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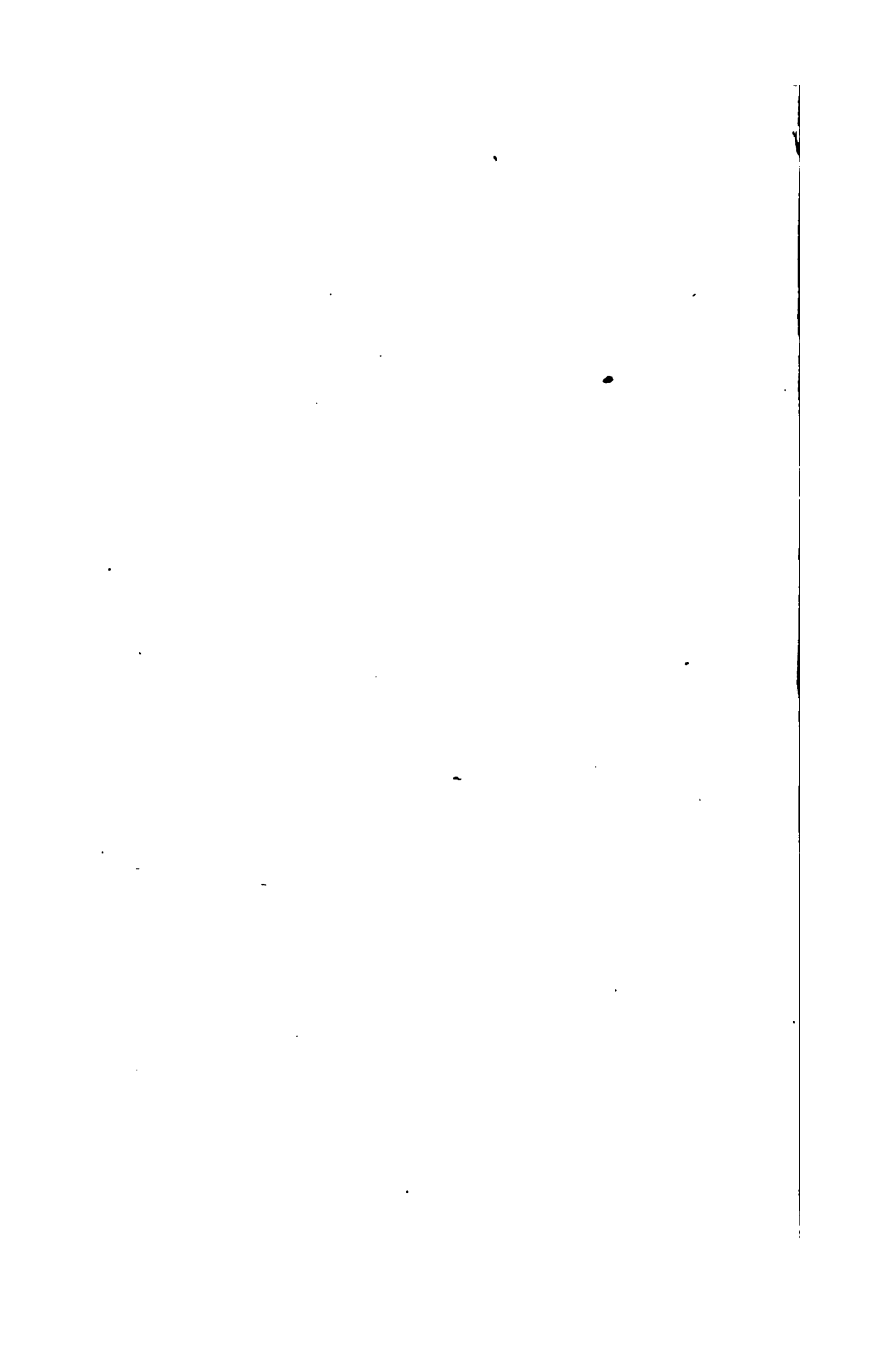
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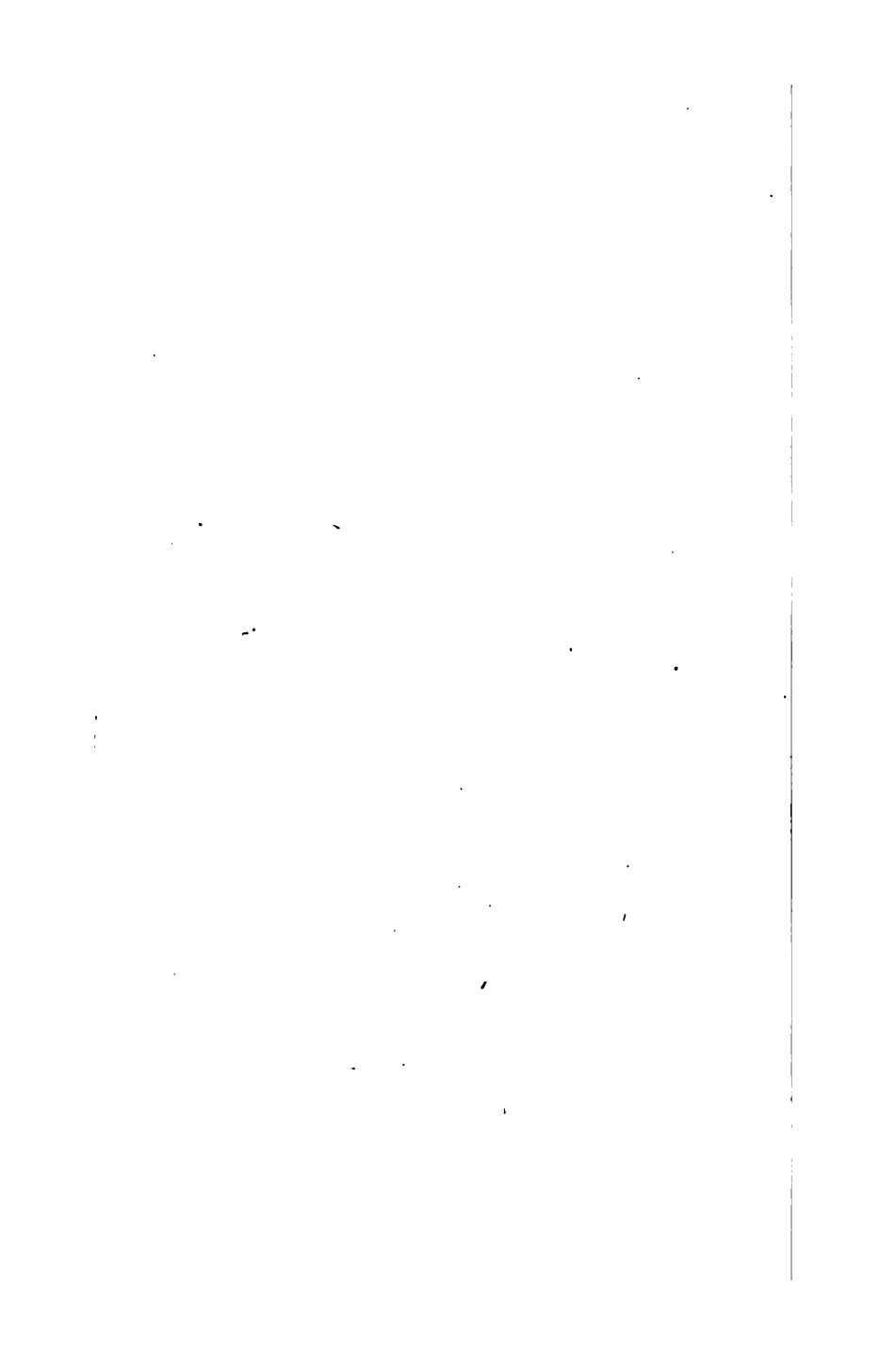


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THE
LIFE
OF
MADAME LOUISE,

A
CARMELITE NUN,

AND
DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV. KING OF FRANCE:

Originally written in French,

BY
ABBE' PROYARD;

PUBLISHED AT BRUSSELS, IN THE YEAR 1793.

AND NOW
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

—◆—
“ Non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientie verbis, sed in
“ ostensione spiritus et virtutis: ut fides vestra non sit in
“ pietatiâ hominum, sed in vertute Dei.”—I Cor. c. II. v. 4.

—◆—
“ Take my yoke upon you ; for my yoke is sweet, and my
“ burden light.”—St. *Matth.* c. xi. v. 29, 30.

Salisbury:

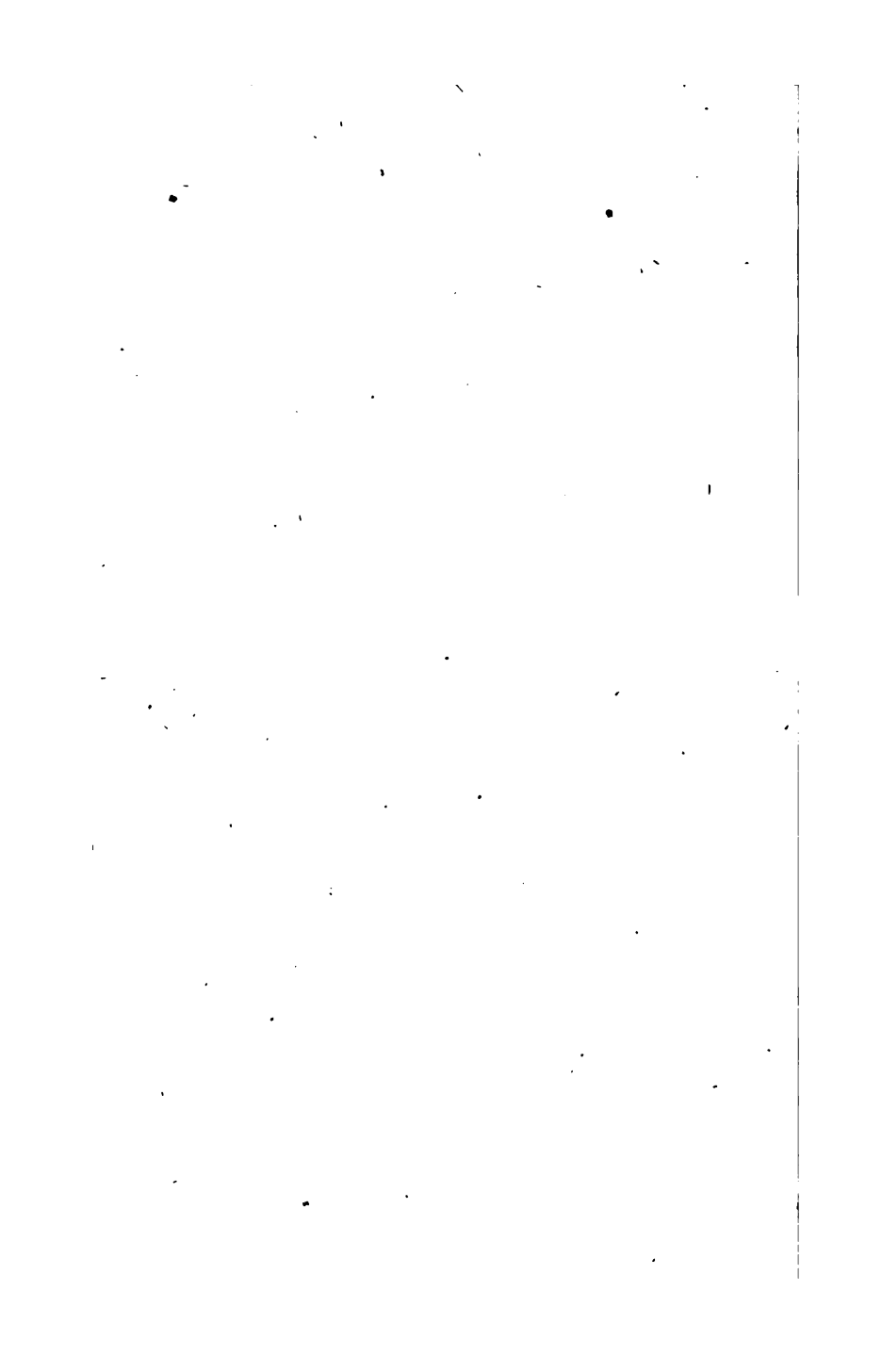
PRINTED FOR THE TRANSLATOR,
BY J. EASTON, HIGH-STREET.

—◆—
1807.

7 FEB 1961

TO THE READER.

ABBE' PROYARD is Author of the Lives of the Duke of Burgundy, Father to LOUIS the Fifteenth; of the Dauphin, Father to LOUIS the Sixteenth; of STANISLAUS, King of Poland, Duke of Lorraine; and of MARY LECKSINSKA, Queen of France, and Mother of MADAME LOUISE, whom the Translator has, throughout the whole course of the following sheets, denoted by the English appellation of PRINCESS LOUISA.



TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
Mary Christina Lady Arundell,
COUNTESS
OF THE SACRED ROMAN EMPIRE.

MADAM,

TO request of your Ladyship the liberty of addressing myself to you on the present occasion, would certainly be an unpardonable presumption in me, had I not the most convincing proofs, that, whatever is intended to advance the interests of RELIGION and VIRTUE, is always sure to meet with your support and patronage.

Thus encouraged, I humbly beg leave to lay before your Ladyship the LIFE OF PRIN-

MISS LOUISA in English. I am conscious that you will not find in the Translation the native elegance of the original; however, I am confident, that in its plain and unadorned dress, it will still be interesting to one, whose tender Piety, and engaging simplicity of Manners have ever been her distinctive characteristic. And I hope that the Catholic Reader, seeing your illustrious Name prefixed to my Work, will be induced to overlook with indulgence the imperfections of the style, and only fix his attention on the admirable examples of Virtue which it exhibits.

I have the honour to be, with profound respect,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's

Most humble

And devoted Servant,

The TRANSLATOR.

PREFACE.



THE most unexpected events succeed, and, push one another forward with such rapidity, that in a single day it seems we have lived more than a century. Thus some few reflexions which my subject suggested to me very lately concerning the precarious existence of communities of women in France, are already no longer adapted to the circumstances of the times (1790). But as some other occurrences might happen to morrow, and put things again on the same footing, I leave my observations just as I wrote them, at first.

Among the contradictions of all sorts which we witness in the shifting scenes of the day, there is one undoubtedly very striking. It is at the very moment when the *Rights of Man* are proclaimed with emphasis through the French empire, that, in the same empire, the Religious State loses even its right to exist. It is from the same Senate that are issued out the laws which promise

liberty to all, and a law which deprives many persons of that liberty ; a law so much the more unaccountable, as its effect is to strike with sterility the nurseries fruitful in the Land of Saints, and to reduce to a lamentable solitude the happy abodes of Innocence and Virtue. Alas! these Convents, so little known, and yet so much calumniated by pretended philosophers and worldly people, afforded to their humble inhabitants such comfort, such peace, delights so pure, so powerfully attractive and alluring to certain souls, that, in order to secure to themselves the undisturbed possession of them, they sacrificed without regret, and even with holy eagerness, all the enjoyments, distinctions, and honours, which beauty, riches, a high rank, and Royal extraction would ever have procured them in the world. We speak here only of Religious Women, because nothing can be added to the apology which has been made in behalf of communities of men.

What crime had our Nuns committed against the state, to provoke their destruction? Never any petition from our provinces solicited it. This is a fact which cannot be called in question. Who were then their accusers? The law gave them a right to know who they were. But how could the law inconsistently with itself, condemn them, without any previous information against them? Or how could they be condemned by Judges who were their very accusers? If it be a crime to lift up, continually, our hands to-

wards Heaven, to draw down the blessings of God on the Empire and its Governors, we must confess it, with candor, all Religious plead guilty. If it be a crime to join to the practice of the Divine precepts, that of the Evangelical counsels, it is true the Nuns are also guilty of it. In short, if it be a crime in the eyes of the State, to lead a poor and frugal life, a life, constantly divided between manual labour, and the duties which either humanity prescribes, or religion commands, let Government punish our Nuns; for, this crime is certainly theirs also.

But if, according to the principles of sound policy, as it is generally acknowledged, the end of every wise government is public happiness, is it not equally evident that this public happiness is but an idle theory, when that of individuals does not flow from it, as its necessary and natural consequence? Ought we not, therefore, to conclude, that the wisest government is that, the law-giver of which has best conceived and contrived the means to open and smooth to every member of the community the roads to happiness, without shutting them to any one; thus comprising together, out of his respect for the sacred rights of men, the whole field of man's inoffensive inclinations, however diversified they may be throughout the immensity of nature? But, to proscribe, in France, a kind of life innocent and virtuous, to which numbers of French women habitually aspire, and to shut,

without distinction, to all, the entrance of the Cloister, is evidently to preclude several of them from the avenues to happiness, which, consisting for them in a seclusion from the agitations of the world, they could not find elsewhere. In order to make us sensible of this truth, we need but take a slight survey of the state of our communities of Religious Women. Let us suppose each of them to have been composed of thirty members: well: out of this number, ten, who were without near relations, and, as it were, strangers in their native country, esteemed themselves happy, to have had it in their power to enter, by adoption, into a family, the gentle and pure manners of which were suitable to their own inclinations: ten others, destitute of these natural graces and captivating charms so highly valued in the world, had brought a grateful heart into a society of pious and enlightened souls, among whom the want of these external accomplishments is accounted as nothing, when compensated by virtue. The ten, remaining, condemned by the shipwreck of their fortune to a life of penury and indigence, with transport blessed the religious foresight of our ancestors, who had prepared for them a hospitable land, where, from slender means of subsistence, united together, there arose a comfortable sufficiency for all. Now, if you disperse these thirty Nuns, and keep them separated from one another in the wide world; you offer violence to their inclinations, destroy their happiness, and devote their existence

to the greatest calamities. But are not the calamities which oppress individuals, to be looked upon as the calamities of the political body, of which these individuals are members? Certainly, our religious women never were a burden to the state, and we shall only express a truth, known and felt from the foundation of Convents to our days, when we say, that, if these venerable establishments did not exist, if our wise ancestors had not provided for their maintenance and support, the nation would immortalize itself by erecting them in our times, and thus spreading on the surface of a vast empire sure resources for the poor; harbours always open to the distressed; useful and ever subsisting censors of public licentiousness; comfortable asylums for suffering humanity; and sanctuaries, where the most pure and eminent virtues might be cultivated with security and peace. And all these blessings poured forth on the community at large, what did they cost to government? The impious themselves, so eager to circulate calumnies, would not dare make the computation of it: our religious women in France possessing but little, always knew how to be contented with little. Rich by their sobriety and abstemiousness, joined to their labour, which Divine Providence constantly blessed, they astonished the world by their abundant charities; Almighty God renewing as it were the miracle of the multiplied loaves, in order to satisfy their tender solicitude and

eagerness to relieve the poor, the widows, and the orphans.

I interrogate the people: but as they do not know how to disguise the truth in their accounts of things, which the pretended philosopher too often does; it is in vain that I seek among them for informers against our religious women; on the contrary, I find them all to be their admirers and panegyrists. Out of that immense number of families which gave a Nun to the Cloister, it would be next to impossible to find out a single one, which ever had occasion to repent of its pious offering; whereas, thousands immediately present themselves, which constantly applauded themselves for their generous sacrifice, and we meet with the first example in the palace of our Kings. In effect, though separated in body from her paternal house, does not the pious inhabitant of the Cloister return to it in mind by the most tender charity? Does she not shew herself again in the midst of her friends as an Angel of Peace, by the influence of her pious and prudent counsels, to entertain among them the union of hearts, to encourage and support their virtue under weaknesses and temptations, or to give them the most solid consolations in their distresses and troubles? Variousy occupied with the different wants of the political body, all our Nuns are useful to it, in their own way, by the several functions which they discharge for its advantage. All of them in the name

of the whole nation, and in quality, as it were, of its delegates before the throne of the Almighty, negotiate our most important concerns with as much zeal as disinterestedness : and many individuals of their numerous and charitable family render also other services to society, if not more momentous, than those we have just mentioned, at least more obvious and more easily noticed by the vulgar. Could any one ever say by what, these pious heroines had ill deserved of their native country, who bury their existence in the melancholy mansions, called hospitals, where they submit themselves to a perpetual slavery in order to serve and relieve all the suffering members of humanity ? Could any one tell us, by what crime these Nuns could have provoked their proscription, who devote themselves with so much zeal and success to the education of children of their own sex, and thus, by their assiduous care and solid instructions form virtuous mothers, who are to be one day the honour and glory of the kingdom ? O infatuated Frenchmen ! impartial posterity will be your judge. It then will be said, to the eternal shame of this present generation, that, having at our disposal all the talents, gratuitous and attentive cares of the most virtuous of our country women, we preferred to abandon to mercenary hands the tender innocence of our children, and the last moments of the forsaken poor.

There is another inconsistency, which

equally betrays the shocking corruption of our morals. Those who inveigh against the celibacy of Religious are blindly applauded, whilst, at the same time, the calumniators themselves are suffered to live unmarried; and, what a celibacy is theirs? such as that of a Voltaire, of a Raynal, and of all those in the National Assembly, who set themselves up for the first accusers of the Religious State; of that state which makes so many happy, and which, by means of a spotless purity, unites the heavens to the earth. But, would it be difficult, by opposing experience, and the evidence of facts to their vain speculations, to prove to these frivolous declaimers that, the celibacy embraced by our Nuns, prepares in reality as many mothers to society, and, perhaps, more than it seems to take away from it. Who will ever dare maintain, that all our Christian virgins, had they remained in the world, would have been mothers of a family? But, what cannot be called in question, and what is seen every day, is that, of two young persons born of a reputable family, but with a small fortune, and who would have been reduced to live both in the world in a celibacy either of decency or necessity, the one embracing a religious state, the other is no longer debarred from embracing that of matrimony. What were you then doing by shutting up your Cloisters? you deprived these two young persons of the most natural exercise of their liberty; which of all things is most essential to their happiness in life.

And thus, by refusing to give a virgin to God, you have taken away from society a mother of a family !

But if liberty in France is not a vain phantom, why should not a young person religiously inclined, enjoy the right of following such propensity, by devoting herself to celibacy within a Convent, since she would have had the right of remaining single in the world, as so many others actually do ? What ! in the very middle of our cities and towns, under the eyes of a government truly accomplice of their disorders, the unfortunate victims of libertinism are not only free, but even encouraged ; they proclaim aloud, and with insolence, the contempt of all deficiencies ; they enjoy a full liberty of corrupting our youth ; and forming themselves into particular societies in order to profess with more skill and success the infamous art of debauchery, and to offer to a depraved people a more complete assemblage of criminal pleasures ; and (in a state which calls itself Christian), the virtuous of the same sex shall not have the contrary liberty of living a pure and chaste life ; they shall not be free to embrace a state of life, which Pagan Rome herself honoured with a kind of religious worship in the persons of her vestals ; in a word, a state of life consecrated by the Catholic faith, and of which the Sovereign and Divine Law-giver of the Christians has given them both the counsel and the example. What name, then, shall we give to that pre-

tended toleration which, with one hand flatters and supports vice and its scandalous abominations, and with the other stifles the noblest exertions of a virtuous and generous heart.

Shall we lend a more patient ear to all the ardent zealots of the rights of man? Alas! his sacred rights were never more wantonly violated, than by those who from hypocrisy gave themselves out in our days for their most faithful assertors and patrons. These men, full of deceit, incapable of reaching the practice of a pure and exalted virtue, dispute even its possibility in others, and behold with a jealous eye the divine means which religion affords to attain it. They loudly cry out, as if they had made the experiment of it themselves, that these habitations, so highly commended, wherein our Nuns have taken refuge, are in reality but an inhospitable land, which devours its inhabitants; that these solitary retreats, where we pretend happiness and peace reside undisturbed, are the doleful abodes of grief, and of unavailing and bitter regret; in a word, that, under the veil of virginity, you discover nothing but the unfortunate victims, either of an indiscreet and momentary fervor, or of the ambitious and selfish views of their unnatural parents. It is thus that these blind men blaspheme what they do not know. Degraded with sentiments below their origin and destiny, they appreciate the virtues of these heavenly souls, by the grove-

ling inclinations of their corrupted and dastardly hearts. Undoubtedly there is nothing so holy, nothing so sacred, which the passions or the weakness and frailty of man cannot abuse, and which, in reality, they have not sometimes abused. But, while the world is filled with unfortunate wives, or wretched women, who deplore their condition of life, why should we expect that our Convents should enjoy the singular privilege never to have the inconstancy of a *foolish virgin* to bewail. However, is it true, and can it be said without calumny, that a Cloister is always a place of slavery and woe? This is no longer problematical. At length that famous process, commenced by the perversity of our age, against these angelical souls known to God, but hidden from a profane world, is finally decided; and a most afflicting scandal, has served, at least, to display, in its full evidence, a most edifying truth. Out of a feigned compassion for our religious women, pretended philosophers had long since published throughout all France, that the day when an option should be offered to these cloistered victims, between their chains and their return into the world, they would that very same day quit with eagerness their deserted solitudes. However, a solemn law has loudly proclaimed such an option, and the result of this philosophical experiment has, to the eternal ignominy of those who had solicited it, been a splendid triumph of the fidelity of our virgins. And we may, if such a comparison

be allowed, say, that the crucible scarcely threw out an imperceptible dross. Those religious virgins, whom they had flattered themselves to provoke and to draw into inconstancy; those, to whom they had endeavoured to palliate the crime of perjury and apostacy, and to smooth the way to the same, out of a perfidious officiousness, all of them recoiled back with horror at the prospect which opened before them, and hid themselves with more eagerness than ever in the obscurity of their beloved solitudes, from which, violence alone has since been able to tear them away.

But, the Life we are going to write will be of itself a kind of refutation of all the calumnies published against Convents; and, in the eyes of the virtuous and wise, will be the most complete apology of the holy and useful state of life followed therein.

The greatest merit of the Author in writing the History of Princess Louisa, will be accuracy: my only fear is to alter in the account of the facts, the moving simplicity of the memorials, with which I have been supplied by the most creditable ocular witnesses. I mean the virtuous companions of the virtuous Princess, the Superiors General of the Carmelite Order, the House of Saint Denis, in particular, and Abbé Bertin, brother to the late Minister of State of this name. The work of this respectable Clergyman has been a very great assistance to

me. He concludes it in these words: "Such are the facts, and the different particulars of which I have been myself an eye witness, or the truth of which I have ascertained. And I think it my duty to attest them before God and men. It is an homage of justice which I owe to the virtues of Princess Louisa, whose zeal, fervour, punctuality, and unremitting constancy, seemed to me to have been truly heroic. Such is the testimony I thought myself obliged to give, concerning the special manner by which Divine Providence conducted this precious soul, from the first moment when supernatural grace gradually wrested her from the world, by increasing every day her fervour for all the duties of her holy profession. This fervour appeared to us especially wonderful during the last eighteen months of her life, up to the very moment she gave up her pious soul, filled with the utmost tranquillity and peace, and expressing an ardent longing to return to her God. It is what I now do sign and certify in the sincerity of an upright heart, out of duty, as Superior of her house. I do it also of my own accord, and without being influenced in the least by any application which might have been made to me on the subject."—*Chatou, the 11th of January, 1789.*
Bertin, Counsellor of State and Superior.

However, I must own that the precious memorials I have made use of, and which were absolutely necessary to me, in order to make me perfectly acquainted with all the

particulars of the Life of Princess Louisa, have not offered any thing new to me with regard to the eminent-virtue of this Princess. A close and long intimacy with her confessor, Abbé Duterney; a residence of fifteen months at Saint Denis; some particular audiences with which she honoured me; the zeal she displayed in order to remove all the obstacles which prevented the publication of the Life of the Dauphin her brother; the tender affection with which she always spoke of the virtues of the late Queen (her mother); the lively interest and solicitude she shewed at all times for whatever might concern religion; in short, all I have heard and seen of this holy Princess had inspired me with so much respect and admiration for her, that the details of her life, which have been since communicated to me, have indeed confirmed, but could add nothing to these my sentiments in her regard.

In the views of Providence, which never does any thing in vain, we may consider the Life of Princess Louisa as a blessing of Heaven, for all ages, and different conditions of Society. The profane world will see in it a courageous virtue, which ever will condemn its sloth and disorders; the Christian world a great example for its edification; and the religious world, a most admirable model, and powerful incentive to courage and fidelity in the discharge of its holy obligations.

This Work will be divided into four Books :

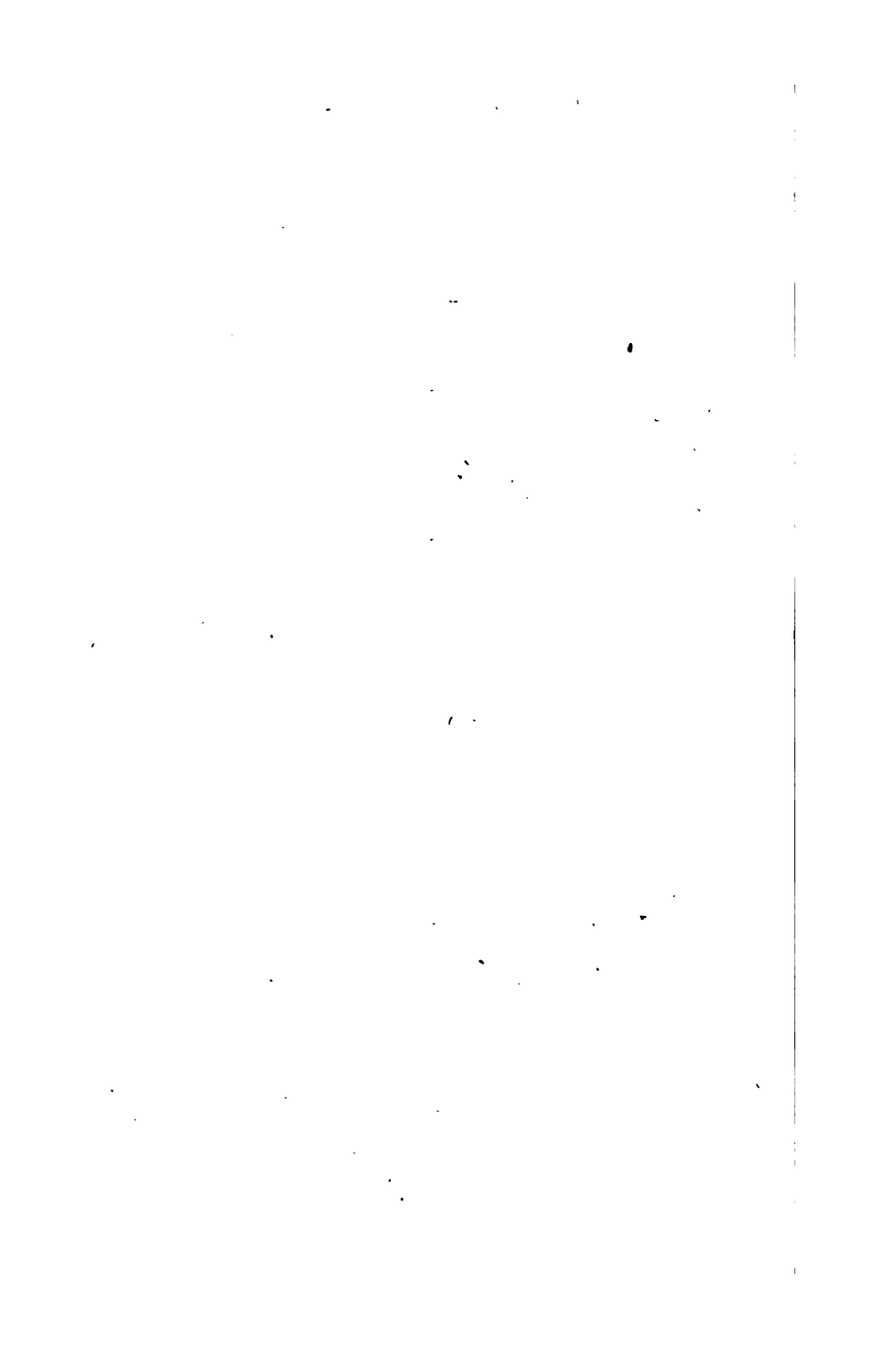
In the first we shall give a faithful account of the infancy and youth of Princess Louisa.

In the second we shall first relate the particularities of her entrance into the Order of the Carmelite Nuns; and next, in what manner she behaved from the beginning of her Noviceship.

In the third we shall see how the Princess discharged, under the eyes of her sisters, the different religious functions and employments which obedience obliged her to accept.

The chief virtues which made her the constant object of the admiration and love of her Monastery, will be the matter we shall dwell upon more at large in the fourth.





THE
LIFE
OF
PRINCESS LOUISA OF FRANCE,
A
CARMELITE NUN.

BOOK I.

LOUISA MARY of France, daughter of Louis the Fifteenth, and of Mary, Princess of Poland, was born at Versailles the fifteenth of July, 1737. She was yet an infant in the cradle when she was carried to the Abbey of Fontevrault, then governed by Madam de Rochechouart, a lady of exalted merit. She arrived there with her two sisters the Princesses Victoire and Sophie; she was committed to the particular care of Madam de Soutlanges, a Religious in the same Abbey,

and afterwards Abbess of *Royal Dicu*. It is from this respectable Tutoress that we have learned the details concerning the infancy of her Royal pupil.

The young Princess was scarcely acquainted with life, but she was likely to lose it by a fatal accident. Her attendant having one day been dilatory in coming for her hour of rising, she impatiently ascended the balustrade which surrounded her bed; she slipped, fell on the floor and fainted away. They ran immediately to the surgeon of the village, a man of little abilities, and who scarcely had any other skill but that of bleeding well, provided he had plentifully drank before. As it was in the morning that he was sent for, they took care to supply him with sufficient quantity of liquor, and he succeeded to a wonder in the bleeding. Our country doctor ought not to have gone any farther; but he presumed to say, that, after what he had done, the fall could not be attended with any bad consequences: unfortunately, he was believed, and it was long after that they discovered (but too late), that the shape of the Princess grew a little crooked.

Princess Louisa had also in her infancy a long and dangerous illness, which nearly brought her to her grave. The physicians having declared that they had lost all hopes of her recovery, the ceremonies of Baptism, which were usually separated from the Sacrament, with regard to the children of the

Royal Family, were supplied to her: In this extremity, and distressed to a degree, at seeing the daughter of their King dying in their hands, the Religious of the Monastery had recourse to God; and in the fervor of their prayers, they made, under the protection of the blessed Virgin; a vow, that, if the young Princess recovered, she should, in her honour be clothed in white for a whole year. She did recover, and accordingly dressed in white. This striking circumstance of Princess Louisa's infancy never went out of her memory. Therefore, can we not presume that, according to the admirable dispositions of God's providence over his Elect, this kind of religious consecration, in which the Princess had then so little share, became, however, by the reflections it occasioned afterwards, the principle of the noble and glorious sacrifice she was one day to offer up to God, with so much merit on her side, and so much edification for all the Christian world. At least it is certain that she remained persuaded that she owed to the intercession of the blessed Virgin the preservation of her life. And, in a more advanced age, she was sometimes heard to say, that she was obliged more than any other, to consecrate to the service of God a life that had been preserved by a special protection of his providence.

Happy the children, whatever may be the rank of life in which they are born, whose

parents know the value of education! useful to all men, it is especially necessary to the children of Kings, because their virtues or vices being more conspicuous, always have a more powerful influence on public manners. We shall not discuss here the modern axiom, "*that men are born equal*:" what cannot be reasonably called in question, is, that this pretended equality, is but a vain theory, if those who are supposed to be born equal in rights, are not born also equal in means to improve these rights. But the inequality of these means, physical as well as moral, belongs to the immutable order of nature, and essentially constitutes among men, that gradual inequality which becomes itself the necessary foundation and guardian of social order. Be it what it will, nature and education were to concur to form in the young Princess, not a vulgar subject of equality, but a rare model for the age in which she lived. Her Tutor soon discovered that the ground she had to cultivate, was an excellent one. In effect, whether she wanted to plant or to root out, never was her labour fruitless with her Pupil.

The peculiar characteristic of the young Louisa, from her first infancy, was an extraordinary vivacity, which manifested itself in all her exterior, and especially in her speech. She was so eager to express herself, that she wished a single motion of her lips could have been a whole discourse; and that, to render her thoughts, sentences could have flowed

more quickly than words. They soon discovered in her an admirable sagacity, discretion, and prudence. She discerned perfectly well the character of the people whom she saw ; and their weaknesses and defects, if they had any, were sure not to escape her. Even she might have been a little prone to be sarcastic ; but as soon as she was told, that a sarcasm was a dangerous weapon which nobody, especially of a high rank, could play with, without wounding very severely those who were struck with it, she never after permitted herself but harmless and innocent jokes : and if by chance she said any thing which might be mortifying, she acknowledged her fault immediately, and punished herself for it. One of her waiting-maids, who had a sore eye, having one day reproached her for a thing which she had not done, the Princess answered, " If you could make use of both your eyes, you would not see me doing things which I do not." " I want but one single eye, Madam," replied the servant, " to see very clearly, that, at least, you are very proud." Princess Louisa immediately approached her, and in a gentle and kind tone of voice said to her, " You are much in the right ; it is only pride that has made me speak to you in such a manner ; will you forgive me ? Alas ! I also must beg pardon of God for it, and confess t."

She had always something agreeable and

pleasing to say to all those who approached her; and when she had received any affront, she looked upon it as a strict duty not to shew the smallest resentment. A young lady who was admitted into her society, had behaved to her in a very uncivil manner; she made her no kind of reproaches; even seemed not to have perceived it; she contented herself to tell her Governess, "Miss N*** is not very polite." In another circumstance, observing one of the Princesses her sisters, who was a little more advanced in years than herself, to be in very great affliction, because they had taken away from her all dolls, as no longer suitable to her age, her good heart prompted her to speak to her sister. Among the different motives of consolation that she laid before her, she represented, that such an amusement being still permitted to herself, she would willingly relinquish it to her, as often as she came to her apartment. But, a profound grief cannot bear consolations; and the eldest Princess, humbled and mortified undoubtedly at the lesson she received from her youngest sister, saw, in her obliging offer, but an injury, which she answered by an affront. The little Louisa, thus ill treated, without exclaiming against the injustice done to her, without shewing the least resentment or ill humour, withdrew in silence; and meeting afterwards with a person in whom she had a great confidence, told her, with all the gravity of reason, "Remember what I say; if they do not watch with the utmost attention on the edu-

cation of my sister N***, she will have all the defects of a spoiled child."

The virtue of discretion, which is seldom found in youth, shewed itself early in young Louisa. If she had heard any word which might hurt her neighbour's reputation, or give them the least uneasiness, she imposed on herself the law never to repeat it again. She never suffered any body in her presence to speak ill of the absent. And, a secret, which did not respect enough Christian charity, was odious to her. A declared enemy to all sort of adulation, she took care to make known her way of thinking on that point to all the young ladies, who might have been tempted to use it with her. She willingly forgave them any want of attention or respect, but hardly a flattery. The character of a flatterer seemed to her so contemptible, that, in order to ridicule it, she bethought herself to write to the Governess of one of her sisters, under the name of a person who wanted, through her means, to obtain a situation near her august Pupil. She had imitated so well the insipid and cringing style of adulation with the person, the protection of whom she implored, that any one might have been easily mistaken.

Endowed with a generous and feeling heart, the young Princess could not see any persons in pain without seeking to comfort them; and her greatest pleasure was to have

it in her power to relieve the unfortunate. All she had, was the patrimony of the poor ; and she loved to distribute it to them herself. She had learned so well at the school of religion, to shun ostentation in good works, that, from her most tender years, she knew all the value of that secrecy which distinguishes Christian Charity from Pharisaic beneficence. The necessities of the poor being often greater than her means, many a time, when she had no money, she borrowed some of her Governess, and sometimes obtained of her to make a sacrifice of her rich playthings, in favour of those who appeared to her to be in the greatest distress.

The goodness of her heart shewed itself in every occasion. One day she learned that, for want of payment of a sum of money due to them, the creditors of the Monastery where she lived, had seized upon its revenues. Extremely grieved at such intelligence, she ran immediately to her closet, took several jewels of great value, and carried them to her Governess, saying, " Sell all this for the house ; I am sure that neither the King nor the Queen will find it amiss." The sacrifice of her most precious jewels was a pleasure to her: but the thing which caused her a real affliction, was that they did not think proper to accept of her generous offer. Sensibly touched at all the care which they took of her during her infancy, she carried her gratitude to a kind of excess, if there can be any in that noble virtue. All the services

which were done to her she always repaid with a thousand marks of kindness ; hence all her attendants served her with the utmost affection.

At an age generally addicted to frivolity, the young Princess shewed a solid character, and constancy in her inclinations. She examined every thing before she took her resolution ; but when once taken, she very seldom altered her mind. To gain her esteem it was necessary to have obtained her friendship ; but they who had deserved it, were sure to preserve it for ever. Her Governess was of the number ; and though she did not spare her when she thought proper to reprimand her for her defects, and often thwarted her inclinations, nevertheless, she loved her with great tenderness, and as a second mother. If by chance she shewed some repugnance to study or any other duty, her Governess made her exert the utmost courage to conquer herself, only by telling her, " Well, Madam, you will then have me to be reproached one day for having neglected your education, and left you ignorant of your duties ?" this Religious having fallen dangerously sick, her young Pupil lively affected at the danger of her situation, prayed without intermission for her recovery ; and in her ardent desire to obtain it, made a promise to God to recite every day for a whole year the office of Providence, if her good Governess recovered her health. She actually re-

covered, and the Princess accomplished her vow with the greatest exactitude. She had only consulted her heart when she took such an engagement, and she executed it without speaking of it to any one : and it was a long time after, and with difficulty that she could be persuaded to disclose the pious secret of her friendship.

The young Louisa had in her character a great fund of gaiety, and a cheerfulness, which Religion soon improved and sanctified, and which she always preserved among all the austerities of the Cloister. She had a very even temper, and her uprightness was truly admirable. The very shadow of a lie inspired her with horror. If she committed a fault, she confessed it with candour : and even it never occurred to her mind to use any disguise. Her relish for truth was so sincere and determined, that the innocent novels, which have been devised to fix by the marvellous the imagination of children, could no longer amuse and please her, when she knew that they contained nothing but fictions. " Never tell me but true stories," said she, to her Governess ; " and, when they are but fables, let me know it before we begin." She believed all that was told her, and even could not imagine that any person could ever seek to deceive her. She was yet but very young, when one of the women who attended her, told her, that there was just born a great Prince in Europe ; and she added, that, this Prince was to be her hus-

band. The young Princess believed that it was an affair quite determined upon; and this idle tale, which they thought would please her, afflicted her very much, and made her shed many tears. Her Governess having asked her, whence her grief proceeded? she answered, "Have I not much reason to be afflicted, since they destitute a husband to me, who will have no other but **JESUS CHRIST**?" It was an easy thing to undeceive her simplicity, but not equally so to make her restore her esteem to the person who had deceived her with a lie. She never forgot this little circumstance of her life, and she said on this occasion, that, those who tell lies to children, seemed to her more criminal than those who do it to people who are less credulous. In effect, a lie is for the child, who soon discovers it a lesson of diffidence, imposture, and duplicity. And if a great uprightness of heart preserve it from these odious vices, it will always entertain great contempt for those who might have exposed it to contract the habit of them.

With such happy dispositions, the heart of the young Princess early imbibed sentiments of piety, in a house where every thing spoke its language, and offered to her the example of it. From her most tender years, she was capable of receiving lessons of religion, and her forward reason prompted her to ask questions which surprised others. She was not yet four years old, when one day she told her Governess, "My dear

Mamma, you know very well that I love God, and give him my heart every day; but, pray, tell me, will never God in his turn give me something?" The moment was come to give the Princess an important lesson. The wise Mistress did not fail to do it. "What madam," replied she to her Pupil, "do you not yet know that all you have, and can ever have for the future, comes from God? Is it not God who has given you your life, and preserves it? If you are born the daughter of a King, and not of a poor country man, is it not to God that you are indebted for such a favour? If we instruct you, take care of you, it is because God has commanded us to do it. The food you take every day, it is God who sends it to you: men are not capable of producing wheat, fruits, and all that nourishes you. It is the same with respect to your clothes, it is God who gives them to you. The linen you wear, is made of a plant which God causes to grow for you in the fields, and which is called flax. The fine stuffs which are sent you from Versailles to make your gowns, it is God who has caused them to be spun by an insect which they call a silk-worm. In a word, Madam, all that you have and are, it is from God that you hold it. You owe to him the air that you breathe, and the light which enlightens you; the earth upon which you walk, and the heavens expanded over your head. This very heart of yours, which you offer up to him every day, is a heart which he has given you, and only that you

might offer it up to him : but all that God has already given you, without mentioning all he intends to give you, besides, upon earth, is nothing when compared to what he reserves for you, and which he will certainly give you in Heaven, if you always love him. Now, will you think, still, Madam, that God gives you nothing, in return of your heart, which you offer up to him every day ?”

This lesson, one of those which the Genevan Philosopher thinks only adapted to the capacity of young people of fifteen years, was understood by a child of four ; it made upon her a lasting impression, and fixed her attention so well on the blessings of God, that from this time, the young Princess applying herself the principle, as occasions required it, said often to her Governess “ We must also thank God for this ; it is God also who has given us that.” One day, during a violent storm of thunder and lightning ; “ Is it God also who has made this thunder which frightens me so much ?” “ Yes, Madam,” answered her Governess ; “ God thunders over the head of sinners, out of mercy for them, to admonish them to return to him, lest they should be destroyed by his vengeance. The worse the state of our conscience is, the more afraid we must be of thunder ; but, when we love God with all our heart, we ought not to entertain the least fear of it, because God never does any harm to his friends.” But as the Princess attributed afterwards to the bad state of her

conscience, the fear she had still of thunder, to remove her scruples, it was necessary to make her distinguish two sorts of fear, occasioned by thunder; the one involuntary in itself, which is a natural consequence of the delicacy of our organs; the other reflected and grounded on the bad state of our conscience; and, moreover, the possibility of being struck by the lightning in such a dreadful state.

They never discovered in the Princess any sign of that disgust which children often shew for the exercises of religion. She was very fond of the Church Office, and never complained of its length. She said her prayers with all the recollection and respect which could be expected of her age. One day, as she was praying alone in her oratory, she told one of her waiting maids, who sat still, "Come kneel down to pray with me, and our Lord will be in the midst of us."

These happy inclinations, and premature virtues of the young Princess, were not, however, without some mixture of imperfections. Pride seemed to be her capital defect; it is generally so with people who have less of others. Too sensible of her high birth, she could not bear that any ever should seem to forget it. She knew the ceremonial which was to be observed with her, and she authoritatively required it. Her wise Governess often had to represent to her that she should strive to merit regard and

attention, but that it was ridiculous to exact them; that she might remember her exalted rank, but only to reflect, that, in consequence of it, she was under the obligation of doing better than others; otherwise she would be much more exposed to the censure of the public. Sometimes, also, she enforced her advice by practical lessons. Thus, one day as the Princess had shewed some haughtiness to the women who attended her, she recommended to them to affect to sit still, against the *etiquette*, when she was drinking. Such a want of regard could not escape her. She discontinued drinking, and said, with the commanding tone of a mistress, "Up, if you please; Princess Louisa is drinking." Her Governess, using the same tone of voice, answered, that, Princess Louisa might drink as long as she pleased, but that her women would sit still, because they had received an order to forget that she was a Princess, as often as she herself should forget that a Princess ought not to be proud and haughty, nor to affect an imperious tone with those who had the goodness to do her any service.

In consequence of the same defect, the young Princess was subject to anger. The Governess found out no means more efficacious to correct her of it, than by introducing to her a person in whom she had the greatest confidence, and who, as it were without any design, making the conversation fall on the danger of anger, made a long enumeration

of its fatal consequences, and ended by giving her an account of a tragical death occasioned by a fit of passion. This conversation was for the Princess an occasion to ask many questions, and the answers she received, made her conclude, that she could not too soon take the surest measures to repress the least motions of a passion so violent and so dangerous.

But what could always be looked upon as a certain presage, that the defects of the young Princess, would disappear with her infancy, was, that though she committed faults, she nevertheless shewed constantly a solid mind and sound judgment. She willingly yielded to a good reason, and never maintained with obstinacy, the bad cause which her humbled pride had made her support. Imagining, that a woman who was at work in her apartment, had offended her, she told her with humour, "Am I not the daughter of your King?" "And, I, Madam," replied coolly the woman, "am I not the daughter of your God?" Struck at the answer; "You are very much in the right," said the young Princess; "and I was myself in the wrong: I beg your pardon."

However, the efforts which reason, self-love, or goodnature induced the Princess to make, in order to correct her defects, or to discharge her duties, were not very constant, nor truly efficacious, but when they came to be commanded by the more powerful and pure motives which religion suggests. She

had given many proofs of docility to its lessons, at an age when she could scarcely be sensible of their importance: but soon all her sentiments and actions were entirely influenced by its impressions. When ten years old, she reproached herself for the least fault she might have committed; and the delicacy of her conscience was alarmed at the mere appearance of evil. She had been told, that in the tribunal of penance, she should make herself known, as she knew herself; and was known by **ALMIGHTY GOD**. From this principle, and in order to save herself any anxiety or reproach of conscience, she prepared her confessions with an extraordinary attention; and as it was represented to her, that she employed too much time in that preparation, she replied, "Must I not endeavour to know my conscience as well as God knows it?"

Arrived at this period of her life, they remarked in the young Princess, not only virtuous inclinations, but those real virtues, which, still preserving the simplicity of the first innocence, render a young heart so acceptable to God. By a continuance of generous efforts, she had succeeded to moderate her levity, and conquer her natural repugnance to study and close application. Her faults became more rare, and her piety more striking. She prayed with edifying recollection. In a word, all her conduct was exemplary. They thought then that it was time to speak to her of her first communion,

And of the dispositions she should bring to that awful action. She was about twelve years old, when, for the first time, they mentioned this important subject to her, she answered, "It is not yet time for me to think of it:" and several times afterwards, to the same proposal, she made the same reply. Her Governess judged it then necessary to reproach her for a kind of indifference towards a favour she should esteem herself too happy to have the liberty of aspiring to. "God forbid," replied the Princess, "that it should be out of indifference that I wish to put off my first communion; but I am too conscious of my great unworthiness of such precious grace." The most convincing proof which she gave of her unworthiness, was that she did not yet know her Catechism well enough: they removed her fears by telling her, that she had yet time to prepare herself; and, besides, that in order to be judged sufficiently instructed of the truths of our religion, it was only requisite that she should so far understand them as to be able to give an exact account of their meaning, and for that it was not always necessary to use the very words of the Catechism. Thus encouraged, she wholly applied herself to dispose her heart to receive the grace of that sacrament; and she did it with a fervor, and sentiments of piety, truly admirable in so tender an age. All her regret was to be conscious of having yet done nothing for the God, whom she was going to

receive ; and from this moment she took a resolution to live henceforth for him alone.

The general confession, which preceded her first communion, was an affair of high importance for her: and Divine grace, already acting powerfully in her heart, made her discover great transgressions in those things which young persons of her age generally deem trifling. After having examined herself for a long time, and with the utmost attention, she wrote down her confession: and for fear she should have been in the least defective in the accusation of her faults, she desired a Nun, in whose secrecy she entirely relied, to examine her confession before she would make it, and to give her freely her advice on the things which might still give her some uneasiness. She asked this favour with so much earnestness, that it was impossible to refuse her. She began then to read her confession to her Confidant; but, coming to a certain place of her writing, she hesitated, and passed it over. The Nun having taken notice of it, desired her to read the same page over again, and observed that she made the same omission. She therefore asked her, if she had read every thing sincerely? The Princess candidly owned that she had omitted an article which she dared not to read. "Why do you constrain yourself with me?" said the Nun to her: "why do you not keep your whole confession for your Confessor? Have I not already begged of you not to disclose any

part of it to mé?" Princess Louisa then insisted upon her reading the article which she had omitted; it was as follows: "*I accuse myself of having desired, out of vanity, to be born a Turkish woman.*" Her Confidant having asked, what could have been the motive of such an extravagant desire; and how she could attach any vanity to such a thing? "It is because I imagined that I should have the greatest pleasure to abjure Mahometism in the most splendid and evident manner to embrace Christianity." On this occasion, a reflection was suggested to her, which she never forgot: it was, that, without being born a Turk, she would have many opportunities to signalize her zeal for religion, by abjuring at Court the maxims and conduct of those who live there.

She made her first communion in the most edifying manner, at the time fixed for it; and in a soul so well prepared, grace did not fail to bring forth the most abundant fruits. From that time, her piety increased every day; and till she left Fontevrault, which happened some years after, she deserved by her whole conduct, by her fidelity and exactitude in the performance of all her duties, to be proposed as a model to all the young persons who lived in the monastery. "It would be a difficult task for me," said her religious Confidant, "to represent to you the fervor with which she made her first communion: and ever since the same spirit of piety animated her. When she approached the

sacraments, she consecrated a few days before to retreat and recollection, in order to receive them worthily." At her return to Court, in her fourteenth year, Princess Louisa led a life most regular and free from reproach. It was edifying, even in the eyes of a Queen, whose rare virtues were the admiration of the whole kingdom. Nevertheless, the Princess said afterwards, that the moment of her entrance into the world, had been unfavourable to her piety. In effect it may easily be imagined, how perilous must be to a young person, the passage from a school of virtues, which she has inhabited from her most tender years, to the fascinating theatre of the most brilliant Court in Europe. She confessed with candour, that notwithstanding the good resolutions she had formed, and the great care she constantly took, to keep them with fidelity, her virtue was continually exposed to many struggles which weakened its power. She felt herself often solicited to make an ostentatious display of the natural accomplishments which she had received from Heaven: oftener was she tempted to retract the sacrifice which she had made to religion, of a fondness and study of dress and worldly attire. One day she was shaken in her good resolutions by human respect; the next she was carried away by the impetuosity of her character. However, her attention to keep under proper restraint the sallies of nature prevented that any sign of this intestine war which harrassed her so

much, should appear outwardly : and every one at Court praised her regularity, excepting herself, who did not forgive herself the least inidelity. It may be judged by the following fact that she had yet lost nothing of the delicacy of her conscience. Her compassion for the poor, of which she had given so many proofs from her most tender years, had been constantly increasing, with the means which she had to relieve them ; so that all she received for her pocket money, was destined to them without the least reserve : and her Lady of Honour, who at the same time had the superintendency of her money affairs, was so well acquainted with her intentions in that regard, that as soon as she had received money for Princess Louisa, she distributed it immediately into the hands of the poor, without giving herself the trouble of offering her the least part of it for her particular wants. However, the young Princess having once permitted herself to gratify her fancy, by spending something to the prejudice of the poor, which she felt a difficulty of owning to her Lady of Honour, she used some little artifice to draw from her the trifling sum of a guinea, which was the whole amount of what she had spent. She imagined therefore to draw up a petition addressed to Princess Louisa, and she caused it to be presented to her Lady of Honour in the name of a person who was in the greatest want of a guinea, to pay her debts. She in reality owed that sum to one of her waiting maids. The Lady of Honour with

out entertaining the least suspicion gave the guinea, which immediately was delivered to the Princess. This little piece of art and deceit left in her heart a great remorse, and occasioned her very serious regret.

The new kind of life she was obliged to pursue hurt her inclinations in many things; and the amusements which it afforded her, seemed to her purchased with too much pain and constraint. She did not relish any of those pastimes, and sedentary diversions which are the most pleasing to young persons of her sex. And when out of complaisance she played at cards, she usually lost her money for want of due attention to what she was doing. She had, on the contrary, a strong inclination for violent exercises. Travelling pleased her; she was courageous on horseback, and preferred no diversion to hunting, which Louis the fifteenth gave her sometimes. As she was one day following the King through the forest of Compiègne, her horse reared up to such a degree, that he threw her off to a great distance: she fell in the middle of the high road, and almost under the feet of the horses of a carriage which followed her full gallop. By a particular Providence, which, afterwards, she called a miracle, she escaped unhurt from this double danger; and without seeming in the least disconcerted, she would continue the chase. In vain did they entreat her to make use of her carriage; she rejected this timid advice, and her Gentleman

which, even the sentiments of nature must yield. I wished to resemble her, but my will was not courageous enough; hence I was discontented with myself; hence I constantly heard at the bottom of my heart a voice whispering to me, that I was not doing for God what he required of me. But, at the same time, it seemed to me, that, Augustin like, I was afraid lest God should speak too clearly to me, and consequently be obliged to engage myself more deeply in his service.

“ I had another bright model under my eyes : Henrietta lived like the Queen. Every body said that she was a Saint ; and, indeed, the whole of her behaviour confirmed this opinion. When she was constrained to go to the play-house, she prayed to God there. Her death made a very deep impression upon me. I was made sensible how sweet it was to die as holily as she had done ; but her life was very different from mine, and I had a great fear of dying before I had begun to live better. I had even at that time some attractions for a religious state.

“ It was about this time that the Countess of Rupelmonde left the Court to enter into the Convent of *Grenelle*. This first step made but a slight impression upon me, because every body said with confidence, that she would not remain : but they were all deceived. When the usual time of trial was over, she took the habit. The Queen, who

never missed any opportunity of edifying herself, would go to her clothing, and conducted us thither. She was very fond of the Countess, who deserved her friendship, and had been one of the Ladies of her bed chamber. Become a widow, when yet in the bloom of youth, she possessed all the accomplishments to please in the world, and enjoy all the pleasures and comforts of this present life. Her generous sacrifice, considered with attention, caused me to make profound reflections on the necessity of salvation, and the emptiness of all that may flatter our senses. There is true courage! said I to myself; it is thus that Heaven may be gained. I was then sixteen years old: During the ceremony, and before I left the Church, I took a resolution to ask of God every day, to afford me the means of breaking off the bands which detained me in the world, and of having it one day in my power of becoming, if not a Carmelite Nun (as I did not then flatter myself to have health sufficient for such a life), at least a Religious in a very regular house: for, during the long trial of my vocation, I always trembled to enter into a relaxed Monastery; saying to myself, that it would be useless to make so great a sacrifice, and still to be in danger of losing my soul.

“ We were scarcely returned to Court, but I heard repeated over and over again all that idle talk and those Antichristian sur-

mises which they had indulged, when the Countess went to the Carmelites. "What an indiscretion, said the most moderate! could she not sanctify herself in the world? she might have had besides the merit of edifying others. Why so much noise, said they also, for a thing which will be soon dissipated in smoke? a few months more of the austere and melancholy life of the Carmelites will soon exhaust all her zeal. And though she should persevere, her health is unequal to the undertaking. One may lay a wager without the least fear of losing, that she will never make her profession." The confidence with which they spoke, kept me still a little doubtful and uncertain, I confess it; and I dreaded exceedingly lest I should hear one day, that Sister Thais had left off the coarse habit of a Carmelite Nun, to resume the Court dress of the Countess of Rupelmonde. The King, the Queen, and my brother, were almost the only ones who did not condemn at all the step which she had taken: on the contrary, they maintained that she had chosen the best part, and that it was very wrong to blame a person who wanted to secure her salvation. These reflexions made me hope from that time that they might also give me one day their consent to follow my vocation, were I to be so happy as to remain faithful to it. At length the day fixed, for that profession, which had occasioned so much talk, arrived; and Sister Thais gave the lie to all the Court prophets. She made her sacrifice with an inexpressible joy and courage;

and she ever since assured us that she found herself extremely happy for what she had done; and it was easy to see that she spoke the language of her heart.

“ I made then some inquiries concerning the life of the Carmelite Nuns; and though I had not yet any exclusive inclination for a particular Order, in which I should consecrate myself to the ALMIGHTY, I was, nevertheless, pretty well determined to embrace theirs, unless insuperable difficulties should prevent me from accomplishing my design. However, as the obstacles which I foresaw, did not permit me to disclose my secret, even to the persons in whom I had the greatest confidence, as to all the rest, I endeavoured to divert my thoughts from my project, or at least not to be eager about it, till I saw a favourable opportunity to lay it open. But, every thing awakened and revived my desires; and the Queen, without having the least suspicion of it, contributed to it more than any one. She was particularly fond of the Carmelite Nuns, and especially those of Compiègne, whom she visited very often during the stay of the Court in that town: she even had a little apartment in their house, where she passed whole days together, following all their exercises of piety; but, out of respect for their solitude, she very seldom gave us leave to accompany her; but she spoke to us of their peace and joy, with such expressions, as made me sigh after

the moment when it would be in my power to make a trial myself of them. However, though I had the greatest confidence in the piety of the Queen, and her resignation to the will of Providence, I had never the courage to open my heart to her, persuaded as I was, that my weak health would be a very great objection to her; for she knew that, habitually, I spit blood. Moreover, the Archbishop, who was acquainted with my project, because I had looked upon it as a duty to consult him, before taking a final resolution, was afraid that it should fail if I disclosed it before the time; and he exhorted me to pray, and wait with patience. Afterwards came on, unexpectedly, my poor brother's illness; then his death; which brought to their grave the Queen and the Dauphin. All this occasioned necessary delays on my side, and when removed, the Archbishop required new reflections, for fear I should expose myself by a measure I might not have sufficient strength to effect. At length arrived the happy moment which had been so long the subject of my wishes and sighs, praying every day to Saint Theresa to obtain of GOD, that the day of my deliverance might be accelerated; and the ALMIGHTY, notwithstanding my unworthiness, vouchsafed to hear my prayers, and to break off my chains. It is a very precious grace, indeed! which I duly esteem and value. Happy, alas! were I as faithful as I ought, to return to the Divine mercy adequate thanksgivings for it."

We must certainly rely on the testimony of the Princess, when thus revealing the secret of her vocation, which a profane world endeavoured, but in vain, to ascribe to profane motives. We find, also, a short account of the motives which induced Princess Louisa to embrace a religious life, in a letter which she wrote to a young lady, now a Carmelite, who had consulted her on her vocation. "I never wrote any letters of direction," said she to her, "and I will never take upon myself to decide the vocation of any one, but I will tell you with sincerity the motives which engaged me to leave the world, how brilliant soever it might be to me; and though, on account of the rights given me by my rank, I did not run certain dangers to which others may be exposed, these motives were my sins: what it cost JESUS CHRIST to accomplish our salvation: the necessity of doing penance, either in this life or in the next; a penance which it is very hard to do in an easy commodious life, especially being so extremely fond of my comforts as I was: the parable of the camel which could rather pass through the eye of a needle, than a rich man enter into the kingdom of Heaven: the precept of alms-deeds, which goes as far as to all superfluities, and these superfluities were immense with regard to me: in short, the desire of possessing, eternally, my God, and enjoying the happiness and glory which are prepared for us in Heaven; such are, Madam, the motives which decided me."

A very short time after her return from Fontevrault to Court, Princess Louisa had, under the seal of secrecy, intrusted the Lady who had taken care of her infancy, with her resolution of being a Nun. Being not yet decided for any particular Order, she excluded only those where there are Abbesses, and she seemed rather inclined for the visitation. She had studied their constitutions; she liked them, excepting one single article, the education of youth; an employment to which she had then the greatest repugnance. On the day of the Countess of Rupelmonde's clothing, she felt herself so much taken up in favour of the Carmelites, that, as soon as the ceremony was over, she procured to herself a conversation with the Sub-prioress of the Convent, Madam D'avré, to whom she asked so many and so precise and circumstantial questions on the constitutions of the Carmelites, their austerities, and the order of their exercises, that the Nun told her, in a joke, "One would think that Princess Louisa has a mind to become a Carmelite." The Princess, according to the first sentiment of her vocation, which, she was sure no one would suspect, answered, in the same tone of pleasantry, "And, why not, if the Carmelites are so happy?"

From this time, her resolution to be a Nun, and a Carmelite one, if ever she had it in her power, was so fixed and determined, that she would not have forgiven herself th

least hesitation between a crown and a veil: and she gave a proof of her sincerity in the following circumstance: the Ambassador of a foreign Prince, having repaired to Versailles, invested with credentials to obtain a wife for his Master, Princess Louisa took the most proper measures to prevent the Ambassador from making to her any proposal, which she was fully resolved not to accept. She was then about eighteen or nineteen years old.

Exact in the discharge of all her duties, and faithful to the grace of God in all things, and not relying on the uncertain merits of a perfection but yet in desires, Princess Louisa applied herself to her sanctification by all the means which Providence had left in her power. The simplicity of her virtue, free from ostentation, made her rather beloved than taken notice of at Court; though nothing is more remarkable than a Princess of great accomplishment, who, in the bloom of youth, and placed by her birth on the most seducing theatre of worldly vanities, has the courage even not to smile at them, wholly taken up with those sublime occupations, the knowledge and importance of which she hides from the worldlings who surround her.

Docile to the internal voice which called her to an extraordinary virtue, she waged an implacable war against her least defects;

and, as severe to herself as she was indulgent to others, she would not suffer that the people of the world, who so readily excuse their own crimes, could find in her the least weakness in the exercise of her piety to criticise. She had long and severe conflicts to encounter, and it cost her a great deal to subdue the extreme vivacity of her character, but she succeeded to a wonder. One of her attendants having been a witness of an act of patience, which seemed heroic to her, could not help saying to the Princess, "Truly, Madam, this is admirable; God will reward your virtue." "I must endeavour," said she, "thus to conquer myself in all things, but it will not be the work of a day, nor without much difficulty."

More sensible of the great value of time, than the generality of young ladies, especially those who are born in affluence, she sanctified, by supernatural motives, all the moments which her rank and state of dependance did not leave at her disposal, and regulated, with the most sedulous care, those she could dispose of. She turned to advantage every minute of her time, and each hour of the day was marked out for some laudable occupation. Her exercises of devotion, her work, and diversions, all was foreseen with wisdom; and she was exact to scrupulosity to fulfil the obligations she had imposed upon herself. She never failed to dedicate every morning half an hour to the meditation of the truths of our salvation; and

every night she called herself to an exact account of the manner in which she had passed the day, and examined in what state her soul was before God. She edified herself by pious readings regularly twice a day. Her profound recollection in the temple of the LORD was a continual lesson to the dissipated Courtiers; and she looked upon it as a great happiness, when she had it in her power to prolong her prayers, at the foot of the altar. Of all the exercises of the day, to pray was the sweetest to her heart; and this precious portion of time, which a frivolous youth often idles away in reading books which corrupt its morals, or in diversions which impairs its health, a Princess of eighteen years, the daughter of a King of France, employed in blessing the ALMIGHTY, to whom she offered every day as many prayers as the Virgins particularly consecrated to him. But the principal means Princess Louisa made use of to secure herself against the dangers of both the Court and youth, and in which she placed her greatest confidence, was a frequent participation of the sacraments; and it was undoubtedly out of this divine source that she drew the light and strength she stood in need of to fulfil all her other duties, with that fidelity, and engaging sweet manner, which, at the same time that they made her beloved, rendered also her piety respectable to every one.

Nothing could equal her tenderness for her Royal Parents : she was not contented to avoid with the utmost care all that could cause the least displeasure to the King and the Queen : she breathed only to afford them satisfaction and comfort : she had no other will than theirs ; and she gave them, at all times the most convincing proof of that tender affection and unfeigned respect, which parents never look for in vain in a well-born child, whose education they have carefully attended. Louis the Fifteenth was remarkably fond of all his children, and in this nature might seem to have proposed him as a model to all parents : but, as nature does not speak another language to the heart of a King, when also a father, than it did to the father of Benjamin, this Prince loved Princess Louisa as parents generally do the youngest of their children. We shall see in the sequel of this History that she was equally dear to him when clothed with the coarse habit of St. Theresa as with her Royal purple dress. The Queen, this incomparable Princess, whose virtuous life will be recorded in our annals as a memorable epoch in our Monarchy, was more capable than any other of appreciating the merit of Princess Louisa. Hence she said, exulting with joy to see her virtues revived in her daughter ; “ I not only love Louisa, but I also respect her.” The young Princess, in effect, finding in the Queen an accomplished model, studied it with attention, and endeavoured to copy it out in her conduct. Of all the characteristical virtues

of her pious mother, that which she admired the most, was her unbounded humility, which made her study to hide her good works and most heroic actions from the knowledge of her very children. I received the following particulars from Princess Louisa herself; who one day told me, "What I have seen of the virtues of the Queen, is nothing in comparison of what I have heard, and I have learned a great deal more since her death than during her life." Princess Louisa, however, out of the considerations which I have already mentioned, never communicated to the Queen the resolution she had taken to embrace a religious life. But the eyes of such a Mother are very piercing to discover what passes in the heart of such a daughter: and that pious secret which the Princess hid with so much care, was so well known to the Queen, that she told one day Father Bieganski, a Polish Jesuit, her Confessor, "*You will see that my dear Louisa will attempt to become a Carmelite. But the poor child! her weak health will not be able to hold it out.*"

Wherever she appeared, whatever she did, either in the bosom of her family or without, she shewed the goodness of her heart, and displayed every day some new virtue. In that intimate society she lived in with the Dauphin, a brother so worthy of her, and with the Princesses her sisters, she was in the judgment of all, a model of tenderness, discretion, and complaisance; which had inspired them all with the greatest affection

for her. All those who approached Princess Louisa, and especially those who had the advantage to be of her household, had a particular regard and love for her; and it was easy to see that these their sentiments had her person rather than her rank for their object. They found themselves so happy with her, that they would have willingly purchased the pleasure of serving her; and her leaving the Court offered a very sensible and striking proof of it. This event plunged all her household into the most profound grief. All her faithful servants remained inconsolable, though she had procured them the great favour of enjoying for life the same salary which she gave them in her service. What had gained to the Princess the generous attachment of all her attendants, was an easy and condescending character, an encouraging goodness, a countenance always cheerful and satisfied, and an unalterable evenness of temper. This amiable quality, a fruit of her virtue, was become so natural to her that a Groom of the Chamber, who had been attached to her service from her return to Court to her entrance into the Convent of Saint Denis, had never forgot that, during this long space of time she had twice spoken to him in a more elevated tone of voice than usual. Curious to know the reason of it, this old servant having gone to Saint Denis to pay his dutiful respects to his good and beloved Mistress, took the liberty to remind her of these two circumstances which lay still heavy upon his heart: "I remember.

them very well also," said Princess Louisa; "the reason is, that you came to do your office at a time when I was reading Saint Theresa's Rule; and I should have been extremely sorry if any body could have guessed what I was then doing."

In effect, the Princess took all sort of precautions to conceal from the world the secret of her vocation, and what means she made use of to try it, and confirm herself in her resolutions. Every day she read the Rule of Saint Theresa; and, after having meditated in her oratory, on the contents of that book, which became more and more precious to her heart, she locked it up in a little box covered with silver, made like a reliquary; on which was written, "*Relics of Saint Theresa.*"

Great courage certainly is requisite to fill up that immense space, which separates a Princess from a Carmelite; and Princess Louisa had it in its full extent; but as she had also the prudence necessary to regulate it well, she thought that she ought to familiarize herself by degrees, and by different trials, with the way of life which she intended to embrace, and to begin at Court, as far as it would be in her power, the noviceship which she was to make in the Convent.

Though the Princess had always loved virtue, she was not, however, of those characters so happily born that they practise

it, as it were, naturally, and without effort : her victories had cost her many a struggle, and her most striking virtues were grafted on some defects which she had conquered. She had no longer, it is true, to overcome the propensity she had once for dress and worldly attire ; she had sacrificed to religion all the pretensions of pride ; she had subdued the natural impetuosity of her temper, and made herself an example of meekness and forbearance. But the daughter of a great King, brought up in the palace of her father, and, as it were, naturalized with the ease and comforts of life, had much to do in order to disengage herself from them : and we shall say with sincerity, that, on this account, her virtue, already so much respected, paid still a tribute to humanity. A person of merit, who was as sensible of it as myself, asked me how I should contrive to represent such a weakness in a life so admirable as to every other respect ? To which I replied, “ I shall say plainly and without the least disguise, that, there was a time, when Princess Louisa at Court was very fond of ease and convenience ; I will say, that this Princess, of a weak constitution had insensibly accustomed herself to look upon as real wants all the delicacies and excessive cares of great affluence, more calculated to destroy health, when already impaired, than to reestablish it. In short, I will say, that, Princess Louisa at Court had the reputation of being very difficult to please at her meals ; but, I will add, and,

Princess Louisa, nevertheless, became a Carmelite; then, this weakness or defect will disappear, and display in its full lights the heroism of her irrevocable sacrifice." However, out of respect for truth, we must declare, that her victory over this weakness, though later than what she had gained over all her other defects, was completed long before she left Versailles: but, contented to have God alone for witness of what she did for God alone, she often hid under the cloak of her former nicety her actual mortifications: and her cooks complained yet of not being able to dress any thing to her liking, at the very time that trying herself for the new way of life she intended to embrace, she denied herself, out of mortification, the nicest and most delicate dishes on her table.

For several years she endeavoured to inure herself to bear heat and cold, according to the seasons, as the Carmelites do; and during the most severe winters she passed whole hours together without any fire. Knowing that the Theresians instead of linen wear woollen shifts, and that their sheets are of the same stuff, it seemed to her very essential, to assure herself by a trial, whether she would be able to accustom herself to that austerity, as during her whole life she had made use of that fine and precious linen woven on purpose for the children of Kings. Her perplexity was to know what sort of woollen stuff was in use among

the Theresians, without making any direct inquiries which might have raised suspicions and exposed her secret. The circumstance of a clothing at the Carmelites' of Compiègne, seemed to her a favourable opportunity of accomplishing her project. As she was particularly acquainted with the Prioress of the Convent, she wrote to her in these words: "I have a favour to ask of you, but under the utmost secrecy; it is to have the goodness to send me the woollen shift which your novice had on yesterday at her clothing. I should be very sorry that the thing should be known, because many people would laugh at it, and many others would find it very strange. As for me, I own, that I consider almost as a relic, the tunic which a novice wears at this first sacrifice she makes of herself to GOD. You may send it me some morning by one of your out sisters, well wrapt up in paper, and carefully sealed, with a strict order, that the parcel should be delivered only into my own hands." Every thing was done as Princess Louisa had desired, without any one having the least suspicion of her intentions. She had no sooner in her possession this shift, more precious in her eyes than a royal mantle, than she made use of it, and her zeal made her soon conclude, that she could engage herself to wear coarse woollen all her life. She had also, by innocent artifices, contrived so well as to procure to herself other instruments of penance used among the Theresians, but the Court was, without doubt, very far

from suspecting that a Princess, whose character announced nothing but gait and cheerfulness, was wearing under her purple dress, the clothes of an austere penitent.

Among the different trials which Princess Louisa made of a religious life, she met with the matter of the most painful sacrifice in a trifle which is a mere nothing to others. She could not bear the smell of tallow ; she had so great an horror of it, that the smoke of a candle would have been sufficient to make her faint away. But wax candles are not in use amongst the Theresians, therefore, the Princess, fully determined to conquer all her repugnances, desired a good woman, who did not belong to her household, and could not suspect her intentions, to get for her some tallow candles ; and, at night, when all her attendants were withdrawn ; she used tallow instead of wax. All she could do the first days, was to bear the smell in her apartment ; afterwards she inured herself to hold in her hand a tallow candle lighted for a few minutes ; then a little longer, till at length she had conquered herself so well, that the use either of wax or tallow became quite an indifferent thing to her.

In the mean time the Princess, already a Theresian in the Palace of Versailles, did not dare flatter herself to be so one day in a Convent : and in a will, which her fears of dying in her chains at Court, had dictated

to her, she besought the King to command that she should be buried in the Convent of the Theresians of *Rue Greenelle*. But always immovable in her resolution, and more admirable, perhaps, for her perseverance to wait for the moment of following her vocation, than in her vocation itself, without losing courage for a single instant, she overcame the obstacles arising every day to oppose the execution of her pious designs, by the fervour of her prayers and a thousand good works to which she devoted herself; and to the merit of which she associated all the virtuous souls she was acquainted with either in the world or in the Cloister. Having consecrated herself to GOD, she never deliberated when a sacrifice was required of her; she trampled under foot all reserve and human respect; she sold her jewels; stript herself of every thing for the sake of the poor; multiplied her exercises of devotion; made her communions more frequent; and prolonged very far in the night her mental prayers.

To all these different means which her piety constantly employed to render Heaven propitious to her ardent desires, the Princess added another in which she seems to have placed the greatest confidence. She endeavoured to interest in her behalf, the holy Foundress of the Order in which she wished to sanctify her soul, and in this intention she addressed every day to Saint Theresa, a Prayer she had composed herself, to make it

more adapted to her situation. It is the voice of a tender daughter, who, penetrated with a lively sense of her wants, pours forth with familiarity all her desires into the heart of a mother, whose affection for her and her power with God she well knows. We have found this Prayer so truly interesting, that, though it is pretty long, we should have had a scruple to deprive our readers of the least part of it. We are persuaded, that those who had but imperfect notions of the virtues of the Princess before her entrance into a Convent, will be delighted to see in this Prayer a faithful picture of the sentiments with which she was then animated, and to seize in one view the tender accents of her grief on the duration of her exile, the sighs and ardent desires of her faith, her confidence in God, and generous love for him.

“ Behold me prostrate again at your feet, my holy Mother, and always to crave the favour which I have been soliciting for these many years. My hopes are increased; but, alas! they are yet but hopes. I am always in the world, always very far from your holy abodes, and even I do not see yet any certain way to arrive at them.

“ I persist, O my God! to submit myself without reserve to thy holy will. I wanted only to know it: and had it been contrary to my most ardent wishes, thou knowest that I would have submitted myself to it without the least delay. Yes, I would have renoun-

ced my dearest projects, and fixed myself in the state where thy adorable Providence would have been pleased to keep me. But, be thou for ever praised for it, O my GOD! Thy mercy has not rejected the desires of my heart. Thy oracle himself hath spoken.* Thou hast agreed to my sacrifice; and I have nothing else to do than to wait for the moment thou hast fixed; I wait for it, O my GOD! and it is with as much submission as eagerness; for thou permittest us to pray, and dost not consider our solicitations and requests as revolts: hasten then, O my GOD! hasten the happy moment with speed!

2. "O my good Mother! join your entreaties to those of a child you cannot disown any longer for yours. Look upon me. Behold the slavery I am in, and the agitation in which I live: my prayers constrained, my meditations interrupted, my devotions contradicted. Behold the temporal affairs with which I am beset: behold how the world sows under my steps its pomps, plays, shows, maxims, delights, vanities, wickedness; in a word, all its temptations, without leaving me the power either to remove or to fly from them. Behold the dangers I run, and the thorns on which I walk. Be moved with compassion at the sight of my faults, and of the little good which I do. Behold

* The Archbishop of Paris.

my desolation, grief, and uneasiness. Have pity on me; and, in short, obtain for me the holy liberty of the children of God.

3. "Am I not sufficiently tried, my holy Mother? Do you not know the bottom of my heart, and its earnest desires? After so many years of perseverance, could you still entertain the least doubt of my resolution? Have I varied for a single instant? Have you not always seen me listening with the utmost fidelity to the voice which calls me? Tending to it with all my thoughts, desires, and all my strength; longing after the happiness of following my call, and sometimes melting into tears to see the execution of my designs put off from years to years? Yes; it is in all the earnestness and sincerity of my soul, that I beseech God to break off my ties; that I conjure and solicit you to help me in the undertaking, and that I employ, to make you propitious to my desires, the intercession of your dearest daughters. Am I not sufficiently acquainted with the world to detest it for ever, and never regret its delusive promises? I have considered long enough, and one after the other all the sweets and comforts of my worldly station; and thou art my witness, O my JESUS! that there is not one which I have hesitated to sacrifice to thee. I feel how vain, treacherous, and bitter, these delights are; but were they a thousand times more desirable and pure, I prefer to them the chalice of my SAVIOUR. Do not tell me, O my

good Mother! that I do not yet know your Rule well enough. Have you not seen me constantly occupied in reading it; in meditating upon its contents; in carrying it upon me; in a word, in making it my delight? No; I have not disguised to myself any of its difficulties: abasement, poverty, austerities, and privations of all sorts, solitude, want of comfort, contradictions, humiliations, contempt, ill-treatment; I have put every thing to the worse, and through the grace of GOD, nothing has frightened me. I have compared the state of a Theresian with the state of a Princess; and I have always declared that the state of a Theresian is preferable. Never, no never, will my heart retract this judgment. I have seen it, O JESUS! I have weighed the Cross, which I beseech thee to lay upon me! Oh! why is it not as heavy as thine?

4. "O my holy Mother! what more do you require of me? What more do you want? My years and days pass rapidly away! Alas! what shall I have left to give to my GOD? Open, O my Mother! open then to me the doors of your House; shew me the road; pave me the way to it; remove all obstacles. To take the first step, I need all your assistance, I need it especially to declare my resolution to him whose consent is necessary to me. Procure me a favourable opportunity; prepare his heart; dispose him to hear me; guard me against his tenderness; guard me against my own; give me

the courage to speak to him, and inspire me with persuasive words which may triumph over all his repugnance and opposition ; put on my lips what I cannot tell him ; or, rather speak yourself in my stead, and answer him for me. You have once obtained so many graces to break asunder all the bands which kept you in the world ; you obtain the like every day for your daughters ; intercede, then, for me also, O my Mother ! and before I leave this place, say to my heart, That I may speak to the King whenever I please ; and that his heart is ready to grant my humble request. But, my holy Mother, will ever the King learn my resolution ? will he consent to it ? will he see it executed, without being himself moved with an inward grace ; without giving himself up entirely to God ? I a Theresian, and the King wholly to God ! What a happiness ! God can do it ; God will do it, O my holy Mother ! if you ask it of him. Alas ! he would even grant it to my own prayer, if my faith answered my desires. I believe, O my God ! I believe ! O my good Mother ! Offer up my faith to your divine spouse ; may it increase in your hands ; may it equal yours, and deserve, as yours, to obtain miracles ! What shall I have then to wish for ? Shall I not be happy to die ; and to die a Theresian ; leaving here below all my friends in their way to Heaven ?

5. " But if I am yet to purchase by some

delays, so great a favour, at least, my holy Mother, increase in my heart the sentiment that my hopes will be realized; display before my eyes, the will of God in its full splendor; and vouchsafe to give me, constantly, certain proofs of my vocation. But, above all, do not let me trifle away this interval, how long soever it may be. Help me to disengage myself this very day from all affections contrary to my vocation. Alas! to how many things does not our heart attach itself, and almost always without our having the least suspicion of it? Relations, friends, honours, riches, apartments, furniture, clothes, jewels, dainties, conveniencies, habits, human consolations, and, I know not what! But you see it; make me, then, see it also. Take away from my heart all that I must not carry to your House. Spare me in nothing within myself: but, as for without, O my good Mother! withhold that formidable arm that has lacerated my soul by so many fatal strokes. O my God! preserve the Queen! Give her before her death the consolation to see me amongst her dear Theresians. Preserve all my family! Preserve all those I love; disengage me from them only through thy grace! No, I will not resist it! I will trample under foot all my inclinations to follow thy voice! But, O my holy Mother! while I labour to root out my former attachments, do not let me contract any new ones: protect me against all occasions, and all the snares which are laid before me.

6. "In proportion as my heart will be emptied of the affections of the earth, it will be filled with those of Heaven. O my holy Mother! dilate this heart of mine; shower down upon my soul all religious virtues; from this very moment may I practise them as far as it is in my power. Procure me frequent opportunities of exercising obedience, mortification, and humility. May I learn to be condescending and affable with my inferiors, and even always to consider myself as much beneath them. Teach me to trample under foot, the world and its vanities; to glorify God without human respect; to embrace without shame the Cross of JESUS CHRIST; to confess openly his religion and his Church; to deny myself and all my affections; to relish contradictions, aridities, and privation of human comfort; to bear cold and heat, hunger and weariness; to strip myself of my own will, and resign myself to that of God; to raise my soul to him, to pray to him, to converse with him; to visit him at the foot of his Altar; to receive holy Communion with worthy dispositions, and to hear often his Divine word, and sing his praises. Multiply for me all these opportunities, and may I not lose any one of them. In short, every where, and even in the places the most subject to the empire of the world, may I ever carry a crucified heart; a heart of a Theresian; and may all my thoughts be worthy of you.

7. " Be constantly by my side, O my holy Mother! to repeat to me at all times, *Think on your vocation; think to form yourself into a Theresian*: a Theresian would not think, say, or do that. With such an assistance I might hope to become, even now, and in the midst of the world, a perfect Theresian, to whom nothing would be wanting but a Cloister and the habit. Vouchsafe, then, O my holy Mother! if you leave me still in the world, vouchsafe not to lose sight of me for an instant; watch over me as over one of your daughters; be my support, my safeguard, my assiduous counsellor.

8. " I recommend to you, not only my heart, that you may form it to all virtues, and to the perfection of your rule, but also my body, that you may find it through God's mercy, able to bear all austerities. I do not ask for perfect health. I would, O my holy Mother! resemble you in all; I would resemble JESUS CHRIST, my Divine model, and carry my cross both in my heart and on my body to my last breath. *'To suffer, or to die!'* will be my motto, as it was yours; but among pains and infirmities, may my constitution be fortified that its weakness be not an obstacle to my vocation, when, through God's mercy all others are removed.

9. " But, while I occupy myself in the thoughts of my future state of life, while I purpose to myself its virtues, and inure my-

self to practise them, do not permit me, my holy Mother, to neglect those of the station in which Providence still detains me; however short may be the time. Remind me of all my duties; and obtain for me to discharge them with as much punctuality, exactitude, and perfection, as if I were to remain all my life as I am now. Multiply also under my hands, the opportunities of doing the good adapted to my present situation, and which it will be no longer in my power to do when in a Cloister. Alas! what have I done, O LORD! till now, to answer the views of thy Providence, and vindicate thy wisdom for having placed and kept me for more than thirty years in such an elevated rank. Fill up, O my GOD! the few days which I have yet to pass in this state of grandeur; and out of their plenitude fill up the emptiness of my former life. Give me, during this short space of time, the grace to serve Religion, the Church, and the State. Grant me to rescue the unfortunate from their miseries; to support, reanimate, and encourage piety; to protect innocence under oppression; to silence for ever slanders and calumnies; to gain over to thee all my household; to edify all the Court; and, before I shut myself up in solitude, in order to be only occupied in the salvation of my own soul, to become also conducive to that of those to whom the high rank from which I shall descend will make me conspicuous. *Amen.*"

Such sentiments, without doubt, could not be expressed with this moving and candid simplicity but by the virtuous heart which felt them ; and, in the midst of a frivolous and dissipated Court, they ought perhaps to excite our astonishment and admiration as much as miracles in a Cloister.

The Archbishop of Paris having been consulted about the time of the Dauphiness' death, had declared that he saw all the characters of a supernatural vocation in that of Princess Louisa ; and, nevertheless, he required that the Princess should wait another year before she asked of the King his leave to retire from Court. The Queen was then ill, and the pious Prelate might fear lest the parting with such a virtuous daughter should be too severe a trial for the heart of a mother already a victim to her tenderness, and still inconsolable for the death of her son, who promised to France the reign of Saint Louis, whose eminent qualities he revived. But, during that year which pious obedience obliged Princess Louisa to add to so many other years of trial, the Queen died ; and by that event, there remained no other obstacle to be removed to make her obtain the end of her wishes, than the tenderness of the King her father ; though she knew how sincere and strong it was, she had always hoped to triumph over this sentiment by the means of this sentiment itself ; and she was not deceived in her expectation. To make his daughter happy, and obey the orders of

Providence, were motives which the heart of Louis the Fifteenth could not resist.

However, it was rather difficult to find out the best way to announce to the most affectionate parent the resolution his daughter had taken to separate from him, and to break off all the ties which attached her to the world and the Court, in order to bury herself in an obscure solitude, and in the practice of the hardest austerities of penance. Princess Louisa, therefore, after having consulted GOD and her heart, thought, that she should beg the Archbishop of Paris to be in her name the bearer of a Petition which she was afraid her tenderness and respect would scarce permit her to present herself. Though the commission was far from being an agreeable one, the Athanasius of France did not decline it; and having been admitted to a secret audience of the King, he told him, "Sir, I am charged to inform your Majesty of a piece of news, which I am persuaded you will hear with your usual sentiments of religion; Princess Louisa, after the longest and the most serious trials, has felt that ALMIGHTY GOD called her to a religious life, and conjures your Majesty to consent to her happiness by your permission to follow her religious vocation." At these words, the King was struck with the utmost astonishment, and cried out, "What! it is such a piece of news you bring me, Mr. de Beaumont; and

you are the bearer of it!" then, leaning upon the back of an arm chair, with his head bent between his hands, and with the emotion of the most bitter grief, he added, "How cruel! how cruel it is!" But, after a few moments of profound silence, the Prince, naturally religious, making the sentiment of his tenderness yield to the more powerful sentiment of his faith, replied to the Archbishop, "Mr. de Beaumont, if it be GOD who asks her of me, I should not, nor can I oppose his will: I will give my answer in a fortnight." Then, the Prelate, whom the first answer of the King had a little discomposed, added, "That the Princess gave the preference to the Order of the Carmelites; but was ready to enter into any House of this Order which it would please his Majesty to appoint for her." But it was not the manner of the sacrifice which could cause the King to hesitate; on the contrary, he said, that, since his daughter wanted to be a Nun, he preferred to see her a Theresian than an Abbess, or a Nun of a mitigated Order.

It is easy to imagine how long must have appeared to Princess Louisa the fifteen days, at the end of which the King was to give his answer. During all that time, the Prince did not say a single word in particular to his daughter; he saw her only as usual, when she was in company with the Princesses her sisters; but every night, when he was going to take leave of her, he felt himself so affected as to shed some tears;

and was obliged to turn his eyes from the object which was the innocent cause of them. These interviews excruciated the heart of Princess Louisa, and, as soon as she found herself at liberty, she run to her oratory, and there, prostrated at the feet of her crucifix, conjured the ALMIGHTY to join the sacrifice of the King to hers, for the salvation of them both.

Precisely at the end of a fortnight, the King sent for Abbé du Terney, Confessor of the Princess, and commanded him to deliver into her hands the following letter, written from Versailles the twentieth of February, 1770 :

“ The Archbishop, dear daughter, who has given me an account of all that you have told and written to him, has also, without doubt, informed you exactly of my answer. If it be for God alone, I cannot oppose his will, nor your determination. During fifteen years, you must certainly have made your reflections ; and so I do not ask of you to make any more. Even it seems that every thing is settled ; you may speak to your sisters when you think it proper. Compiègne cannot be the place ; any where else as you like ; that depends entirely upon you, and I should be very sorry to prescribe any thing to you on the subject. I have been forced to many sacrifices against my inclination : as for you, this is a voluntary one. The ALMIGHTY will give you the strength you

stand in need of to bear the hardships of your new state of life : for once embraced it is for ever. I embrace you with all my heart, and give you my blessing.

LOUIS."

The Princess could not read this letter without bedewing it with her tears : she ran immediately to prostrate herself at the feet of her crucifix, and in the transports of her joy she poured forth her whole soul in thanksgivings towards that merciful Providence which turns at pleasure the hearts of Kings, and disposes all things in nature for the salvation of those, who, putting their whole confidence in him, are faithful to wait for the moment of his grace.

Free to chuse for her retreat such house of the Theresians she might like best, it seemed natural that she should give the preference to that of *Grenelle* in Paris ; but, at the moment of making her option, she reflected that she was particularly acquainted with several Nuns of the house ; and, moreover, that, being situated in the capital, she would be exposed to receive many visits prejudicial to the spirit of solitude and retirement : above all, it occurred to her mind, that as they fired the guns as often as the King came to Paris, the noise would become for herself and her community an occasion of distraction, at every visit the King would please to pay her. These considerations, which were the fruit of her lively faith, were sufficient to

make her sacrifice a House which she loved as the place where she had felt the first sentiments of her vocation. No human motive influenced her choice of the Convent of Saint Denis ; she did not know it in the least : the only thing which she had learned of this House, when she was told that there was such a one, was that it was a very poor and regular community, and it is on this account that she preferred it before all. She wanted only to know whether the King would not have some repugnance to visit her in a place so near the grave of the Kings of France: but, as soon as this Prince had assured her, that he would see her there with as much pleasure as any where else, she irrevocably took her resolution to go to Saint Denis. That the motives which determined the Princess were very respectable, every one must allow ; but in that change of her inclination, and in her sudden resolution to fix herself in an unknown and poor Monastery, the Theresians of Saint Denis always saw besides a striking mark of a special Providence over their House ; and the grounds of their pious belief are as follows:

In 1770, the Theresians of Saint Denis were in such distress, that they had no longer the means to provide the necessaries of life. They had for several years past made the most severe reductions in their diet, already very scanty and frugal ; they drank no longer any wine in the refectory ; they eat

but very little fish, and bought but the cheapest provisions: but notwithstanding their severe plan of economy, notwithstanding the generous assistance of Abbé Bertin, and other charitable Clergymen, the community greatly involved in debt could not satisfy their creditors. One day the baker, for want of payment, refused to supply them with bread any longer; another time the wood merchant signified to them a seizure of their revenues; in short, every day was marked by some fresh perplexities of distress, and the suppression of the House, which the Nuns dreaded as the greatest misfortune, seemed unavoidable.

In this extremity the Prioress of the monastery assembled her community; and without concealing any thing of the distressed situation of the temporalities of the House from her dear children, she exhorted them not to lose courage, and to remember that GOD never abandons those who hope in him. "You remember," said she * to them, "that our LORD has already helped us in a very special manner through the Blessed Virgin. His omnipotent arm is not shortened: what he has done once, he can do again; and he

* Mother Saint Alexis, a Religious of eminent virtue, whose memory is in great veneration in the Monastery of Saint Denis. Abbé Bertin, in the memorials which he gave me, attests, concerning this special mark of Providence, that he had been a witness of another of the same kind, in consequence of a similar vow, which the faith of this Nun had prompted her to advise her children to make.

will do it, provided we have faith." Encouraged by this discourse, all the Nuns agreed with their Prioress, to apply again to the Blessed Virgin, and to conjure her to obtain for them of ALMIGHTY GOD, a subject, who, with a fortune, joined to a real vocation, may come to join them: and thus avert the fatal blow with which they were threatened. To this end, on the eighth of February, after having obtained leave from their Superior, these holy souls began a Novena of prayers, communions, and good works in honour of the Blessed Virgin, with the promise to erect an oratory to her honour in the interior of their community, if they are heard, and their wishes accomplished. Now there cannot be the least doubt, that the subject whose credit and fortune could save their House from destruction, has been given them in the person of Princess Louisa. It is equally worthy of remark, that the time fixed for the nine days of prayer, to obtain this favour of GOD, fell in with the fortnight which LOUIS the Fifteenth had taken to determine himself with regard to the consent which his daughter solicited of him. The King's letter, dated February the twentieth, is a proof of it. Accordingly, the Theresians, out of gratitude for such special blessing of GOD, as soon as Princess Louisa had entered their Monastery, did not neglect to build to the honour of the Blessed Virgin, an oratory which represented a moving picture, both of their vow, and of the wonderful manner in which ALMIGHTY GOD had been propitious to it.

In the mean time, as soon as Princess Louisa was sure of the King's consent, she did every thing in her power to accelerate her departure from Court; and though she was at liberty to inform the Princesses her sisters of her determination, she thought it more prudent to save them and herself the conflicts of friendship, and the pangs of a separation; so that the first communication they had of her design to devote herself to the austerities of a Cloister, was dated from the Cloister itself.

Provided with all the other permissions necessary for her admission into the Convent of Saint Denis, she wanted only that of the immediate Superior of the House. She was extremely pleased to hear that it was Abbé Bertin, whom she was acquainted with; and in her great eagerness to accomplish the will of God, was charmed to learn at the same time that he was at Versailles. She sent for him, and ordered him to sit down, because she wished to have a long explanation with him; and, immediately, with her usual vivacity, "I am going to be a Carmelite," said she to him, "and it will be in the Convent of Saint Denis, of which you are Superior. I want your leave to be admitted; and I must have it without delay." At these words, Abbé Bertin almost imagined himself to be in the illusion of a dream, and, notwithstanding all he had heard, still thought it would be a presumption to flatter himself that the King's daughter was to be the subject solicited by

the prayers of his poor Theresians of Sa'nt Denis, to become the restorer of their House. Princess Louisa, in effect, whose cheerfulness and lively humour was so well known, was of the four Princesses who then inhabited the Court, the last whom they had suspected to have an intention to devote herself to a way of life so very austere. However, forced into a belief by the evidence, and being no longer able to call in question the resolution of the Princess, Abbé Bertin thought that he could not omit in her behalf the prudent precautions which Superiors of religious communities employ to save the persons who solicit their admission, the unpleasant consequences of an irreflected step. He judged, besides, that the high rank which Princess Louisa held in the world, was a stronger motive for him to do his utmost to ascertain the characters of her vocation. Accordingly he made his Royal Postulant undergo a very minute examination, the substance of which our reader will not be sorry to find here, with the Princess's answers :

“ I think,” said Abbé Bertin to her, “ that a project of such great consequence for a daughter of France, requires the longest and most serious reflections.” “ I am perfectly of your mind, Sir,” answered the Princess; “ but these reflections I have made during these eighteen years without even the variation of one single minute in my vocation to a religious life, though traversed all that time.” “ Such long trial, is certainly, Ma-

dam, a material circumstance in favour of your vocation," said the Abbé, "but on my own part, I dare not take upon myself to decide without advice, on a step which will occasion such noise in the world." "Be not afraid, Sir," the Princess said, "those who these eighteen years have been to me the representatives of God, have approved of my design. My first pastor, the Archbishop, approves of it; it is therefore high time that I put it in execution; my finest days pass rapidly away; I have no longer to deliberate." The Abbé replied, "I own that you may look upon as the interpreters of God's will in your regard, the learned and virtuous persons, who, from your return to Court, have had the direction of your conscience; I own that the suffrage of the Archbishop of Paris has such weight, that I can entertain no longer any doubt of your vocation to a religious life; but, to follow this your vocation, Madam, a thing is of an indispensable necessity, and will you obtain it with facility? I mean the King's consent." "I have it, Sir," she said, "yes, I have his consent; I cannot think, without tears, how much it cost his paternal heart to grant it me; but religion got the better of his tenderness; he consents to my being a Religious, and a Theresian; he leaves me the choice of the House, Compiègne only excepted, and I persist in my resolution to go to Saint Denis." The Abbé replied, "A true vocation to a religious life, Madam, may be had without being for that called to lead the extraordi-

nary hard life of the Theresians : you might, for example, embrace the less austere Order of the Benedictines, which you are well acquainted with." "It is true, Sir," answered the Princess, "and I will moreover tell you, that I have not concealed from Madam de Soulanges my inclination for a religious life ; but convinced her, that, considering my tender friendship for her, something too human might insinuate itself into my sacrifice, were I to enter into her Order. Besides, as I do not make myself a Religious to command, but to obey, and work out my salvation, I should be sorry to expose myself to the trouble of refusing Abbeys, or to the temptation of accepting them." "But, without entering into an Order," the Abbé observed, "where you might be exposed to be called to exalted dignities, you could make choice of another, the rules of which being not so rigid, would be more suitable to the delicacy of your constitution, and to the way of life you have led till now : for, from a Court to a Convent of Theresians the passage is immense." "I am very sensible of it, Sir," replied the Princess, "and on account of my weak health, I should have been inclined to become a daughter of Saint Francis of Sales had he not included in his institute the instruction of youth for which I feel unfit. But when ALMIGHTY GOD calls us, ought we not to rely upon his grace more than upon our natural strength ? Here my health is but weakly ; therefore, they will not be surprised if I do not enjoy a better among the

Theresians." "But, the Order of the Theresians, Madam," the Abbé represented, "is an Order so austere in every respect; fasting is of obligation there for the greatest part of the year; meagre diet, habitual, and ill dressed; obedience unbounded; profound solitude, prayer, and work without intermission." "I know all that, Sir," the Princess said, "and many other things you do not tell me; I have meditated at leisure on the constitutions of Saint Theresa, and I hope that God will give me the grace I stand in need of to be able to put them in practice; I have even made some trial which encourages me. Moreover, I shall have to try my strength during the Noviceship, which the King commands the Nuns to extend three months longer for me than for other Novices." "I see very clearly," the Abbé said, "that Princess Louisa is decided to be a daughter of Saint Theresa; but will she give me leave to make some few more observations on the House of the Order she intends to adopt? As the Superior, I know it better than any one. With regard to the buildings, the Community has not the conveniencies of many others; and as for their temporalities, they are plunged into the greatest misery." "So much the better, Sir," the Princess exclaimed; "it will be comfortable to me to come to their assistancé, and instead of great virtues, to bring them at least the effects of the King's goodness in my regard." "This is not all, Madam," the Abbé still objected; "this Community, the poorest in France, is

also the most austere, for, though they pledge their faith to no other constitutions, they follow, besides, many pious observances, which are in use only in this Monastery, and from which, the good Religious never seek to be dispensed; in a word, they call Saint Denis, the Trappe* of Mount Carmel." "So much the better, Sir," said the Princess; "for all my fear since I have thought of being a Nun, has always been to enter into a relaxed House; and I ought to thank Divine Providence, which accomplishes all my wishes in conducting me to Saint Denis; it is certainly my good Angel who has suggested to me to make this choice." "Now, Madam, I am convinced that your vocation comes from God; and I shall find myself extremely happy if I can any way serve you towards fulfilling your intentions. I must, then, inform you, Madam, that it is indispensable to have the King's consent *in writing*, that we may open to you the gates of the Monastery." "But this request will renew all his grief." Then the Princess asked, "Could you not, Sir, be contented with the verbal consent which he has given, and which he will not certainly retract?" "No, Madam," replied the Abbé, "it would not be sufficient to secure us against future reproaches; we are obliged to ask of every

* All the Catholics know that the Abbey of La Trappe in France was the most austere of all the religious communities of men.

Postulant to present to us the consent of her parents *in writing* ; you may judge whether we could neglect that wise precaution with regard to the King's daughter?" " Well, then, Sir, since this consent in writing is requisite, you shall have it ; I will not present myself to Saint Denis without it." In effect, as the King, to dissipate his grief on the approaching departure of his daughter, had repaired to Choisy, the Princess wrote to him requesting his orders that the consent necessary for her reception should be dispatched without delay. The Monarch sent it to her with this little note, dated April the fifth, 1770 : " I embrace you with all my heart, dear daughter : I send you the order you mention, requisite for your departure ; I will execute all that you wish for concerning your servants ; and all your other arrangements. You will have but a word from me this evening, my dear little heart, for it is very late."

It is with such amiable familiarity and kindness that good Louis the Fifteenth behaved with his children. Provided with this necessary instrument, Princess Louisa, in a second audience which she gave to Abbé Bertin, concerted with him all the dispositions requisite for her entrance into the Convent, which she fixed for the Wednesday following, the eleventh of April. " On Wednesday morning only," said she to him, " you will inform your Religious that I intend to hear mass in their choir. I will en-

deavour to be at the gates of the Convent about nine, or half after nine: if I arrive sooner at Saint Denis, I will go and pray upon the Queen's grave. After mass I shall stay before the blessed Sacrament; and during this time you will assemble the Nuns to communicate to them the design which brings me to their House." The Abbé desired the Princess to give him her orders concerning what she desired they should do for her lodging. "I want for my lodging," said she, "but a cell, entirely like that of the other Nuns. But as I am accustomed to go up and down very easy stairs, and having always by me a Gentleman Usher, if there be no ballisters in those for my use at Saint Denis, I beg of you to cause ropes to be put to them, for fear I should break my neck; for my giddiness does not grow old."

Abbé Bertin executed with punctuality all these instructions; and Princess Louisa, at the appointed day and hour, arrived at the Carmelites of Saint Denis accompanied by few persons. She had beforehand told the Princess of Ghistel, her Lady of Honour, that, not to disturb the solitude of these holy souls, she would enter alone and without any attendant into their House, where she was to hear mass, and then come back again to her. The Superior received Princess Louisa at the outward gate, whilst the Nuns, whom he had just informed of her coming, disposed themselves to receive her at the inclosure door. The ceremonial to be observed

for this extraordinary and unforeseen reception required a few moments ; but these few moments seemed hours to the Princess, who measured the time by her eagerness ; and her looks and countenance much resembled that of a person, who, pursued by an enemy, is afraid to be overtaken before being out of his reach. " I might certify, in case of necessity," said the Princess to Abbé Bertin, " the exact inclosure of your children ; it is such, that, even with your orders and your presence, it is a difficult thing to penetrate into their House " At length they opened the door ; and she had no sooner stepped over the threshold, that she thought, as she said afterwards, that she had already a foot in Heaven. She spoke to the Nuns for a few minutes, and she delighted them by her affability and kindness. " It seems," said she to the Prioress, " that your community is not very numerous." " No, Madam," answered the Prioress, " and there is a very good reason for it." " And, what is that reason?" " It is, Madam, because we are extremely poor." " Have you any Novices?" " None, Madam, for these several years past." " And, Postulants?" " We have two." " Are they very old?" " The one is very young, and the other is forty ; they intend to present themselves on this very day." " This very day ; this very day," said the Princess, " it is very fortunate indeed ! in my great friendship for the Theresians, how pleased I should be if my visit could bring you any happiness." " The honour we receive to day, Madam, is already

a very great one for us." "You must hope that some other subjects will offer themselves, and that your House will be re-established." "In our greatest embarrasments we never mistrusted Divine Providence for a moment." "You are much in the right," replied the Princess, lifting up her eyes to Heaven; "this Providence is admirable towards those who put their whole confidence in it. But, Ladies, it is the time of your mass, and I am come to hear it with you; no ceremony with me, I beseech you; follow your own customs without thinking on me, but to recommend me to God. I beg of those among you who will have the happiness to communicate to do it for my intention." After mass, whilst Princess Louisa staid before the blessed Sacrament, the Superior, as it was agreed, assembled the community in the parlour, and, without having been prepared in the least for such a piece of news, he told them, that the Princess who had just entered their House was no more to leave it; and that she was come only to be a Theresian. At these words the Nuns looked at one another with the greatest astonishment, lifted up their lauds to Heaven, and could express the transports of their joy only by their sighs and tears; some of them, not from any doubt, but to get some particular informations which might confirm their hopes, asked of their Superior, if he really was in earnest? "Yes," replied Abbé Bernin, "it is a settled thing; Princess Louisa wishes to be a Theresian, and in

your very House. The King has given his consent, and what must increase still more your joy, is, that the Princess has desired me to inform you, that she wants to be a Theresian without mitigation, without distinction ; and that the greatest affliction you could cause her, would be to make her feel that you remember the exalted rank from which she descends in order to be your equal in all things, and to live as a faithful daughter of Saint Theresa ; this sentiment of humility is so deeply imprinted in her heart, that she wanted me to enjoin you as a duty, to treat her in all as another Postulant : but you are going to hear your Royal companion, and you will learn from herself the motives of her coming to you ; I have agreed with her to send for her when you are assembled together.

Immediately after this discourse the Prioress accompanied by a few Nuns, came to the choir, and Princess Louisa, as soon as she saw her, arose and followed her. In the mean time, the contemplation of an event so consoling to religion ; the striking contrast of the actual situation of their House with that of the day before ; this double miracle of Providence powerfully moving the hearts, tears continued to flow from all eyes in abundance. It was at that moment Princess Louisa, conducted by the Prioress, came into the parlour, and casting herself at the feet of the Nuns, who on their side prostrated, she told them with a firm and very kind

tone of voice, " I beseech you all, Ladies, to grant me the favour to receive me among you ; to look upon me as your sister ; to forget who I have been in the world ; and to pray to God both for the King and me ; I wish with all my heart to be a Theresian, and with the grace of God, and the assistance of your prayers, I will do my best to be a good one." At this moment tears were seen; and sighs heard to redouble on all sides: the Princess then going to the Nuns, desired and helped them to rise, one after the other, and embraced them tenderly saying, " Well, Ladies, is it I, is it my cheerfulness which makes you shed so many tears?" then, going to the grate, " And you also, our Superior," said she to Abbé Bertin, who was so lively affected at what he saw, that he could not answer the Princess a single word.

To this moving scene succeeded another equally so, but less agreeable to Princess Louisa. She begged of the Nuns to send for, into the outward parlour, her Lady of Honour, and her Gentleman Usher, who were very far from suspecting the purpose of her journey to Saint Denis; and after having used all the means and taken all the precautions she thought the best calculated to alleviate the grief, which the news she was going to impart could not fail to cause in persons whom she knew so sincerely attached to her, she declared to them, that she

had entered into the Convent, never to go out of it; and shewing them the order signed by the King, to obey her as himself, she exhorted them to return to Versailles. The Lady of Honour, and the Gentleman Usher, thunderstruck at what they heard, remained motionless for a few moments, and afterwards shed a flood of tears, and mingling to the accent of grief the exaggerated expressions of despair, they accused Princess Louisa of having deceived them. The Princess of Ghistel would not return to Court. "How shall I dare present myself to the King? What shall I say to him? What shall I say to the Princesses your sisters, who will die of broken hearts when they hear what you have done? Is it thus that you abandon a family who had always the greatest tenderness for you? Your departure from Court is like an evasion; and you will have me to be looked upon as your Confidant and accomplice. Madam, I always loved you, and you do not love me. No! I am not returning to Court; I cannot, nor will I ever return to it!" It became a very painful office, and a real torment for Princess Louisa to have to console persons who were inconsolable only from their lively attachment for her: it was in vain that she reminded them, that every thing was done with the King's consent; it was in vain she told them that the letters she was to give them, for the Princesses her sisters, would entirely justify them at Court: nothing could make any impression upon their hearts too deeply penetrated

with affliction; they even refused at first to be the bearers of the letters which the Princess intended to send to Versailles; and it was but after a long conversation that Princess Louisa at length persuaded them, that reason and religion commanded them to submit to the orders of Providence, and take themselves their share of the sacrifice to which their good Mistress devoted herself with so much courage.

After having taken leave of them, Princess Louisa returned to her new companions, and endeavoured to forget in their pious society the grief which she had felt in this last interview. As the Prioress, in speaking to her, always called her, "*Madam*:" "*Madam!*" replied the Princess, with vivacity, "what do you say, reverend Mother? I know that a Postulant among the Carmelites is not called, *Madam*, but *Sister*; and I beg of you not to forget, that it is in great earnest, and without restriction, that I have just renounced in your hands all the titles and distinctions which may flatter the vanity of the world. When I deserve a mortification, make me sensible of it, by calling me, *Madam*. But since we are speaking of names," continued she, "I think that I remember, that, when a person enters into a Convent of Carmelites, she must change the name she had in the world." "It is true, it is our custom, *Madam*," (for they could not accuse themselves to suppress this denomina-

tion as soon as the Princess wished it) "Well, what name will you give me?" "It depends upon Madam to choose the name she likes best." "Every name is the same to me, provided it does not recal to my mind the situation in which I was in the world; but, had I an inclination for any one in particular, it would be that of *Theresa*; but I should be very sorry to deprive of it the Nun who may already bear it in the community; and, besides, as for that, as well as for all the rest, I ought to have here no other will than the will of reverend Mother Prioress; I leave the whole entirely to her choice." "Would, Madam, like also the name of Saint Austin?" "I have, indeed, a great devotion to Saint Austin, but I own that I should have never thought of asking for his name: could I know, reverend Mother, why you wish to give it me?" "It is, Madam, because it is the name of our Superior, and we had proposed to give it to the first Postulant he should bring to us." "Therefore, I shall be here the first daughter of Abbé Bertin." "Yes, Madam." "Well, that being the case, it is right that I bear his name; but how will the name of *Saint Austin* be joined to that of *Theresa*?" "Nothing is more easy, Madam; they will say, *Theresa of Saint Austin*." "Perfectly well; I am named, *Sister Theresa of Saint Austin*. When I entered the Convent, you mentioned to me two Postulants whom you were waiting for; are they come?" "There is but one, Madam." "Is it the old one?" "No,

Madam ; it is the young de Saint Germain : we wait till the second comes to open the inclosure door but once." " This attention is very regular, indeed !"

However, the reflection of Princess Louisa, concerning the Postulants, was an occasion for the Nuns to make another. They had almost forgotten those whom they expected, being so much taken up as they had been with that who had so unexpectedly come to them : they thought then, as these two Postulants were to be the habitual companions of the King's daughter, that it might be prudent to put off their admission in order to ascertain whether their birth, or at least their education, permitted that they should be associated to so great a Princess. As they communicated their perplexity to one another, Princess Louisa, who was in the place where they were deliberating, discovered the subject of their anxiety, and on the occasion, gave the community a lesson, which cannot be too much attended to by those persons, who under the garb of humility still preserve the foolish pride of worldly pretensions. She interrupted the deliberation, and plainly shewed how much she was grieved at it ; and representing to the Nuns how opposite to the spirit of Saint Theresa such human consideration was, she desired them to have the goodness to open immediately the door to the first Postulant, without even waiting for the second. Accordingly

the young person was introduced without any further delay ; and as soon as she appeared, Princess Louisa embraced her, and with the greatest kindness told her, " I must welcome you as my first companion." They had now a name to give to the new Postulant ; and the Prioress left it to the choice of Princess Louisa, who gave her the name of *Adelaide* ; and the King and some other persons of the Royal Family having come afterwards to pay a visit to Princess Louisa, she took her young companion under her arm, and presented her to them, saying, "*Here is my sister Adelaide.*"

While Princess Louisa, in the transports of joy applauded herself for having broken all the ties which attached her to the world, and at length finding herself in that liberty which had been so long the continual object of her desires ; her retreat produced very different sentiments at Versailles. When the King informed the Princesses her sisters of the event of the day, they all fainted away. All her servants in the utmost affliction, shed tears as they would have done at her burial ; and the most frivolous among the Courtiers kept a silence of admiration and respect at an action, at the heroism of which they could not help being struck and astonished. The Princess of Ghistel who in the morning had left the Court in joy, found it, at her return from Saint Denis, ready to share the grief with which she was overwhelmed. This Lady, after having given to

the King an account of Princess Louisa's journey to Saint Denis, delivered the letters she had been intrusted with for the Royal family, in which the Princess excused herself to them, for having kept her intended retreat secret, on the motive of saving them needless affliction before, and unavoidable and painful struggles at an actual tender parting.

On the same day, the Royal Family sent to Princess Louisa an extraordinary messenger, to express to her their tender sentiments in letters, which being in our hands, we shall communicate to our readers, who certainly will be pleased to see in them sentiments as honourable to the persons who wrote, as to the Princess who had excited them.*

* " You can better conceive, than I can express, all the feelings of my aching heart. My grief is equal to my astonishment; but you are happy; that is enough for me. Pray to God for me my dear heart; you know all my wants; they are now more urgent than ever. I will certainly call upon you as soon as I can, and have courage to do it. Let me know when I can see you without intruding upon your time. Adieu! my dear sister, I am going to Tenebræ, where I fear I shall be rather somewhat distracted. Always love me; and depend upon the most sincere return from yours,

ADELAIDE."

April 11, 1770.

" If I did not mention to you that I always entertained a suspicion that you wished to become a Nun, it was because I thought you would never execute your intended project. I forgive you

Though the King had already been informed of the circumstances of Princess Louisa's entrance into the Convent of the

with all my heart for having kept it a secret from me. Your sacrifice is truly noble and generous, because voluntary. But do you think that mine, which, I confess is quite involuntary, since it is forced upon me by your leaving us, requires less fortitude to bear it? in short, God's will be done. Be assured, my dear beloved, that I love and will love you as long as I live. As soon as you give me leave, I will not lose a moment to call upon you: I embrace you with all my heart.

SOPHIA."

Besides a letter of Madam Victoire to Princess Louisa, which we did not find among her papers, that Princess wrote two others, one to the Prioress of the Convent, and the other to the Mistress of the Novices:

"I entreat you, Madam, to have the goodness to deliver these two letters; one is for Louisa, and the other for Madam Desroches. I long to become acquainted with you; I therefore beg of you to write often to me, and give me an exact account of my dear Louisa's situation. I love her to excess, I own; hence you may judge what our separation has cost me; it is only for God's sake that I can support it; and I say, God's will be done. I am obliged, in conscience, to tell you, that Louisa's constitution is weakly, her lungs are very delicate, and she often spits blood. I doubt not but you will take all possible care of her. I must inform you also that very likely she will bear your kind attention with some degree of impatience; but do not forget that you are her superior. Adieu, Madam. I beg of you to be persuaded of my great regard.

VICTOIRE."

"I am overjoyed, Madam, that you are in the House which Louisa has chosen for her abode. This is a great comfort to me, who am grieved to my very heart, I must confess, but resigned to God's will, which it seems to me is clearly manifested in the present occasion. I have the greatest favour to ask of you; it is to be so kind as to let me know very often how Louisa goes on, especially in the beginnings of her trial, when her zeal may carry

Carmelites by the return of her Lady of Honour to Versailles, nevertheless, the Princess gave him a particular account of them herself, in a private letter she wrote to him, and which the King answered as follows :

“ Versailles, April 12, 1770.

“ Abbé Bertin, dear daughter, has delivered your letter to me this morning, on my return from the ceremony of the Last

her beyond her strength. In short, conceal nothing from me; particularly with regard to her health. I beg it of you for God's sake, and a little for mine, though unworthy. I am, Madam, with the greatest esteem,

VICTOIRE.”

Versailles, April 16, 1770.

“ My dear Aunt, I am penetrated with the most profound grief at our separation; but admiring at the same time the courage which you have displayed in leaving the world to consecrate yourself entirely to God. Did I not fear to intrude upon your holy occupations, it would certainly afford me the greatest pleasure to go and see you, and express to you by words of mouth the lively sentiments of tenderness and veneration I am animated with towards you, and which will last as long as I live. Be always a friend to me, and give me a little share in your holy prayers. I embrace you with all my heart, my dear Aunt.

LOUIS AUGUSTE.”

The other three Princesses her nephews and nieces, following the example of the Dauphin, their brother, shewed the same eagerness to express to their Aunt whom they loved with tenderness, their admiration for her eminent virtues, and their regret for being separated from her.

Supper; and after Mass, I have had a long conversation with him. I have obeyed you, though your superior by many titles: it is now your duty to obey the Superioress of the House you have chosen for your retreat. Abbé Bertin has spoken to me very advantageously of her, and of all her Religious. She will do well to spare you a little in the beginning, in order to enable you to reach the end you have proposed to yourself in leaving us. Depend on my friendship, dear Louisa, or, Sister Theresa of Saint Austin. My health is very good. Last night has been a little agitated, and my morning visit to your sisters not so pleasant as usual.

LOUIS."

Already the King had commanded his Minister of Foreign Affairs to inform the Embassadors of foreign Courts, of Princess Louisa's retreat into a Convent,* and soon the news of her courageous action passed from the capital into the provinces, and be-

* " SIR,

The great piety of Princess Louisa, the King's daughter, has inspired her these many years with a desire to retire into a Convent of Carmelite Nuns. She has tried her vocation in the midst of the Court, and after having obtained his Majesty's consent she shut herself up yesterday in a Monastery of that Order at Saint Denis, where she intends to make her profession as a simple Religious; having renounced, without reserve, all the distinctions to which her exalted rank might have entitled her. The King has commanded me to inform you of this event, which is so admirable and edifying.

THE DUKE OF CHOISEUL."

came the topic of general conversation. Every one spoke on the subject as they were affected. The virtuous and good, relying on the perseverance of the Princess, whose pious disposition they knew, praised Divine Providence for having vouchsafed in the midst of an irreligious age, to give again to the earth striking lessons and prodigies of mercy: but the world is full of narrow souls who cannot believe in exalted virtues, because they cannot find out any faint image of them in their debased hearts. Is there any probability, said the one, that a Princess brought up in all the effeminacy and grandeur of a Court, should ever be able to accommodate herself to the coarse habit, hair-cloth, fastings, works, and all the other austerities of a Carmelite? No, certainly, replied others, with more confidence, and as people better informed, the King's daughter cannot be a Carmelite as a private person; Princess Louisa will be dispensed with from all the chief austerities in the Rule of Saint Theresa. It is decided that she will be a perpetual Superioress: moreover, she will wear a less coarse habit; she will have a more convenient cell, and her meals will be better dressed than for the simple Religious. Such were the judgments of worldlings, who, letting themselves be governed and ruled by their senses, very little know the empire of grace. As for the impious and libertines they went still farther; for of what schemes and endeavours is not a depraved heart ca-

pable to put out the light which he cannot bear? A Princess of Royal extraction, and of great mental accomplishments, a true Carmelite, and of her own accord! This being too forcible and convincing an argument of the truth of the religion they wish to annihilate, they did their utmost in order to disseminate suspicions, and inspire doubts on the motives, and even on a freedom of choice in Princess Louisa's retreat: and as the Court where the Princess was too well known, was not a suitable place to spread out their calumnies, it was by libels secretly addressed to the credulity of people living in the provinces remote from the capital that they attempted to depreciate the merit of a sacrifice worthy of admiration and respect, even had it been a sacrifice of atonement, but which was truly heroic after a whole life of innocence and virtue.

Princess Louisa was minutely acquainted with all these absurd imputations, but without wanting for her consolation, to meditate this gospel maxim, "*That all that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution,*" she was the first to laugh at them: the only trouble she felt was to think that ALMIGHTY GOD could not but be very grievously offended by such crimes. Accordingly perfectly tranquil and resigned, she would never have any other apology than that she found within her soul. She knew which was the spirit that had led her

into solitude ; and she gave an evident proof of it from the first moment, by becoming the model of all those whom she had chosen for her companions.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE
LIFE
OF
PRINCESS LOUISA OF FRANCE,
A
CARMELITE NUN.

BOOK II.

ARRIVED at the Convent of Saint Denis, Princess Louisa enjoyed there the happiness of a traveller, who, after a long and perilous navigation, finds himself safe and secure in the harbour which he had wished for. All her life will be henceforth consecrated to the remembrance of the blessings of Heaven. After having seen her for many years, groaning like the Israelite captive on the banks of the river of Babylon, we shall see her now like the Ismaelite penetrated with gratitude after the passage of the Red Sea, celebrating the wonders of God by con-

tinual thanksgivings. The following Prayer, composed by the Princess immediately after her admission, was found at her death among her writings of devotion. She recited it as the canticle of her deliverance :

“ What heartfelt thanksgivings ought I not to return to thee, O my God ! for having brought me into thy holy House. It is here, at the foot of thy sacred altars that I shall now pass the remainder of my days ; it is here that I shall dwell to my last breath ! What a happiness ! O LORD, to testify my gratitude to thee for such a favour ; is it too much to offer myself up to thee without the least reserve, under the sweet yoke of the holy Rule which I come to embrace ? Could I ever regret what I have left ? What I left is nothing in comparison of what I have found ; since it is thyself, O my God ! O my all ! Henceforth poverty shall be my treasure ; and what a treasure, since it will gain me thy kingdom ! What a proportion between a few days of penance, and an immense and eternal weight of glory ! Yes, sweet JESUS ! I embrace thy cross ! I embrace it with all my heart ! Grant me never to be separated from it. Give me, O LORD ! all the graces I stand in need of, that I may become thy victim ! Thy *victim*, O JESUS ! what a noble title ! and how highly honoured do I esteem myself to give up all the vain titles of the world, to bear that of Thy victim ! ”

These sentiments were so truly sincere in

and constitutions, that it would have been a difficult thing to deceive her concerning the particular functions attached to the station of a Postulant. She knew, for example, that a Postulant among the Carmelites ought to read and serve in the refectory; that she must be the first at all common exercises; that it is her office to open and shut the choir door, to light the Nuns in the dormitories, when at night they pass from one exercise to another; in short, to shew in every thing that she is come to minister, and not to be ministered to. Princess Louisa discharged all these different offices with the most scrupulous punctuality. There are some others more disgusting, or more painful, to which they never fail to inure the Postulants, and which they would have been happy to save her; such, for instance, as scraping and rubbing the floors, cleaning the candlesticks, washing the dishes, and such like; but the Princess would not yield to any body what she called her rights: she had, on the contrary, a propensity to usurp those of others, and nothing was more ordinary than to see her take in hand such like work when begun by another Sister; and it was particularly to those for which she had the strongest repugnance, that she devoted herself with the greatest eagerness. One day, when a Sister would not let her clean the candlesticks, "Pray let me do it," said she to her; "I cannot now eat mutton any longer, which I always liked very much; let me at least have a little smell of it." She put on

all shapes, she used all means to remove the attention shewn to her. "You pretend," said she to her fellow companions, "to give me some mark of your friendship; indeed, you should also give me some of your esteem, for all the measures which you take to hinder me from doing what you do, seem to tell me, that you have not a great confidence in the courage of a person who has been a Princess;" and then they were obliged to let her do as others did. However, a Sister whom she assisted in the most laborious works of the vestry, found means to fetter her ardour for a little time, by telling her in a cross manner; "Be quiet, I beg of you, Madam, do not fatigue yourself to no purpose; for you understand nothing of the matter; I must do your work over again; be contented to look at me." Princess Louisa received this lesson with the greatest docility, and said, "Well, I will, then, examine with the greatest attention how you do it, that I may do better another time."

As soon as she was arrived at the Convent, she wanted to go in her turn to work in the kitchen; but they represented to her, that the Postulants who wore silk gowns like hers, were dispensed with that drudgery, because it would be contrary to the spirit of poverty to spoil such precious clothes, which might be useful to the Church; therefore, without loss of time, she wrote to the King, to desire him to have the goodness to give his orders that she might be furnished with

clothes more suitable to the work she had sometimes to do. The first thing they sent to the Princess was a silk bedgown of rose colour: therefore, on the day appointed for her to wash the dishes, she put on this silk gown, and went to the kitchen, where, after having attentively considered for some time how the Sisters did, she thought that she would do the same, and having cast her eyes on a dirty kettle, she laid hold of it, and wishing to make it clean without as well as within, she began to rub the outside; she turned it over and over again all manner of ways; scratched her hands, exhausted her strength, and made her silk gown as black as the kettle, without having succeeded in the least to make it cleaner. The Sisters, who, to disgust her of the kitchen work, had not without some little merriment, left her in perplexity, at length told her, that they scoured only the inside of their dirty kettles. "I should never have suspected it," answered she, "but as it is for the first time in my life that I clean the utensils of a kitchen, I could not guess that kettles were not to be cleaned like all other things: I will remember it." This silk gown, which she wore on that day, could be no more of any service to her; but the Prioress would have it carefully preserved in the House, to attest for ever, that a daughter of the King of France had not disdained to fulfil the meanest offices among the Carmelites; and what had been very much beneath her high rank in the world, was not above her virtue in their Convent.

The Superior of the House, with the agreement of the Prioress, thought proper to oppose the disposition of the Princess to have no other meals than those of the community; and for fear the sudden passage from the table of the Court to the table of the Carmelites, should aggravate her bad state of health, already much altered, he enjoined her to continue the use of wine, as she did at Versailles, and permitted that the Nuns should give her every day some fish for her dinner. She obeyed the prescription, apprehending that the least alteration in her health would become an obstacle to her making her vows; and, moreover, because she found in her obedience the matter of a double sacrifice, for she had a natural dislike to fish, of which they had ordered her to make her usual meals; and she would have almost always preferred the meagre of the community to that which they gave her. This circumstance she never told the Superior, but after she had made her vows.

This distinction, which, in reality, was but a distinction of penance for her, was the only one to which she consented. From the first day of her entrance she fasted with a religious punctuality. Fasting, which is of eight months among the Carmelites, was at all times her hardest mortification. A Nun expressing to the Princess great surprise to see her in the morning with a pale and emaciated look, she told her, "It is a sign of the great impatience with which my stomach

waits for its dinner." She owned that, on several occasions, hunger was a true torture for her; however, it never occurred to her mind that she might obtain some relief from the severity of the rule; and when they proposed to her to consult a physician on the subject, "Do you not know," said she, "that physicians are always disposed to judge necessary for us, all the things which we imagine we stand in need of, and that they are also ever ready to cure us of all the disorders which we have not?"

A few days after her admission among the Carmelites, Princess Louisa received the visit of the Princesses her sisters. The first interview was very affecting. The three Princesses, embracing their sister with the greatest tenderness, melted into tears, as well as the whole community, which was equally moved at such a sight. As for Princess Louisa, with a joyful heart, and the most amiable serenity in her countenance, she endeavoured to console them, speaking to them with cheerfulness, and assuring them that they had no reason to weep over her, unless they were jealous of the perfect happiness which she enjoyed. It was then Easter time, when the Carmelites interrupt their fasting. The Princesses were curious to assist at the supper of their sister, and went to the refectory: the bill of fare for the day brought in stewed potatoes and cold milk. They saw Princess Louisa eating cheerfully and with good appetite this homely meal,

which at Court would have caused her a dreadful indigestion, and from thence they concluded, that with her courage and piety, she was in reality less to be pitied than congratulated in her solitude.

The Dauphin and all the Royal Family paid also a visit to Princess Louisa. The Pope's Nuncio, and the Archbishop of Paris came to congratulate her in the name of the Church, on the happiness which she had procured to herself; and the great example she offered to the Christian world. Clement the Fourteenth, overjoyed to see his Papacy illustrated by an event so consolatory to religion, addressed a particular Brief to the Princess with his picture. Louis the Fifteenth, consulted on that by his daughter, answered to her, "I have seen the Pope's Brief; it seems to me very fine, but rather long. I know very well the features of the holy Father. When I see you I will tell you whether the picture he has sent you is like that which I have seen; so you need not send it me. You must not fail to write an answer. Mr. de Choiseul will inform you of all that. It seems that the Brief concerns only the Carmelites of your House; nevertheless, you may do with it as the Carmelites usually do with such Briefs; though this be in a circumstance unheard of. Louis."

¹ Princess Louisa had already passed three weeks in the Convent of Saint Denis, when the King, her father, paid her his first visit.

He had informed her beforehand, that he wished to be received without ceremony, and without causing the least trouble in the community. Accordingly Princess Louisa, only attended by a few Nuns, went to receive him at the gate. He would enter alone; and he said to the Captain of his life guards, "You may wait here for me without anxiety; I am in perfect safety among the Carmelites." The Prince seeing his daughter, could not help owning that her health did not seem altered; others found it improved. After having talked for a whole hour with her, examined her poor cell, and viewed her bed, which he found very hard, he visited the House most minutely, and promised to see all the Nuns at his next journey, which was to take place in a week. In effect, going to meet the future Dauphiness, accompanied with the three Princesses his daughters, and the Dauphin his grandson; this Prince stopped at Saint Denis, and dined at the Carmelites, in the apartment of the Superior. After dinner, he desired Abbé Bertin to shew him the whole community; he spoke to the Nuns with the greatest kindness and affability, and recommended his daughter to them. As he knew that supper is very early in a Convent, being already four o'clock, he had the curiosity to see what they were preparing in the kitchen: they conducted him thither, and he was much surprised to see neither any fire nor any appearance of a supper; his surprise increased, when he was told that they would prepare

the supper only at five, to be served at six o'clock. But as Princess Louisa assured him that she enjoyed better health than at Versailles, he concluded from thence, that very likely the cold kitchen of the Carmelites, was the most wholesome to her. This Prince, who naturally loved virtue, was much pleased to hear that in the commencement of his daughter's abode at Saint Denis, she was already a model to the community, and edified them all. It was a testimony which the Superiors esteemed themselves highly happy to have in their power to bear to the zeal of the Princess, which was always increasing.

The Mistress of the Novices, on her arrival at the Convent, had put her in a cell such as she wished for, and perfectly similar to that of the other Nuns; but she had laid a mattress over her straw bed. Princess Louisa represented that it was contrary to the rules of the Theresians to sleep upon a mattress; but being very sensible that her Mistress would not give her a favourable hearing, she addressed herself to the Prioress, before whom she pleaded the cause of regularity with so much eloquence, that she obtained what she wanted. She was still with the Prioress, when her Mistress came in. Immediately she cast herself at her feet, saying, "I beg your pardon, my dear Mother, for what I have done to rid myself from your too great indulgence; but," added

she, "really you must own, that I should accustom myself from the beginning to bend under the yoke of the Rule, otherwise I shall find it austere all my life time." Under the mattress which was taken off from her bed, she found a straw bed, which not being quilted, as is customary among the Carmelites, was not, of course, so hard as theirs; she reiterated, therefore, her entreaties, and obtained also the satisfaction she wished for.

It is thus that Princess Louisa, who was pitied as much as admired at Court, found no true pleasure herself but in the exact practice of the whole Rule: in the very beginning of her trial, she enjoyed all the happiness which a courageous virtue always affords, and she liked in the occasion, to dwell upon the sweetness of a state which experience alone is able to appreciate. We shall see in the following extract of some of her letters* to intimate friends, in what manner she revealed the secret comforts of the place which she inhabited. "There is here a heavenly cheerfulness in every thing. I have just come from recreation, where I have been ready to die with laughing, though I had received sad letters which had affected me very much: see, then, what the influence of the joy of a good conscience is." In another letter, written to the same person a month

* The first written four days after her arrival.

after: " My letter shall be also sealed with a wafer, because it is more convenient to me than all the trouble of a wax candle. Well, my dear, the description of my bed has excited your sensibility. However, I am not so much to be pitied; I find it very comfortable; and this very day I have slept eight hours together. I do assure you that it is not a thing worth exciting pity, especially when we reflect what JESUS CHRIST has done for us. Moreover, that costs me nothing; I must say it to my shame: while every body is edified at it, I find myself as comfortable on my quilted straw bed, as ever I was on a feather bed. You know that I do not approve of those who take upon themselves obligations they are not able to fulfil; therefore, you may remain satisfied, that, if ever I become a Theresian, it is because I shall feel myself strong enough to be so. It is for this reason that I desired my trial should be of eighteen months instead of fifteen, as it is for others. But I am so well persuaded that I follow God's will, that I have not the least anxiety."

About the same time she wrote to the Prioress of the Carmelites of Compiègne: " I am not yet recovered of the joy which has penetrated my whole heart from the moment I came to this Monastery: I have never entertained the least doubt, but that you had lively felt all my happiness. I have a thousand pardons to ask you for all the tricks which

I have played you to discover all the particulars of your holy practices ; without forgetting the shift which I stole from you. Now you know from whence came all my questions, and surely you have forgiven me all. Adieu ! my reverend Mother. Remember me in your good prayers, that my sacrifice may be consummated according to my wishes."

A person of undaunted courage, after gaining a victory, says that it cost nothing, and really believes it. Thus, Princess Louisa, having filled up the immense space which separates the daughter of a King from a daughter of Saint Theresa, said, " It is very little ; it is nothing !" And in these circumstances, when the contrast of the usages of the Court with those of the Theresians made her suffer most, she betrayed nothing of it, or spoke of the thing with such levity and cheerfulness as to divert sometimes the attention of those who had made the observation. Accustomed to wear in the world shoes with heels extremely high, it was a real torture to her, when she had to use the flat slippers of the Carmelites ; her legs swelled to such a degree that she could scarcely walk. As soon as the Nuns perceived it, they advised her to give up the slippers, " But I must, sooner or later, put them on again," said she, " therefore, I prefer conquering the difficulty from the beginning." The very hard bed in use among the Carmelites is also so narrow that it often

happened she knocked herself against the wall; and once it was with such violence that she bruised her head considerably. Having afterwards an occasion to write to the Princesses her sisters, she told them that she had bruised her head, for having rubbed herself too roughly against the curtains of the Carmelites. It is thus that by her cheerful humour, she overcame all the inconveniences she met with in her new situation, of what nature soever they might be. A thing which was not for her the matter of a sacrifice, but was however troublesome to her, was the privation of her watch, which, from long habit, she was always seeking after, where it was no longer to be found. They observed to her, that she might keep it as long as she wore a secular habit; "But, when I have put on the habit of the Order," replied she: "Then," answered they to her, "you will wear beads instead of a watch." "And can I not make use of beads this very day, to help me to get rid of my worldly habits?" She therefore hung beads at her side, and every time that wanting to look at her watch, she met with them, she said a short prayer.

A great proof of religious disengagement and self denial, and the greatest, perhaps, that Princess Louisa could give at her arrival at Saint Denis, was to leave it entirely to the Superior of the House, whether she ought to keep for her Confessor, the worthy Ecclesi-

astic who had been the confidant and guide of her vocation? Abbé Bertin was very much edified at the sacrifice she had already made in her heart; but persuaded that no one was better qualified to be the director of the Princess, than the virtuous and learned Priest, who had led her from the Court into the Convent, assured her, that, instead of seeing the least inconvenience in her keeping her ordinary Confessor, he thought, on the contrary, that it would be a very great advantage to the House, because the Nuns would find in him a trusty friend, who might be of great help to them in the unavoidable relations, which either the good of religion, or the regard due to the Royal Family would necessarily require of her. Thus, Abbé Duterney, whom the Archbishop of Paris had appointed to be her Confessor, when the society of the Jesuits was broken up, continued to be her spiritual guide.

After an habitation of a few months in her Monastery, the Princess met with one of those contradictions, which, without disturbing the peace of a generous soul, nevertheless affects her virtues, when it is sincere and truly humble. The Nuns, from the laudable motive to perpetuate in their House the memory of a King's daughter having become a Carmelite, desired to have her picture drawn. She was then but a Postulant. She at first refused all their requests; then yielding to their reiterated entreaties, she gave leave to a woman to draw her picture. But this pic-

ture not being finished when she took the religious habit, she would not hear any more of it; and she dismissed the artist. At the first visit which the King paid her, the Prioress of the Convent conjured his Majesty to settle the difference between his daughter and her community. The Princess then asked the King, if to have her picture drawn did not seem to him a ridiculous contrast with the habit, and the spirit of the new state she had embraced? This Prince had too solid a judgment to decide against his daughter, a question presented in such a manner; however, he told her, "I think to let the artist finish your picture which is already begun, would be from you but a laudable condescension. You cannot refuse this consolation to your Mothers, who wish for it." Of course, the picture was finished, but when they compared it with the model it was found unlike; therefore they wanted to have another drawn by a more skilful painter. This was a fresh cause of anxiety for Princess Louisa, who, persuaded that she had carried complaisance on the subject as far as she could, endeavoured to free herself from these new solicitations, by gaining over to her sentiments the Superior of the House, to whom she wrote: "My conscience is in very great trouble, and I think you will judge that I am in the right. They had my picture drawn by a woman, as you know; and notwithstanding I was tired to death, I permitted its being finished: but now they

find that it is not enough like me, and they want me to be drawn again by a man. I find many inconveniences in such a thing; at least, it is as unbecoming as to have our hair curled by a man, and it takes up much more time. Never a Theresian caused her picture to be drawn: and I should not wonder at all, if people of the world were scandalized at what they want me to do. I do truly believe that it must be prevented. I beg of you to reflect seriously upon it." This representation procured tranquillity to the Princess, whose only desires in dedicating herself to God were to be entirely forgotten by the world, and even, had it been possible, by the companions of her solitude, who often fatigued her by the charitable care they took of her health.

On certain festival days, when the offices of the Church and prayers fill up almost the whole day and night, they wanted to prevail on the Princess to compensate the fatigue of the day by taking the next day a little more rest than usual, and thus to recruit her strength, which must certainly have been impaired by such interruption in her sleep, and increase of lassitude to which she was not accustomed at Court. "Am I come here, then," said she, "to do as they do at Court? I, whose most ardent desire was to be able to do at Court what the Carmelites do here." The Reader may remember that the Superior had ordered that every day at her dinner they should serve her with a dish

of fresh fish. Extending the indulgence still farther, the Nuns made also a choice among the vegetables they gave her, and dressed them in a better manner. She soon perceived it, and complained to the Prioress; who took but little notice of her complaints; she then addressed herself to the Superior, who did not seem to pay much more attention to them. Deeply afflicted at that kind of connivance between her Superiors, in order to soften the beginnings of a way of life, all the austerities of which she already embraced with all her heart, she went to the Prioress, and throwing herself at her feet, with her eyes filled with tears, she told her, "I beseech you, dear Mother, consider of it; what will be the end of all these distinctions to which you make me submit? Will you have me become a Theresian; without having first learned to practise the Rule of Saint Theresa? or will you suffer that I engage myself to embrace this Rule, without either myself or yourselves knowing whether I shall be able to bear it, since you subject me to mitigations which prevent me to try it in all its integrity." These words, and especially the abundance of tears which accompanied them, at length triumphed over the resolution of the Prioress. She suppressed these distinctions which had no other effect but to harrass with uneasiness the zealous Postulant, and she gave her leave to eat like the community, the pease and other coarsely

dressed vegetables which were served up in the refectory.

Though the rapid progress of Princess Louisa in a religious life, are particularly to be attributed to the virtues she had practised before, and to her continual effort to improve herself in her new state ; nevertheless, she affirmed, and her modesty had persuaded her of the truth of it, that whatever might be deemed good in her, she was indebted for it to the good examples of her sisters, and especially to the wise and courageous advices which she received from one of them. It is a custom among the Carmelites, when they have admitted a Postulant, to give a special charge to a Nun, different from the Mistress of the Novices, to watch over her conduct in order to admonish her of her faults, or point out to her her defects ; and the Nun who is intrusted with this office of charity towards the young person is called her Angel. Sister Julia, called in the world, de Macmahon, had this ministry to discharge towards Princess Louisa. To all the virtues of a holy Religious, she joined great affability and evenness of temper, and a sincerity inaccessible to all human considerations. From her first essays in the practice of a religious life the Princess had many an opportunity to see what she could expect from the good offices of the terrestrial angel who was to be her guide. And Sister Julia, on her side, soon judged from the lively and tractable character of her pupil, that in a

very short time she would become a true daughter of Saint Theresa. Hence began between these two pious souls that mutual confidence which remained as unalterable as the virtue on which it was grounded.

Princess Louisa made at first the most exact inquiries, not so much concerning the general rules of the Theresians with which she was sufficiently acquainted, as concerning the particular usages of the community of Saint Denis, to which she wished to be as faithful as to the most essential articles of the Rule. She begged of her Guide to love her enough to let her know both her duties and her defects. Sister Julia concealed nothing from her. She told her, without the least disguise, that for a Princess, like her, born to command, accustomed to all the ease and conveniencies of life, brought up in the delights of a Court, to bend under the yoke of religious observances, was certainly a great undertaking. She did not hide from her, that in order to bear the variety of tempers, the disgust of uniformity, and the self-denials of solitude; to annihilate the human *self*, and to make to obedience the sacrifice of the will, a sacrifice more painful to nature than that of all the enjoyments of grandeur; in a word, that, to embrace the poor, humble, and mortified life of a Theresian, she wanted a more than ordinary courage of soul. Entering afterwards into particulars, she laid before her, in all their extent, the different

duties which she would have to perform, and the practices she could not be dispensed with ; in short, at the same time that she encouraged and animated her first steps towards the Land of Promise, she shewed her on her side all the enemies she had to remove and conquer before she could taste its pure enjoyments and comforts. This courageous and charitable sincerity attached so much the more the Princess to her angel guardian, that she was afraid that too much indulgence from the other Nuns might expose her virtue, either to the illusion of self-love, or to the dangers of remissness.

In one of these confidential conversations of a virtuous friendship : “ You may expect Madam,” said sister Julia to the Royal Postulant, “ that, they will spare you here as much as possible. At every step they will offer to you some new allowances ; you may accept of them, and be still very edifying to us, in comparison, and even at the only remembrance of what you were in the world ; but, believe me ; you will not be half a Carmelite.” “ God forbid,” replied Princess Louisa, “ that my example should ever authorise relaxation among the Carmelites ! I had rather undoubtedly be a good Religious, in a less austere Order, than a remiss daughter of Saint Theresa. But I firmly wish to be a Theresian, and with the help of God to be a true one in every respect.” On certain occasions when the Princess consulted Sister Julia, on her duties : “ *That suffices,*” said she, “ *that is*

enough for Princess Louisa; but for Sister Theresa of Saint Austin, such thing ought to be added; she ought to pay attention to this; she should not neglect that." These advices were like strict orders for the Princess; she was as quick to put them in practice, as she was eager, to receive them. Hence there was very seldom occasion to repeat an admonition, except to moderate her zeal, and holy eagerness to practise all the austerities in use among the Theresians; to which they wished to inure her but by degrees. Her docility was exemplary and without restriction to the Nun, to whom she had granted the right of watching both over her exterior actions, and the interior spirit which animated them. On certain particular circumstances, such as the time of strict silence, the least sign, a simple look from the Nun, was sufficient to make the Princess know that she was in a fault. It happened even more than once that, being thus admonished of some involuntary fault, after having asked pardon of the Prioress according to the manner appointed among the Theresians, she begged of her kind Monitor to inform her in what she had been defective.

Viewing the kind offices of Sister Julia in her regard in the light of faith, Princess Louisa esteemed them of infinite value; and as gratitude is both a religious debt, and the first among the necessaries of a generous heart, hers, towards her benefactress was inexhaustible, and seemed somewhat excessive: so that that the Superior of the House

represented to her, that they thought she had a predilection for that Sister. "I can assure you with truth," answered the Princess to Abbé Bertin, "that I love all my Sisters with tenderness, and that I never feel greater satisfaction than, when I have it in my power to give them marks of these my sentiments in their regard; but I will also own to you with simplicity, that I cannot help feeling an affection of preference for the person, who alone has the courage to let me know my defects, and forms me to my state. Pray, is not the Nun who flatters me the least, that also who loves me best, and to whom I am the most indebted?" Friendship, when grounded on such pure motives, is doubtless, a most precious and laudable sentiment; and we must sedulously distinguish this filial attachment of a virtuous Pupil towards the friendly monitor who dispenses to her lessons of exactitude and virtue, from those friendships of caprice or sympathy which cannot but lessen charity, and be a great hindrance to regularity in religious Communities.

However, the eminent virtues, which rendered Sister Julia so dear to Princess Louisa, had gained so much to her the hearts of all her Sisters, that at this very time, their united suffrages raised her to the Superiority of the House. Many letters of the Princess now in our hands, and in which she speaks of her new Prioress, are so many proofs of the pure motives she was animated with in her affection for her. "Our Mother," said she, "car-

ries things a great deal too far, even I am almost ready to say that she is quite unreasonable. She grieves as much at her maternity as we rejoice at it. She still was in tears yesterday. She has brought me up for the eternal kingdom, and she already deserves it by her virtues; nevertheless, I hope that she will not obtain it so soon. She has been ill from the beginning of the winter; her meekness and patience are beyond expression: not a complaint: in the sharpest pains scarcely she utters a little, Oh! dear. Never, no, never a single moan. Indeed, with such a Prioress, we must all be Saints. Pray earnestly to God, dear Theresa, that he would vouchsafe to preserve our Mother. Such a one is never to be met with again. All the Nuns, without exception, love her to the highest degree. Her sanctity is eminent; the simplicity of her manner charms every one; and whatever may be the circumstances she is in, nothing can ruffle the evenness of her temper. In sufferings, contradictions, sacrifices of all kinds, constantly disturbed by the importunities of the Nuns, who being so fond of her do not leave her quiet for a minute: well, she is always the same. As for me, I do really want all the reflection I am capable of to see how much her virtue overcomes all she must suffer inwardly. We find an anticipated paradise to live under her government: and it is the subject of my great anxiety; for Souls that have already attained such a high degree of virtue, have not long to wait for their reward. If only when interrogated,

she speaks of her sufferings, it is with such great tranquillity, and a countenance so cheerful and serene, that we do not suspect half of them. But when the acuteness of the pain is over, and we see its effects, then we wonder at all that she has suffered. Such is Mother Julia, and every Nun here will tell you the same."

In effect, all the memorials I have received of the House of Saint Denis, confirm this honourable testimony which gratitude bore to virtue. At all times the community was edified at, and praised the use which Sister Julia made of the Princess's great confidence in her; and if some imagined that there was a little weakness in that unbounded confidence of the Princess in her, undoubtedly they did not reflect that the greatest commendation of a soul dedicated to God, is to be able to say of her that she yields herself up to be conducted and ruled by the person, who knows herself no other road but the road of perfection; and above all, by that whom Providence alone has given her for her guide.

But the admirable manner with which Princess Louisa practised virtue, shews enough that the lessons which she received were excellent ones. At the end of the three months trial in use among the Carmelites before the Postulant puts on the habit of Saint Theresa, the Princess, though judged worthy to wear it for the honour of the Order, by the votes of

all her Sisters, was, nevertheless, in conformity to the King's will, obliged to wait three other months for the happiness after which she longed with so much eagerness. This interval was not for her a time of rest ; she employed it entirely to search to the bottom all the duties of a religious life, to meditate on her Rule, and to inure herself to all its observances ; so that all the Nuns openly declared that she possessed all the virtues of her state before she had put on the habit of it.

In the Rule which Princess Louisa had to embrace, there was only one article which gave her great anxiety, and with so much the more reason, as the observance of it frequently returned ; it was to be on her knees long together. This posture of the body was so extremely fatiguing to her, that it was physically impossible for her to bear it without having something to lean upon. This inability caused her the deepest affliction, and was the habitual subject of her most ardent prayers to the ALMIGHTY. This bodily weakness was in the eyes of her mind a sort of irregularity for a Carmelite, by requiring a distinction, which at the same time that it was humbling unto her, seemed also to her not edifying to the community. One day that she had been revolving for a long time these melancholy reflections in her mind, she addressed herself to one of her companions in the Noviceship, and in the ardour of her faith conjured her to join with her to ask of

God her cure, through the intercession of Saint Louis of Gonzaga. The young person entered with zeal into the views of her pious and noble companion, and for the said intention they both began the practices of the nine days of Prayer; at the end of which Princess Louisa found herself cured so perfectly well, that never since she felt the least return of her former infirmity. The Nuns surprised at what she then did, attributed it to an excess of zeal which might hurt her health; and whatever the Princess told them to remove their fears, as she did not disclose the reason of her cure, they had much difficulty to persuade themselves that the same person who, a few days before, could not be upon her knees for a very short time without a support, could then remain in that posture for a considerable time together without endangering her health. Princess Louisa, in effect, overjoyed at her cure, and wishing to return her thanksgiving to ALMIGHTY GOD for the gift he had granted her, by making a frequent use of the gift itself, was not contented to conform herself to the other Religious in all common exercises; but during the time which was left at her disposal, she repaired alone to the choir, and there prayed on her knees for hours and hours together. This pretended indiscretion was communicated to the Superior of the House, who spoke to her upon the subject. It was then that she told him with great candour how the thing was, and she assured him that her cure was so complete, that this posture of

the body, which formerly was a real torture to her, was that which fatigued her least.

This striking mark of God's providence over her, could but fortify the Princess more and more in the spirit of her vocation. What we have already learned of her dispositions must certainly have convinced us, that, before her admission among the Carmelites, the sacrifice of an irrevocable engagement was made in her heart. It was therefore an occasion of very great joy for her to see the day approaching, when she could renew her offering to the Lord by stripping herself entirely of all the ornaments and splendid marks of her Royal birth. The ceremony of taking the habit among the Carmelites is preceded by a retreat of ten days, which may be looked upon as comprehending in substance all the austerities of Saint Theresa's Order; extraordinary watchings, strict silence, continual prayer, humbling practices; in a word, nothing is neglected which may any ways mortify the senses and subdue self-love. Princess Louisa did not think that the happiness of putting on the habit of Saint Theresa was too dearly bought at the price of this new trial; she went through it with the utmost alacrity and fervor, and without the least mitigation.

Not being able to entertain any longer the least doubt on his daughter's constancy in her resolution, and having been an eye witness of the visible recovery of her health,

the King thought that he should correspond with the views of Divine Providence, by giving her leave to put on the religious habit, at the time which he had fixed himself. In this circumstance unheard of before, and so consoling to religion, the Pope did not hesitate to claim from his most Christian Majesty, the right of his Primacy in the Universal Church; he wrote to him as follows: "At the first intelligence we received of the generous design of this august Princess, having ascertained that the spirit of God animated her in such an admirable manner, we felt ourselves moved by the most ardent desire to go and perform in person the ceremony of her clothing, in order to add by our presence to the celebrity of such a solemn day, but the distance of places putting the thing out of our power, we gratify in part the wish of our heart, by giving a special charge to our Nuncio near your most Christian Majesty, to represent us on this memorable occasion." The holy Father addressed at the same time to his Nuncio the necessary faculties to represent him; and though the Archbishop of Paris, the great Almoner of France, and every Bishop in the kingdom would have been much gratified to have officiated as sacrificing priest in the offering of such a precious victim, nevertheless, as soon as the successor of Saint Peter had spoken, they would have looked upon it as a kind of sacrilege to dispute his right. The Sovereign Pontiff, to render more complete the joy of the Theresians on that day,

opened the treasure of the indulgences of the Church in favour of all the Nuns of that Order, who should join their intention to Princess Louisa's sacrifice.

Louis the Fifteenth, on his side, wishing that things should be done with all the solemnity which such a ceremony could permit, sent notice to the Prelates of his kingdom, then assembled in Paris, that his intention was that they should assist there in a body. The Agents General of the Clergy repaired to Saint Denis to inform Princess Louisa of his Majesty's intention, and of the Assembly's readiness to fulfil it. The Head Master of Ceremonies received orders to go to Saint Denis, to regulate the decorations requisite in the Church of the Carmelites; to appoint the places for the assistants, and to adorn the walls with the most beautiful hangings of the Crown. The Musicians of the King's Chapel went to the Convent to receive the instructions of the Prioress, with regard to the part they were to perform in the ceremony.

On the 10th of September, 1770, early in the morning, detachments of the French and Swiss guards were stationed without the precincts of the Monastery to keep good order. The life guards were charged with the internal police of the Church. The Pope's Nuncio, Archbishop of Damas, repaired in the morning to the Convent of the Carmelites, and said the mass, in which Princess Louisa

communicated. She was clothed with the mantle of Saint Theresa, which she had the devotion to send for from the Carmelites of Paris, who possess this precious part of the habit of their holy Foundress. Thus, on the greatest festivals of the year, Saint Antony put on the humble tunic of Saint Paul the first hermit.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the Dauphiness arrived from Versailles with all her household. Princess Louisa, attended also by hers, and conducted by the Superior of the community, went to meet the Dauphiness as far as the middle of the outward court of the Monastery. From thence, the two Princesses, after having mutually expressed to one another the sentiments of the most tender friendship, walked to the Church, the Pope's Nuncio in his Pontifical vestments, preceded by the head Master of Ceremonies, and attended by the Bishops of the Assembly of the French Clergy, received them at the gate; presented them with holy water, and then conducted them to the praying desks which had been prepared for them.

There was in the Church a double row of life guards; the Bishops, and the secular and regular Clergy, occupied the choir; and a multitude of people of distinction from Court, as well as from the capital, filled up the nave. But, in the midst of this assembly, which both the Church and the Empire

mutually endeavoured to render awful and venerable, the most striking object was the Princess who was the occasion of it. The daughter of a powerful King might easily be discerned by her noble and modest countenance, as much as by the splendid retinue which surrounded her: She had put on all the rich attire of Royalty; her clothes sparkled with gold and precious stones; in a word, on her person was displayed all the pomp and splendor of Royal extraction, at the moment she was going to bury herself for ever in the obscurity of a Cloister, and devote herself to all the rigours and austerities of a poor and crucified life.

A profound silence reigned in the whole assembly. The awfulness and majesty of the sight held all minds in religious expectation, when the Bishop of Troyes ascended the pulpit; the eloquent orator, deeply penetrated with his subject, had no sooner begun to speak, but the sound of his voice manifested the sentiments which animated his heart; in an instant the impression was communicated to all sides; his audience shared his tender emotions, and soon all that were present mixed their tears with his, excepting the courageous Princess who was the cause of them.

The discourse being over, Princess Louisa answered with a steady and deliberate tone of voice the different questions put to the Postulant in such ceremonies: then she

withdrew for an instant; and appearing again immediately stript of her pompous dress, she advanced towards the Dauphiness to receive from her the veil and religious habit, which the young Princess, in presenting her with them, bedewed with a flood of tears.

But the most awful part of the ceremony, the most striking, was at the moment when the Princess, who a few minutes before was sitting upon a throne glittering with all the splendour of a Royal crown, appeared as it were annihilated, prostrate on the bare ground, under the coarse habit of Saint Theresa. This contrast, still more powerful and persuasive than the eloquent discourse which had just represented it, moved the most insensible hearts with tenderness. The household of Princess Louisa above all, which was placed round her at this moment, bore a striking similitude to a set of distressed children attending the burial of a most beloved mother. We did not see then, as before, people wiping off their tears in silence; but sobs and groans were heard on all sides; even Courtiers and Soldiers, the curious of all nations who, attracted by novelty, had come to the ceremony, could not resist the influence of the general emotion; several of them sought to withdraw from the crowd, in order to abandon themselves without restraint to the impression of this involuntary sensibility.

Witness of these tender emotions which had pervaded the whole audience, Princess Louisa beheld them with sentiments that might have been compared with those of the Saviour of the world when the daughters of Sion were weeping over him. The sweet peace, the unalterable calmness which the holy Princess enjoyed at that moment seemed to say to these worldly souls, lamenting her lot around her: "You are greatly deceived; your pity is very much mistaken; it is not over me, who find my happiness in renouncing the world, that you ought to weep, but over yourselves, whom this world bewilders into eternal perdition, and who, nevertheless, remain intoxicated with its vanities." The ceremony being over, the Nuns asked the Princess what were the feelings of her heart in the midst of a scene so proper to move it with tenderness? "I felt," said she "an impression of strength which raised me above myself and all that I saw round me."

The lively and very remarkable interest which the Pope had expressed on the sacrifice of Princess Louisa, engaged the Princess to write to him immediately after her clothing. "Most holy Father, your Holiness has filled my heart with joy, by appointing the Archbishop of Damas, your Nuncio in France, to perform in the name of your Holiness the ceremony of my clothing in the Monastery of the Carmelites of Saint Denis; I return to you my best thanks for such a favour. This

holy Habit is a new tie which attaches me more and more to the Church, the holy See, and your Holiness. The Nuns of the Order which I have had the happiness of embracing, partake my lively gratitude for the indulgencies which it has pleased your Holiness to grant us on the occasion."

Though the poor and austere habit of the Thesians was not unknown to the King, this habit appeared to him still more poor and austere when he saw it for the first time worn by his daughter; and this good father told her with tender grief, "Well, my dear daughter, you are then fixed and determined to renounce all your rights for ever." "O no;" replied quickly the Princess, "not at all; the most precious of my rights, the dearest to my heart, I will preserve for ever, for always I shall be your daughter."

Overjoyed to have at length compassed the end of her wishes which she had longed after for so many years, and to have it in her power to exchange the Royal purple for the garb of poverty, she wholly dedicated herself to acquire the perfection of the virtues which the habit of Saint Theresa necessarily supposes. Her zeal, already so ardent, seemed to increase more and more every day, in proportion she advanced towards the time when she was to consummate her sacrifice, and the only effectual means they could find to contain her within the bounds of discretion, was to suggest to her fears for the

ultimate success of her vocation. "You are in the right," said she, with a smile, to her sisters, "spare me as much as you please till I have pronounced my vows; but then, having no longer the Versailles spies to apprehend, and being therefore a Carmelite for ever, and a Carmelite without fear, I shall undoubtedly be allowed to be like yourselves, a Carmelite without mitigation." We may remember which were those mitigations which prudence had required of her to submit to.

One might have been inclined to think that observances the most repugnant to nature, even those which are still painful sacrifices for the ancient Nuns, cost nothing to the young Novice. Her undaunted courage made those frightful phantoms which the profound solitude of a Theresian Convent might present to a vulgar mind disappear before her. She was actuated by the principle which forms heroes, that *not to fear an enemy is already to have vanquished him*. "We must not," said she one day to her companions in the Noviceship, "examine if what we have to do, will cost us or not, we must begin by doing it, thinking that it is our duty, and that ALMIGHTY GOD commands it."

In this disposition, no obstacle could stop her zeal; nothing discouraged her; every thing seemed easy to her; and her example

in the Noviceship was a living rule which preached religious perfection more effectually than all the zeal of the Mistress. She had a special talent and a wonderful grace to support and console her companions, in those distressing moments of darkness, when the picture of religious austerities striking their imagination, was the most capable of alarming their inexperience, and afflicting their hearts. It was generally by her using with them the tone of pleasantry that she raised their responding courage, and recalled them to the spirit of their vocation. One day as she was gone alone to pray in one of those little oratories, called *hermitages*, which the Carmelites build in their gardens, she found there one of her young companions bathed in tears, who as soon as she saw her, cried out, "Always sweeping! always rubbing the floors! no, I shall never be able to hold it out!" The Princess, with a smile, and mimicking with a sweet look this afflicted young Novice, replied, "Yes, yes, always sweeping! always rubbing the floors! always humbling ourselves! mortifying ourselves! we shall hold it out! And you and I, we shall add; and, *that to death!* This is the maxim in which the Carmelites vows terminate.

Attentive and careful to lay hold of every opportunity she could meet with of doing good, and availing herself of the last moments when she could yet gratify her inclination of promoting the happiness of others, she would pay the portion of a young Lady

whose fortune was not equal to her birth, and who wished to be a Theresian. "I am too happy" said she, in her profound humility, "to be able to contribute to offer up to the LORD a sacrifice more precious than mine." This first service was followed by another of still greater importance. Being already judged worthy, though yet a Novice, to give lessons of religious perfection, she was appointed the Angel of the young person whom her charity had introduced into the Monastery. Obliged, in this quality, to instruct her in private, of the duties of her new state of life, to watch over her in the practices of the observances and usages of the House, she discharged her trust with unabated zeal and infinite care. Her patience was admirable, her complaisance without bounds in calming her anxieties and troubles; and she neglected nothing to teach her to despise the vain phantoms which beset the avenues of religious solitude. She associated with her in her first trials: she did for her, & jointly with her, the things to which she had the greatest reluctance. Thus, this young Lady was indebted to her both for the advantage of being a Religious, and of having the true spirit of religion.

When sometimes, on the occasion of a retreat, or for some other reason, the Princess was separated from her companions in the Noviceship, and, of course could not animate them by her discourses and example,

she never failed to do it by writing, when she could get leave ; and the same liveliness and gaiety which rendered her conversation so amiable she preserved in her letters. She wrote as follows, to one of them who was entering into the retreat appointed before the profession. The beginning of her letter is an allusion to the profound solitude in which the Novice was to pass that time, and to the white veil she wore : “ Good morning, my little white hermit ; how do you find yourself at the entrance of your desert ? I pray to God that your road through it may be strewn with roses to embalm you with their sweet perfume, and their thorns entirely blunted. I am much pleased with you : you set off for your solitude with alacrity and courage ; be not frightened at the trials you may meet with ; your Divine Spouse will make you abundant amends for them, and even to a hundred fold : for ten days together he will unite himself to you by the holy communion : his tender love for you does not suffer him to wait till you have given yourself up entirely to him : how happy you are to consecrate yourself so young to his service ! Pray for her who could not do it but at the age he died for us.”

To the answer of her companion, Princess Louisa replied ; “ Well, my dear hermit, you are then a little in a state of dryness : I am, indeed, very sorry for it. I was far from imagining that my little note of yesterday could inspire you with devotion : my

only intention was to give you a little pledge of my friendship, and to express to you how much I feel to be so long without seeing you : however, I do assure you, that, notwithstanding all the pleasure which I have in writing to you, if you do not call me *Sister*, you shall have nothing more from me. I am much grieved at your sufferings ; but I hope that when the first days are over you will be more at peace. May the ALMIGHTY alleviate these trials by some little comfort and sweetness ! I have no doubt but he will grant you this favour if you ask for it in holy communion, in order to reanimate your fervor, and your love for him, and enable you to make your sacrifice with all the perfection he expects from you. This is not so difficult as you may think ; your future bridegroom is contented with a good will, but it must be a steady one, and such as is animated with the most tender love for him. O my dear Louisa Mary ! how sweet it is to give oneself to GOD without the least reserve ! and how happy you are (I repeat it to you over again), to consecrate yourself so young to him ! To sacrifice what we do not know is a great deal more than to sacrifice what we despise, because we know its emptiness and vanity. If people of the world set such high value on my sacrifice, how much more should they esteem the sacrifice of a young person, who knew JESUS alone, and has preferred him before all. If you had not great riches to give up, you had your heart, and as

soon as you felt that he asked it of you, you have generously sacrificed it to him. This is the morning sacrifice. I endeavour to unite mine to yours. Alas! unfortunately, it could not be but an evening sacrifice. I hope that the sweet perfumes of the morning will dissipate the thick fogs of the evening; pray then for me, my dear Louisa Mary, and let the inheritance of my name be for you a continual warning to remember me before our Heavenly Spouse.

In the Noviceship among the Carmelites, every thing tends not only to destroy self-love, but moreover to thwart the delicacy of sense in every thing, without scarce sparing in any thing the strength of the body; so that when they forbid Princess Louisa to apply herself to such hard labours as required that bodily strength which she had not, her zeal had always the resource of the most disgusting employments. If she had not the charge of them by office, she knew how to procure it; she watched every favourable occasion to steal them, as it were, from her companions, which happened so frequently, that when they found their work done they concluded that it was a trick of *Sister Theresa of Saint Austin*: and, if any Nun, catching her in the fact, would claim her right, the Princess cast herself at her knees, kissed her hand, and obtained thereby to finish what she had begun.

It is thus, that, equally fond of the exer-

cises of an interior, as well as of an active life, the fervent Novice, always at the head of her fellow companions in the paths of duty, endeavoured to draw them after her, though she was very far from having the presumption of giving them her conduct as a rule; and her principle was to bring them to the perfection of their state only by the sweet and gentle influence of good example; yet, on certain occasions her zeal for regularity moved her into quickness; but at the very same moment this excess of vivacity expired in the goodness of her heart, and she immediately asked pardon of the Novice who had provoked it. Once, when the Princess was giving an useful advice to one of her companions, but rather in a little reproachful manner, reflecting forthwith that, by admonishing her so of her fault, she herself committed a real one; she saw no longer but her own; and casting herself at the feet of her whom she had reprehended, said to her, "Forgive me this quickness, my dear, it is the fruit of our education; for, as for us unfortunate Princesses, we are so ill brought up, that we pretend always to be in the right, and never meet with any contradiction: however, I hope that I shall mend." Thus her faults were useful admonitions to others; and she edified them in whatever she did. A young person, who was yet a little stranger to religious virtues, told her one day with great simplicity, "Were I Princess Louisa, I should have great dif-

ficulty to submit to such and such observances." "Were you Princess Louisa you would be no longer yourself, and you would think as I do myself; you would say, I am not come here to be ministered to, but to minister; not to command, but to obey; and if, on account of my former situation in the world, I feel repugnances, I must do my best to overcome them, both for my own sake who will reap the whole advantage of it, and also for the sake of others, to whom I will not give bad example."

Such generous sentiments and behaviour deserved to be proposed as models to others; and so they were. The Mistress of the Novices, in the absence of Princess Louisa, or in the private instructions which she gave to her young pupils, never failed to strengthen her lessons by an example so well calculated to make a deep impression upon their minds. When she spoke to them on the properties of humility, or the advantages of religious obedience; if she represented to them the necessity of corresponding to the grace of their vocation, or warned them against the dangers of tepidity; if she described to them the happiness and joy of a Nun animated with fervor, and faithful to the least observance of her rule; in a word, whatever she said for their instruction, she appealed to the conduct of Princess Louisa, and said, "Behold Sister Theresa of Saint Austin; has she another Heaven than you to gain? Have you been brought up with more care and

delicacy than she has been? Can you not do, what the daughter of your King does every day before your eyes?" What a lively impression such admirable example must have made upon young and candid souls who had yet all the sensibility of their first innocence, may easily be conceived.

As for those who lived at a great distance, what idea could they form to themselves of all the perfection of a soul which was the admiration of the eye witnesses of her eminent virtues? No wonder, then, that the Pope offered to this Princess, already a model among the Carmelites, even before her being a Novice, all the mitigations which he thought necessary to enable her to bear the passage from the delights of a Court to the austerities of a Theresian Convent. The Holy Father, by a Brief, spontaneously given (*proprio motu*), authorised Princess Louisa's Confessor to mitigate the Rule which she had embraced, and even to dispense her from the observance of it in all the circumstances in which he should think it expedient for the greater good of his penitent. The same Brief grants to the Royal Novice an indulgence for every time she should communicate. "As for this latter indulgence," cried out Princess Louisa, when she heard the contents of it, "I have the greatest regard for it, and I hope that I shall often make use of it. But as for the other, as long as I am in health, I will not hear of it ;

and in sickness it is no ways requisite : besides, it is a dispensation from going to Heaven, which the Holy Father offers to me ; so true is the sentence of our Blessed Saviour, that it is very difficult for the rich to enter into the kingdom of Heaven ; every body being solicitous to lay impediments on their way to it." These fears which, when in the world, had been for her the occasion of so many serious reflections, put, from time to time, her confidence to fresh trials in her solitude ; so that her whole Noviceship was still a time of pious disquietudes concerning the success of the step she had taken ; when she had pronounced her vow, she said, with her usual candour, " I was much inclined to think, that, out of indulgence, and on account of my former situation in the world, I should obtain the favour of being admitted to my profession ; however, I durst not flatter myself to have it ever in my power to accomplish these my desires, and consummate a sacrifice so necessary for my salvation ; always entertaining a secret fear, lest Divine Providence, by some hidden judgment, should exclude me from a happiness which seemed to me so much above what I deserved." Thus, the righteous, whilst every one admires their virtues, which conceal themselves from their eyes, rely only upon humility, which is their most secure guardian and preserver.

Ever equally satisfied under the habit of a Carmelite Nun, the Princess often spoke

of her happiness, never of her sacrifices: all she had done, and did every day, and proposed to do for the future, did not seem to her deserving the least notice. If she compared sometimes her former life, with the life which she led in her Convent, it was always to prove to others, that she had left little to find a great deal. Our readers will see in the following extracts in what manner she drew the parallel between these two opposite situations. "Believe me," said she to her fellow Novices, with that candour which always carries persuasion with it; "I am truly happy, and beyond my deserts, and with respect to my body as well as to my soul, I have gained a great deal by coming here. It is true that at Versailles I had a very comfortable bed, but in that comfortable bed I had but a very interrupted sleep: the most exquisite dainties were served on my table, but often had no appetite for them: here I have but a hard straw bed; but on this straw bed I sleep to a wonder. Our refectory affords me but a very homely fare, but I bring with me a keen appetite, which seasons so well whatever is set before me, that often I have some scruples to feel so much pleasure in eating our beans and carrots. As for the peace of the soul, what a difference! it is literally, and with plain truth that I can say, that one day in the House of the Lord affords me more solid pleasure and contentment than a thousand ever procured me in the Palace which I inhabited. If a Convent has observances, the Court also has its own;

but much harder than ours : and those who live at Court, must, notwithstanding their repugnance, follow the exercises of the Court : here, for example, at five o'clock in the afternoon, I go to mental prayer ; at Versailles I was summoned to the card room. At nine o'clock the bell calls me to matins ; at Versailles notice was given me it was the hour for the comedy. They never enjoy a moment of rest at Court, though they run constantly the same course of trifles. How many delightful mornings have I lost there ! Sometimes to recruit me from the often unpleasant fatigues of the preceding day ; at other times to be wearied to a degree at my toilet, or to hear the tedious conversation of troublesome visitors. Here, as I sleep well during the night, it is a pleasure to me to get up early in the morning. I am not two minutes in dressing myself ; after that I am occupied all day long in a manner extremely agreeable to my mind, because I feel that it is profitable to my soul. In short, at Court, every thing promised me pleasures, and I found none any where. Here, on the contrary, where every thing seems calculated to contristate nature, my joy is undisturbed and without allay : and during all this year which I have passed here, I have asked myself every day, where those austerities were to be found with which they wanted to frighten me from my resolution ? but since it is so evident, that in every respect I have been a great gainer by exchanging the Court for a Convent of Theresians, you may judge

how groundless they bestow upon me so much praise for having embraced a religious state."

But whatever the humble Novice could do to lessen in the eyes of men the merit of her sacrifice; every body either in the Convent or in the world, must have been very sensible how heroic this sacrifice was in a Princess of Royal extraction, so delicately educated, and especially whose weak health had always required so much attention and care. Hence the people who had the greatest confidence in her courage, still entertained doubts whether her strength would be able to hold out to the end of her Noviceship. In effect, to pass from a Palace into a Theresian Monastery; to have no other bed but three boards and a straw mattress; no other linen but serge; no other clothes but of coarse woollen cloth; after abstinence and fasting no other food but a measured portion of aliments most simply dressed; and, moreover, an uninterrupted succession of long prayers and manual labour. Every day seven hours choir; in short, silence, mortification, solitude every where; and to be a King's daughter; I beg leave to ask whether any one would have been surprised; if a weak and tottering health had sunk under the weight of such trials? Nevertheless, it was quite the reverse: and the miracle of nature accompanying and seconding the miracle of grace, the Princess, always sickly in the midst of the delights of a Court, visibly recovered her health by fast-

ings, abstinence, and labour : the very same person who had never tried to keep Lent, as it is kept at Court, without being ill, kept, during her Noviceship, the Theresian Lent without the least mitigation, and found herself at Easter in a better state of health than any other of her community ; her constitution became stronger every day ; she had no longer her usual spittings of blood, grew fat, and her ruddy countenance announced the most vigorous health. Louis the Fifteenth, however, would not for a long time agree with his daughter, that she enjoyed better health at Saint Denis than at his Court ; and he yielded only to the clearest evidence, confirmed by the physicians whom he sent on purpose to the Convent, and by some Lords of his Court who assured him that when they saw the Princess, they were struck at the improvement of her health. One day the Monarch, whom his daughter often entertained with the great comforts of her state, represented to her, that he could not comprehend how she could find herself so happy in a state of life so extremely hard ; “ Dear father,” said the Princess, “ it is nevertheless very true, that I enjoy the greatest happiness. The thought alone that I am come here both for my salvation, and the salvation of those whom I love, has something so exquisitely sweet, that I do not wonder at all that it has cured me of all my complaints.” The King was so moved by this answer that he could not refrain from shedding tears.

However, before consecrating herself to ALMIGHTY GOD by an indissoluble engagement, Princess Louisa wanted to have no longer any money concerns to transact with the world which was going to inherit all her temporal pretensions. As grateful towards her faithful servants, as they were tenderly attached to her, she had before she left the Court, recommended them to the King who had promised to reward them ; but their allowance was not yet fixed. She solicited it again by a very minute memorial in their favour, and she wrote at the same time a pressing letter to the King, begging his Majesty to order that a debt which laid very heavy upon her heart should be discharged. "It seems natural to me," said she, "that my servants should be treated exactly in the same manner as if I were dead, since in reality I am dead to the world by the state which I embrace." It appears, that in her memorial addressed to the Minister of the Finances, she carried still farther her wishes in favour of the persons who had attended her, for the King in a letter dated from *Compiègne*, July the thirty-first, 1771, wrote to her: "To-morrow, dear daughter, I will do your commission with the Controller General. You are just, and, nevertheless, you wish that your servants receive a bounty for journeys which they do not take. As for their wages and victuals, nothing is more equitable, with some allowance besides; but what you ask for is too much, especially in the present situation of our finances." Who would ever have thought, that this good

Prince, whose principles have been so unmercifully calumniated and traduced, had calculated with so much scrupulosity the interests of his people, with a daughter whom he loved with so much tenderness.

As for what concerned her in particular, Princess Louisa had already all the sentiments of a faithful daughter of Saint Theresa; and we may assert, having the written proofs in our hands, that besides all the sacrifices of her high rank, affluence, *et cetera*, which she had so generously made, she wished also to live poor, in the poorest Monastery of the Order. Knowing that in the House of Saint Denis, the usual portion was two hundred and fifty pounds; and that in case of weak health in the subject, the community could receive double that sum of money; Princess Louisa putting herself in the number of the sick on account of her delicate health, had offered to the Prioress five hundred pounds, the very day of her arrival, saying, "I meant to conform myself to your customs and practices, which I am well acquainted with. I have saved five hundred pounds which I give you; one half for my person, and the other half for my debilitated frame: as for the rest, we shall rely on Providence;" which she actually did.

The great poverty of the House which she had adopted, all the buildings of which were in ruins, engaged the Princess, not indeed to solicit, but to suffer that the King should come to their assistance. She had above all,

the greatest repugnance to consent that any part of the King's bounty should be settled upon herself; and though she knew that the Theresians might receive pensions, because they are put in common for the wants of the whole community, she would have preferred to have had none herself; and it was only out of charity for her Sisters, and of condescension to the advice of the Superior of the community that she consented to keep, as a pension for life, half of what was allowed her in the world for pocket money. "Out of my great regard for what you have told me concerning this pension," said she to Abbé Bertin, "I have yielded, and accepted of it; it would have been certainly more to my liking to have no pension. That would be even more honourable to the King. It would be said, that, Princess Louisa in becoming a Theresian, has renounced every thing, that she has refused a pension; and that the King, to satisfy her desires, has been so condescending as to give her none." Having been acquainted with the King's intention to endow the Monastery for a certain number of Nuns, out of the revenues of the Abbey *Saint Germain des Prés*, she wished also he would remember, that what he intended to do, was for poor Theresians; and that it could be said, "He has founded the House, but has not made the Nuns rich; he has only given them a competent sufficiency."

The King, wishing to settle on his daughter

a suitable pension, consulted the Superior of the House, and Abbé Bertin having told him that one thousand pounds a year seemed to him a sufficient sum, Louis the Fifteenth astonished at his asking so small a sum of money, mentioned the Abbess of *Beaumont les-tours*, who received annually a great deal more both of himself and the Prince of Condé her nephew. Upon which the Abbé represented to his Majesty that it was not an Abbess whom he had to endow, but a Theresian, whose wants are very limited, and the heart so disinterested, that he could not prevail upon her to accept a pension, but on account of the great wants of her community, the buildings of which were falling on all sides out of old age. This good father, admiring more and more the generous disengagement of his daughter, signed with tears in his eye, the memorial which was presented to him, and a pension of one thousand pounds a year was settled upon her. But Louis the Fifteenth, who had already communicated to Princess Louisa his intention to endow the House which she lived in for forty Nuns, wanted to know in what manner she wished that the project should be accomplished. Accordingly the Princess addressed to him her observations on the subject. In his answer, the King told her, "I will see you, dear daughter, to-morrow about five o'clock in the afternoon. I have communicated to the Controller General the memorials which Abbé Bertin has presented to me. I have found them very well drawn

up : you may depend on it, we shall do our best in behalf of your community for the present as well as for the future." Princess Louisa particularly desired, that the income which the King thought proper to grant to the Monastery of the Carmelites of Saint Denis, out of the revenue of the Abbey Saint Germain, should be paid rather in wheat than in money. This request met with some difficulties, not from the King, but from his Ministers, or those who, perhaps, were concerned in the thing. In an explanatory letter which she wrote to the King, she told his Majesty : " It is still I, dear father, and my wheat. It is very certain, that if you would give us the revenues only in ready money, it would be always a very great favour, and we should have nothing to object against it. All that we have said is only an answer to the questions which we have been asked concerning the manner of the foundation. We chose wheat in nature, because we have been told by every body that it was the most secure ; and there is a very plain reason for it, which a Theresian can perceive in her cell, as well as a man of business in his office. Since it is now so difficult to the Carmelites, at the very moment you protect them and load them with favours, to prove to your Ministers, or at least to make them own, upon the most exact estimates under their eyes, that, on an average, wheat is only fifteen or sixteen shillings worth, who will have credit enough a hundred years hence, to have the provisions of that time

fairly valued. When a favour is to be granted, is it not natural to do it in a complete manner? and we ask it as a favour that our foundation should be done in wheat. Thus you will complete all you had the goodness to do for us, and deliver for ever the Carmelites from the trouble of speaking of their temporal concerns; their whole ambition and mine, dear father, is not to be heard of any more."

7 The King finding his daughter's observations perfectly right, and having besides proposed himself to her to make a choice according to her liking, laid the affair before his Council, without the advice of which he never did any thing; and it was concluded that the foundation should be in a stated quantity of wheat. The Monarch, in announcing this decision to his daughter, by a letter which is in our hands, informs her at the same time that the two powers (civil and ecclesiastical) must concur to consolidate this settlement; and among other things he tells her: "They will communicate to you the letters-patent, and the Bull, for a Bull is necessary." He was certainly far from imagining the possibility of what we have since witnessed, when professing a persuasion, as well as his Council, that a Bull was *requisite* to legitimate a subtraction from a religious benefice in favour of a religious community.

However the spirit of self-disengagement

which animated the fervent Novice, was so sincere, that notwithstanding the laudable motives by which she had been influenced in permitting a pension to be settled upon her, nothing could supply in her heart the joy which she would have felt, in making a sacrifice of it. About this time writing to the Superior of the community, she told him, "The only pain I have, is the grant of that pension. It would have been much more comfortable to me to think that there was nothing left for me in the world. My consolation is, that among the Carmelites, notwithstanding my pension, I shall have nothing more at my disposal. Thus I abandon myself to God's will, who would not permit that I might enjoy the little glory of being the first Princess who kept no pension in becoming a Nun. Nevertheless you well know, father, that it was not out of any such vanity that I had begged of the King to grant me nothing."

All these things being finally settled, Princess Louisa free from all temporal solicitude, and delighted to preserve no other connections with the world, but those of charity, devoted herself entirely to prepare with the utmost fervor the consummation of her sacrifice. A short time before her profession, the King paid her a visit, and he repeated to her how much it cost his tenderness to see her settled for ever so far from him: "But, God," he added, "will have it so; since you are happy, this thought com-

forts me." Princess Louisa, on her side, often confessed, that of all the sacrifices for which the world had given her such encomiums, the only one which had truly affected her, was her separation from the King her father, and from a family in the bosom of which she had enjoyed all the pleasures of a tender and virtuous friendship. But no human feelings would have ever been capable of making her then balance in her heart a determination formed by Divine grace, and confirmed by so many years of the most serious reflections. The sacrifice which her tender and affectionate heart had yet to make, having been considered over and over again for many years, as well as all her other sacrifices, may have been for her a fresh matter of merit, but never was the occasion of struggle. The Princess coming into the Convent had been from the first day looked upon as a conquest as glorious for religion in general, as for the House which she had adopted; hence, from that moment, all the desires of the Christian world joined with hers, called her to her profession. She terminated her trials by a retreat of ten days, all the exercises of which she performed with her usual zeal, more inclined to out do than to mitigate their rigour. At that time she wrote to the Superior of the House, and told him, "I cannot express to you, father, how impatient I am to reach the happy moment in which I shall consecrate myself for ever to the service of the ALMIGHTY: my health is very good; it seems that it grows

stronger every day: however, you well know that a time of retreat is not a time of rest. This happy change, the satisfaction which I enjoy, and my eagerness to see the long wished-for twelfth; all this convinces me more and more that it is here that God means I should fix. Pray for me, father; I stand in great need of it."

The eve of her profession, which is especially a day of mortification and penance; after having prayed for a long time, fasted upon bread and water, and with hair cloth under her habit, she had besides to pray before the blessed sacrament till midnight. Her Prioress, fearing lest so many austerities, which came after all those she had already borne, should be above her strength, proposed to her to dispense her from part of them. But, Princess Louisa, as, if this indulgence had been offered to her rank rather than to her wants, answered the Prioress: "I see clearly, dear Mother, that you always remember what I have been in the world; try, then, I beseech you, to forget it for good and all; or, if the thought ever occurs again to your mind, let it be to remind you that, in that quality, I stand in need more than any other to do penance." They thought proper, therefore, not to constrain her zeal on the occasion; and she passed half the night in adoration before the blessed sacrament; she did yet something more; she employed the remainder in her cell in meditating on her ap-

proaching happiness; after which she sighed with still greater eagerness, in proportion as the moment drew near; and she owned afterwards that she did not close her eyes the whole of that night.

The next day, the twenty-second of September, 1771, her Prioress, before the whole community assembled for that purpose, reminded her for the last time, of all the obligations which she was going to contract, by pronouncing her vows; she hid nothing from her; and among other things she told her, "Henceforth, my dear Sister, self-will can no longer be yours; born to command, you must depend on all those to whom the ALMIGHTY will intrust his authority: the vow of obedience forbids all examination, all choice, all election, all self-opinion and sentiment; it captivates the mind, chains up the desires, and subdues the judgment. To fulfil this vow in its perfection (and this perfection you aspire to), it is not sufficient to execute what it commanded; it must be done quickly, and without the least delay; without repining, without sadness, rejoicing on the contrary to imitate by your submission, that which JESUS CHRIST paid to his Father while he lived on earth. In a word, by the vow of obedience, a Religious abdicates for ever the disposal of herself; she renounces for ever her liberty; she becomes a pupil for the remainder of her whole life; she returns to a state of infancy, holy indeed, and spiritual, but which is to last for ever: she in-

cludes and loses her own will, in the will of another; she gives up to another the full management of it, reserving only to herself the merit of the sacrifice.

“ If our Order has preserved its primitive fervor, it must be attributed to the exact observance of the strictest poverty. It would not be enough for a daughter of our holy Mother, to have given up all that she possessed in the world, together with the desire and the means of ever enjoying it again, or any thing else : her disengagement of heart must go still farther ; must be still more perfect ; she must not even look upon the most necessary things left to her use as her own ; the expressions themselves which might indicate some propriety must be entirely banished from her conversation : desirous to imitate the poverty of JESUS CHRIST, who had not where to rest his head, she ought to esteem herself happy to be in want, not only of the conveniencies of life, but even of the things which she might procure to herself, without infringing her sacred engagement : poverty is her patrimony, her inheritance, her treasure ; she is eager to seek the occasions of feeling its hardest privations, and rejoices when she has been able to find them.

“ A Religious, animated with this love of poverty, runs with rapidity in the way of the cross ; and it is this cross, my dear Sister,

which you are going to take upon you by the third vow : a sublime vow, by which you will present to God your body a living sacrifice : a vow which forbids the most innocent indulgencies and pleasures, for religious chastity is a virtue which feeds and lives on mortifications ; it is the lily which grows and blossoms among thorns, and which cannot be preserved in all its beauty, but by a bloody and implacable war against the senses, which are its irreconcilable enemies. Such are, my dear Sister, the sacred engagements which you are going to contract at the foot of the altar."

The Princess had meditated long enough on these awful engagements ; and the more she knew their weight and extent, the more eagerly she seemed animated with the desire of vowing the observance of them. It was the Archbishop of Paris who received her profession ; she pronounced its form with a fervor and animation which were the plain expressions of a heart fully satisfied. Though divested of all external pomp, the ceremony was extremely moving, and sufficiently calculated to impress the spectators with the most profound reflections. If the Lords of the Court and the inhabitants of the capital did not appear at Saint Denis on that day, a multitude of those pious faithful, whom religion alone conducts to such pious solemnities, filled up the Church of the Carmelites. Penetrated with admiration at the heroic courage which the Princess manifested at

that awful moment, every one praised her, shedding tears of joy on the consummation of her sacrifice, which they viewed as the most memorable triumph of religion. The pious Pontiff, above all, who was the officiating Minister in the consecration of the August Victim, seemed more penetrated than any other with the sentiments common to all; and he often repeated since, that among all the events the most proper to alleviate the pains of his long and laborious Episcopacy, none had afforded him so great a consolation as this metamorphosis of a great Princess into a fervent Theresian. When the ringing of the bells of the whole town acquainted the public that Princess Louisa had pronounced her vows, the sentiments which had affected the beholders, seemed to have been communicated every where: workmen left their work undone; artisans went out of their shops; crouds of people gathered together in the midst of the streets and public squares; they lifted up their hands to Heaven, and wherever you might have gone, you would have heard repeated on all sides; "How is it possible that our King's daughter should have devoted herself, for her whole life, to the practice of austerities which no one of us would have the courage to undergo?"

The ceremony being over, the Princess, who had attained the end of her wishes, continued to return to God her heart-felt

thanksgivings, and invited all those near her to share her joy. This sentiment shone in her countenance and in all her words. She embraced her companions with tenderness, and spoke to them in the most affectionate manner: "Let us bless God," said she to them, "he has broken all my bonds; I am his; I am yours. Thank him for his great mercy to me. I inhabit the Land of the Saints; ask of him that I may sanctify myself in it, and always be guided by the spirit of our holy Mother."

After having poured forth among her Sisters these first overflowings of her joy, she stole away from them for a short time in order to write to the King. "I write to you, dear father, with the same pen with which I have written my vows, to let you know that I am happy, and to assure you, that I will never forget that I owe it entirely to your tender friendship to me."

Some Ladies particularly attached to the Princess, and desirous to edify themselves by seeing nearer the ceremony of her sacrifice, had obtained leave of the Archbishop of Paris to enter the Convent on that day. One of them seeing, that Princess Louisa, for the sake of whom alone she was come, preferred the company of the Nuns to hers, represented to her, that it was impossible to enjoy her alone for an instant, while all her attentions were for the Religious whom she saw every day. "O! if you knew," replied

the Princess, "how much I love them all, and every one in particular, and how much they deserve to be loved! They are Angels! and I owe all my happiness to them!" Another Lady, who thought that the hard and austere life of the Carmelites ought to give them a sad and severe countenance, could not recover from her surprise, in beholding the serenity, sweetness, and modest gaiety of their looks. "You cannot imagine," said the new Carmelite to her, "what a constant cheerfulness a good conscience always gives! The whole year here, is but one holy day. Yes, I feel myself, truly, too happy in this House: every thing is smiling and pleasant to me; even these very walls which separate me from the world."

It was only a week after the emission of her vows, that Princess Louisa received the black veil from the Countess of Provence. The Pope's Nuncio, attended by several Bishops, and a great number of inferior Clergy, officiated in this last ceremony, which, by an express order from the King, was performed with as much solemnity and external pomp as her clothing. The Bishop of Senlis made the discourse, as usual, on such occasions, and the eloquent preacher availed himself so well of all the advantages which the subject furnished him, as to make the deepest impression both on the minds and hearts of his hearers. The Princess at her clothing had shewn all the ardour of an

Athlet who rushes rapidly forward in the career which he has to run. At her profession there shone in all her countenance and looks, the pure joy of a conqueror, who, by a victory, has at length secured a long wished-for peace.

Princess Louisa's profession soon became the general topic of conversation all over the kingdom, as had been eighteen months before her coming to the Convent. At that time people of the world had permitted themselves to blame the Princess: her step, said they, was at least a very inconsiderate one; she would never be able to go on: Nevertheless, she went on with courage, and received the habit of Saint Theresa. They then appealed to her profession, assuring with positiveness, that never the daughter of a great King would pronounce the vows of a Theresian. When Princess Louisa had made these vows, overcome by evidence, yet no less inclined to depreciate a courageous virtue, which so loudly condemned their cowardness and effeminacy, but always obstinate in their malignant constructions, they pretended that the Princess would not be at least a Carmelite like others.

More equitable in their judgment, and better acquainted with the truth, the unprejudiced and truly wise, did justice to the heroic virtues of Princess Louisa, and were greatly edified at them; among them we may reckon the most venerable man perhaps of

this age, and the best qualified to appreciate unblemished virtues; I mean the holy Bishop of Amiens. Having been formerly Superior of the Theresians of Saint Denis, Mr. de la Motte had always entertained an intimate correspondence with their community; and it was after having seen there Princess Louisa, and witnessed her edifying behaviour in the Monastery, that he wrote to several friends of his: "I have been at Saint Denis, and admired the conduct of Princess Louisa, now *Sister Theresa of Saint Austin*. She is always seen the first at all the exercises of the community; and what is still more striking, is her obedience and love of poverty. She is satisfied with every thing. To see her is a very moving sermon. There is nothing in her cell perfectly similar to the others, but her straw chair, and an arm chair for the King. Sometimes his Majesty sits down upon her bed, which is a quilted straw bed, and finds it hard, but she makes a joke of all that. What is more admirable in her, is her humility, which makes her the equal of the Nuns in all things: she asks leave for the most trifling things with the simplicity of a child: I cannot express to you the joy, the evenness of temper, and the courage of this holy Princess, loving her state of life, and finding herself more happy in it, than if she wore a crown. It is a miracle to behold her practising the greatest austerities, and enjoying at the same time a strength and vigour, which are not seen in those Ladies of the world who are

the most attentive to avoid the least thing which might endanger their constitution : in short, to see her leading the life of a Theresian without mitigation, with uninterrupted cheerfulness, and a most flourishing health. I am just returned from Saint Denis discontented with myself, and firmly resolved to serve GOD with less tepidity than I have done heretofore. I declare it candidly, because in reality no one can see such an example without being animated to piety, which always makes those completely happy who sacrifice every thing for it."

However, Princess Louisa, equally insensible on the various judgments which either the unthinking worldlings, or the truly Christian souls might pass on her, and much more zealous to possess the merit of holiness than to obtain the reputation of it, rejoiced in being able to raise up secretly the edifice of her perfection in the obscurity of a profound solitude ; and the virtues which we are going to lay before our readers, known only in the sanctuary where she practised them, would have been lost for the edification of the public, had not obedience and charity imposed as a duty upon the pious companions of the Princess to communicate to us every particular of her hidden life.

THE
LIFE
OF
PRINCESS LOUISA OF FRANCE,
A
CARMELITE NUN.

BOOK III.

SCARCE had Princess Louisa bound herself to a religious state, by the solemn emission of her vows, when an office became vacant in her Monastery; it was a place of confidence, indeed, and undoubtedly very important, if not the most important in a community; the office of Mistress of Novices. The religious companions of the Princess, who from the first day of her admission, had constantly watched her, in order to know, and soon after to admire her, had conceived of her such a high esteem; had so well appreciated her prudence, wisdom, mildness, and sound judgment; had always been so much

edified at her docility to the advices which were given her, at her profound humility, her fervor in prayer, and at her love of sufferings ; in short, had seen her walking with so much courage and steadiness in the ways of religious perfection, that they thought no one better qualified than she was, to be the guide of others ; and accordingly resolved to intrust her with the care of the Novices. Abbé Bertin having been informed of their project, even before Princess Louisa had made her profession, did every thing in his power to dissuade the community from it. He represented to them that the public would find their choice very extraordinary ; that it was a custom, as well as a rule of prudence, to elect to such an office only a Religious tried by long experience : moreover, that such a burden, though it were not above the virtues of Princess Louisa, seemed to him above her strength ; because her health, though much improved, was not yet robust. The Nuns answered to these observations, that Princess Louisa herself had taught them ever to disregard the vain judgment of the public, when any good was to be done ; that it was precisely the high importance of the charge, and their desire to intrust with it a true Religious, which determined them to choose Princess Louisa ; in short, that they had no anxiety in respect of her health, which grew stronger every day. The Superior knew the Princess well enough, and was not ignorant that the fervor of all the Novices was the fruit of her great examples ; therefore he needed but

little reflection to be sensible of what could be expected of a zeal as enlightened as it was fervent : judging therefore that they might be allowed, not to regard as a mere Novice, a person who had inured herself for so many years to the practice of religious virtues, he yielded to the desires of the community ; and Princess Louisa the next day * after her profession, was named Mistress of the Novices. This mark of confidence was for the Princess a great subject of affliction ; she did not fail to represent her inexperience, her want of knowledge in the ways of perfection, and especially the inconvenience of commanding others, having scarcely learned herself how to obey : but her Superiors insisting upon it, she resigned her will ; and the fear of acting against the obedience, which she had just been vowing to God, obliged her to accept an office, of which her humility made her entertain so great an apprehension.

Become the Mistress of those of whom the day before she was the companion, the Princess always loved to shew herself to her Pupils under this character ; she had no precautions to take to gain their confidence, which she enjoyed without reserve ; and it must have cost her but little to preserve it. In the circumstances she was in, she had this great advantage, that almost all the young persons, whose direction was confided to her,

* Others have said, after she had received the black veil.

were indebted for their vocation, to the great example which her retreat had given to the world; and for their perseverance, to the powerful influence of those virtues which with their own eyes they every day saw her practise in the Monastery. When she took the conduct of the Novices they were seventeen in number: the first time she spoke to them as their Mistress, "My dear sisters," she said to them, "it must indeed appear very surprising to you, as it is to myself, that being yesterday in the midst of you as your equal; to day I am placed at your head; and it is the subject of my confusion. Do not expect from me eloquent discourses on our duties; but I will endeavour to fulfil them with you to the best of my abilities; and we will encourage one another to combat our defects, and form ourselves to the virtues which we have not acquired;" and such was her invariable rule: she spoke little, and did much: her example always confirmed and supported her discourses; and her pupils were sure always to find the lessons which she gave them, eminently traced out in her own conduct.

Almost as soon as she had began to discharge her new office, she felt that the sacrifices which we make to God are never without reward. The burden which her docility had made her look upon as a duty for her to accept against her inclinations, instead of being attended with all the inconveniencies which she so much dreaded, became on the

contrary to her a source of graces and spiritual lights. " I must own, *Father*, said she, writing to the Superior of the House ; for I speak to you here as in confession ; I must tell you then that there is not a better school for virtue, than the charge of preaching it to others. Our Novices are so fervent that I am often ashamed when I think that I am preaching to those who are a thousand times better than myself. Since Reverend Mother has intrusted them to my care, I cannot tell you how useful it has been to me to correct many of my own defects."

The community on their side, had soon to congratulate themselves for having put into such able hands the care of perpetuating regularity and fervor in the House. All that can be expected from a prudent and indefatigable zeal, animated with the most tender charity, Princess Louisa displayed at the head of the Noviceship of Saint Denis ; and we might give here an excellent treatise of Christian perfection, if we could enlarge on the method which she followed, and the particular means which she made use of to unfold the seed of religious virtues in the heart of her Pupils ; to teach them how to study and know themselves ; how to unite themselves to God by mental prayer, and bless him in all their actions : how they could enjoy peace themselves, and diffuse around them its most delicious fruits ; in a word, how a Christian *Virginia* lives no longer her own life, but the very life of her Divine

Spouse It was doubtless a great subject of admiration for those who had the happiness to be witnesses of all her conduct, to hear a King's daughter, scarcely come out of her father's Palace, speaking of the things of God, with a wisdom and unction worthy a Religious grown old at the feet of Saint Theresa herself. Hence all her instructions were listened to and treasured up by her Pupils with a holy avidity; they delighted to recal them to their minds, and entertain themselves with them during the hours of recreation; they meditated upon them; sometimes even wrote them down, in order to enjoy, at a more remote period of time, the pleasure of considering them over and over again; and it is what has enabled us to collect them ourselves, and to present our readers with some precious fragments of them.

The first object of the solicitude of the new Mistress, was to apply herself to know the vocation of her Pupils, and enable them at the same time to discern themselves its character and principle. She did not hide from them; on the contrary, she often laid before them the danger of an irrevocable engagement when entered on from human motives. "There is no need of much reflection, said she to them, "to be convinced that Nuns are not exposed in a Convent to so many dangers as people living in the world; and that at the moment of death, as well as during our life, we have among us the most powerful means of salvation. But it is not

sufficiently considered, that these precious advantages are only for those whom ALMIGHTY GOD calls to that state of life ; and GOD calls to it only whom he pleases. It is not always the most holy souls ; it is often the weakest ; but no persons ought to think themselves called to a state of life, unless they have the virtues proper to that state ; if not yet in an exact practice, at least in sufficient abilities and good will ; and this good will shews itself by actions."

The prudent Mistress never took upon herself to decide positively on the vocation of her Pupils ; she always referred to GOD those who wanted of her a formal decision. "It is not to me, said she to them ; it is to GOD that it belongs to call you. By the purity of your intentions, and a sincere desire of knowing his designs over you, shew yourselves worthy of obtaining that he would vouchsafe to speak to you." One of these young persons insisting, represented to her that knowing better than she did the state of a 'Heresian, she could also decide with more certainty whether she was fit for it. "All I can tell you on the subject," answered Princess Louisa, "is, that I find myself happy in the state which I have embraced, even beyond all my hopes ; but to assure you that this state which makes my happiness will also make yours ; I want a gift, which I have not, of penetrating into your own interior, better than yourself. The only advice which I can give you in the present circumstance, is to

consult the LORD with more zeal than ever, and beg that he will be your light and guide ; I will join with you, and to-morrow, if you approve of it, we will begin a Novenna for this intention. If, after that, you do not feel yourself enlightened and fortified, I will settle every thing for your return to the world ; for, GOD forbid, that the first step you have taken towards a religious state, should ever be for you a motive to embrace it, without a well decided vocation."

A report, undoubtedly very ridiculous, had been disseminated among the Public; that on account of Princess Louisa's admission into the community of Saint Denis, they would receive no longer but Ladies of rank; on the contrary, the principle of the Princess, when become Mistress of the Novices was, that the vocation of Ladies of rank or of fortune should be examined with more severity, for fear of being dazzled by these outward advantages which Theresians ought to reckon as nothing. "It is," said she, "the spirit of our holy Mother, and it ought to be the spirit of all Religious Houses. We can do very well without birth or riches, but nothing can supply a good vocation."

A young person who knew Princess Louisa only by the reputation of her virtues, consulted her on her motives for embracing a religious state. The Princess answered her, "You write to me Miss N*** with a simplicity and candour which engages me to answer

you with the utmost sincerity, without however pretending in the least to give you any decision. According to the picture which you draw of yourself, it seems that you are of an easy and condescending character : with such a disposition, it is very difficult for a young person to work out her salvation in the world, especially when, like you, she enjoys all the advantages which high birth and fortune can afford : nevertheless, I do not say, that it is a thing quite impossible. Whatever may be our station in life, or temper of mind, we have a right to hope for a place in Heaven, if we are faithful to correspond to the graces of God : we have an evident proof of it in the lives of the Saints : we find there people of all descriptions and characters who are proposed as our models : what they have done, we can do it also : but a young person of an easy and condescending character, is exposed to many more dangers ; it is more difficult to her than to any other to overcome all the obstacles which might oppose her embracing a religious state ; but this step once taken, meeting but with examples which are calculated to excite and animate her to piety, her salvation is more secure ; and often that easy complying disposition, which comes from great natural gentleness is transformed into virtue. The fear which you seem to entertain on your salvation, is a very good motive ; but it must not be the only one : the love of God, the desire of enjoying him for ever, and to do for our LORD JESUS CHRIST what he has done for us, are also

requisite. I leave you Miss N*** to these reflections; there is certainly sufficient matter for the most serious ones: but what I recommend to you above all, is not to take any step, without having implored the light of the Holy Ghost by fervent and assiduous prayers, in order to know and accomplish the will of the ALMIGHTY over you."

Attentive to the different wants of her Pupils, Princess Louisa loved to entertain them in private on their vocation; sometimes to teach them how to search into or purify its motives, sometimes to make them sensible of the danger of infidelity to a grace, of such great importance with regard to their salvation. Often when the occupations of the day had not permitted her to give a private advice by word of mouth, her charity prompted her to take upon her sleep the necessary time to give it in writing to the person whom she thought to stand in need of it. "Reflect, my dear sister, that God will ask you a strict account of your vocation, if it be he who has inspired you with it. Do not say; *If I am sent away it will not be then my fault, if I am not a Religious*, for it might be still your fault, if you do not correspond with grace; grace is a gift of God, but we must labour with earnestness to make it fructify within ourselves; and, how many motives have you to do it?"

"You are then going to be soon the spouse of JESUS CHRIST, (writing to the same

Novice a little time, before her profession) “but I repeat it to you, reflect again seriously upon it. Will you have the courage and strength of practising during your whole life, what has cost you so much during your noviceship? it is true that the merciful God, whom we serve, well deserves that we should suffer for him; it is true that we suffer nothing but what our Divine SAVIOUR has suffered the first for our sake. Oh! let him be constantly before our eyes, as our strength and model; endeavour to accustom yourself to walk habitually in his presence; avail yourself of the tranquillity and calmness which you enjoy, to entertain yourself more intimately with him. A look upon the graces which he has granted to you, in the midst of the trials which his Providence has sent you, to fortify your vocation, will be very proper to supply you with an ample matter of the most tender conversation with your beloved. The testimony which you can bear to yourself, that you love and prefer him before all that you hold most dear in the world, without mentioning riches, and all the other advantages you might expect, will be sufficient to enkindle more and more the fire of the divine love which is already burning in your heart. I entertain a confident hope that it will be animated with the purest flames, and that you will feel that unction, and inexpressible joy, which is felt only by those who love JESUS, and know how happy it is to be entirely his.”

One of the means which Princess Louisa often employed, and never in vain, to excite the confidence of her pupils and maintain their fervor, was to fix their attention on the inestimable grace of their vocation to a religious life: "God," said she, sometimes to them, "has granted to us many graces; but we need only consider that of our separation from the world, and of its scandals; that blessing alone which is so striking a sign of the special mercy of God over us, requires from us in return a love without bounds, and sacrifices without reserve."

She had to a perfect degree, the rare talent, which the most holy souls are not always endowed with, of knowing how to insinuate herself into the minds of those who were under her care, and she knew how to open their hearts to a confidence in her. For fear this precious sentiment should be lessened in some of her Pupils, out of an ill understood respect for her person, or on account of what she had been in the world; she made herself their equal, and preengaged them with the most amiable affability and goodness. "Sometimes a thought occurs to my mind," said she to them one day, "that the Tempter, who makes use of every thing to accomplish our ruin, might perhaps use an artifice with you in order to lessen the confidence you ought all to have in me, as in your Mother. Thus, instead of this quality alone under which religion commands you to behold me, perhaps some of you will

still remember what I was in the world ; and this remembrance you will form into a phantom for the meer pleasure of being frightened : each will say to themselves, If our Mistress was another person I would disclose to her the troubles of my heart ; but I dare not speak with so much liberty to one who formerly was Princess Louisa. In the the Name of God, I beseech you, my dear Sisters, let never any one of you give me the affliction to learn that they have entertained such a thought ; it would be a true temptation of the Devil sufficient to complete your ruin : however, if some of you could not overcome their involuntary repugnance to disclose their pains to me by word of mouth, let them do it first by writing."

All the conduct of Princess Louisa with her Pupils drew them towards this confidence in her ; the lessons which she gave them as their Mistress she reiterated as their friend in her private conversation with them, and during the recreations where she made herself their companion and their equal. It is there, that always preserving a most amiable cheerfulness on her lips, and an unalterable peace in her heart, she offered up to them a moving picture of the happiness of a soul that has made great sacrifices to God, and knows how to bear them with alacrity and courage. Her sincerity, her good nature, and her familiar plain carriage, disposed all the hearts in her favour. All that she did then, all that she said invited to virtue ; every thing was

an instruction to her Pupils, without having the least appearance of it. She made use sometimes of jokoseness in order to correct those, who, but little inured to the sacrifices of mortification and religious poverty, seemed to remember too much their former education. "Yes," said she to them, "such were also my pretensions; I had the same niceness, I felt the same repugnance, when I was Princess Louisa; but Sister Theresa of Saint Austin must learn how to be brought down." One of the Novices having told her, that there were no austerities in the House more painful to her than the using of the common towels which she found quite wet when she wanted to wipe her hands: "I must tell it you sincerely," replied Princess Louisa, "that at my coming here, I was caught like you, for I had never reckoned this mortification among those which I thought were practised by Theresians: my niceness in that regard was such, that, in order to find the towel clean, I was very earnest to be one of the first at the hour fixed to use it; but, reflecting afterwards, that such a motive of punctuality in the discharge of duties was very little becoming a person who intended to make a vow of poverty, I reconciled myself to it, used the towel without thinking of it, and I do assure you, that any one is soon accustomed to such little sacrifices, and that they do no harm when they are made for God's sake."

Her long residence at Court and great knowledge of the world, had given to the

Princess' an exquisite discernment to judge of characters : thus she always knew perfectly well what defects she had to combat, or what virtues she was to encourage in a Novice ; and success answered her cares, because they were always directed by prudence, and commanded by a spirit of inexhaustible charity. In an office so little suited to the education which she had received, and the way of life which she had led at Court, nothing ever could tire her patience or alter her mildness : those among her pupils who presented more defects to mend, seemed to her the most worthy of her special care and affection ; and, in reality, they obtained them. A Novice asking her pardon one day for a fault of some importance, Princess Louisa told her : " This pardon has been readily granted, but let us agree upon one thing ; when you are a little out of humour, let it be only between you and me, without your companions being able to perceive it." The wrongs of others in her regard seemed always to her of little consequence, and she excused them with an indulgence, which appeared sometimes carried to excess, but which the ALMIGHTY blessed with success on account of her pure motives. Her virtue had given her such a command over herself, that, notwithstanding her vivacity, she preserved in all circumstances a perfect evenness of temper. As one of the Religious seemed to be edified at her never shewing any ill humour amidst the many contradictions in-

seperable from the details of her charge, Princess Louisa answered her with great ingenuity, *Give me no credit for that, for if I never lose my temper, it is because I never feel it discomposed.*" It was nothing in the eyes of a King's daughter thus to accommodate her character to the various characters of all those whom she had the charge of forming to religious virtues.

The skilful mistress asked above all of her pupils a great generosity in the first sacrifices which offered themselves to them on their coming into a convent. "You are in the road to Heaven," said she to a Postulant, "every thing depends on the first steps you take. Take care you do not resemble those unfaithful Israelites to whom their cowardice, represented in the Land of Promise, monsters which actually did not exist; and who on that account deserved to be excluded from it. You had the courage to make the greatest sacrifices; fear lest you should fail in the little ones. Believe me, never seek to compromise with your duties. Remembering the proverb, that, *He who smells too much, at a dose of physic will never take it.*

"The yoke of a Carmelite is either very light or very heavy, according as she carries it with courage, or drags it along with cowardice. At my first coming here, the only means I found to get ease and comfort, was to overcome all at once my repugnance

to some little daily sacrifices, with which the imagination is frightened, when let to work at pleasure. I remember, for example, that I had the greatest dread of being Chauntress in our offices. Instead of trying to elude this function, I begged to be employed in it, and my repugnance disappeared. On the eve of exchanging my linen for woollen clothes, and of resigning myself to wear them all my life, though I had already tried them, nature was still prompted to murmur; in order to reduce it to silence, I thought it would be very proper to ask leave to wear a hair cloth for some time, and from that time woollen felt as soft as silk."

Princess Louisa's earnest desire was to find in her pupils sincerity and simplicity joined with courage and good will: "I know no better ground for virtue, than simplicity; I do not mind the faults, nor even the defects of those who have a simple and upright heart before God, because they will mend; but nothing is more opposite to the spirit of Christianity; nothing is more apt to conduct a Religious to a spiritual blindness, than certain pretensions to a superior way of thinking, which tend to lessen the respect which she ought to entertain for the least of our pious observances." A young person, shortly after her admission in the Convent, found ridiculous some little practices, which are never neglected in communities, where they know how important it is to try humility by

humiliations; and she said to her Mistress, that, when she was a child, they made her kiss the floor; ask pardon on her knees; and make a cross upon the dust with her tongue; that she had never thought she should meet again with these childish trifles in a Convent. Princess Louisa, filled with compassion for the young person who spoke to her in this manner, answered to her, "You come from the world, my child, and you have just spoken the language of the world. You have opened your mind with a candour which pleases me much: I must, therefore, tell you also what I think: it is, that if you wish to be a Nun, you must forget all that you have learned in the world: you must return to the days of your infancy, which you seem to despise so much; and you must resume the sentiments you were then animated with. A true Religious seeks her greatness in littleness: she sees nothing childish, but a sublime act of virtue in David, when he humbled himself before God, and prostrated himself before him with his face in the dust. She always keeps present to her mind that our Divine Master threatens us to shut against us the gates of Heaven if we do not become like little children; that is to say, if we have not their docility, candour, and all their simplicity."

Though human respect seems less to be feared in a Convent than any where else, Princess Louisa, nevertheless, recommended very much to her pupils, never to let them-

selves be actuated by that motive. She could not forgive herself to have yielded to that weakness when at Court; and she humbled herself again for it by the confession she did not blush to make of it. "Often," said she, "out of a fear of displeasing the world, I did not dare do the good which God required of me, or I did it but in part. Here, my dear Sisters, it is against a human respect quite different from this that you will have to guard yourselves. What you ought to do only for God, you will be tempted to do it either to please your Mistress, or out of fear of displeasing her; as if it were your Mistress, and not God alone who is to judge and reward you. Defiled by such motives, your best actions would become a kind of idolatry."

In instructing her pupils on the same subject, she told them, besides, "We read two maxims in the Gospel, which at first seem contradictory: the first, that we must do our good works before men, that seeing them they glorify their Heavenly Father: the second, that we must do our good works in secret, otherwise we shall have no other reward but the reward of the hypocrites. Our Lord taught us thereby, that we ought without human respect or ostentation to accomplish before men both his precepts and the duties of our calling; and, moreover, that we ought to keep secret the works of supererogation and counsel, which are neither commanded

by his law, nor by our particular engagements. Thus, a Nun may and ought from duty to shew every where, an entire resignation to the orders of Providence, a profound humility, an unreserved disengagement from creatures, an unbounded obedience, a great love of silence, retirement, mortification, and poverty; in a word, she ought to observe with exactitude all the articles of the Rule to which she has submitted herself of her own accord; that her Sisters, edified at her fidelity in the performance of her duties, may glorify their Heavenly Father. But, these indispensable duties once fulfilled, a faithful spouse of JESUS CHRIST will find besides many opportunities of offering up precious sacrifices to her Divine Bridegroom which are to be known by him alone." Entering afterwards into particulars, which undoubtedly were the account of her habitual practices, she told the Novices, "You feel a repugnance for some particular observance; never recur to any means, however lawful, of obtaining a dispensation from it; you do not like much the company of some of your Sisters; redouble your attentions and affability towards them in their presence, and your charity when absent, without letting any body penetrate your motives: they contradict your opinions, and with a single word you might gain an easy triumph; abstain from that word: they relate a piece of news which cannot contribute to your edification, though it may satisfy your curiosity; decline the information, but do it without af-

fection; they rehearse in your presence some historical facts with which you are perfectly acquainted, and which are much disfigured; you have it in your power to represent them as they are; do not allow yourself that satisfaction: there are some religious practices which cost you more than others; observe them with fidelity, and do not say a word of it to any one; you do not like certain dishes which are usually served in the refectory, choose rather to eat of them as remedies against your sensuality; and let not any one be informed of your secret but God alone: you receive a public reprimand; they have enjoined you an humbling satisfaction; you submit with docility and humility, which is an indispensable duty, and an example you ought to give to your Sisters; but in receiving that reprimand, you felt that it was quite ill grounded: this satisfaction, you were sure, exceeded the fault; all that must be kept hid from them, and must be known only to him who is to give you your reward."

Princess Louisa would not allow that in any circumstance her Novices should exculpate themselves of the faults which were imputed to them, though without the least ground: "When you have made a real progress in an interior life," said she to them, "if by chance they accuse you either through mistake or otherwise, of a fault which you have not really committed, you will humble yourself in silence, praying at the same time

for the person who is mistaken. If you had solid reasons to think that scandal would be taken from permitting yourself to be judged guilty, it might be then lawful, and sometimes it might be a duty in you to represent that you are not really so. But if after the *Yes* or *No* of a Christian, there appears no disposition to believe you, you should not insist. It is then a precious moment for you to make to God the sacrifice of yourself love, saying to him in the secret of your heart: *It is very right, O Lord, that having so often sought to exculpate myself when I was truly in the wrong, I suffer now for thy sake to be accused of a fault which I have not actually committed.* We begin to be guilty, when we endeavour with too much obstinacy to prove that we are not so."

The Princess was very much pleased when she discovered in her pupils the love of truth, which she herself cherished with great zeal. No defect seemed to her more opposite to a religious spirit than propensity to deceit and duplicity; she regarded it as a sort of irregularity for a Cloister, because it is attached to the character, and the person subject to it, is more rarely corrected of it, than of any other defects, even more shocking. "God is truth," said she to her Novices, "and, consequently, all that is remote from the exact truth, offends him in his essence, and necessarily displeases him." In conformity to this fundamental principle, she told them also, "There is no true humi-

lity but that which is joined to truth ; and I do not know whether there is more pride in an attention to lessen our faults in the eyes of others, than in an affectation to exaggerate them : in either case it is deceit and hypocrisy : if we know ourselves well, we shall discover in us real defects enough to humble ourselves for, without attributing to us those which in truth we have not."

According to the particular character and disposition of the Novices whom she had to form, Princess Louisa used, for their spiritual advancement, all the means and condescension which a tender and enlightened charity can suggest. But whether she exhorted or instructed them, and whether she made use of mildness to encourage, or of firmness to reprimand, the Novices were so well persuaded, that in all she did, she was actuated by the spirit of God, that they would have thought to have offended God himself, had they slighted her instructions. Thus the respect which they had for her virtues, added great weight to her lessons ; and the confidence which she had inspired made them to be relished. Her great secret to gain the love of her pupils, was to love them herself, and only for God's sake and their own good. The tender attentions of a Mother for her children, are not equal to those of Princess Louisa for her Novices. Their wants became her own ; she sacrificed to them with joy her time, cares, and repose ;

nothing escaped her solicitude ; she gave up to them the whole day, and also part of the night, when she judged it useful to them. " She was a true Mother for us all," says one of the Novices ; " she was animated with all the sentiments of one for us. When sick in the Infirmary she came up three or four times in a morning, either to comfort us or entertain in our hearts the dispositions suitable to our situation. In the most severe winters, she came at night after matins to our cells, to see whether we were not too much exposed to suffer from cold, and whether we had all the necessaries allowed to a Carmelite. When it was not so, she went herself to fetch the things which we wanted, and did to us herself, all that a mother could do for her children. We were penetrated with gratitude and shame, when we reflected that the person who was so attentive and ready to serve us, was both our Mistress and the daughter of our King. As for her, she never appeared more pleased and cheerful than when we gave her much trouble. Her patience in bearing both our spiritual and corporal infirmities, was for us a continual subject of admiration. Having told her one day that a Princess like her must have found our society very little entertaining, she immediately reprimanded me for it, as a very ill-becoming flattery, and said, " Are we come here then to seek after what may amuse us ? And do you think that our LORD found much more entertainment in the society of his twelve Disciples."

Princess Louisa being always affable, of an easy access, and receiving constantly her Novices with the most engaging kindness, they did not always consult her leisure and her most convenient time to speak to her; but as soon as they presented themselves, it seemed that it was the very moment that the Princess wanted to see them; some went to her without having any thing to say; others to hear from her some word of edification; some merely to enjoy the pleasure of beholding the amiable cheerfulness which always shone in her countenance; her complaisance in receiving them was never tired; even their indiscretion did not seem to importune her, because she knew how to turn it to their advantage. One of these young persons, whom a fit of weariness had conducted to her Mistress, found immediately with her a remedy to her pain, and returned to her cell better instructed on the means of being contented in solitude. One of the Postulants told her one day that she had been a little tired because she had been alone for a long time. "Alone," replied Princess Louisa, "and what have you done then with the good company which you have received this morning? (She had communicated) a Carmelite can never be alone: is not her cell a Paradise, where she is always sure to find her Heavenly Spouse disposed to hear and answer her; and the Blessed Virgin, her Angel Guardian, and all the Saints, who call for her homage, and offer her their protection?"

Princess Louisa seemed to outdo herself in charity, in favour of those whom she saw in affliction or trouble. Her religion and tenderness of heart rendered her ingenious to offer to every one the motives of consolation; the most proper to make a deep impression upon them; and, without requiring of them to impart to her the subject of their troubles, she obtained the free disclosure of them by her solitude, to give them every comfort in her power. One of her Novices came one night to disclose to her the anxiety and disquietudes of her mind. It was on holy Saturday, and the Princess was to get up the next day at two o'clock in the morning to sing the matins of Easter-day. She listened to the young person with her usual kindness, and gave her the advice she stood in need of; esteeming herself happy to be able, at the expence of a night's repose, to restore tranquillity and peace to an afflicted soul. Having one day to impart to a Novice the distress of a Sister of hers, who was in an urgent want of a sum of money, and had not the least hope of procuring it; the good Mistress first obtained the sum from the liberality of the Princesses her Sisters, then sent for the Novice and told her, "I have deferred for some days to deliver this letter into your hands, as I hoped to shew you at the same time, both the remedy and the evil: come, take this sum of money, and send it to your Sister in the name of Divine Providence, and wish her a good journey."

One of the greatest griefs of the tender hearted Mistress, was, when she had to declare to a Novice that she could not stay in the House. Whatever might have been the motive of her dismissal, she seemed very much affected at it, and it was with all the precautions of charity that she acquainted her with the final decision. She shared in her affliction, wiped off her tears, and sometimes wept with her. Moreover, if the young person seemed to her to be called to a religious life, she exerted all her zeal to procure her admittance into another community, the rule of which being less austere, would be more suitable both to her moral and corporal capacity and dispositions; and many Houses had always to congratulate themselves for this sort of presents which they had received from her. Deservedly beloved by all her pupils, the only pleasure which the pious Princess seemed to enjoy in the possession of their hearts, was to have from thence the power to direct more effectually all their affections towards ALMIGHTY GOD. Always upon the watch, to prevent human nature from stealing imperceptibly into the mutual return of these tender sentiments, she studied to avoid that imperfection in her own self, and caution against it the young persons committed to her care. "Seriously reflect, my dear Sisters, that we ought to live and breathe only for our Divine Spouse; we entirely belong to him, and he will have us to be his without division and reserve. The least motion of our hearts which would

fix itself on the creature without going to him would be a robbery highly injurious to him." She never suffered her pupils to address her with those expressions of fondness and love which children make use of to testify their tenderness to their parents; she chid those who indulged such childish affection; she told them, that it was a kind of idolatrous language never to be allowed in a Convent. She was not without scruple for being so much beloved by her Novices; but as for them they could not have the least, for loving in their Mistress the most eminent virtue, and an accomplished model of all their duties. One day as Princess Louisa was speaking of an event which was to take place after her death, a Novice yielding to the first motion of her heart, cried out, "What will become of me, if ever I have the misfortune to lose you?" "Will you not have always ALMIGHTY GOD?" replied gravely the Mistress, "but, be not afraid," added she, "you do not yet shew dispositions perfect enough to deserve that God would vouchsafe to grant you soon the trial of a great sacrifice."

It was naturally, and as it were without reflection, that according to the circumstances and characters of her pupils, the able Mistress administered and modified her advices and lessons; knowing well how to distinguish the faults of frailty from the oppositions of the will; the repugnance of nature from the caprices of obstinacy; the un-

certain steps of timidity from the versatile ways of duplicity: and whether she had to combat imperfections, or those defects which nearly border on vice, always more inclined to indulgence than severity, after the example of the Saviour of men, she encouraged at the same time those whom she was obliged to chide; nay, her reprimands themselves were but invitations to do better. She was inexorable to faults against charity; and she prescribed a public and full reparation for them; but it was still with the meekness of a friend who advises, rather than with the positiveness of a mistress who commands. A Postulant having told her a fault of this kind which she had committed: "You ask me a great deal," said Princess Louisa to her, "when you ask me to give you an answer to day: however you shall have it. Were you in the world, your answer to Sister N*** would appear but a joke in the eyes of the world; but, in religion it is a detestable thing: all this is forbid as dangerous to the soul; you will do well to go to confession for it, and first to explain how the thing happened. As for the reparation, you must go and declare privately your fault to our Mother: and, at our first chapter, you must not forget to say, that you have been by your bad answers an occasion of trouble to your Sisters. If you have said any thing to Sister N*** which may have, I do not say irritated, but only grieved her; go and ask her pardon, and do it on your knees; it is our custom here. You might perhaps al-

lege as an excuse, that Sister N*** has put you out of patience; but if possible, make also this sacrifice to God: with such he is ever pleased: your heart was grown cold and remiss, and God has vouchsafed to try you: renew, therefore, my dear Sister, your fervor and love for him."

In order to insinuate itself with more advantage, the ingenious charity of Princess Louisa hid itself under a borrowed name; and the young person who was the object of her solicitude, received, without knowing it, the lesson of a Mistress in what she looked upon merely as the advice of a companion. I read in a little note which the Princess wrote to one of her Novices: "Avail yourself of Sister N***'s friendship to encourage her, and excite her to a fervent piety: for example, as a friend and companion, engage her to put more straw in her straw bed, and even to have it quilted; for I think it is not: tell her, that all the beauty of a Carmelite's bed is to be as smooth and as hard as a board."

There was nothing extraordinary in Princess Louisa's conduct with her pupils; her simplicity and artless carriage are the only things we have to admire in it. With the Rule in her hand, she required of them the Rule, and the spirit of the Rule as all Mistresses of Novices do; but it was with that tone of sincerity, and with that engaging kindness which gained confidence, and to which all hearts open, and all wills obey.

Many particular facts, which have been transmitted to us by the Carmelites, who had the happiness of receiving their religious education from the Princess, bear the stamp of her wisdom always directed by the Spirit of God."

A Postulant, lately come to the Convent, was in her Mistress's cell when a lay sister came in: the latter, who had just finished her work in the poultry-yard, did not smell very savoury, which seemed to make some impression on the young person. Princess Louisa having taken notice of it, told her: "Do you not reflect, dear Sister, that such perfumes offered up to God, are as precious and valuable as any other?" Occupied then in spinning very coarse wool, she added, "You will not likely find more pleasant the odour of this wool; but all those things will cost you nothing when you consider them with the eyes of a Carmelite, and as means to expiate the false niceties and Antichristian sensualities which people indulge in the world without the least scruple."

A Novice, from a remnant of attachment for her hair, deferred to have it cut in the manner the Carmelites do. The Princess taking her apart, represented to her, how much this childish reserve contrasted with the sacrifices which she had already made, and told her in a joke: "All the favour I can grant your fine hair, is to cut it off myself, and to give you leave to weep for the

loss secretly, without letting any one know that Theresian courage may dwell with the weakness of a child." As she was speaking, her scissars performed the work; for no office seemed mean to her, when discharged for the advantage of her pupils, as no sacrifice cost her when she had to teach them how to make any themselves. One of her pupils having been sick, could not for some time be prevailed upon to take physic which was necessary for the recovery of her health. Her Mistress, having exhausted, but in vain, all the arguments which she thought the most proper to make her yield, at length told her; "My child, I see that you are not very generous. Well! What you have not the courage to do, neither for my sake nor for your own, nor for the sake of him, who, for the love of you, drank gall and vinegar; you shall see me do it, merely to convince you that physic is not poison;" and, while yet speaking, she pouted out part of the draught into a cup, drank it, and said to the young sick person; "Well; here I am, not dead, as you see." The Novice astonished and ashamed, asked for the rest of the bitter potion, drank it, and owned, that the sacrifice required of her was not a sacrifice above human strength.

Oftentimes, when a Novice appeared unwilling to do what she was either advised or commanded to do, her punishment was to see it done by her Mistress; especially when it was some humbling thing for a fault com-

mitted. "It is with very great wisdom," said she, "that Saint Theresa prescribes every public fault to be punished by a public penance; and if that penance is not done by the person who has committed the fault, it is right it should be performed by that who ought to have prevented it through her vigilance and care." This was her invariable rule, and they knew that in the occasion she never hesitated to put it in practice: they were indeed afraid to see her doing such things; but they were sometimes surprised at the moment they would have least expected it. Among the little practices in use at the Carmelites of Saint Denis for the preservation of regularity, there is one which enjoins to the Nun, who, without a lawful reason, has not attended with the community, the first exercise of the day, to accuse herself publicly of it in the refectory, holding in her hands the pillow which had been the accomplice of her negligence. A young Novice being to undergo this humiliation, shewed an insurmountable repugnance to submit. Princess Louisa cured her of it, by disposing herself to perform that penance instead of her.

Always at the head of those whom she had to conduct; and, as the Scripture represents to us the eagle flying over her young ones to encourage them to soar into the upper regions of the air, the good Mistress invited her pupils to the perfection of their state. She applied herself to remove their preju-

dices, and made them, as it were, touch the object with her hands, in order to convince them, that the things which terrified them in their solitude, were but idle fancies, and that the monsters which they imagined to meet, were but vain phantoms. A Novice having spoke to her of a natural aversion, which she said was unconquerable, for some vegetable of frequent use among the Carmelites : " I am very glad," said Princess Louisa to her " to have been precisely in your case ; the mere sight of this legume was unsupportable to me, and caused convulsions in my stomach. I took the following method : My aversion rose in part from my eyes ; therefore, I turned them aside ; I eat, and found that the thing was not so bad ; and, Oh ! besides, how good is that to the soul, which is not pleasing to the taste !" One day they presented her with a bit of bread which had been served to the Noviceship, and had visible marks of dirt upon it from eggs and beet roots : the Princess considered it, and saying, "*Truly, this does not excite the appetite ;*" she eat it, adding, with a smile, " This, after all, cannot poison a Theresian." One of her pupils came to her one day for comfort, and with the tone of despondency, confessed to her a defect, against which she had, as she said, employed, but to no purpose, assiduous prayers, and all the other practices recommended by spiritual writers. " Oh ! my dear child ;" said Princess Louisa, with that zeal which penetrates the soul, and leaves always a deep impression, " It is by

your love for God, that you shall triumph over it. Believe me, the love of God can cure the most incurable disorders." After having made an exhortation to a Postulant on generosity in daily sacrifices, she added, "You will tell me, that such a thing will cost you, and I readily believe you, feeling how much the very same thing has cost me, and still does every day, as no person likes her conveniences as much as I do. But in coming here, we must have brought with us a firm resolution to feed solely on mortifications and sacrifices. The secret to alleviate them, is to think a little less of what we have to suffer, and a little more of what we are sure to gain." Animated with these zealous dispositions to acquire the virtues of her state, the Princess laid hold of the least opportunities to put them herself in practice, at the same time as she gave lessons of them to her pupils. If she saw, for example, that a book, a crucifix, or some other trifling thing allowed to a Carmelite, was not much to the liking of any one of them, either because it was not so new or not so nicely worked, she immediately proposed an exchange. The only property which had escaped the spirit of self-denial in the Princess, was a lock of hair of the late Queen, which she kept in a plain common little box. Having once remarked that a Novice preserved also some hair of her mother still alive, she called and told her, "I thank you, my dear, for having made me sensible, that, to preserve some hair of our mother's,

shews an attachment a little too human for a Theresian, who ought to find every thing in God: so, let us both renounce this small satisfaction. The Novice yielded to her Mistress's advice, after having ineffectually observed to her, that, by keeping these remains of the late Queen, she was honouring the memory of a Saint. However, Princess Louisa had felt that it would be more perfect to make the sacrifice of them to God, and she instantly made it.

The examples which she gave were supported by her discourses; in her familiar instructions to her pupils she spoke on no subject oftener than that of regularity; "The greatest calamity, she would say, that ever can afflict a religious community, is when the spirit of regularity begins to slacken in it; and the deepest offence of a Religious is to have contributed to such an alteration. Yes, my dear Sisters, I speak to you as I think. If ever such a misfortune should befall this House, I would take you all with me, saying; let us fly away from hence, and without delay seek for our salvation where regularity reigns."

It was to strengthen them in this spirit, that she recommended to them above all things, never to occupy themselves with things which had not a decided reference to their salvation, and never to allow themselves to do any action of which they could not say to God, "I do it for thy sake." One of her

Novices having asked her leave to read a book more calculated to please the mind, than to feed the heart, the pious Mistress reprimanded her seriously for it; and putting into her hands the treatise of the *Christian Perfection*, by *Rodrigues*, and the *Life of Saint Theresa*, she told her, "This is what ought to excite the curiosity of a Carmelite, and is truly interesting to her."

Though she animated her pupils to the most exact regularity, she was no less careful to guard them against the danger of scrupulosity: "All that which does not come from God," said she to them, "cannot be good; and scruples do not come from him. Let us form to ourselves, not a large or too easy conscience, but a calm and peaceable one. Sadness and anxiety of conscience are fit for the world, and the lovers of the world. But Religious ought to carry the yoke of our LORD with more love than fear." A Novice finding too short the time allowed her to prepare herself for confession, Princess Louisa told her, "Remember, my dear, that a Theresian ought always to be ready to go to confession to *communicate and to die.*"

What maintained in the fervent Mistress, this zealous activity for the spiritual advancement and perfection of her pupils, was besides the desire of the glory of God and of the salvation of her Sisters, the thoughts continually present to her mind, that she would render to God a strict account of the souls

committed to her care. Penetrated with this sentiment, the faults of her Novices seemed to her to be her own faults, and their defects her own defects: she sometimes accused herself of them openly before them, saying, "If any one among you does any thing deserving reproach, it is to myself they are to be addressed, as I ought to reproach myself the first for them: if you are not all entirely what you should be, it is because I cannot say to you, as Saint Paul did to the faithful: "*Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.*"—Cor. xi. 1. She held nearly the same language to them when she spoke to them in private: and according to the wants of the person, she told her with an effusion of heart capable of making the deepest impression: "Is it not true, my dear Sister, that if I shewed you more holy examples, you would on your side shew less negligence: if I cultivated more carefully the field of your hearts, I should not see growing in it cockle with wheat; if I made you more sensible of the importance of such a virtue, I should have the comfort of seeing you practising it better: if my prayers for you were more fervent, they would obtain for you to be more exact to such or such article of our holy Rule. Consider then," continued she, "how much interested you are yourself to beg of God my sanctification, lest my negligencies and sins should be an obstacle to the designs of God over you."

However, while profound humility made :

thus the pious Mistress feel all the weight of her charge, while she looked upon herself as answerable to GOD for all the defects and failings of her pupils, she nevertheless offered to them a perfect model of confidence in the ALMIGHTY. It was especially against the temptation of discouragement in the ways of salvation that she cautioned them with the most sedulous care: "What are we," said she to them, "thus to wonder and grieve to an excess at our weaknesses, and even our falls? The Saints humbled themselves for them, rose up again quickly, but never gave way to despondency. Our discouragement is the effect of an insupportable pride, which attacks ALMIGHTY GOD in those perfections which he is the most jealous to display in our favour; I mean his goodness, mercy, and omnipotence. Discouragement is always attended with presumption, and is generally its punishment." Penetrated with these principles, she laid hold of every opportunity she could meet with, to make her Novices well understand, that with a courageous good will, joined to sincere humility, we may render our very imperfections conducive to our spiritual advancement. One of them confessing to her one day with abundance of tears, a fault for which she had often been reprimanded; "To what purpose, these tears of discouragement," said her Mistress to her; "it would be a thousand times better to impress our minds with the sentiment of our weakness, and put

all our confidence in him, who can draw out good from evil." "And what good," replied the young person, "can be drawn from my continuance in committing the same faults?" A greater one than you imagine" answered Princess Louisa; "this gives us both an opportunity of humbling ourselves before God; you for what you are, and I for what you are not.

It was a very great pleasure for the good Mistress; all her most ardent desires were accomplished; and she found herself abundantly recompensed for all her pains and troubles, when she could accompany to the foot of the altar, those whom she had thus formed to religious virtues. It is a custom among the Carmelites, that a Novice on the eve of her profession, passes part of the night in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, attended with her Mistress. In such a circumstance, Princess Louisa having suffered much for some days, all the community desired that another Nun should watch instead of her. "Not at all, my dear sisters," replied the Princess; "it is my right to offer up my children to the ALMIGHTY, and I am too jealous of it to be prevented by a defluxion from enjoying it as usual. Moreover, why could I not do for this Novice what I have done for the others!" They were obliged to yield to the affectionate sentiments of the Mistress for her pupil.

From the first coming of a young person

to the Community, till the moment she bound herself by an irrevocable engagement, Princess Louisa incessantly exhorted her to measure her strength and courage by the obligations which she was going to contract, the extent and importance of which she knew so well how to instil into her mind. She reminded in the following manner one of her Novices of the substance of these obligations, in the last advices which she addressed to her before her profession: "By the vow of poverty you are going to strip yourself of every thing which you could have pretensions to, or desired in the world. Nothing henceforth, shall be yours; not even your poor clothes; nor the straw you lay upon. By the engagement you are going to take, your time, your health, your occupations, even your very desires, shall no longer be yours: Yes, you shall be stript of all: and the necessaries which will be allowed to you you must receive them, like the poor, as alms given you. If it be shocking in the poor of the world not to behave with the humility and simplicity suitable to their condition; how much more so, were it the conduct of those who made themselves poor out of a free choice, and in order to imitate the poverty of JESUS CHRIST, how could they dare behold him laid in a manger; nailed to the cross; in a word, in all the circumstances of his life? he says of himself: *"The foxes have holes, and birds of the air nests; but the son of man hath no where to lay his head;"*

such is, my dear Sister, the model which you undertake to imitate.

“By the vow of chastity you are going to consecrate to our LORD your heart as well as your body. Thus, in order to render yourself worthy of the Divine alliance which you are going to contract, you must have no other desires, than the desires of being devoted to GOD without the least restriction or reserve; no longer any false delicacies are to be indulged, and this is the mortification of the mind. Henceforth nothing that can satisfy nature, shall be allowed; on the contrary you shall have to wage a perpetual war with your senses, and that in the mortification of the body.

“By the vow of obedience you perfect all your other sacrifices; for undoubtedly the sacrifice of our will is the hardest and the most meritorious. We do not always feel the inconveniences of poverty; we have not always to fight against ourselves; but we must always obey, and obey in all. All the moments of your life shall be consecrated by holy obedience, even when it will be left to your choice to do such thing or such another, that will be regulated by obedience, and it will be under the influence of holy obedience that you will make a choice; mental prayer, vocal prayers, manual labour, even acts of charity towards your Sisters, all that must be subordinate to obedience. You must not permit yourself to wish for any thing, to ask

for any thing, to receive any thing, without having first submitted to obedience. In short, your very thoughts must be regulated according to the calls of obedience."

So much solicitude and vigilance, so many moving instructions, enforced by such eminent examples of virtue, could not fail to make a lively impression upon young persons, whom the desire of escaping the dangers of the world had already conducted into solitude. Hence the Novices of Saint Denis afforded the greatest edification to the whole community, and the sweetest comfort to their Mistress. "I regard all my Novices," said the Princess in her letters to her Superiors, "as so many models which our LORD has given me in his infinite mercy, to shew me how to be humble, mortified, penitent, courageous, and fervent."

"How can I have a single moment at my disposal, having the charge of thirteen Novices, whose fervor I must continually be attentive to moderate? The only difficulty I meet with by them, is to make them rest themselves: to the most ardent relish of mental prayer, they join the greatest zeal for painful labours: they would swallow as honey the very austerities of superogation tolerated by the Rule, if I did not use the greatest prudence to stop them."

"My Noviceship is composed of Angels which is certainly the best sermon for my

soul. Really when I consider them, I am ashamed of myself. They are penetrated with the love of God, and with a true spirit of penance, mortification, and obedience.

“ I cannot see my Novices without feeling myself encouraged to serve our LORD. Their fervour incessantly condemn my weakness and tepidity. I return my heart-felt thanksgivings to Divine Providence for having surrounded my frailty with this little flock of Angels, who breathe the purest love of God; and though they fill me with confusion, they nevertheless penetrate my heart with the most lively sentiments of joy.”

The community had received so much benefit from Princess Louisa, while she had the charge of the Noviceship, that several years after, being Prioress at that time, the Novices having lost their Mistress, all the Nuns expressed great regret not to have it in their power to commit again to her, an office she had so admirably well fulfilled. The Princess, on her side, would not have hesitated in her ardent zeal to take upon herself this heavy additional burden, had she not been deterred from it by a motive of prudence, which she imparted to the Superior of the House, in the following words: “ I could very well take the care of the Novices, but I see a very great inconvenience in it; the Novices would be still more attached to me, and at the time of an election they would not know what to do, as they would

lose at once both their Prioress and Mistress." However, we shall see her in different circumstances, uniting the direction of the Novices with the Place of Prioress.

It was after having thus displayed as Mistress of the Novices, her exquisite discernment of souls, and her particular talent to lead them in the ways of perfection, that Princess Louisa was elected Prioress of the House of Saint Denis. About four years after her entrance, she was raised to the Superiority by the unanimous votes of the Community; and all her sisters, congratulating with one another on the choice which they had made, declared that Saint Theresa herself could not have made a better choice in their House. Princess Louisa was the only one who did not share in the common joy; and though, out of obedience, she accepted of the burden which they laid upon her, she pitied very sincerely those who were so delighted to be under her government; "As much as this election seems to please you, so much it grieves me," said she, answering a letter written to her on the occasion; "and I believe that they never will again be guilty of such a blunder: at the end of my three years they will have had enough of me." She wrote about the same time to the Bishop of Clermont: "To be elected Prioress at the end of two years of profession, is for me a very great subject of fear; my confidence is in the obedience which I have vowed to

God and my Superiors : I hope, with God's grace, that I shall never swerve from it ; and that you will always find, my most honoured father, a docile and obedient daughter."

The Bishop of Dax, Visitor General of the Theresians in France, went to Versailles, and informed the King that Princess Louisa had been elected Prioress, and that she had all the votes but one. " Well," said the King, " there was, however, a revote against her ? " " Yes," replied the prelate, " but it was her own, and they took no account of it." Louis the Fifteenth, then turning towards the Lords of his Court, told them with an air of satisfaction, that Princess Louisa had been elected Prioress of her community ; " and what pleases me the most," added his Majesty, " is to be certain that the election has been without cabal ; for she dreaded the post." The Prince went a few days after to felicitate his daughter, and told her that he was overjoyed to see that she had the spirit of her vocation sufficiently to have deserved to be raised to the Superiority. " I had rather, dear papa," replied Princess Louisa, " have nothing to do but occupy myself with the care of my own sanctification, for though my dominions are very limited, I feel that it is a very great charge before God to have to govern." What a discretion and skill in giving an advice.

The Prioress among the Theresians is in place for three years ; but the Rule allows,

and generally it happens, that she may be re-elected for three more. Accordingly Princess Louisa was re-elected. "Alas!" said she, writing to an intimate friend on the occasion; "alas! the fatal day is come, and our Sisters have repeated their folly. It is but too true that I have yet three years to pass before I can be delivered from an office which I discharge so ill." The Nuns were far from entertaining the same sentiments as the Princess; even some of them were so well persuaded that the Superiority could never be placed in better hands, that they had imagined to solicit a Brief from the Pope, to authorise the community to continue her in it for an unlimited time. Princess Louisa having been acquainted with these intentions, lively expressed both her astonishment and her affliction. "Yes," said she, "if ever ALMIGHTY GOD reserve me for such a trial I will beg of him to take away my life, and I trust that he will grant me my request, rather than to permit that such an irregularity should be introduced in my regard, to the great prejudice of the House, and scandal of the Public. Of course the project was laid aside.

At all times the Princess shewed the same repugnance to the first place, while her Sisters earnestly desired that she should hold it for ever, inviting the Superior of the House to repair to Saint Denis, on a day fixed for a new election; "That day," said she to him, "will be the most happy day of my life; be-

cause I shall have it more in my power to study and practise what I have been preaching to others these six years." Three years after she had laid down the burden of the Superiority, a burden which her zeal and solicitude had rendered a very heavy one, the Community proposed to impose it again upon her; and all the votes were before hand united in her favour. Sincerely afflicted at this new mark of the affection of her Sisters, Princess Louisa neglected nothing to prevent her election. She had then two offices, that of Mistress of the Novices, and that of Procuratrix. "I have mentioned to you several times," said she to Abbé Bertin, "how much I desired that our Mother may be re-elected, and I have told you all my motives. I confess to you, as to my Superior, to whom I owe all truth, that for the sake of my health I want to be freed from the Superiority. It is only since last year that I begin to recover from the fatigues which I have endured during my six years, which have been for me a time of labour beyond my strength; and I look upon it as a miracle of Providence that I have been able to bear it; and, undoubtedly, such a miracle could not be expected if human views were to influence the election. As for me, my conscience does not reproach me for desiring you to recommend to our Nuns not to elect me, because my health greatly requires a repose of mind, which I could not enjoy, being Prioress. Moreover, my interior is also in great need of it to acquire the virtues that are wanting to me;

my labours now are not beyond my strength, to be Procuratrix is not too fatiguing for me; because I find no difficulty in writing, and now understand accounts. I have besides the charge of the Noviceship, and it is a very heavy one, but it is nothing like that of Prioress."

As the King had shewn much satisfaction the first time Princess Louisa had been elected Prioress, her religious Sisters, who, to obtain the happiness of being again under her government, laid hold of every thing, earnestly represented to their Superior, that, besides the motives of a spiritual advantage to the House, it would be highly convenient to do a thing agréable to the King and the Royal Family. But the Princess was very active in putting aside this human consideration. "You have told me, Father," said she to the Superior, that you were desirous to know the King's sentiments on the occasion; I thought that the best way was to write to him in the most plain manner, and I have done it: this is his answer; you may read it over to our Sisters. My Sisters are quite of the same opinion; and find very strange that some of our Nuns could have imagined that they should be pleased to see me Prioress." The King answered his daughter, that, though he saw with pleasure the dispositions of the Community in her regard, he nevertheless approved very much her opposition to any infringement in her favour, of the constitutions to which she had sub-

mitted of her own accord. Moreover, since her Superior joined with her in the same sentiment, he thought that such agreement would be undoubtedly sufficient to prevent the effect of that excessive attachment which the Nuns wished to shew her.

Princess Louisa being thus countenanced by the authority of Abbé Bertin, escaped the Superiority ; but it was not for so long a time as she could have wished ; for, the Superiress re-elected, dying while yet in office, Princess Louisa, who had been the last Prioress before her, was obliged to supply her place, owing not so much to the constitutions, as to the unanimous votes of the Community : and in this circumstance, as in the first, it was only not to refuse obedience that she consented to command. She held the Superiority on these two occasions, for eight years, and always governed the Community according to the principles and spirit of Saint Theresa. The Rule was her guide ; she kept to the Rule ; she appealed to the Rule, of which her conduct was a better interpretation still than her discourses. I read in the memorial preserved by the Nuns, " She was a living rule for us. Always at the head of the community, and the first at all regular observances. She was so far from indulging herself too much, in some little incommodities, that we could scarcely prevail upon her to take some rest, when she was seriously ill. Hard and austere to herself, she reserved all her meekness and pre-

cautions for her Sisters." She carried these sentiments as far as charity could allow without encroaching upon duty and regularity, for she earnestly wished for the accomplishment of both from a principle of conscience. She was often heard to say, that one of her greatest fears was lest the ALMIGHTY might have to reproach her one day, that the Community under her government had fallen from their primitive fervor and regularity.

Though she had the greatest dread of the duties of the Superiority, still when they had been laid upon her, she performed them with an unabated courage. Always patient, generous, and of an even temper in the midst of the troubles and contradictions inseparable from the government of a numerous Community, she seemed altogether unacquainted with the temptation of discouragement. It might have been thought that the painful labours of her office cost her nothing. Entirely devoted to her Community, of which she was the soul and the main spring; she was equally attentive to all the wants of each Nun in particular. Nothing could tire out her patience. She descended with goodness to the minutest particulars. Her charity embraced all; her vigilance informed her of all; her prudence managed all; and her activity was sufficient to all. Her advices, as well as her decisions; what she counselled with kindness, as well as what she prescribed with firmness; all proceeded from the same

principle ; all bore the stamp of that tender and solicitous affection which makes subjects find in Superiors support rather than a yoke.

Discretion, a virtue absolutely requisite for persons in high offices, was the characteristic of Princess Louisa long before she was Prioress. All the Nuns were convinced of it, and accordingly they did not hesitate to tell her what they wished to hold most secret. Hence the secret with which one of her Novices had intrusted her became her own secret, and she never spoke of it but to her, when advice was proper, or to ALMIGHTY GOD in prayer. Being confined to the Infirmary for an indisposition, which did not prevent her from receiving those who had any wants to lay before, or any advices to ask her, the fear lest a young Nun who took care of her should be tempted to seek to penetrate the secret of her conversations, engaged her to give her the following advice : " They say that I spoil you ; prove the contrary by your behaviour. Be the most fervent and most zealous of the Community : but let your zeal be confined to yourself alone. Let us leave others to themselves when it does not belong to us to mend their defects or failings. Never attempt to guess why I do such things rather than another. For instance : I may have sometimes an abuse to remedy so as not to be noticed ; sometimes it may be an indiscreet word which has escaped unawares, which I would

not have divulged; perhaps I may have some difficulty in settling the offices of the House. To day I shall have a defect to palliate, to prevent a fault, to encourage an act of virtue; to morrow I may have to calm the sensibility of a Sister; to open the heart of such a one to confidence, to prepare such another to resignation with regard to family concerns, &c. There are thousand other things which exhaust the poor Prioress, and which, however, she ought not to communicate to any one, because it is the secret of the Sisters."

The most holy souls, in the most regular Houses, pay, nevertheless, from time to time, a tribute to human frailty. In the memorials which I have in my hands, I have met from the pious companions of Princess Louisa, with the humble confession of some faults which they had to reproach themselves for in regard of their Prioress. As for the Princess, I see that she has less zeal to maintain the rights of authority than solicitude to encrease charity in the hearts with the desire of doing better. We may say of Princess Louisa with regard to her religious daughters, what is recorded of Saint Martin, That the least of his Clergy could offend him with impunity. Thus some people reproached her for having inherited that noble and amiable defect, which had rendered Henry the Fourth the idol of his subjects. However, this extreme goodness, was in her, less the effect of her natural temper than the

fruit of her virtue. It proceeded especially from her continual attention to imitate the Saviour of mankind, who manifests to us his mercy above all his other perfections. She was seen sometimes asking pardon in the most humble terms of those who should have made her many excuses. She was inaccessible even to a single thought of rancour; and had any Sister been guilty of a fault in her regard, it was by more particular marks of affection that she brought her to repentance. A Religious who had deserved this reproach, avoided to meet her. Princess Louisa having perceived it, accosted her, saying, "Will it not be allowed to a mother to embrace her child?" She had once against her resolution, solicited some favour from the Court. "I would not have done it," said she to her Superior, "but Sister N*** asked it of me; could I refuse her?" It is because that Sister had been somewhat in the wrong towards her. It was particularly to the weak, and the most imperfect; that she shewed the greatest indulgence. It was to them that she had the condescension to lay open the motives of her conduct. However, her indulgence was not a weakness which tolerates abuses, but a condescending meekness which employs all the precautions of charity in its endeavours to destroy what is wrong, and thus smooths the way to a sure triumph. "Is it not true, my Sister," said she to one of her Religious, "that I looked very serious this morning?" The Nun immediately owned that she had given occasion

to her displeasure. Even her advices, which bordered the most upon chiding, were always accompanied with some tender expression which penetrated the heart. Having one day given to a Nun a pretty sharp exhortation on the necessity of working with more zeal to her perfection: "After all," said she, "God has his reasons for all that he does or permits. For had you already attained the end where I wish to see you arrived, I should be too fond of you." Another solicited very eagerly of Princess Louisa a thing which she thought not proper to grant. After having told her with kindness all the motives of her refusal, she said, "I know that you love me, and that you would be very sorry to see me suffering great pains in this world. And, nevertheless, you would have me suffer on your account the flames of purgatory, were I weak enough to yield to your desires."

With the most perfect, Princess Louisa used another sort of charity. She called them to perfection by the shortest ways. She did not attempt to lessen the burden which their fervour could bear. On the contrary she helped them to add new flowers to their crown. "This is well," said she sometimes, "and you might be quite contented;" but that is better, and I am sure you will do it. Thus, without departing from the rules of discretion, she left to them the whole merit of obedience, daily sacrifices, and all the austerities of the Rule. One of

these Nuns asking a thing which seemed to suffer no difficulty, Princess Louisa refused it to her without giving her the reasons of her refusal. The humble Nun suspecting the secret motives of her Prioress, withdrew, without seeking to know them. The next day Princess Louisa sent for her, and told her, "What you asked me yesterday is very reasonable, and I grant it to you with all my heart. Do you know why I refused you yesterday; it is because I wished to give you a matter for a little sacrifice, well assured that you would not let such an opportunity slip from you."

While the fervent Prioress thus exerted all the means in her power to contribute to the sanctification of her daughters; while the most admirable success answered all her cares; still the imperfections and defects of which she was a witness from time to time afflicted her as if she had been herself guilty. She actually imputed them to herself, and sometimes felt, on the occasion, all her regrets of being Prioress reviving. It always seemed to her that any other in her place would have done better than herself. Her only comfort was to think that she followed God's will, and not her own. "I resigned myself," said she in a letter to the Superior of the House, "not to do always all the good which might be done. With some precautions and prudence I shall not at least con-
nive at, any thing defective or bad. What may encourage me is to look up to our di-

vine master. Were it my lot to end my life like him, on calvary, and on the cross, I must submit, and take for my motto *fiat fiat.*"

Obliged in consequence of her charge, to watch over the temporal as well as the spiritual concerns of the House, her vigilance extended to every thing. She entered into all the details of household economy with the greatest exactness, and did not disdain to consult the experience of the Lay Sisters. One of them having made her in a hasty manner an observation relative to her occupations, which was very just and reasonable: "I do assure you, Sister," said the Princess to her, "that the advice which you give is so good, that I would certainly follow it, even if you did not chide me."

The more severe the Rule is in a Community, the more obliged are Superiors to apply themselves to make its austerity be forgotten; and it was Princess Louisa's continual attention. She softened, as it were, the rigours of the law by the manner in which she required it to be observed, without ever using the least dispensation for herself. She carried to a scruple her attention to avoid in her admonitions or orders, the least word or look of haughtiness. Always afraid lest they should remember, in obeying her, what she had been in the world, she studied to divert from it the thoughts of her Sisters, by the sweet and engaging manner with which she received all those who addressed them-

selves to her; she used the most tender officiousness in order to open their hearts to confidence; and lavished upon them all, in all circumstances, at all times of the day, the most effectual proofs of a truly maternal affection. If at the time of her meals, a Nun came to communicate her troubles to her, though even since the recovery of her health under the Theresian diet, fasting had always been the most painful austerity to her, still forgetting then the corporal wants which preyed upon her, to attend only to the spiritual wants of her daughter, she received her with her usual kindness, and did not let her go till she had re-established the peace of her soul.

At a time when she had the direction of the Noviceship, with the Superiority over sixty Nuns, who were all jealous to avail themselves of the right they had to her instructions and cares, she sacrificed her purest inclinations to her duties. And thus leaving God for God's sake, she found in the midst of external occupations, the calm of an interior life, and in the exercise of charity, all the unction of prayer. Though interrupted without intermission, she always attended with kindness; always answered with mildness: and the God of peace who reigned in her heart, rendered her, as it were, insensible to the vexations of importunity.

The Nuns who, wanting to speak to her,

had not either found a favourable opportunity, or thought it convenient in the day-time, went at night to their good Prioress, who was always ready to hear them at the expence of her repose. As this happened very often, they represented to her, that she should advise these Sisters to take a more proper time; "And, why that?" answered Princess Louisa; "do not all the hours and moments of a Superioress belong to her community? Why would you deprive the Nuns who could not speak to her in the day-time, of the liberty of doing it at night? The person who holds the first place must never forget that she no longer belongs to herself, but to others; that she owes them the sacrifice of her time, repose, health, and if necessary, life itself." In a nearly similar occasion, she was desired to consider, that she should not exhaust herself for others. "Pray, have I more rights to be spared than our Divine Master, who came into the world to minister, and not to be ministered unto, and give his life for many."

If she knew that a Nun had sought to speak to her without having found an opportunity of doing it, as soon as she was at liberty she went to her cell and excused herself, as if it had been in her power to multiply herself to answer at once the desires and wants of all the Religious. The fear of being troublesome to her, which sometimes the Nuns alleged to obtain before hand some leave which they wanted, was very seldom

a motive to the Princess to grant it. "Why would you have me," said she to them, "deprive you of the merit of obedience, and myself of the merit of bearing importunities?" All the charitable details into which the good Prioress descended, in order to make herself all to all, can hardly be imagined. One of the Nuns was fearful to an excess; Princess Louisa who was acquainted with her weakness, had the goodness to accompany her at night wherever she would not have dared to go alone. Prompted by her charity, she did still more; she gave her leave to place her bed in her narrow cell, which was a very great inconvenience to her in the heats of the summer. However, she never mentioned it to her but once, but rather in a joke than as a reproach. "Indeed," said she to her, "you should reserve your frights and fears for the winter, for, being two in this little cell, we are both stifled."

It was especially in favour of those who were either in affliction or suffering, that she displayed all the generosity of her benevolent heart. Her compassion and cares were without bounds. She enjoyed no rest, till she had afforded consolation to, and restored peace in the hearts of those whom she saw under some trouble of mind. She looked upon this ministry of charity as one of the most essential duties of a Superior. "The peace of soul," said she, "is the only pleasure which a Nun can enjoy without remorse. We have left the world to acquire this

heavenly happiness which surpasses all sentiment; and according to me, it is so precious to a Nun, that if it could be bought with money, and was necessary to sell our sacred vessels to procure it to the least of us, I would not hesitate for a minute." Had she any afflicting news to impart to any of her Religious, she did it with all the precautions she thought the best calculated to sweeten the bitterness of the communication: but, nevertheless, leaving to her the merit of the sacrifice which she had to make, for it may easily be imagined that it was not to the vanity of human consolations that she had recourse to comfort her Religious. "Without religion," said she to them, "all evils are incurable and hopeless; with religion there is not one destitute of comfort; not one which cannot be the principle of some good." In the place which she occupied, she considered herself as more particularly appointed by Providence to co-operate to that happy change; and she was overjoyed when she had succeeded in the attempt. One of her Nuns after having opened her heart and disclosed all her pains to her, told her with the greatest simplicity, "I know that I am speaking to my Mother." "Yes," answered to her Princess Louisa, with the greatest kindness, "and to your best friend also."

It was under the double character of a mother and a friend that she obtained of her daughters an unreserved confidence, which, perhaps, I might call excessive if there

could be any excess in such a sentiment towards a mother so prudent and so good. She knew so well how to administer consolation to the afflicted; they found themselves so much relieved, when they disclosed their secret pains to her, that, after having often let her know those of their mind, they discovered also to her those of their conscience, and manifested to her the state of their souls as to a confessor. A young person who had not yet made her vows, was to communicate on Maundy Thursday at the solemn ceremony. Remembering then, that when she was in the world, she had the misfortune of receiving holy communion in a state of soul which had with too much reason raised scruples in her mind, she was not afraid to make the avowal of it to her Prioress; and in a little note which she wrote to her, after having told her, that she would look upon herself as a Judas, in the midst of her pious Sisters, if she had the boldness to approach the holy Communion, she begged of her leave to bewail at a distance from the altar, the sin she had been guilty of to receive it on such day with equivocal dispositions. Princess Louisa judging that it was not proper to adopt such a mode of expiation, answered immediately in the following words: "Well, my dear N***, because you have formerly been guilty, you wish not to participate in the great ceremony of this day; I am certainly very much edified at your sentiments; but I beseech you, have a little more confidence. Yes, if it be true that you

have committed the sin which you mention, you have obtained the remission of it, first by the absolution of the Priest, and secondly by your contrition, which seems to me to have been very sincere. You had therefore nothing else to do, than to atone for it, and there cannot have been any better means than those you have chosen, by becoming a Theresian. How great is the goodness of our merciful GOD who, after such a fault, has not only admitted you again to his table, but chooses you also to be his spouse? Yes, you shall perform your Easter duty on Holy Thursday as all of us; and with more lively sentiments of love, gratitude, contrition, and repentance. It is a very particular grace which the ALMIGHTY gives you, to penetrate your heart with this contrition for your faults; but, outwardly you must do as others do. Remember this once for all; affliction and sorrow in the heart, but a constant serenity in the countenance and looks. Every one has her secret, every one had her particular motive of vocation, every one has her cause of doing penance; but it must remain between GOD and herself. The greatest penance which we can do, and the most acceptable before GOD, is not that which is the most extraordinary: our conduct must always be plain and without particularities: well; they will judge you more deserving than you are; so much the better; it is an occasion of edification to others. As for you it is a very powerful motive to humble

yourself more and more before the ALMIGHTY. No, you shall not be a Judas; but a Peter on whom our Lord looked with tenderness, and who bewailed the remainder of his life the misfortune which he had to have denied him. Yes, he has looked upon you since he has moved your heart with sorrow; you have wept, you will weep, and continue to weep, for your faults; because you will be sorry for ever to have offended so good a master; but these bitter tears will be changed into sweet consolations. JESUS will say of you as he said of Magdalen, *Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much.* Good night my dear, pray for me; I stand in need of it more than you may imagine. You may depend on my doing the same for you." Divines, the most versed in the ways of spirituality, Saints themselves could not speak with more wisdom and unction.

Once having been extremely taken up with the occupations of the day, and the incessant cares of her charge, Princess Louisa forgot that a Nun was under some pain of mind, and that she had not comforted her. This thought struck the good Princess in the middle of the night; she instantly got up and went to her, and told her, "I should have spoken to you yesterday, my dear Sister, and it was my intention to do it; I cannot forgive myself this forgetfulness; which perhaps has increased your pain; I come then to repair my fault." Moved to tears at such an extraordinary instance of goodness,

the Religious did not know how to testify her gratitude to her good Prioress: "No thanks," said Princess Louisa; "what I do is as much for my relief as for yours. Could I enjoy my sleep whilst I remembered that you were in trouble!" And she left her only after she had restored peace to her soul.

In the more pressing or more lasting wants of her Religious, the charitable Prioress seemed to surpass herself by her attention towards them. In their sickness, sick, as it were, with the sick, by her assiduity to visit them, she relied on no one but herself to relieve and comfort them. She was always present when the Physician attended, and took care herself that his prescriptions should be well executed. All the time she staid in the Infirmary, near the sick, she considered herself as their first nurse, and would not permit any one to do for them what she could do herself. Sometimes she was seen making the bed of the Sisters, or kneeling close by them, in order to prepare or give them the remedies and the draughts which they wanted; and sometimes fulfilling other offices of charity still more repugnant to nature. During two years she dressed herself every day the wound of a Religious, which was shocking to the sight. After the Princess's death, they learned that for a long time, she had got up every day a quarter of an hour before the Community, in order to dress a Lay Sister, who was af-

flicted with a rheumatic pain. Being herself indisposed in the Infirmary, they told her, that a Sister was coming; she was then at her dinner; she left it immediately and went to meet the sick, who at the same moment was seized with a vomiting. Princess Louisa accosted her, and desired the Infirmary to withdraw, saying, "Let me alone, I will do it better than you; for nothing makes me sick." Accordingly, she laid hold of the sick, and rendered her all the services necessary on such an occasion. It was in vain that the Nuns endeavoured to prevent her from paying such frequent visits to the Infirmary, or staying a considerable time with the sick, when their sickness had a character of malignity. In such circumstances her charity was always above all human prudence. Having been told one day that the sickness of a Sister might be the small pox, which she had not had, and that for the sake of the House, she should not expose herself to the danger of catching the disorder: "What," said she, "shall I therefore neglect an evident duty, in order to avoid an uncertain danger?"

If the disorders were of a long duration, or degenerated into permanent infirmities, she exhorted the sick not to stay away from holy communion for more than a week. "When JESUS CHRIST fortifies us by his presence," said she to them, "if we do not suffer less, we bear it better." She would not let them deprive themselves of the con-

solation of communicating, because in their state of weakness they could not pray with all the recollection which they wish for : " To pray," said she, " is to unite ourselves to GOD, and to unite ourselves to him by sufferings is the best of prayers."

Her principle was, that in giving to the sick all the assistance and comfort which Christian charity commands, care should be taken not to revive in them the feelings of human nature ; on the contrary that nothing be neglected to help them to fix their minds on the Creator alone, when all creatures are going to abandon them for ever. One day, as she was attending a Sister dangerously ill, this Religious, penetrated with gratitude, would have kissed her hand. The Princess withdrew it quickly, and substituted her crucifix in stead of it ; saying, as it were, to the sick ; " This is the only object towards which you must at this moment tend with all the affections of your heart."

As soon as an illness was declared mortal, she would never suffer that the sick should be kept in ignorance of her situation, or that she should be entertained with vain hopes of a recovery. " Though a Carmelite," said she, " ought always to be ready to leave this world, I should be glad, to be admonished in good time, when that happy moment is come for me : and I should think to have neglected a very great duty of charity, if I

did not do for others what I looked upon as so essential to be done for me one day" A Religious in this awful situation, became then the constant object of all her solicitude and cares. She did not leave her bedside, either to satisfy herself that she wanted none of the assistance and comforts requisite in her state, or still more to procure her with the grace of the last sacraments, all the spiritual helps which the Church gives to her children in their passage from time to eternity. Even she engaged more than once the Princesses her Sisters to put off to another time a visit which they intended to pay her, because a Religious was dangerously ill; and if it was represented to her, that, on that account, there was no necessity of her staying always with her; "It is my place," said she; "I should not be easy any where else."

After having passed in the Infirmary all the moments of the day which she could dispose of, she could have wished to stay there the whole night also. When the want of rest, or condescension obliged her to leave a sick Nun in an imminent danger, it was always on the condition that if she grew worse, they would be careful to send for her and to awake her, if during the night. The Religious were very exact in following her intentions, for they knew that nothing could afflict her charity so much as not to be obeyed in such a circumstance. In proportion as the danger increased, the good Mother redoubled her cares and zeal towards

the dying person. She passed a considerable time in prayer at the feet of her bed, and supported her by her exhortations. Availing herself of all favourable opportunities, "Every minute of which," said she, "might obtain unspeakable treasures," she suggested to her the sentiments the most proper to reanimate the confidence of a Christian soul at the moment of appearing before her Creator. She often presented to her devotion, the consoling sign of our redemption, and after she had received her last breath, she still discharged for her all the pious offices of religion. She took upon herself all the trouble of her burial; and at the moment she was to be laid in her grave, she never failed to give her the last kiss of charity. Her charity followed her dead child in the grave itself: she was very solicitous and attentive to procure her the assistance of the prayers and other good works of her Order; and above all, the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We shall have some other occasion of speaking of her devotion to pray for the dead.

Princess Louisa having received some advice from the Superior of the House concerning her excessive assiduity near the sick, on account of an old Lay Sister who was just dead, and whom she had attended with a zeal truly heroic: the pious Princess answered him, "I should be glad, indeed, Father, if you did not believe all the bad

things they say of me: for example, that I kill myself by attending the sick. I only fulfil my duty, and nothing more; and you see that God blesses my actions in that regard; for I have not been in the least indisposed. We must sometimes rely on Providence. It was a great pleasure for me to give all my cares to that poor Sister. In a Community, we cannot, we ought not to be indifferent for any one: for it is the soul which I consider in all, and I should be very much afflicted, if by my fault, they were deprived of the least Christian and religious consolation."

By her assiduity near the sick, and her zealous attention to take notice of every thing which could give them relief, the Princess had acquired so much experience, that in common indispositions, the Nuns would not consult any other physician but herself. It was not only when seriously ill that Princess Louisa attended her children; their indispositions and infirmities were equally the object of her solicitude. As soon as she was informed that a Nun was indisposed, but not so much as to be obliged to take to the infirmary, at night she went to her cell; judged herself of her situation, enquired after her wants, and took great care to provide for them. They often met the good Prioress on the stairs or along the dormitories, carrying sometimes, a blanket or a pillow, or draughts and medicines. Her zeal to procure to the sick spiritual

helps, and the corporal assistance which their state required, extended to all those who were any ways employed by the Community. The out-door servants, even the workmen, were, according as circumstances required, the objects of her charitable cares.

The religious Princess, taking for her model, in the place which she occupied, the Saviour of mankind among his Disciples; looked upon herself in the middle of her Sisters not as a Mistress, but as the servant of all. Though Prioress, she continued to sweep the stairs, to wash the dishes; in a word, to fulfil the meanest offices of the House. If the Nuns forgot her turn, she remembered it herself; for, according to her, the first duty of a Superior was to give the example in every thing. Attentive to reject all sorts of distinction, she would not allow her children to pay her the least particular attention; so that if, when at work, she had let any thing drop from her hands, she would not have suffered that the youngest Nun should have taken the trouble to take it up; whilst on the contrary she was so officious, and so ready to oblige them all, that they were often ashamed at what she did for them. The old and infirm had always the preference, and a special right to her indefatigable charity: she gave them in every circumstance, unequivocal proofs of her affection and respect. When she met with them in the House, if she saw that there was any thing misplaced in their dress

either about their veil or habit; she rectified it with her own hands, and these old Nuns saw Princess Louisa at their feet, in order to tie the strings of their slippers: and she did all that with an air of ease, satisfaction, and cheerfulness, which clearly shewed that, to practise these acts of virtue, was for her, to gratify the dearest inclinations of her heart.

We may have already remarked that in the dispensation of her charitable cares she made no distinction between the Lay Sisters and the Choir Nuns. "All the children of the same mother," said she "have all an equal right to her tenderness, whatever may be the different offices they are applied to in the House: sometimes she seemed even to give the preference to the state of the former, because it appeared to her more favourable to the practice of humility. "Be faithful to your vocation," said she to one of the Lay Sisters, and you will be greater before God, by ministering to us, than we who are ministered unto." They all had the most free access to her person. At all times, in all circumstances, they found her ready to hear them, and share in their troubles and afflictions: and they knew perfectly well how far they could rely upon her virtue and good heart. We may judge of it by what follows: One of these good Sisters, who had to call up the Nuns for matins on Easter Sunday, at two o'clock in the morning, was very much afraid to miss the time; remembering in her per-

plexity, that her Prioress could break off her sleep when she pleased, she went to her, acquainted her with all her fears, and told her candidly, that all things considered, there was no one in the House on whom she could rely as surely as upon her, to be awaked at a proper time, and, therefore, she begged of her to have the goodness to do her that service. Overjoyed at such a mark of unbounded confidence, Princess Louisa told her, "I am glad to be able to deliver you from your frights and fears: go to bed; sleep quietly, and rely upon me." The next day before two o'clock, the Lay Sister heard her Prioress, and the daughter of her King, scratching at her cell door to awake her. Such acts of virtue, though consecrated by religion, are nevertheless of those which even a profane world cannot help admiring.

After her six years of Superiorship, Princess Louisa re-entered according to the customs of the House, into the rank of the meer Nuns, under the obedience of a new Prioress. Being then named Procuratrix, she was charged with the temporalities, and all the economical affairs of the House. Her love for all the functions belonging to her state, supplying her inexperience in that part, she discharged this new office to the great satisfaction of the Community, and by her constant assiduity she put every thing in the best order; which was not quite the case before she had taken in her hands the ma-

agement of the affairs. "I am delighted," said she, writing to a friend, "on the occasion of this change in my occupations, to have now nothing more to do but to write and to cast accounts. It is not a thing I was formerly very fond of; but with years our inclinations change; and I find that obedience sweetens every thing and makes it agreeable." We must believe her word: for undoubtedly religion alone, and the encouraging consciousness of doing the will of God could have induced a Princess brought up in the carelessness of a high rank, to give herself up with alacrity to occupations so foreign to the education of the great and rich; such as the details of housekeeping, paying and receiving money, settling bills, casting up accounts, inquiring about the place, the time, and the persons with respect to purchasing the most common provisions, and entertaining a correspondence with the workmen, artisans, and tradesmen. I have perused an infinite number of such letters, among which there were three hundred and forty written to a single individual, who from disinterested zeal brought into Paris provisions, and performed commissions for the Carmelites of Saint Denis. However, these letters, so insipid by their object, and which seem to signify nothing, signify very much indeed in favour of the Princess, who from a principle of virtue descended into these fastidious details, and did it, as every thing else, with the spirit of her religious state. Our readers will be able

to judge of it by some short extracts of these letters which we are going to lay before them. "Remember, I beg of you, in doing your commissions, that the poor Daughters of Saint Theresa require that you spare their purse. You must be sensible enough, that it is not the brilliant, but the solid which we wish for: for among us, what lasts the longest, is always the finest. It is not of the quality of the thing which we had to complain of, but of the price, which seemed to us a little too high for Carmelites, who for their victuals, as well as for their clothes, must always look for the most common things. Another reason which engages me to address myself to you, is to be less apparent in the buying of things, to prevent the mistake of many people, who instead of seeing in me Sister Theresa of Saint Austin, purveyor of poor Carmelites, would always see in me Princess Louisa, with all her former means of paying largely. To work, to build a church for us, is certainly an excellent thing, but to work for it without necessity, on festival days, is an irreligious and antichristian thing, to which with God's grace, I will never connive. I have already sent several workmen word that if they attempted to work on such days, it would be for God's glory; but no money, because I would keep the strings of our purse tied up so fast, that surely their profanation shall not be paid. These poor creatures would never have had such a thought, had it not come into the head of their employers. These

sheets which are cast off at Court, are not at all to be despised; they are very good and fine cloth, which may be of very great use to us for the Church, *etcetera*. I intend to write to *Adelaide* to desire her to make the proper inquiries. We shall have only to settle the price, which must be very low, considering what they are. We agree perfectly well with respect to provisions. Nothing too much. It is already no small thing to keep what a bountiful Providence gives us in our garden. Large and abundant provisions occasion great trouble to preserve them, and, moreover, expose the Sisters to the danger of prodigality. It is, besides, a manner of hoarding up treasures, which contristates the spirit of true poverty. There are in reality no other prudent and secure provisions for Christians, but those which they lay up in the storehouse of their heavenly Father."

As Procuratrix, she had the special charge of overseeing all the work of the kitchen, and she always did it with great attention. After having consulted the experience of those who had preceded her in this office, she gave to others the lessons of economy which she had herself received. She taught the Lay Sisters how they should either keep or employ the provisions, regulate the ordinary expences, take care of the remnant destined to the poor, and keep every thing in order and conveniently clean. One of them, brought up in the country, and accus-

tomed to all the drudgery of country works; heard one day the Daughter of her King telling her, "Look, dear Sister, how I wash this milk pan; without this attention the milk you put in it will grow sour." It is thus that the religious Princess offered up to God the tribute of her fidelity to all her duties, in all the various offices which obedience laid to her charge.

Besides these particular relations which were a consequence of the functions she had to fulfil in the Monastery, Princess Louise entertained some more general; either with the society of which she was a member, or out of condescension or necessity with the world which she had left; but both the one and the other were consecrated, by religion, and she rendered them useful to others by charity, knowing, like the lawgiver of the Jews, to make herself beloved by God and men. She was of those free and open characters which do not require much study to be known, and whose candour inspires with interest and love all those about them. In the abode of mortifications and austerity, she had always a serene countenance. An amiable and sweet cheerfulness shone in her looks, and evidently proved the interior satisfaction which she enjoyed in her state. She had more than once to present to God sacrifices painful to nature; but she never betrayed for an instant any human sadness. When Prioress, she recommended nothing so much to her Nuns, than cheerfulness. "Let

us rejoice," said she to them; "it is the precept of Saint Paul, and I find that cheerfulness gilds the pill of austerity." Therefore her cheerfulness in recreation time, as well as her fervor in the exercises of piety, yielded to none. At certain times of the year, when it is allowed to the Carmelites to cheer up the habitual seriousness of their mortified life, by innocent amusements, she would have the old as well as the young Nuns to share in them: and she gave them the example as Prioress. She invented some little plays suitable to the dispositions of those whom she had to amuse. Thus, once she caused a lottery to be drawn which was not a little acceptable in an abode where people are very covetous of spiritual gain and profit. All the Nuns were to have a share in the gifts of fortune: and these gifts were either a vocal prayer to recite, a little time of meditation, or staying for a few minutes before the blessed Sacrament; in short, the practice of some good work of supererogation. "Never," said the Princess on the occasion, "never any of the brilliant feasts where I have been at Court, made me enjoy the pleasure which I taste here in our little recreations." So true it is, that the most delightful enjoyments are those which a pure conscience approves of; and that innocent pleasures are sufficient to innocent souls.

This amiable cheerfulness, the usual attendant of a generous virtue, had something so particularly characteristic in Princess

Louisa, that it struck all those who approached her. "What is more admirable in her," said the holy Bishop of Amiens, "is her cheerfulness among all the austerities of her Convent, which she practises without the least mitigation." Her whole conduct was impressed with the signs of this happy disposition of her soul. She served the ALMIGHTY with cheerfulness: she fulfilled all her duties with cheerfulness; cheerfulness reigned in her conversation, and we have many instances that she did not banish it from her correspondences with the persons whom she had judged worthy of her confidence. Of that happy number was Abbé Bertin, whose god-daughter, or eldest daughter she called herself, because she was the first Carmelite whom he had received, and because she bore his name. Sometime after her admission in the Convent, seeing with grief that her Superior continued notwithstanding all her representations, to treat her as a Princess, she reproached him for it in the following manner: "Notwithstanding all the respect which I owe you, Father, you are a very strange man to fancy that I do an act of humility, when I desire you to write to me without ceremony, and without beginning your letters in the middle of the page. Well, you must know my most honoured and reverend Father, that instead of shewing the least humility by so doing, it is on the contrary a rest of my ancient ways in the world. For had I thought as Sister Theresa of Saint Austin, I would have per-

mitted myself to be treated by Reverend Father Superior as he pleased ; but from a *remembrance* of having been formerly Princess Louisa, I wrote to you what is usually practised by the King's daughters when they entertain a correspondence with any one. After a short time they command the suppression of respectful compliments, and they are obeyed. Therefore, Abbé Bertin shall no longer put at the beginning of his letters, *Madam* : he shall retrench at the end, the *Respect*, and all the *Servants* in the world ; and he shall not speak any more in the third person in the context. Such is the will of Princess Louisa, and the earnest desire of Sister Theresa of Saint Austin.

Sending to the same Abbé Bertin the clock of the House, which was out of order, she wrote to him ; " I send you our clock, and such are its doings : First, it gains very much. To that, perhaps, you will say, *Like master, like man*, for in the ways of virtue I advance not at all. Second, the ringing of the bells are too slow for my vivacity. Good bye, my holy Father. It is really silly to write to you merely for a commission, but I cannot help it."

Being Mistress of the Novices ; in a letter which she inclosed in that of her Prioress to the Superior, to wish him a happy feast, she told him : " Our Mother will not come alone with her numerous professed daughters ; you will give leave to your god-daugh-

ter to present herself with her little Angels of the Noviceship, to tell you how earnestly they pray to good Saint Louis and Saint Austin to protect their Father."

It was in this cheerful strain that she wrote sometimes to the Cardinal de Bernis, with regard to the beatification of a Carmelite, which she solicited jointly with the Empress Mary Theresa; and, as by a mistake of the Commissaries, they had resumed the inquiries about the beatification already begun of another Nun of the same Order: "It is, Sir," said she to him in her letter, "for the venerable Mother Ann of Jesus, and not venerable Mother Ann Magdalen of Saint Joseph, that I interest myself now. It is that former who founded the Carmelites in France. She was French, and died at Paris; the latter was a Spaniard, and died in Flanders. I would with all my heart that both could be beatified: but I have always heard people say that one ought not to run two hares at once. You will see that it was the advocate of the Devil, who, being inspired by his crafty client, has started this second hare, to give us the change, and make us miss them both. It would be a very good trick upon him if his cunning were to make us catch two instead of one. You are equal, Sir, to such an undertaking, and I must tell you that I hope it will be so; but if that be impossible, do your utmost for venerable *Ann of Jesus*, and leave venerable *Ann Magdalen of Saint Joseph* for a future time; per-

haps her turn will come afterwards: but the Mother must pass before the Daughter."

As for me," said she in one of her letters to a Carmelite, "I am equal to every hardship, and therefore, if I do not exert myself to the utmost this Lent, GOD will be authorised to make me lively reproaches at Easter for my sloth and pusillanimity. I enjoy good health, for that has been published out in parish churches after the sermon. My habitual prayer is, *Thy will be done, O my God! I ask for nothing but the accomplishment of thy will.* With that I go on very well. It is all I can do, and yet I think that it is a great deal. But to puzzle my head beforehand about things which by chance may happen to me, that would give me the vapours; then my bodily strength would be soon done with, and I should want broth before Easter."

This constant cheerfulness of the Princess, the fruit of an irreproachable conscience, was also the sign of her noble and generous heart; it was impossible to be acquainted with her without admiring the goodness of her character. All that she did for others was nothing in her eyes, whilst the least thing done for her seemed always to her of great importance. Sensible for the least attentions, she scarcely thought of having requitted herself well enough by repaying them with thousand marks of affection. As for her gratitude, she carried it to a sort of

excess, with regard to the Sisters who rendered to her the services of a virtuous friendship. Thus she attended with an unwearied assiduity, watched with the most tender care, and even exposed her life, near that infirm Religious, who had given her the first lessons of the perfection of her state; and after all that, she was heard to say: "All I do is nothing, compared to what I wish I could do for the relief and comfort of the person who has given me the most effectual proofs of her tender zeal for the salvation of my soul."

In conversation, Princess Louisa had a tone of sincerity and candour which commanded an entire confidence. She gained at first sight the friendship of those who had to deal with her; she always edified them by her virtues, and charmed them by her sweet carriage and engaging manners. She made religion not only commendable by her examples, but also amiable and beloved in her person; and it seemed that Christian piety could not dwell in a sanctuary better qualified to conciliate the love and the homage of the world. Thus the greatest Saints, those divine men, whose conversation was in Heaven, were from charity gentle and affable towards their fellow creatures, and seemed, as it were, to crawl yet upon earth with them, the better to draw them to God. The title of a Christian, which, by raising her to the ALMIGHTY, put her at the same time on the same level with the generality of men,

was the only one which she valued, and which she claimed as her right. It was not her Religious only that she wished to forget her Royal birth; she was also surprised that people from without could see in her something more than a simple Nun. A Gentleman, in whom she had great confidence, and whom she had sent for to draw up a deed, important to her Community, did not dare sit down in her presence: "What! still standing?" said the Princess to him; "when you are seated I shall be able to lay hold of all your good thoughts. Take notice, Mr. de Longchamp, religion makes all men equal; and in society two things put all conditions on the same level; the manner of obliging, and the manner of feeling the obligation: the one is for you, and the other for me."

In leaving the world, Princess Louisa had carried into her solitude that benevolent inclination which had made her so generally regretted at Court. Disgrace and misfortune never found her insensible. She had wished to have it in her power to remove all the evils which afflict mankind, and her sentiments were well known; so that she was still beset in her Convent by thousand solicitations of all kinds, which fatigued her very much, and which, however, before her profession she could not take upon herself to reject; and even then her good heart rendered her, more than once, unfaithful to her resolutions. "The world," said she, wishes to make the best advantage of me, to

the end, and I must be resigned to be impo-
 rtuned till my divorce from it is fixed for
 ever." Her tender compassion for the un-
 fortunate often brought her back to Court;
 sometimes near the King her father; some-
 times near the Princesses her sisters. We
 see her soliciting pardon for deserters; means
 of subsistence for men of talents in distress,
 and succours for individuals, families, and
 communities, reduced to poverty. Having
 heard one day the extreme misery under
 which a young man of creditable parents
 groaned, by which he was reduced to the
 greatest despair, moved with pity at his situ-
 ation, though she knew him only from the
 scandal which he had given by his conduct,
 she solicited for him, and obtained from the
 Court, a favour which had the power of
 changing him suddenly into a virtuous man.
 A Nun of her Community had sought, but
 in vain, to procure for a very near relation
 of hers, the means of obtaining a retired si-
 tuation, judged necessary to his salvation.
 Princess Louisa having heard it, sought with-
 out loss of time for the sum of money re-
 quisite for that good work, and giving it to
 her companion, she told her: "I am de-
 lighted that a stranger has not robbed me
 from the satisfaction of extricating you from
 this perplexity."

Always guided by supernatural motives in
 the good which she did to men, she proposed
 to herself to please God alone, and looked
 up solely to him for reward. To remind her

of her benefits would have been a mortifying thing to her ; they might even have been forgotten without any danger of exhausting the source of her benevolence : and she was seen many times eager to oblige persons who were so much accustomed to her favours, that they seemed to exact them as debts. It was above all things a true enjoyment for her when she could repay with benefits, the wrongs which others might have been guilty of in her regard ; and she never missed such an opportunity.

Those who had favours to dispense, could not always comply with the charitable desires of the good Princess, or were not inclined to do it. She did not take it ill, nor complained of it. " Having no longer any thing in the world," said she in a letter to a friend, " I have no longer any thing to give ; but it is not against the vow of poverty to beg for others ; if I be refused that does not signify ; the poor ought not to wonder at it, when they are dismissed with a, *God bless you.*" When she thought that she ought to sacrifice to the spirit of her vocation, her laudable propensity of doing good, and of affording relief to the distressed ; in the account which she gave of her motives to one of the Superiors of her Order, she said, " If I do so, it is less from the fear of meeting with refusals and reproaches, to which I would willingly submit for God's sake, than on account of the dissipation which is the unavoidable consequence of external affairs."

Though Princess Louisa had adopted a new family, in the name of religion; religion by purifying and sanctifying in her the sentiments of nature, had not destroyed them; and the goodness of her heart never appeared under a more amiable character than in the intercourse she kept with the Royal Family. The salvation of the King, and other friends of her own blood, had been one of the motives of her vocation, which she always kept present to her mind. Every day there were prayers said for their intention in her Monastery. "I can assure you," said she, to Abbé Bertin, "and you know it as well as myself, the King has a share in all the prayers and other good works which are done here." And all these prayers she offered up to the ALMIGHTY in the fervor of her particular devotions. The letters which she wrote to several persons of piety, are filled with pressing invitations to pray for the King. In one of these letters, she says, "Pray for the King: of all the Princes actually upon the throne; he protects religion with the greatest zeal: but, alas! that is not enough."

Louis the Fifteenth took frequent journeys to Saint Denis, and was seldom a month without paying a visit to his daughter. This good Prince had always the attention to concert things with her before hand, in order to come to see her but on the days, and at the hours when she could receive his visit,

without any trouble to herself or to her Community. He had forbidden all sort of ceremonial for his reception, and he never introduced any one of his attendants into the Monastery. Even it happened more than once that he was ready to depart, when it was not yet known in the Convent that he was come. According to the hour of his visit, he assisted at mass, vespers, or benediction, in the outward choir. "We must not give any distraction to your Nuns," said he to his daughter: "besides, by my going out, I will oblige all my attendants to pay a short visit to your Church."

They had prepared in the House a little apartment to receive the King, where usually he took some refreshment, and now and then a little dinner. In one of the first visits which he paid to Princess Louisa, being yet a Postulant, he dined alone with her. "Call in your Nuns," said he to her, "they will be glad to see their King." He recommended his daughter to them, and spoke to them all with that engaging goodness, which was his true characteristic. Sometimes during Lent, instead of the coarse dishes prepared for the refectory of the Nuns, he brought them in his own carriage the finest fish destined for his own table. The first time he gave these royal treats to the Convent, he said to Princess Louisa, "Come, dear daughter, I bring you my dinner; I would not entrust it to any one, for it is ten to one that you would not have had it quite entire." One day

that he had stayed with his daughter longer than usual, he told her in taking his leave, "They will talk of our interview: they will say that we settle here the affairs of the state." They were very much mistaken indeed; for the Princess never entertained her father, but with the concerns of her order, or discourses suitable to her holy profession. One day at the end of such an interview, in which the tender piety of his daughter had spoken to his heart, this Prince assisted, as he usually did, at the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. While the sacred Host was held up to the adoration of the faithful, he prostrated to the very ground, remained for some time in that humble posture, and rose up wiping off the tears with which he had watered the pavement of the sanctuary. Hence no one ever entertained the least doubt but that it was to the sacrifices of innocence, and to the moving examples of piety which he beheld in his daughter, that Louis the Fifteenth was indebted for the lively sentiments of penance which penetrated his heart, and which he displayed so openly in the last moments of his life.

It was also in this trying circumstance, that Princess Louisa exhibited all the heroism of filial piety, united to the most religious zeal. She prayed, she procured prayers, she passed days and nights at the foot of the altar, begging of God the salva-

tion of the King, with that lively faith which penetrates Heaven, and obtains miracles. Her anxiety was equal to her grief, especially from the moment when she was acquainted with the danger of the King, till she learned that of his own accord, he had asked with eagerness, the last sacraments of the Church, and had received them with the most profound sentiments of repentance, resignation, and confidence; blessing under the most acute pains the hand which struck him; bewailing the errors and sins of his life, and settling himself the form of the humble declaration, in which he would have published throughout all his dominions, the regret of a King on his death-bed, who judging his former actions by his faith, called them *scandals*, of which he asked pardon of God and his people.

Princess Louisa, in her answer to a letter which acquainted her with these consoling particulars, cried out: "ALMIGHTY GOD has heard our prayers: Oh! what a happiness: I am not surprised at the intelligence you give me concerning the King. My joy is now complete. I hope that we shall still long preserve him, and see him a perfect Christian. Yes, I rely much more on the preservation of my poor father, since God has gained the possession of his heart." Two days after writing to the same person, who gave her an account of the progress of the malady, and the Christian dispositions of the King, she said, "What a consolation have we not in this

distressing-circumstance ! I am prepared for the worst. God is master. I will not retract the sacrifice which I have made to him. However, I do not yet despair, because I will never despair of the mercies of the ALMIGHTY. But above all, *fiat voluntas, his will be done.*

The King's illness growing worse every day, Princess Louisa ever occupied with the salvation of his soul, sent him a crucifix, a present which she had received from the Pope, desiring that, when put into his hands, he should be informed that it had indulgences in *articulo mortis*. When they presented it to the King as coming from his daughter, he said with great feeling, "By this act I truly know my daughter; return my thanks to her." And taking this sacred sign of our redemption, he kept it by him, holding it constantly in his hands, or at least, having it under his eyes. Louis the Sixteenth writing to his aunt on this melancholy occasion, said to her; "Overwhelmed with grief as we are all of us, I could not write to you yesterday. It was a trying moment; but the graces which ALMIGHTY GOD has bestowed upon him are very consoling; he died holding his crucifix in his hands, and joining in the prayers which were said for him."

Though Princess Louisa was duly prepared for the King's death, yet when she heard it she was penetrated with the most bitter grief: but raising herself by the aid of

religion above nature, it was not with unavailing tears, but with fervent prayers, repeated communions, and all the good works practised for that intention in her Monastery, and in all those of her Order, that she endeavoured to prove her tenderness to him whom she loved more than a father, from the time he had given her leave to embrace a state more precious in her eyes than life itself. It was also in religion alone, that she found her consolation. "God, by requiring of me this sacrifice," said she in a letter to the Superior of the House, "has so much alleviated it, and I am so much comforted when I reflect on the singular graces which the King has received in his last moments, and of which he seems to have so well profited, that did it depend upon me to bring him again to life, I own, I would not expose him again to the dangers which surround a throne, and risk a second time the salvation of his soul. The dispositions of his codicil do not surprise me. His humble sentiments have touched the scarcher of hearts, but I tremble when I read in it that he has been ill served in his good intentions in favour of religion; that is a dreadful thing. How happy is it for him that ALMIGHTY GOD knows the heart of man. O, how noble was his heart, and how little known! and how much thwarted in all its good designs." Six weeks after she wrote to the same person: "My poor heart is always suffering: but there is no other remedy than submission to the will of God."

If ever a nephew could supply the best of fathers in the heart of the most dutiful and affectionate of daughters, Louis the Sixteenth would have done it towards Princess Louisa by his solicitous attentions to promote all her wishes. In one of his letters, this Prince, told her: "I beg of you, my dear aunt, always to rely upon me: when you can write to me, do it with full liberty, that I may have an opportunity of convincing you of my tender affection for you."

The Queen shared in these affectionate sentiments of the good and virtuous Louis the Sixteenth, her husband, for his aunt: and on every occasion she gave the most unequivocal proofs of it. We may remember in what manner she expressed her tenderness for Princess Louisa, when being yet Dauphiness, she assisted at the ceremony which prepared the sacrifice of that Princess. Become Queen, she begged of her to shew her the sincerity of her friendship, by addressing herself directly to her, for every thing she could wish: and she regretted that the wishes of a Carmelite were so limited.

In following the inclinations of her heart, the Queen * expressed at the same time the

* The Queen, in the visits which she payed to Princess Louisa, brought sometimes her children with her. Being one day at-

sentiments of the Empress, her mother. This great and pious Princess, the zealous protectress of religion throughout her dominions, and especially of the daughters of Saint Theresa, was penetrated with esteem and affection for Princess Louisa. She never spoke of the heroism of her sacrifice but with the emotions of the greatest sensibility, and it might have seemed as if she regretted not to be able to share the merit of it. She had her picture drawn in the dress of a Theresian, and sent it to Princess Louisa, with the following little note at the bottom of it, written with her own hand:

“When, at the foot of the altar, you enjoy the unspeakable peace which your piety and virtues have preferred before all the splendour of a Court, remember me, and look on this picture. It asks of you as the reward of its friendship, a sentiment of tenderness for my daughter and for me. *Mary Theresa, Empress.*”

The same Princess ends one of her letters

accompanied by *Madam*, then only four years old, the young Princess, on the eve of being inoculated, was put to a severe diet; however, they gave her leave to take a little collation, but so very little, that she picked up her crumbs with the greatest care, and without losing the least part of them. A Nun, saying, that *Madam* seemed to announce some dispositions for a Theresian Convent, where it is a practice to gather up the crumbs in such a careful manner, the Queen answered: “If Almighty God were to give her one day that vocation, I would not hinder her from coming to partake of your happiness.”

to Princess Louisa, in these words: "These ten years, during which our incomparable Archdutchess Isabella* has made me enjoy the greatest happiness, I have always had the most sincere esteem and affection for you. I beg leave to recommend to you my daughter, who being so young, is in great need of advices, examples, and prayers. Remember also, Madam, a friend who will be to her last breath, your most affectionate sister and cousin. *Mary Theresa, Empress.*"

Nothing was more edifying than the intimate relations of Princess Louisa with the Princesses her sisters. They were the communications of hidden virtues with conspicuous virtues; both which concerted together the best means of diffusing happiness and virtue around them. Those good works which Princess Louisa could not do on account of her religious state, she left them to the charge of *Mesdames* who looked upon it as a duty to discharge these pious commissions, and in return requested prayers. "All I can do," said she, to a person who solicited some money, "is, to address your friend to *Adelaide*. I will remind my sisters of your affair," said she to the Carmelites of Compiègne: "but you must wait till the feast of All Saints is over: with the best heart in the

* Daughter of the Duke of Parma, and Niece to Princess Louisa.

world, they are so generous, that at the moment they wish most earnestly to give, their purse is quite empty." During the severe fit of sickness, which was the consequence of the religious cares of these Princesses for the King their father, Princess Louisa wrote, "I am always in fear, but my fear is tranquil, and I find my consolation before God, thinking, that if they sink under such a trial, they will be martyrs of the filial piety, which they have displayed in the most christian manner. A little sooner or later we must come all to the same end. *Fiat voluntas.*"

A short time before the death of Madam Sophie, Princess Louisa thus expressed her sentiments with regard to the alarming situation of that Princess: "I am very far from entertaining any hopes concerning Sophie. It is a very hard trial for me to bear; but since it is God's will, it must also be mine. My sisters attend her like heroines. It is Adelaide who has told her every thing; and who supports her submission to the will of God, and her confidence in our holy mother." After the death of the Princess, she wrote to Abbé Bertin: "Though my heart is penetrated with the most bitter grief by the death of Sophie, still I am filled with consolation, considering the manner in which she has made the sacrifice of her life. Oh! how true it is, *as we live so we die.* It would have been very difficult to give you any particulars concerning her life; Christian simplicity having been her great virtue, and her chief

study to conceal her merits. All I can say is, that I wish that I had not more to reproach myself with than she had ; no, never did I know such a pure soul."

I have many proofs of this tender and truly religious friendship, which Princess Louisa entertained for all the members of the Royal Family. Even in the cradle, a child was the object of her pious solicitude. At the birth of the Duke of Normandy, she wrote, " Pray much for our little Norman ; he is very well, and his mother also." In different occasions, I see her begging prayers for the Count of Artois, who was to make his first communion ; for Monsieur, who was founding a Convent of Theresians at Alençon ; for Madam Elizabeth, of whom she was particularly fond. " The day after to morrow is the feast of Saint Elizabeth : recommend strongly, I beg of you, my niece to her patronage ; through the mercy of God she has a very strong will to be his ; but I know what land she inhabits : the most pure and eminent virtues there want great support."

The affections of a virtuous heart are not annihilated by the death of the object of its love ; they follow it into the grave itself. As long as the Queen her mother lived, Princess Louisa shewed her all the sentiments with which nature inspires well-born children, and which religion renders unalterable. She was both the consolation and the de-

light of that pious mother; and after ALMIGHTY GOD had taken her away from her she never missed a single day without paying her at the foot of the altar the tribute of her filial piety. The last act of religion which she did in the world, before she entered into the Convent of the Carmelites, was to go and pray on her mother's grave. But when she remembered the admirable examples which the Queen had given to the world and to her family, she said sometimes, that she would feel more devotion in invoking than in praying for her. The rare piety of this Princess was continually speaking to her heart, and she could not think of her virtues without the most lively emotions of sensibility and love; and I must say it, it is Princess Louisa who has enabled me to compose the work which will, I hope, perpetuate their memory. She had allowed me, and obtained of the Princesses her sisters, the same favour, to dedicate to them the life of the Queen their mother. She regarded its publication as one of the most useful lessons which could be given to Christian France; and she desired it with the greatest eagerness; which she often expressed to me by word of mouth, and particularly in one of her letters to me, in which she says *I wait with great impatience to see the Life of the Queen printed.* This pious impatience accompanied her to her last moments, when doubtless she felt herself a thousand times more happy to depart from the world, to partake of the immortal rewards of virtue, than to live on, and be re-

duced to contemplate with us its image, so strikingly contrasting with the ruins of religion, and the perversity of our manners."

All the correspondence which Princess Louisa allowed herself out of her Convent, had no other object but religion, or what might have some reference to it. She was ready to undertake and suffer any thing for the glory of God and the salvation of souls: and this she manifested in every occasion presented to her by Divine Providence. It was a very precious one in her eyes, which she did not neglect, to be able to co-operate to the re-building of the Church of her Monastery. The King her father had promised her to have it re-built; and Louis the Sixteenth deeming this promise a sacred engagement, fulfilled it with alacrity. Nevertheless, this affair occasioned to Princess Louisa many perplexities and troubles, and even some contradictions. But she was labouring for God's glory, and consequently nothing could slacken her zeal. "Though I have renounced the goods of the world," said she, in a letter which she wrote on the subject to the Superior of the House; "I think that I may still wish that our Church be re-built." At length she obtained it. That Church is a master-piece in its kind: the decorations answered the grandeur of the fabric, and whilst the most severe poverty dwells within the Monastery, both the Church and the Sacristy shine forth with highly brilliant and splendid ornaments.

Among the magnificent things which adorn the Sanctuary, the most striking are six silver candlesticks and a cross, of which the Pope had made a present to the Princess. But, of all the treasures this Church contained, the most valuable in her judgment were many precious authenticated relics; even bodies entire of several Saints, which she had procured from different countries of the Christian world.

Before the rising of the edifice, and while the Princess desired with the greatest eagerness to see its foundation laid, always keeping her zeal for the House of God, subordinate to her still greater zeal for the observance of his law, she took the most effectual measures to prevent the Temple which she was going to erect to the ALMIGHTY, from becoming an occasion of profanation, even before it was built. Animated with these sentiments she wrote to Abbé Bertin: "What gives me now the greatest anxiety, is, that, when the Church of the Convent of Versailles was built, neither the Nuns nor my sisters themselves could ever obtain from the architect not to work on Sundays and holy-days: but I tell you beforehand, that I will not have it so; and it is high time to let them know my determination. It is much better that they should be one year more in completing their work, and that in the mean while the commandments of God and his Church be observed. Yes, I had rather a thousand times never to see our

Church rebuilt, and run the risk of being crushed to death under its ruins, than to suffer such a profanation to be committed within our precincts. Let it not be said, as an excuse, that it is their business ; it is ours to prevent it, and to employ workmen who observe the commandments of the Church, or to do without them. Ask for a formal promise of Mr. Migue, and in writing, for greater security."

Stranger in her solitude to all the affairs of the world, which she called *games at cards*, Princess Louisa exhibited her concern and solicitude only for those of religion ; and during her life she had unfortunately more frequent occasions of bewailing its losses, than exulting in its triumphs. More than once she informed against the criminal attempts of infidelity encouraged by the connivance of the King's Ministers. She often expostulated with Government against the daily and always unpunished outrages against religion and morals ; against the scandalous profanation of our most holy solemnities, and that unrestrained licence of the press which was then sowing all the calamities under which we now groan. But too often her zeal, as conformable to sound policy, as to the principles of religion, was neglected and disregarded by the Agents of Government, blind enough in their depravity to caress a monster which it was their duty to destroy, and of which, by a dreadful

but just judgment of God, they have been the first victims."

Having not always in her power to protect and defend religion effectually with the Civil Government, Princess Louisa neglected nothing to encourage those who by their state were the defenders of our religious tenets; and in many occasions the humble and holy daughter of Saint Theresa animated by her zeal that of the first Pastors, and encouraged them to arm themselves with resolution and intrepidity to combat the impiety of the pretended Philosophers, to stop the depravation of manners, and recal the faithful to a regular observance of the precepts of the Church. Among the several instances which we might lay before our readers, we shall content ourselves to transcribe a letter of the Princess to the Bishop of Clermont, as the most particularly striking. Solicited by the people of his Diocese to grant them a dispensation from the law of abstinence for one Lent only, this Prelate had published his mandate on the subject. Wishing to be helped by the learning and advices of his Curates, he had assembled them in a Synod. Princess Louisa having been acquainted with all these particulars, and relying entirely on the sentiment of a Bishop, who was Visitor General of the Theresians, wrote to him as follows: "Permit your Daughter to pour forth into your paternal heart the bitter grief with which hers is penetrated at the request which has

been made to you. I am very bold, and perhaps I shall do something out of season, and improper; but I hope that you will forgive me, considering my zealous motives, and the melancholy situation to which they have reduced in our days all the observances of the Church. They have been contriving these many years to suppress our Lent; and, pray, who are those that want this? People without religion. Since the establishment of Christianity, there were always countries poorer than others: nevertheless, the law has ever subsisted there in its force; and, pray, who will profit of the indulgence which is now solicited? Is it the poor who eat nothing but bread? No! Will it be those who eat only vegetables all the year round, and who keep meagre from poverty? Will it be those who, to eat meat, want only the leave of their Curate, or those who are prevented by their infirmities to eat fish or vegetables dressed with butter? No, undoubtedly. But the rich alone will have all the benefit of the dispensation; the rich, who, when they keep meagre, will have their tables covered with all sorts of fish and other dainties; and of course will have themselves served in the same sumptuous and exquisite manner, if they are allowed to eat meat. It will be with the suppression of this meagre diet at Clermont, as it has been with the suppression of feasts in Paris. Mr. de Beaumont suffered himself to be prevailed upon three years ago, to retrench fourteen holy-days, because he was assured that the

Police would make the other remaining strictly kept. Well; all the former abuses have begun again: and yesterday, the Day of the Epiphany, the shops in Paris were opened, and all sorts of commodities were cried about the streets as usual.

“ Do not yield, my good Father in God; consider how many Bishops might be inclined to follow your example. The good themselves will say; Mr. de Bonal has done it. He is a very exemplary Bishop; he is courageous and firm: however, he could not refuse this dispensation to the people of his Diocese: and thus you will have on your conscience, not only the *flesh and meat* of your Diocese, but that of many others. They will say also, you may be certain, that the Bishop of Clermont had made the most serious reflections on the matter; his dispensation has been preceded by an admirable letter to his Curates; his mandate is extremely moving; it is clear that he yields only to necessity; and this pretended necessity is only the consequence of our luxury, and the depravation of our manners. Oh! Father, maintain the Church, and the spirit of the Church: do not suffer yourself to be drawn in by a false compassion. If the abstinence of Lent is once mitigated, it will never be re-established. It has been so with respect to the use of eggs. Will it be even possible to preach penance, after having enervated it to comply with the luxury of the rich. But I say

no more : for, if it be lawful to speak, still one must not go too far.

“ I have lived thirty-two years without being able to bear meagre, though very delicious; and these thirteen years I have supported it here, though not so comfortable as that used in the lowest stations of life. I do assure you, Father, that I would consent to pass the whole Lent entirely on bread and water, and to do and bear many other things to prevent you from giving up the law of abstinence; and were it necessary I would sign it with my own blood.

“ Forgive me, Father, and assure me that this letter has not passed the bounds of the confidence and respect which I owe you as a Bishop and my Father.”

It seems that we hear Pulcheria encouraging Saint Ambrose, and even we may say that Saint Ambrose himself could not have spoken with more zeal and wisdom.

Attentive to all that could edify the Church and contribute to re-animate the piety of the faithful, Princess Louisa solicited the Sovereign Pontiff to prosecute the process for the canonization of two Carmelites, begun many years before at the solicitation of the French Clergy, of the Queen Catharine of Medicis, and of the Court of Vienna. On this occasion she wrote to Pope Pius the Sixth: “ I avail myself of this opportunity.

to beg your Holiness to give orders, that the process for the beatification of venerable Mother Ann of Jesus, Carmelite, may be continued. The Empress Queen takes the most lively interest in the success of this affair. I share all her pious desires more than ever."*

The holy Father answered her : " We see more and more how sincerely concerned you are for the interest of religion ; we see that your sentiments are worthy of your vocation, and that all your desires tend to the advancement of God's glory. We will pray to him with all our heart to be himself our guide, and to communicate to us his spirit of counsel and wisdom, that we may do what he requires from us to promote his greater glory. For you know it perfectly well, the success of an affair of such a consequence does not depend upon human will." The French Ambassador in compliance with Princess Louisa's desires, pursued this business jointly with the Minister of Vienna. The wise and prudent slowness of the formalities used in the proceedings for the canonization of a Saint, prevented the Princess from reaping the fruit of her pious solicitations. But the process having been carried on the fifteenth of October, 1788, the Pope declared by a solemn decree, the heroism of the vir-

* This holy person was Spanish, and had founded Houses both in France and the Low Countries.

tues of the two Saints, for the glory of whom Princess Louisa had expressed such a lively concern. By another decree of the tenth of April, 1791, the Holy Father approved of three miracles operated through the intercession of Mother *Mary of the Incarnation*; and on Easter-day, the twenty-fourth of the same month, he concluded by a solemn judgment the canonization of that Saint; the ceremony of which was fixed for the fifth of June in the same year, and was celebrated with the greatest solemnity in the Basilick of Saint Peter: and it is a remarkable circumstance, that Princess Louisa, (who had also taken this canonization to heart ever since the moment of her profession, because that Saint was in a particular manner deemed the foundress of the French Carmelites) was represented in this great feast by the two Princesses her sisters, whom our calamities and their piety had brought to Rome. As for venerable Mother Ann of Jesus, the Holy Father thought proper still to wait for more abundant lights from Heaven before he should proceed to the solemn decree of her canonization. Several authentic miracles wrought through her intercession, though they render her sanctity indubitable, are not yet sufficient that her sanctity may be proclaimed by the organ of the universal Church.

If Princess Louisa exerted such ardent zeal to have GOD glorified in his Saints, she exhibited the same both to encourage and

establish holiness upon earth. Her pious life furnishes us with many proofs that, next to the glory of God, nothing interested her so much as the salvation of souls. This sincere concern she displayed in the most sensible manner, by her solicitude and care to preserve to the Nuns, who had been secularized, the precious advantages of their state, and especially to the Carmelites of Brabant and Austrian Flanders. These holy women overwhelmed with grief at the sight of the walls of their dear solitude being levelled to the ground, turned their eyes towards France, trusting that a great Princess, become their Sister by religion, might alleviate the hardness of their situation, and procure them, if not in their native country, at least in a foreign land, the means of remaining faithful to the promises which they had made to the ALMIGHTY. Their hopes were not deceived. All that could be expected from a generous soul, and a religious and compassionate heart, they received from Princess Louisa. Judging, by her love for solitude, how dreadful must have been the situation of these faithful virgins, torn with violence from their sanctuary, the pious Princess entered into all their troubles, partook of all their afflictions, and promised to God, that, from henceforth all their wants should be hers. The spirit of her state had made her forget for many years that she was the daughter of a King of France; and on this occasion the same spirit made her remember it. She applied to the King her

nephew in behalf of these Nuns, with all the confidence which both the cause and the protector she had fixed on could inspire. Louis the Sixteenth granted all that she asked of him, overjoyed to be able, by a single act of his will, to give at the same time a proof of his attachment for Princess Louisa, of his compassion for the distressed, and of his zeal for religion.

It was not enough for Princess Louisa to grant her protection to the Nuns, who had requested it; she offered it even to those who had not sought for it. She invited, she pressed them to come and join their sisters in France. "In the name of GOD, said she in a letter to a Prioress, come to France, to practise what you have vowed to the ALMIGHTY. Do not give way to despondency, and animate the courage of the other Communities. We are all here praying for you, as the faithful did in the time of persecutions. Did I dare to preach to you, I would invite you also to reflect on the courage which our holy Mother displayed to establish her reformation and all that she suffered, and almost to imprisonment: and all this even under a pious King: This is an example highly worthy your consideration."

It was even before she had obtained the King's consent, that knowing his noble heart, and secure of his sentiments, Princess Louisa had not lost a moment to offer to these pious foreigners a comfortable hospitality in his

dominions. When the King had given his consent, she wrote to them: "I saw the King yesterday, who assisted at our Benediction with *Monsieur*, both in the choir of our Church; I have spoken to him of you and your children. He willingly gives his consent to your coming into his kingdom: and I hasten to inform you of it, to deliver you from any future anxiety." This verbal consent which Louis the Sixteenth had given to Princess Louisa, was confirmed by a letter of his Minister for the Foreign Department, to the Princess. "His Majesty," said the Count of Vergennes, "has given me his orders to let Princess Louisa know that she may give an asylum in the Convents of the Carmelites in France to all the Religious of this Order, who, having been secularized in the Low Countries, wished to live and die in the practice of the Rule which they have embraced. His Majesty leaves it entirely to her option to fix the number of the Nuns whom she is desirous to admit, and to distribute them in such Houses as she will think the most convenient. I have already informed Mr. de Villegas d'Esteimbourg, that it was from Princess Louisa alone that he had any commands or instructions to receive."

Among the religious and feeling hearts which interested themselves in the misfortune of the Carmelites, and other Nuns, persecuted in the Low Countries, was that of Mr. de Villegas d'Esteimbourg, who had the courage to protect them more openly, and

who afforded them the most generous consolations. This virtuous Magistrate by his zeal, abilities, and the credit which always attends great reputation of probity, perfectly answered the views of Princess Louisa. Accordingly, she wrote to him in the following words : " I have received from Mr. de Vergennes a letter similar to yours : therefore you are appointed by the King, my nephew, my correspondent in the good work ; for it is indeed a very good one to receive in our congregation of France, the Carmelites of Flanders, who are willing to persevere in the discharge of the sacred engagements which they have vowed at the foot of the altar. All our Houses ask for some of them, and you may be convinced that we all prefer the salvation of these dear souls to all worldly interest."

It is impossible to read any thing more pressing, and at the same time more tender, than the letters by which the pious Princess endeavoured to raise the courage of her afflicted Sisters, and open their hearts to consolation and hope. When she invited the Prioress of the Convent of Brussels to bring with her Nuns those of all the other Monasteries of the Low Countries, who would wish to follow her example, she told her, " Our Superiors will distribute them in the Houses which are the less poor. They know very well, that, by leaving Flanders, they have no pension to expect from the Emperor.

Those who have some from their friends will keep them. But it is a matter of no consequence ; all that we wish for is, to do the good work. I hope, Reverend Mother, that we shall have our good share, and that you in particular will fall to our lot.

“ All we desire for our reward is the body of our venerable Mother *Ann of Jesus*, who was our Foundress in France, before her being yours : and, besides, that of Mother *Ann of Saint Bartholomew*. If those who make the inventory of your furniture and goods want the reliquaries or shrines, leave them ; but bring us the relics. We shall find ourselves too happy to possess these precious treasures, and to be able to receive you like affectionate Sisters.

“ It is not of late, that Abbé Bertin has expressed to me, his paternal kindness in your regard : he has often told me, that we should receive our poor Sisters, even were we by that reduced to bread and water. I hope that every thing will go well. I write to Mr. de Villegas, to desire him to let me know the day of your arrival among us. O, my dear Mother, how much occupied am I with what concerns you ! In what painful situation are your hearts ! in leaving Flanders, you leave country, parents, friends, directors : in short, every thing that is dear. We shall do our utmost to give you some consolation. Our Community is fervent ; there reigns in it the greatest union. The

life is a little strict and hard; but, on the other side there is an inexpressible charity; not only in ordinary illnesses, but also in every kind of extraordinary sufferings. My Novices are very fervent: perhaps a little too much. My greatest difficulty is to moderate their zeal. I hope, Reverend Mother, that you will be happy in your exile. You are already every one in our hearts."*

Such sentiments could not fail to penetrate with gratitude all those who were the objects of them, and the Carmelites of Brussels in particular, who were destined to inhabit the House of Saint Denis. Therefore their eagerness to accept of that favour was proportioned to the charity which had made the offer. However, keeping themselves

* Similar was her stile, when she addressed her English Carmelite Sisters, namely, those of Liere, whom she did not forget on that occasion. We have lately learnt from a most respectable Ecclesiastic, who has had the opportunity of perusing the originals of some letters, which the Princess wrote with her own hand to the Prioress of that Convent, Mrs. Houseman, now alive, that they are not only highly edifying to all readers, but also peculiarly interesting to the British Catholic; and shew what noble sentiments, what general philanthropy, what universal charity, religion, when genuine, breathes into the hearts and souls of its votaries. Little did she think, that the storm, which she was so eager to avert or to alleviate from the English, was so soon to burst over the heads of her own country women with redoubled fury. Little did she think, that her own daughters would be reduced to penury, when she invites the English to join her, and proffers to break the last piece of bread she is possessed of with them, and to use all her interest in obtaining them an establishment."

within the bounds of that humility which so much becomes the unfortunate, these holy women, in returning their thanks to Princess Louisa for the happiness which she had procured them to be able to live and die in their holy state, conjured her to complete her favours to them, by granting them to occupy during their whole lives, the last places in the Community, and never to enjoy any vote, either active or passive. The Princess answered them that their request could never be granted; that the conditions on which they wished to be received, could never be proposed to the Community; that, being henceforth to form one same heart, they could not but be, of course, one same body: consequently, that every one of them would take in the House of Saint Denis the same rank which they would have held in their Convent of Brussels, according to the date of their profession. Adopting intirely the sentiments of Princess Louisa, Abbé Bertin, on his side, wrote to the Nuns, who were soon to acknowledge him for their Superior, that their first act of obedience at Saint Denis, was not to be willing to set any bounds to the charity of their new Sisters; and in this edifying combat, humility was obliged to yield to charity.

Every thing concerning those pious exiles being settled according to the wishes of Princess Louisa, she bestowed on them another favour which completed the whole. She procured to them private carriages for

their journey, and sent to them a worthy Priest to be their counsel in the last moments which they were to pass in their native country, and their guide upon the road. But while Princess Louisa thus opened with so much zeal and eagerness to her Sisters the only asylum suitable to their state, and towards which they aspired with all the desires of their hearts, their worldly acquaintances on their side, moved with false compassion, offered them very different consolations, conformably to their own sentiments. To this end they employed all sorts of arguments. They made them the fairest promises in order to deter them from their design to pass into a foreign country. To some they represented their old age, or their infirmities; to others the resource of parents in good and easy circumstances. Obliging friends offered them the comforts of a tranquil and peaceable retreat; and to all they objected the danger of undergoing one day in France, where infidelity made such an alarming progress, the same misfortune which they had now to bewail. Even the wise and virtuous wished to keep with them those who displayed such an heroic love of virtue. "They are true martyrs," said the pious Princess, speaking of them; "they have to fight not only against flesh and blood, but even against Casuists, Directors, and all those who ought to encourage them most." Nevertheless, faithful to their duties, they rejected with courage the most seducing proposals. "What

do you propose to me?" said one of the oldest and most infirm. "Believe me, with my paralytic legs, I would crawl to the end of the world, if necessary, in order to die in a Monastery, and under the habit of Saint Theresa." Some of these holy Religious, being on their road to France, passed by their parents' doors, and did not enter their house. In order to shake the inflexible courage of one of them, they imagined to announce to her the false news of her father's death, to whom she bore the greatest affection. She wept for the loss of this parent, prayed for him, and leaving to the dead the care of burying the dead, went on with intrepidity to the place where ALMIGHTY GOD called her.

The charge which Princess Louisa had given to her future Sisters, to bring with them the precious bodies which they possessed in their House, met in the execution with some difficulties from both the Civil and Ecclesiastical powers. The Cardinal Archbishop of Mecklin, called the *Beaumont* of the Low Countries, on account of his courageous opposition to innovations in matters of religion, and for his virtues worthy of the Apostolic times, wrote to Princess Louisa: "I must confess to you, Madam, that it is with regret that I see the bodies of the Saints carried away from our country, and especially from my diocese. Considering this translation as a presage of future calamities, it increases my affliction for the

destruction of Convents : and were it not to comply with your pious request, and to facilitate the canonization of venerable Mother Ann of Jesus, I should have looked upon it as my duty to prevent it."

Arrived at length at Saint Denis, and introduced to their generous deliverer, the Carmelites of Brussels cast themselves at her feet, and their tears were the first expression of their gratitude. Princess Louisa falling upon her knees, and remaining in that posture, obliged them to rise, and embracing them with tenderness, would not suffer them to pronounce the word of gratitude. "You owe nothing to us," said she to them. "We, on the contrary, owe every thing to you. You bring to us your persons with your good examples, and for your portion the bodies of the Saints; a treasure more valuable in our eyes than all the gold in the world. Were you indebted to any one, it would be much more to the King than to us; but our fervent prayers will abundantly repay all he has done for you. Now consider yourselves as in your own house." While Princess Louisa was speaking in this moving manner in the presence of the two now united Communities, floods of tears ran from the eyes of all the Nuns: but whether these tears were a tribute given to the remembrance of former calamities, or to the joy of the present happiness, it would have been rather difficult to judge. From this moment those who had

met with so kind a reception in the House of Saint Denis, never had any occasion to remember that they were strangers in it; but by the tender and engaging cares of Princess Louisa and of the whole Community to make them forget it entirely.

Whilst the zeal of Princess Louisa exhibited this moving scene in the Community of Saint Denis, many other Monasteries in the kingdom were enjoying, through her pious exertions, a similar happiness. Two hundred and sixty Nuns of different Orders suppressed in Flanders, blessed her in France as the Angel of Providence over them. A whole Community of Religious of Saint Clare, in the city of Ghent, passing through Saint Denis, to repair to the asylum which Princess Louisa had procured them in Franche Comté, went to present the tribute of their gratitude to their Benefactress. Arrived in her presence, the profound sentiments with which they were penetrated did not permit them to express their feelings but by their humble silence, and the abundance of their tears. They cast themselves at the feet of the Princess, who immediately did the same before them, saying: "What are you doing, my dear Sisters? Are you not religious as well as myself, and far above me in the sight of God, by the sacrifices which you are now making to religion and to our holy state? Sit down, I beseech you, or I remain prostrate at your feet." Moreover, these pious souls, who deemed them-

selves so little and insignificant before the daughter of a King of France, were obliged to let her kiss the hands of each of them, saying at the same time, "*It is thus that ought to be honoured those who confess religion with courage.*" Struck with astonishment and admiration at the kind reception which the Princess had given them, these poor Nuns deliberated among themselves on the means of testifying their gratitude to her; and thought that they could not fix on any one more proper than to offer to her piety the only treasure which they possessed in the world, and which they were carrying with them: it was a valuable relic of Saint Colette their Foundress. Princess Louisa wishing to preserve to them both the enjoyment and the merit of gratitude, accepted of their pious gift; exposed it to the veneration of the Community, and, as to herself, passed great part of the night in prayer before the relic of the Saint; and the next day, as the Nuns were on the point of setting off, the Princess told them: "You have made me a present, and now you must accept of mine. I return to you this treasure; it is of too great a value to deprive you of the pleasure of offering it to the Convent which is going to receive you."

The joy which the pious Princess felt at the success of her cares in favour of a great number of her Sisters, was somewhat troubled by the weakness of those who remained in the world. She resorted to all sorts of means; she

addressed to them the most moving exhortations, to open their eyes on the danger to which they exposed their salvation : she represented to them, that the engagements which they had contracted at the foot of the Altar, were without restriction or reserve either of times, or places ; and that nothing but real necessity could ever dispense with them from the faithful observance of their rule : that they could not allege such a motive, since Providence had opened to them in France, the Monasteries of their Order ; and she assured them that such was the sentiment of the most enlightened Casuists, and of the Pope himself, who had been consulted on the subject. However, the indifference of some of these Nuns, and the inutility of her solicitous cares to recal them to their duty, could not dishearten and discourage the *Theresa of France*. Her Sisters, though misled, were still her Sisters, and the tender object of her anxiety and love. She pitied those, who not sufficiently sensible of the holiness of their engagements, yielded so imprudently to the facility which was given them to rid themselves of their salutary restraint. She poured forth all the desires of her heart in the most fervent and continual prayers, to draw down upon them the blessings of God. " Let us hope," said she, " in those circumstances, let us hope still in the mercy of our Lord, in the influence of religion, and the remorse of their conscience, when delivered from prejudices ; let us trust in the continuance and fervor of our prayers,

that they will at last follow the example of their former companions. Let them but come, and we shall forget that, too long, alas! they have been deaf to our invitations. All our endeavours will be to console with them for having come too late. We shall congratulate with one another, to have at length recovered, and to be able to embrace Sisters whom we feared we had lost for ever."

Animated with such sentiments, Princess Louisa might have been much edified, but could not be astonished at the sacrifices which the Nuns of the Low Countries made to their vocation: and as some seemed to pity them in her presence, for the struggles they must have undergone, in abandoning their native country; she said, "The Nuns who have laid hold of so fair an opportunity of testifying to the ALMIGHTY their fidelity and love, are not those whom we ought to pity; but those who have permitted it to slip through their hands. We ought to pity still more, so many souls, who, in process of time would have found their salvation in these retreats, which are henceforth shut up." Her zeal for the salvation of souls was so natural to her and so strong, that sometimes it broke forth in expressions of a charity worthy of Saint Paul: "My only end, in all that I have done for the Order," said she, in a letter to a Nun who had come over to France, "was to be conducive to the salva-

tion of souls, for which I would shed my blood, after the example of our spouse."

Having been acquainted with all the charitable exertions of Princess Louisa in behalf of the Nuns secularized in the Low Countries; Pope Pius the Sixth addressed to her a Brief of congratulation, in which, among other things, he says: "We acknowledge now more than ever the admirable designs of God over you. It is not for your sanctification alone, that he has conducted you into the retreat, where you have consecrated yourself to him. He has destined you also to be the refuge of these poor foreigners, who not being able to walk any longer in the road which they had chosen to save their souls, have found it again near you, and much more frequented than in their native land."

Let the Philosopher, I mean the Christian Philosopher, pause a little here, and let him meditate on the incomprehensible ways of Providence, and the instability of human things.

These very same Nuns who had been exiled from their country by an unfortunate deluded Prince, and so kindly received in France by Princess Louisa, having since been so re-established in their Monasteries, as to reside in them with security and peace, under the government of a wise and just Prince, are now offering in their turn hospi-

tality to those from whom they themselves had received it, at a time when they are now groaning in secret under the daggers of the French Philosophers. *

Princess Louisa did not miss another precious opportunity which occurred, of edifying the Church, and contributing to the salvation of souls. A small number of Discalced Carmelite Friars, who were desirous to live according to the primitive regularity of their Rule, begged of her to procure them the means of delivering themselves from the mitigations which had been introduced in it. After having consulted the Archbishop of Paris, Mr. de Beaumont, and the holy Bishop of Amiens, Mr. de la Motte, she laid the desires of these fervent Religious before the King, whom she easily disposed in their favour. Certain then of the King's protection, she wrote to the Pope as follows: "Holy Father, I will never forget the paternal tenderness with which your Holiness has invited me to ask of you all that I could wish. It is therefore with the greatest confidence that I address myself to day to your Holiness, on one of the most interesting occa-

* But alas! it was for a very short time, for a few months had scarcely elapsed since the publication of this work, but the Low Countries were laid waste by a horde of banditti; their fields deluged with torrents of blood; their towns and villages stripped of all their riches and ornaments; all their religious and charitable establishments destroyed; their revenue plundered, and their sacred buildings either sold or levelled to the ground.

sions in which you may carry into effect the affectionate sentiments which you vouchsafed to express for me.

“ Among the Discalced Carmelite Friars established in France, there are several who wish very earnestly to keep their Rule according to its primitive austerity; but it is now impossible for them to do it, on account of the mitigations introduced among those with whom they are associated.

“ I have laid before the King the petition and desires of these good Religious: and he has found them quite reasonable and just; after having considered the thing several times with the Archbishop of Paris, he asks only the consent of your Holiness: and on his side, he will do all that is requisite to secure to them the full enjoyment of the favour which it will please your Holiness to grant to them. He has given me leave to write to you, and even promised me, that the Cardinal of Bernis, his Ambassador near your Holiness, will join his solicitations to those which I have taken the liberty to present you.

If only a single House were to embrace the reform it would become under the protection of the King, a fruitful nursery, which, sooner or later, would serve to reform other Houses; and perhaps would contribute to renew the whole Order in France: and it would be an example to all other Religious

Orders. But were all these hopes to prove vain, I trust, holy Father, that it will never be said, that, under the Pontificate of a Pope, who has given the habit of Saint Theresa to the daughter of a King of France, it has not been permitted to the Carmelite Friars of France to be faithful observers of their Rule; and in reality you would withhold from them the only means to fulfil it, were you to refuse to them the Brief which they solicit. But I am fully confident that your Holiness will not do so. No, you will not refuse it to their zeal for regularity, which, alone and unprotected, merits to be countenanced and kindly received. You will not refuse the King, who by his asking you this Brief, gives you a proof of his filial respect, attachment to religion, and great esteem which he entertains of Monastic regularity. You will not refuse it to a Daughter of Saint Theresa, who, by interesting herself for these good Religious, only follows the footsteps of her holy Mother. You will not refuse it to your spiritual Daughter, to whom you have given so many testimonies of parental fondness, and whom you have invited to ask you any favours. You will not refuse it to so many holy Religious of all Orders, who lament the general relaxation of manners, and beg of God a resource which they would find in this example: in fine, you will not refuse it to the whole Church, which, scandalized at the sight of so many irregularities, bewails not to see at

least one striking exception proper to excite the emulation of others."

With this letter Princess Louisa sent a particular instruction to the Cardinal of Bernis, and desired him to observe that the Religious who solicited the reform, requested only to follow their Rule, such as it is prescribed in their constitutions. But it is impossible," she added, "that Religious attached to the austerities of their Rule, can observe it when mixed with those who do not practise it. And if it be a necessary condescension not to bind the latter in the whole severity of their constitutions, it is an indispensable justice to procure to the former the liberty of fully conforming to them. There is but a separation which can reconcile these two opposite things. I beg of you, Sir, to exert all your abilities to make the Court of Rome sensible of all this. It is certainly giving you much trouble for very little, for it is a thing as clear as noonday."

It would have been difficult to plead the cause better. Accordingly, the zeal of the pious Princess was recompensed with all the success which it deserved. The Pope granted her the Brief which she solicited; and the King put it in execution, by giving leave to the Friars to whom it was addressed to retire into the House of Charenton. "You will not be sorry, I suppose," said the Princess, in her letter to the Cardinal of Bernis, "to hear some news of the Brief which you have sent us. Well, with the Rule in their hands,

they have set up the House again, and it is now as just coming out of the hands of Saint Theresa. The little family has already increased ; but it will be much more so, when the news of this asylum being opened to regularity is more known." From the time of this reformation, the Carmelite Friars of Charenton have constantly offered the most edifying examples of religious observance and regularity.

The zeal of Princess Louisa met with more contradictions, but had an equal success, in the prosecution of another good work, which she undertook from motives no less worthy of her piety. Some devout people had long expressed a desire to give to the town of Alençon models of virtue, by establishing a Convent of Theresians, without having ever been able to remove the obstacles which prevented the execution of their design. The protection of the Princess having been earnestly sought after, she twice solicited and obtained letters patent, and removed numberless difficulties ; which being done, she persuaded herself that the affair was quite settled. In effect, the House which was destined to receive the Nuns was prepared, at the solicitation of the intended Foundress, and the Religious were arrived : but this Lady having advanced pretensions incompatible with regularity in a Convent of Carmelites, and having met with a refusal to comply with them, she recalled her pious gifts, and left without an asylum and re-

sources, those whom she had invited with so much ardour, and with most brilliant promises. Being informed of such unaccountable caprice, Princess Louisa, trusting on the purity of her motives, blessed Divine Providence in the same manner as she would have done, had she succeeded to the utmost of her wishes; saying only, This Lady wished the establishment when she saw insurmountable obstacles to it; and now she gives it up when those obstacles are removed: but if it be the work of God, his providence will easily find out other means to make it take place. Her only grief was not to bear alone all the troubles and anxieties of her Sisters, now obliged to seek another asylum on being obliged to quit their new Monastery. She encouraged and consoled them, as much as she could, in her letters to their Prioress: "You are then laid upon the cross, my dear Mother, you and your children; but do not flatter yourselves to be alone nailed upon it; for we ourselves are also with you. I expect here in a few days Abbé Rigaud; perhaps he will bring us some news. All that I well know is, that I should be overwhelmed with grief, were I not sure that we shall gather in this affair a good stock of provisions for our true native country, the heavenly Jerusalem, where we shall have the liberty to reside, without being under the necessity of obtaining letters patent."

Divine Providence did not frustrate the zeal and confidence of Princess Louisa. Soon

after this disappointment, a virtuous Priest of *Chartres* took the place of the Lady who had withdrawn her favours; and *Monsieur*, after having declared himself the protector of the forsaken establishment, became its most generous benefactor. "I have given orders," said this Prince, writing to his aunt, "to secure the gifts which I have made to the Carmelites of Alençon: and if any more be requisite to accelerate the conclusion of this affair, I will do it with all my heart." Thus every thing was terminated according to the desires of the pious Princess; and she enjoyed the great consolation of beholding a new sanctuary of Christian Virgins opened for those of her sex to the great edification of the public.

Quite a stranger in her solitude to all the concerns of the world, Princess Louisa made the inhabitants of Saint Denis sensible that she was still existing by procuring them a greater abundance of spiritual helps, and especially in furnishing them with more frequent means of animating their faith by hearing the word of God. The salvation of one single soul, was in her eyes deserving all the exertions of the sovereigns of the earth.* A young English Lady, desirous to become a Religious in France, and not being able to obtain her father's consent, found means to

* An instance of this was seen in the life-time of her father.

intreat Princess Louisa in her behalf. Accordingly, the Princess begged of the King to command his Ambassador in England, to do his utmost to remove that difficulty. The King complied with his daughter's desires. His Minister negotiated the business with the English Gentleman, who being flattered to do a thing agreeable to the King of France, granted the leave which his daughter had solicited ; and Princess Louisa had thus the satisfaction of procuring to the young English Lady the comforts of the holy state which she wished to embrace, and at the same time of securing her faith against the dangers which she had to fear in her native country.

This zeal for the salvation of souls, the Princess displayed again in a very moving manner in regard of a Nun,* whom the spirit of error had formerly induced to run away from her Monastery. Struck with remorse at the great example of the daughter of her King, who sanctified herself in the House which she had abandoned, the poor fugitive was seeking the means to return to it, after having lived thirty years in the world under a secular habit. On receiving this happy intelligence, Princess Louisa, then Prioress, instead of making the penitent purchase by delays and intreaties, the grace of her reconciliation, was the first to open her

* A Lay Sister.

arms and heart to her, and to invite her back to her Convent with the most engaging indulgence. "Consider," said she, to Abbé Bertin, "what consolation we shall feel at her return, and with what sentiments of joy we shall receive her."

This Lay Sister was in a decrepit old age, and sinking under all sorts of infirmities: but this outward appearance, so little inviting, hid a soul precious to JESUS CHRIST; and it is all that Princess Louisa beheld in her. As soon as she learned her arrival at the Convent, she hastened to meet her, and without giving her time to ask for forgiveness, she embraced her with the most tender affection, and bedewed her with tears of joy. Nor could the Community which was present, refrain from tears, equally moved with sensibility at the charity of their Prioress, and the happy return of their converted Sister.

Her heart overflowing with a sentiment which transported her, the pious Princess seemed ready to say to every one on this joyful day, with the woman of the Gospel, "*Rejoice with me on my happiness.*" "What good news I have to tell you," said she, in her letter to the Bishop of Clermont; "one of our Apostates that had been out of the Convent these thirty years came back to us yesterday. She is very penitent, and declares that she wishes for fresh instructions, and is ready to submit entirely to the true faith.

She is ninety-one years old, troubled with a palsy in her legs, but her intellect is quite sound. She hears perfectly well, and has a very flowing tongue. Pray to God for her: make all our Sisters pray also, and thank the ALMIGHTY for the grace which he has conferred upon me, to receive back again in our flock this wandering sheep, at the time I am at their head, though so unworthy of such an important charge. We are now forty; but if the others would come back also, we shall find room enough for them all."

About the same time she wrote nearly the same things to a Visitor of the Order, and to the Superior of the House: "Our old Sister of ninety-one years of age came yesterday; I hope that our Sisterly behaviour, our prayers and exhortations, will dissipate all her prejudices. She was overjoyed to put on again our holy habit, and wept bitterly for having left it. She said before the whole Community, that she was Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman. Unite your prayers with ours that this poor soul may be saved. We make for this intention a Novenna to the heart of the Blessed Virgin. She told us the other day, that with *Jansenism* all kinds of evils had entered the house where she was. How, said I, could you let yourselves be imposed upon to such a degree? Was there no one to speak in favour of the sound doctrine?" "No, my Mother, all those who spoke to us and surrounded us were *Jansenists*, and told us, that, to run away from

our House to go to Holland, was sacrificing ourselves for the truth.' " She has declared to Mr. May that she condemned all that the Church condemns; that she submitted to all its decisions; and, namely, to the Bull *Unigenitus*. She seems very sensible and grateful for all the attentions which we shew her."

None of the Nuns carried these attentions farther than Princess Louisa herself, and during the four years that this old Sister lived in the House she took continually the greatest care of her. She was as attentive to her as a faithful servant could be to her mistress, or rather as a tender mother to a beloved child. As this poor Sister could not make use of her hands, Princess Louisa helped her to dress herself and to eat; she cleaned her cell; in a word, did every thing to relieve her. The only thing which she regretted, was to have hitherto been under an impossibility of making some others who still remained in the world, share in her maternal charity. At length, after the most constant inquiries, she discovered the place of their residence. She sent virtuous people to carry to them words of reconciliation and peace. She invited and pressed them, by the most powerful motives, to imitate the example of their converted Sister. She gave the description of one of these poor fugitives, in the following words, in a letter to Abbé Bertin: " She is the daughter of a *Commissioner of Public Accounts*: her friends, who

are not Jansenists, were much grieved at her leaving the Convent. She must be now seventy-five years old : she is very infirm, and quite covered with scurf : but that does not signify ; let her come back to us, and we shall have all the tenderness and solicitous cares of a good father for a prodigal son. They have assured me that she lives near Saint Eustache, and that she is very comfortable ; and, of course, that it will be rather difficult to make her leave her situation. It is a great pity, indeed ! She was a very good Catholic during all the time of her Noviciate. Even she left the recreation, when the conversation was bordering on Jansenism : but by dint of persecutions she was led into error. These poor sheep have already one foot in the grave : and, what a dreadful eternity waits them. I shudder at the very thought of it. The pious Princess had not the consolation to see them return to the sheep-fold : but undoubtedly her charity had in the sight of God, all the merit of their conversion."

Though her zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls was without bounds, in the desires of her heart ; she knew, however, how to regulate it by discretion and wisdom. She dreaded the illusions of an indiscreet zeal ; and what we have still to say to complete the description of her virtues will be an evident proof that she knew perfectly well, that the zeal of a Nun must be above all to work for her own per-

fection, to disengage herself from the world, and to obey with courage the call of her Divine Spouse through the thorny road that leads to his heavenly throne.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE
LIFE
OF
PRINCESS LOUISA OF FRANCE,

A
CARMELITE NUN.

BOOK IV.

WHAT proud Philosophy has but very imperfectly hinted at, Religion teaches in the most clear and impressive manner; that, neither the advantages of a noble extraction, nor the gratuitous gifts of fortune or genius, but, moral qualities alone, the sentiments of the heart, the virtues of the soul, and especially the virtues adapted to the state of life in which Divine Providence has placed us, are the accomplishments which constitute solid merit, if not always in the records of history, at least in the actual esteem of the

wise and good, and at the unerring tribunal of Supreme reason and justice. Thus, had Princess Louisa never been a great Princess, and the daughter of a King of France; had she never been adorned with the talents and other natural and acquired accomplishments which the world admired in her; still we might say with truth, that, considered only as a simple Religious, she is entitled to our praises, and to all the homage due to heroic virtues.

It is certainly a very encouraging sight for Christian piety, to view this Princess hid in the solitude which she has preferred before the Palace of her ancestors. Nothing can be more instructive and edifying than to contemplate her, sometimes with her young Pupils whom she forms to the perfection of Evangelical virtues; sometimes at the head of a fervent Community which she governs by the empire of her examples; in a word, to follow her through all the other occupations to which she applies herself, or the different relations which religion allowed her still to keep with the world, and out of which by the purity of her intentions she drew an inexhaustible source of merits. But what will not be less interesting to our virtuous readers, is the faithful picture of those hidden virtues, more particularly breathing the spirit of the Cross, by which Princess Louisa seemingly devoted to the service of others without the least reserve from of a

principle of charity, knew, nevertheless, how to work out her own sanctification, and prepare herself to die the death of the Saints.

The more elevated the rank from which the Princess had descended, and the more numerous the relations which she had entertained with the world, the more she stood in need of firmness and resolution to exclude the world out of her solitude. Had she been less deeply penetrated with the duties of her state, and the dangers of dissipation, she might have lost every day many precious moments for her own sanctification : either to gratify the curiosity of those frivolous people who make of every thing and of piety itself, a kind of show to amuse their idleness, or to comply with the interested views of those selfish persons who wish that a Religious who has abandoned every thing for herself in the world, should be constantly occupied with the things of the world for the sake of others ; or to please those, who, actuated by purer motives, are not, however, sufficiently sensible how much respect is due to those sacred asylums in which piety entertains a secret and continual intercourse with the GOD of HEAVEN, to render him propitious to the earth. But Princess Louisa, still more eager to shun the world than the world was to seek after her, never communicated herself with *externs* but when religion or charity required it. She never consented to a visit when she could supply it by a letter ; and the persons who came to speak to her, did

not see her. She was very strict to observe this article of the Rule of Saint Theresa, and could not bear to be dispensed with it. A Gentleman, whose birth and piety deserved great consideration, expressed to the Superior of the House the great desire he had to see the *Heroine of Religion*. Abbé Bertin acquainted Princess Louisa with this desire, and she answered him : “ Mr. de *** is a very worthy man, but what does it concern him to see my face? Well : tell him, if you please, that you have told me to open the grate, but for once only, and that I will obey you ; that according to our Rule to open the grate, there must be either necessity, or a very strong motive for edification ; that once is quite sufficient to make him witness that good health may be enjoyed among the Carmelites, and that you are obliged to maintain the observance of the Rule. It is only by keeping our parlours shut up, that I have freed myself from many tedious and unprofitable visits.”

It was publicly known, and in some occasions she plainly said it to those who came to see her, that one of her greatest troubles was to be obliged to receive visits. Even she once signified it to a Sovereign Prince, though in such an ingenious manner that it became a compliment to him. The King of Sweden talking with her, asked her, if the Prince of the North had paid her a visit : “ Very likely he had heard that I do not like

visits," the Princess answered: "but I am very glad that your Majesty did not know it." As the King, in visiting the House, was going up the stairs: "Shall I dare offer my hand to you, Madam?" said he; "I will accept of it very willingly," answered the Princess, "because our Rule has not foreseen the case when Kings would condescend to present their hands to a Nun, and because our families are long ago in possession of going hand in hand." Entering the cell of Princess Louisa, and seeing the furniture which it contained, such as a crucifix, a wooden chair, a wretched straw bed laid on two trestles: "What!" cried out Gustave, "is this the room of the daughter of the King of France?" "Yes," replied Princess Louisa, "and it is a room where she sleeps much better than at Versailles. It is here also that I am grown so fat, which I was far from being when in the world." She told him very particularly in what consisted the diet, and the usual occupations of a Carmelite. She conducted him to the refectory, shewed the place where she sat in the middle of her Sisters, and the little things she made use of at her meals, such as a wooden spoon, and an earthen cup and a pitcher of the same materials. Struck with astonishment at what he saw, and still more at the privation of what he expected to see about such a great Princess, this King of the North, animated with sentiments similar to those of the Queen of Saba, when beholding the wisdom of Solomon in all his splendor and magnificence,

could not cease admiring the still more wonderful wisdom of the Princess, for having placed her happiness in the contempt and sacrifice of all pomp and grandeur. He could scarcely believe his own eyes, when he observed the visible satisfaction and pure joy which shone in all the words and the countenance of a Princess, who was every day practising all the rigours of a penitent life: "No!" he cried out, "No! Paris and France, Rome and Italy have never offered to my sight any thing comparable to the wonder that is hidden in the Convent of the Carmelites of Saint Denis."

Some other illustrious travellers, and among the rest the Emperor Joseph the Second, an Archduke his brother, and Prince Henry of Prussia, wished also to see the pious Carmelite, who inspired them with the same sentiments of admiration, as she had the King of Sweden. As one of them could not conceive how happiness should be found in the state of life which she led: "It is true, Sir, that our happiness is of such a nature, that it must be felt, to be conceived; but as I have the experience of both, I may say that the Carmelite in her cell, is more happy than the Princess in her Palace." I see in a letter of Princess Louisa to the Superior of her Monastery, that she would have been much more pleased to be freed from these visits, than flattered by receiving them, especially when they were to be attended with a breach.

of the inclosure. "My sisters have informed me that the Queen intended to request of me leave for her Brother to come and see me at the grate only, but observed, that, if he desired to enter into the Convent, that favour could not be refused to an Archduke."

"I have answered Adelaide, that by our Briefs the sons and grandsons of the Kings of France had the privilege of entering the Convents of the Carmelites, but not the other Princes of the Blood. Therefore if the Archduke was not *incognito* here, as the King would, I suppose, allow him to rank as a King's son, he might enter our House. Moreover, I have added, that this circumstance never happened before, because very seldom Princes had acquaintances among the Carmelites, and our Houses had nothing to excite their curiosity. But such a creature as me every one wishes to see as an exotic being."

Though Princess Louisa was always tenderly attached to her parents, and consequently had a real pleasure when she saw them; still, however, as she knew this sentiment ought to be regulated according to the duties of a solitary life, she would have severely reproached herself, had she done the least thing to draw a visit from her family. Madam Victoire, telling her one day, that she would reproach Madam *Elizabeth* for having been so long without coming to Saint

Denis, Princess Louisa made her promise not to do it, and even not to say a word of it to the young Princess. "An intercourse with parents," said she to a Novice, "is a great torment to a true Religious, but is especially hurtful to a Carmelite. It is before GOD that we may converse with parents to mutual advantage. At the moment I receive a visit from my family, I feel a sentiment of joy; when it is over, a sentiment of peace." A young Nun of another House having communicated to her some family afflictions, concerning particularly a sister of hers whom she loved tenderly; Princess Louisa answered her: "It is more easy to leave the world than to disengage ourselves from concern about the interests of our family. You cannot imagine with what bitterness it fills the soul, and especially the soul of a Theresian, who lives a life too sedentary and too much retired to let in any affections of that sort without her spiritual advancement being much hindered by it. Your only object must be, to be occupied with GOD alone: if it cost us to part with every thing that we possessed in the world for the sake of our Divine Spouse; he will recompense us for this sacrifice not only in the next world, but even to a hundred fold during our life. It is what the world cannot believe; but it is always felt by a good Religious, and you feel it yourself, since you have consecrated yourself to GOD; and doubtless you will confess, that, since you have suffered yourself to be excessively

taken up with the concerns of your dear Sister, this consolation is not so sensible and sweet as it was before."

The exact fidelity of Princess Louisa in the observance of the duties of the retired life which she had embraced, made her extremely zealous to remove all that could disturb the peace of her solitude. She even sacrificed to it the propensity so congenial to her generous heart of doing good and of relieving the distressed. In the very exercise of charity, she dreaded the illusions of self-love, and the dangers of dissipation. She would bury in her retreat her credit as well as her person, and no longer suffered that her name should be mentioned to those who had any favour to bestow. Her sacrifice was without restriction: nothing was excepted. The cause of religion was the only one which she had not left off protecting at the Court of Versailles. The satisfaction she would have felt in obliging a Bishop, such as the Bishop of Clermont, could not shake her resolution, and she wrote to him: "I never was so sorry as I am to day, Sir, not to be able to do what you wish concerning a place at Saint Cyr, and particularly because the young Lady is one of your relations. I have already been obliged to refuse many people, who desired me to obtain for them the same favour. I do assure you, that I must love my state as sincerely as I do, not to regret sometimes to have renounced every thing."

“ I am very sensible,” said she, writing to the same prelate, “ that you could not refuse writing to me in behalf of your***, but, surely, you have foreseen before hand what the answer will be, as you know my way of thinking, and how great a stranger I have made myself to all the affairs of the world. Had religion been any ways concerned in the case, I would have done my utmost and deemed it the greatest pleasure to countenance your Apostolical zeal : but here the question runs intirely on human distinctions attached to a noble birth, and you well know that I am come to seek here humility and poverty: I will therefore content myself to raise my prayers to Heaven that every thing may turn to the greatest glory of God.”

It was a real labour for Princess Louisa to have continually to dismiss the various solicitations, which tended to recal her mind to the world, especially as she was very punctual to give at least an answer to those whom she could not oblige. Her invariable sentiments on the subject are strongly expressed in many letters which I have in my hands. “ I have taken my resolution this long while ;” said she ; “ by renouncing the world, I have even renounced doing good to others. What my protection cannot do any longer, I hope to do it by my prayers ; not through their worth, but through the merits of Him to whom I have consecrated myself. Were I to interfere in all that, there would be no end.

That would bring me into a communication with the world by no means edifying. I have not chosen a Cloister for that, and you must be sensible how inconsistent with our Rule such a conduct would be in reality." All the persons who surrounded Princess Louisa, were authorised to give a similar answer on like occasions : " My Sister *Theresa of Saint Austin* wishes never to be mentioned in the world," said a Carmelite of Saint Denis, to a Religious of another House, " and you know that a resolution taken by a noble soul, hardly fails being durable, and I see it is to no purpose to solicit her any more. This religious Princess desires you to return to your friends the answer which she directs me to give you in this letter, viz. That she interferes no longer with any thing in the world ; and earnestly wishes to be left quiet in her poverty and solitude."

But it was especially with regard to Ecclesiastical preferments that Princess Louisa expressed more openly her great aversion to affairs foreign to her profession. " I cannot," said she, " recommend Mr.*** to the Archbishop. Never in my life I made any recommendations tending to procure a curacy ; hence you may easily conclude that I shall not begin now. All I can do, is to pray to God. What Mr.*** says, is very true, without doubt : but I beg of you to give my usual answer ; that I will not meddle with it, because I never meddle with any Ecclesiastical preferments." " As you know my thoughts

and sentiments on every thing," said she, to Abbé Bertin, "you have done very well to declare that I should be very sorry to interfere in the least concerning Bishoprics: and thanks be to God, I never had any on my conscience."

It was little for the pious Princess to renounce all commerce with the world, which might have been either dangerous or without utility. Penetrated with the greatest esteem for the most obscure duties and the minutest practices of solitude; she sacrificed to them even the consolations of piety. Writing to the Bishop of Clermont, she told him: "It is a great pleasure to me to receive your letters. I wish that your pastoral zeal and the many duties of my holy state could allow us both to correspond more frequently with one another: it would be to the great profit of my soul; but it is a thing rather difficult; consequently, as we must turn every thing to the best advantage, I endeavour to gain the merit of the sacrifice." Carrying even beyond her life, the desire of remaining hid from the world, she wished that with respect to her ownself, the Carmelites would abolish their custom of exposing the dead before the eyes of the living. And once she said, speaking on the subject to one of the Nuns: "When I think that after my death, my corpse is to be exposed to the view of every one, I pray to God that it may then be so much disgraced as to destroy any idea of shewing or

looking at it." And it is worthy of remark that her wishes were fully accomplished.

The good of religion and a discreet charity, as we have already mentioned, were the only motives which could attract the attention of Princess Louisa out of her solitude. An Abbess, who had resigned her Abbey, asked her leave to come and see her. She received her with kindness; but at the same time expressed her astonishment at seeing her out of her inclosure; and a little time after, having learned that she intended to fix her residence in the capital, she did not conceal from her the danger to which she exposed her salvation; and even told her with great sincerity that for fear of giving scandal, she could no longer entertain any commerce with a Nun, who proposed to herself to renounce her holy state. A Gentleman who had occupied a place of honour, and who was then out of favour, begged of Princess Louisa to grant him an audience. At first she thought on the means the most plausible and gentle to refuse it, for fear of receiving solicitations which it would be impossible for her to comply with: but, reflecting afterwards that charity was still more due to misfortune, than complaisance to prosperity, she received the visit, and spoke to the Gentleman in so moving and Christian a manner, that, when he left the Monastery, he cried out, "I have forgotten all my misfortunes, since a holy Princess has taught me so well how to support them profitably."

To aver of a Nun that she dreads the dissipation of the world, and loves the silence of her solitude, is giving an undeniable proof that she has found out the secret of being happy, as much as it is possible in this sublunary world. In effect, Princess Louisa enjoyed in her state all the comforts and sweets which are the constant attendants of a noble and generous virtue. I like to bring in repeatedly the testimony itself of this upright and candid soul, that never knew how to disguise her inmost thoughts. Happy in her solitude every day of her life, she confessed that she never more sensibly felt her happiness than when she remembered her residence at Court. "Every time," said she, "that after a visit, my sisters leave me to return to Versailles, I feel myself urged to bless Divine Providence for being no longer under the necessity of following them." We may compare her satisfaction among the austerities of a life of continual sacrifices, to the joy of Saint Paul in his tribulations. Sometimes this contentment was so lively that she feared it, and that it gave her scruples. In a letter to a Carmelite of *Rue Grenelle*, she said: "I cannot conceive how rapidly the time is passing away in our Convents; there years are days, and days instants. They say that there are souls that go straight to Paradise, without passing through Purgatory; I despair ever to be of that number, for I am too happy a Carmelite."

On the occasion of a journey of the Queen

to Saint Genevieve, she wrote to Abbé Rigaud, Visitor General of her order: "You have had a very elegant company in your street. I am persuaded that you have said to yourself, Oh! how happy is *Mother Theresa of Saint Austin* not to be here. Her straw chair, if she knows how to make a right use of it, will one day form for her a more splendid throne, than that which is prepared for the Queen in the town hall; and her coarse woollen habit will be more brilliant than all that I see here. May ALMIGHTY GOD grant it, Father. What I well know is, that all the cloths which a Carmelite wears on the most solemn festival day are not so troublesome as what I have worn on such occasions. And all that was lost for Heaven: but even the dust of our Convents may one day become shining stars for me. Oh, what an account shall I have to render if I do not gather them up with the greatest care!"

The Carmelites of the *Comptat Venaissin*, having expressed to Princess Louisa their desire of knowing the set form of the vows which their French Sisters pronounce, the Princess sent it to them copied with her own hand, and the following words addressed to the Prioress: "It is with very great pleasure, my Reverend Mother, that I perform your commission, and send you the set form of our vows. You have made me extremely happy by procuring me an opportunity of writing them over again. I would write them every where in order to render them, if possible,

more Impressive. In writing them I renew them with fresh fervor. I feel myself more and more happy and satisfied to have made them. There is no crown which can afford a joy equal to that satisfaction which we taste in this very life. Forgive me this preamble; it proceeds from the effusion of my heart."

At the time that Princess Louisa was procuring to the Nuns, who had been secularised in the Low Countries, an asylum in France, she wrote to the Superioress of the Visitation of the street *Saint Jacques* in Paris: "I find those who persevere doubly happy. As for us, we have consecrated ourselves to God only once; but for them, they will have the happiness of consecrating themselves twice to him. I always regret to have but one self to give to the ALMIGHTY; it seems to me that, had I two, the second would be given much better than the first; because I would give it with greater knowledge of what I had to do. Forgive me, Madam, this pious extravagance; but you are yourself perfectly acquainted with the happiness of a religious life; so that you will not be surprised at the transports which it excites, especially in certain moments, when we become more sensible than usual of its inestimable value."

That pure and lively joy, that perfect satisfaction, which filled up the heart of Princess Louisa, proceeded from her courage and fidelity in fulfilling all the duties of her holy

state. A model of regularity in the least observance, she knew no other lawful reason to be dispensed with from them, than an absolute incapacity of discharging them. When on account of her health she could not follow the Rule in all, she accomplished it in all the other points which were not incompatible with her situation. When confined in the Infirmary, and of course at a distance from her Sisters, she endeavoured to follow them as close as she could by her love for each of her duties. Exact to the hours which divided the different services of the Community, she conformed herself to them in whatever she did in private. She recited her office, said her vocal prayers, or applied herself to meditation, precisely at the time fixed for the Community. Faithful, especially to keep silence during all the time that it was commanded by the Rule, even when she was Prioress, she would not allow herself the indulgence which, on this article, she granted to others: "A Nun," said she, "who in time of sickness ought to be dispensed with from many observances obligatory to all, should never think of being dispensed with from the law of silence, since physicians, even in the world, recommend to their patients the practice of it."

From the same spirit of regularity she passed over in silence her occasional indispositions, and recommended to the Nuns, who by chance had discovered them, not to speak of them to the Community. Oftentimes,

after having been indisposed a whole night, she was nevertheless the first at all the regular exercises of the following day. In such a situation, a Nun representing to her how much she was in need to take some rest: "Do you not see," replied the Princess, then Prioress, that if I stay away from the regular exercises, sixty people, by assuring me out of charity that I am ill, will make me so, though but slightly indisposed in reality." One day when she was confined in the Infirmary, the same Nun advised her on account of her health, to dispense herself with from some observance of their Rule: "The need in which I may stand of a dispensation, does not appear to me sufficiently evident to authorise me to use it. Moreover, I must dread more than any other, that my examples should countenance relaxation in the House." And the Religious observing to her, that she could very easily use such a dispensation, without the other Nuns being acquainted with it; the Princess reprimanded her for giving such an advice, saying with great vivacity: "Well! you advise me then to play the hypocrite, God forbid that I should ever indulge myself to do in presence of the ALMIGHTY an action which I should dread to do before men. Let us every where be what we ought to be; and we shall never fear any where to appear what we are."

It happened sometimes, that, when Princess Louisa was indisposed, the Nuns let her prolong her sleep beyond the hour appointed

by the Rule. Grieved at these attentions, and in order to avoid them for the future, she made a Nun promise her that, when she did not see her at mental prayer in the morning, she would come to her cell to know the reason of her absence. She grounded the necessity of being punctual at this first exercise of the day, on the following reasons: She said, "Either I am well, and then it is my duty to rise when others do; or I am indisposed, and then this duty becomes a necessity for me, as my sleep would be uneasy, and therefore more fatiguing to me than getting up."

During a considerable time an oppression on the breast, preventing Princess Louisa from assisting at the office in the choir, at her usual place, she placed herself on the threshold of the door, preferring to bear the most severe cold in order to accomplish the Rule as exactly as it was in her power. The Nuns endeavoured to prevail on her to recite her office in private, representing to her the inconveniences of the place: "It is very convenient to me: it is the place of the publican. When we cannot reach the term of our duties, we must at least keep ourselves on the road." In a familiar instruction which she gave to her Pupils, being then Mistress of Novices, she told them: "I will not insist on the chief points of your vows; your conscience recommends sufficiently to you the observance of them; but were you to live a hundred years, remember

to the very last day of your life, that your Mistress incessantly exhorted you to the most punctual observance of little things; if, however, we may call any observances little, the practice or neglect of which approaches us to or removes us from God in this world, and will fix for ever our place nearer to or farther from the throne of his glory in the next. Believe me, my dear Sisters, we must never deem any thing little in duties or faults, having the happiness and honour of serving so great a King."

Whatever might have been her occupations, whatever might have been the rank or condition of the persons who visited her, she left every thing to obey the Rule; for nothing in the world seemed to her of higher importance than punctuality and exactitude in the accomplishment of her duties. "A good Religious," said she, "ought not to pretend to be so much acquainted with the rules of worldly decorum as with the necessity and advantages of fidelity to her duties: the people of the world themselves are edified to see us concluding abruptly an audience, which we give them, in order to run to the obligations to which ALMIGHTY GOD calls us." In a letter which she wrote to a Carmelite, she says: "I have preserved at the parlour the right of Princess Louisa, which is, to dismiss my visitors even in the middle of a conversation when it lasts too long." She always gave the most kind reception to all those who had to speak to her;

she entertained them with cheerfulness, and quitted them in the same manner. "You may well imagine," said she, to a person of the Royal Family, "that it must be an **ALMIGHTY** that calls me when I have the courage to tell you, you must go." "Is it not true, my Lord," said she to the Archbishop of Paris, Mr. de Beaumont, "that you would give me a severe chiding if, to indulge the pleasure of being with you, I should this day let the time of dinner pass away at which I am to kiss the feet of our Sisters?" Many of her letters end with these words: "*The clock strikes: the bell calls me away: I leave you for the Rule:*" and such like expressions, which indicated her great zeal for regularity.

The Nuns were always sure to please Princess Louisa, and to be entitled to her sincere gratitude, when they admonished her of some fault which she might have unavoidably committed against the Rule. On her side, she looked upon it as one of the first duties of Christian charity to do the same service to her Sisters, and she never failed to perform it. After a retreat of ten days which she made six weeks before her death, she told one of the Nuns: "Will you not be a little afraid to hear, on seeing me coming out of my retreat, that besides the personal resolutions I have made to observe the Rule with great fidelity, I have also made some concerning you." And at the same time she observed to her, "That she was not very

punctual to repair to certain exercises." The Nun representing to her, that this want of exactitude proceeded usually from her inhabiting a part of the House from whence she could scarcely hear the clock strike : " Why did you not tell me," replied the Princess ; I can and will be your clock." In effect, she had the attention to call her till she fell ill ; accounting as nothing a constraint which secured to one of her Sisters the certainty of being exact to all the regular exercises of the House.

We have already mentioned the happy effects which the zeal of Princess Louisa had produced when she was Prioress of her Monastery. She knew how to give, according to prudence and charity, some exceptions to the Rule ; but no consideration could ever induce her to compound with duty. The mother of a Novice had so great a desire to see the abode in which her daughter was to engage herself to reside for ever, that she solicited and obtained a Brief from the Pope to enter into the Monastery. Filled with confidence, she went and presented it to Princess Louisa, who after having perused it, told her : " And we also, Madam, have a Brief of the Pope which yours does not revoke, and which forbids us to grant the entrance of the House to any secular person, without the unanimous consent of all the Nuns." The parents of another Novice wished to see once more in their own House, their daughter, who was admitted to receive

shortly the Theresian habit. Princess Louisa represented to them, that to come out of the Monastery, in such a circumstance, was without an example, and seemed to her so much the more dangerous, as we do not read in the Gospel that the young Man, who upon the call of the Saviour of the World, had asked to go and bury his father, did ever return to follow his vocation. She added, that the only favour which the Community could grant to the young Lady, if she paid that visit, would be to begin again her trials as a Postulant.

Princess Louisa made always the most natural and profound sentiments of her heart yield to her zeal for regularity. In the most painful and afflicting circumstance of her life, when a messenger brought her the melancholy news of the death of the King her father, a Nun who was with her at that time, was going immediately to inform the Community of it, to beg their prayers for the deceased Monarch, who had been so great a benefactor to their House: "Stop," said Princess Louisa; "it is the time of strict silence." She stifled her profound affliction, and hid it from her Sisters, till she could give vent to it without prejudice to regularity. We shall add nothing to this heroic act of virtue; we shall only say, that the many others which adorn her life, are of a similar nature; and that if the Code of Religious Observances were lost, it might be found again in the written account of Prin-

cess Louisa's actions. The only sign which distinguished the daughter of a powerful King from her Sisters in a Convent of Carmelites, was a greater love for all her duties, and a more punctual exactitude in the performance of them.

What generally produces and entertains a sentiment of vanity in a vulgar soul, I mean a noble birth, became in Princess Louisa a principle of humility. Being very sensible that her Sisters would endeavour to give her the first place every where, she set a more strong resolution to seek the last, and by an error very acceptable to God, she persuaded herself that it was the place which she deserved. Humility was her darling virtue, which, as it were, imprinted its stamp on all the others; and from the first day of her admission among the Carmelites, to her death, she continually offered to her Sisters edifying examples of this truly religious quality.

When she took the most effectual means to be forgotten by the Court and by the world, she had wished that her qualification of a King's daughter had not followed her in her retreat. Nothing fatigued her more than the attentions and respect which were shewn to her. She called them the *expiation of her birth*. She avoided them as much as she could, and sometimes they afflicted her even to tears. The name she had received on putting on the religious habit, was the

only one she liked: and, if contrary to her inclination she could not sometimes decline the dedication of a work advantageous to religion, she imposed on the author, as a necessary condition, that the book should be dedicated not to *Princess Louisa of France*, but to *Mother Theresa of Saint Austin*: and the way to make it more acceptable to her was to present it her under a plain binding without gilt edges, and chiefly without a coat of arms. We have already observed that the very first day of her arrival at the Convent, she had earnestly wished to be called only by the name of *Sister*. This she could never obtain from those out of the Monastery. But when by dint of entreaties and representations, she had prevailed on the Prioress to order all the Nuns to give her no other title, she wrote to a Prioress of Carmelites who had formerly resided in the House of Saint Denis: "Thanks be to God, since our last chapter they call me *Sister*; a name so sweet to my heart and to my ears; therefore, I hope as a good Daughter of Saint Denis you will remember to give it me."

She did not like that a Preacher, in the beginning of his Sermon, should address her by name. One day as she knew the Priest who was to preach, she told him: "I hope that you will not follow the bad method of your fellow preachers, who, to humble me, seem to have agreed together to apostrophize me in their sermons:" and as the Preacher did

not seem disposed to acquiesce to her request: "Well," replied she, "since you will have the Carmelites to be *Ladies*, pray do not make any one of them jealous; say, in the plural, *Ladies*." Writing to one of the Superiors General of the Order, she says: "Be not surprised if I call you, *Sir*; I dare not call him *Father* who calls me *Madam*: however, you know very well, that the titles which religion gives me, are a thousand times more acceptable to me, than all those which I might have had in the world."

She always behaved towards her Ecclesiastical Superiors with both the sentiments and the expressions of humility. Of the Archbishop of Paris, Mr. de Beaumont; of the Bishop of Amiens, Mr. de la Motte; of all the Superiors of her Order, and sometimes of some other pious Priests, she asked the blessing on her knees. She had been but a very short time among the Carmelites, when she wrote to the Superior of the House: "Another favour which I have to ask of you, but on which I set a high value, is, that you never write to me any more with *respect*; this *respect* I cannot bear; you cannot imagine how much it grieves me." Towards the same time she wrote also to the Bishop of Clermont: "I am confused, my very honoured Father, at the good opinion which you entertain of me. When you are better acquainted with me, it will not be quite so, I do assure you." In another letter to the

same Prelate, she says: "I am very much ashamed, indeed, to think that I embarrass my Superior; but in time you will see there is nothing in me fit to keep you in awe, and that Sister Theresa of Saint Austin, or any other Carmelite, is the very same thing: the only difference is that I am the least virtuous of all. Good will is not wanting in me, but you must help me to accomplish it. I want for that your advice and prayers."

The great sensation which the generosity of her sacrifice had made in the world, instead of being for Princess Louisa a temptation of vanity, was, on the contrary, a motive to her of humbling herself the more. "They must think us," said she, "on the occasion, unfit for the kingdom of Heaven, since they express such wonder at seeing us do to obtain it what so many others do every day, without being seemingly noticed." A Lady of piety telling her one day, that it was truly admirable, that, notwithstanding her delicate health, and her having been brought up as a King's daughter, she had embraced a state of life so austere as that of the Carmelites: "As for me, Madam," replied Princess Louisa, "I wonder at nothing so much as at your wonder; for you have read the Gospel, and therefore you know that it gives neither those who are of a delicate constitution, or those of Royal extraction, the peculiar privilege of being saved without doing penance." Her humility rendered her so ingenious to invent reasons for lessening the merit of her

sacrifices to God; and, when opportunities were given her to speak of them, she did it with the tone of such intimate persuasion, that any one might be almost tempted to agree with her. For example, she pretended that every one of her fellow Carmelites had made greater sacrifices to become so than she had herself: "All," said she, "have made at least the sacrifice of their liberty: but as for me, I was a slave at Court; and though my chains were very brilliant, nevertheless, they were chains. They are much in the wrong who exalt my sacrifice so much. What cost me most never was the making of it, or to have made it, but to have been obliged to pass so many years without being able to accomplish it." Thus she unthinkingly exhibited in all its lustre the generosity of a heart always virtuous, and shewed, that, by a continual life of sacrifices, she had so perfectly conquered herself, as to look upon as nothing that which might be considered as the most heroic of all.

A little time after her arrival at Saint Denis, and whilst she still wore the secular habit, she made a second reformation in her dress, which she had already reduced to the greatest simplicity. Observing some little remains of curious works of embroidery in gold and silver about her: "Behold," said she, "here are still some little idols of vanity, which should have remained in their native country;" and immediately she threw them into the fire.

The Princess carried, even to scrupulosity, her attention to draw the minds of others from all that could recal the idea of what she had been in the world; and it always appeared to her that the justice meant to be done to her merit, was only an incense offered to her birth. A Community of Carmelites had desired that she would petition for the Order leave of celebrating the Feast of Saint Clotilda. Princess Louisa answered the Prioress: "What will you say, my dear Mother? I have no devotion at all to ask for the office of Saint Clotilda. It is true that she was the first Queen of France: but, it seems to me that such a request could not come very properly from me, and it might savour rather of pride than of devotion. I dread all that can remind me of my former rank, and I have such a fear of being hurt by it, that I often shun even the good things which might make myself or others remember it. Oh! that I had not been the daughter of a King! as it seems to me I should be a better Carmelite; at least, I should not have the grief of being Prioress: for it is certainly *Princess Louisa*, and not Sister Theresa of Saint Austin, who has been elected, whatever the consciences of our dear Sisters may allege to the contrary." Sometimes the Princess forgot so entirely what she had been, as not to reflect that others might remember it and treat her with suitable regard. The most common attentions of charity, which she herself would have never neglected towards the last of her Sis-

ters, she judged excessive and ill becoming when paid to her own person. Indulgent for every thing which might concern others, she never made any complaint: she excused all, she bore all except attentions: and to satisfy her that the rank which distinguished her in the world made no longer any deep impression on the memory of her Sisters, it was necessary they should even appear to forget what was due to her merely as a Nun in a Convent.

Her humility inspired her with great diffidence in her own capacity, though surely it was not a limited one. She did nothing, not even the good which seemed to her the most desirable, without having consulted. She yielded to the advices of her Superiors with the docility of a child. And even when Prioress, and when animated with the utmost zeal for the observance of regularity, she never suffered herself to be so prepossessed with any idea of her own, as to maintain it against the sentiment of others. The youngest of her Nuns was entitled, as well as the oldest, to communicate her observations to her. Every good advice was precious in her eyes, and whatever might have been the principle or the person from whence it came, or the manner after which it was given, she always received it with gratitude.

In the practice of humility she carried

that tone of uprightness and candour, which does not leave to others the least room to suspect affectation in a virtue so liable to the illusions of pride. Her words, her carriage, as well as her actions, were the simple and natural expressions of her thoughts. And when, according to the Rule of her Order, she gave an account of her negligences and faults, she accused herself so strongly, and with such evident marks of contrition, that had she been judged by her own confession, she might in reality have been looked upon as the most imperfect of all the Nuns in the Community.

Her great vivacity prompted her sometimes to speak too loud, or to walk too quickly; as soon as she observed it, or was admonished of it, she immediately and with the same quickness submitted to the humiliations commanded by the Rule, as compensations for such failings. On some unforeseen occasions in which unmortified souls betray their humbled self-love, either under the clouds of shame, or in the sallies of ill humour, the Princess always preserved the same evenness of temper, without appearing to wonder at her own frailty; she ingenuously owned that she had committed either an imprudence or an error; what was wrong she fairly acknowledged to be truly so, without seeking for any other excuse, but that which virtue always finds in the humble confession of her fault, and a good will of doing better. A Religious was complaining

to Princess Louisa, that the progress of a Novice in needle-works, was very slow : “ You might reproach me with the same fault,” answered the Princess. “ It is great pity, that her father as well as mine, have not made learning needle-work part of our education.” She had scarcely uttered the words, that seeing in this comparison an unpardonable sign of pride, she thought that it could not be atoned for but by the most humble excuses, and the most solemn re-
 tractions. Another day, during a recreation, admonishing a Nun for the second time, to go to the parlour, she told her that she made people wait for her. The Nun, whom the curiosity of hearing the sequel of a history that was begun, kept back, answered : “ That sometimes it happened that Mother Prioress made also people wait for her :” “ Yes,” replied Princess Louisa ; “ but our reasons may not be the same.” Many a Superior would have applauded herself for her moderation in contenting herself to answer these few plain and true words to a very unrespectful observation. But the Princess, fearing to have yielded to pride, prostrated herself at the feet of her children, kissed the floor, and asked pardon for having sought thus to justify herself, and cried out : “ I have always been a proud creature : and after having left all, I find again in me the silly delicacies of self-love.”

The mere fear of having said a word which

might have given some trouble to any of her Sisters, was sufficient to prompt Princess Louisa to make her excuses for it. Her delicacy in this regard was so great, that sometimes some of the Nuns saw her at their knees, and asking their pardon, without knowing themselves what it was for. When her Superiority was over, she asked on her knees, like the last of the Novices, the most trivial leaves of the Nun who succeeded her, and submitted with the most edifying simplicity, to all such pious observances as breathe the holy folly of the Cross, and which Religion hides in Convents from the profane eyes that would be scandalized at them. In one of those ceremonies destined to inculcate lessons of Christian humility, as the Princess prostrated to kiss the feet of a Novice, the young person, animated with sentiments similar to those of Saint Peter, who could not suffer to see the Saviour of the World humble himself in such a manner before him, drew back, and almost fainted away, in beholding at her feet the daughter of her King. Princess Louisa then told her with kindness: "What does that signify, pray, am I not your Sister, and a Carmelite like you?"

If some of those faults of which the Theresians accuse themselves at the feet of their Prioress had escaped her, she always owned them in the most natural and humble manner. Shortly after she had been out of her Superiority, the new Prioress spoke to her

one day before the whole Community, in the tone of a reprimand, for a fault of very little consequence : forthwith the Princess fell upon her knees, prostrated, and listened with great calmness to a pretty long lecture, and without shewing the least sign of disapprobation, or even surprise, she withdrew in silence and with respect ; and the first time she met with the Prioress, she thanked her very sincerely for the proof which she had given her of her attachment, and begged of her to shew her always the same charity.

It was a real grief for Princess Louisa, that either an action or a word which might turn to her praise should be mentioned in her presence. If a Nun allowed herself to do it, she never failed to reprimand her : " It does not become Christians," said she, " and much less Nuns, to lay snares for one another by flattery : we are praised for our seeming virtues, and God condemns us for our real defects." They spoke to her one day of the sentiments of gratitude which an Abbess preserved for her : " I know very well," said she, " what to think of it, and that every thing must be admirable in me, since they have given me a *good name*, which is *better than riches*. Not long after the retreat of the Princess among the Carmelites, the powers of Hell, in order to destroy the effect which such great example could not fail to produce, excited wicked people, who had the boldness and impudence to calumniate her sacrifice and virtue in the most in-

famous writings. Having heard what they contained, instead of shewing any sentiment of aversion, or even of meer contempt for the authors, she contented herself with saying : " There are so many good souls, that, not knowing me, exaggerate the little good which is in me, that I should be very wrong to find amiss, that others, who do not know me better, should also exaggerate my defects." They told her that such people deserved punishment : " Say, rather, gratitude," answered she ; " for those who calumniate us do us much more good than those who flatter us ; and when we pray for our benefactors, we must chiefly have the former present to our minds."

Her humility never permitted her to hesitate for a minute, when any sacrifice painful to self-love was to be made. A person who owed her gratitude and respect, had behaved to her in an offensive manner ; she could not help feeling it, but in confessing it candidly to her Superior, she added : " Down with sensibility ; I have endeavoured to lay this sentiment at the foot of the Cross, to follow only those which religion commands. What I had to sacrifice to God in this affair was but little, and was soon done. I have dwelt upon it merely to give you an account of what had happened. I treat those things like wasps, which we drive away as quick as we can."

We have already remarked that she never regarded as beneath her any office, function, and practice of her Convent ; to sweep the

walls and stairs, rub the floors, attend the old and infirm, dress them, even tie the strings of their shoes; to take care of the sick, to dress their most disgusting sores, nothing of all that was painful to her humble virtue. It might have been thought that she found herself too much honoured when she placed herself in the last rank among her Sisters. Having seen one day a picture representing a she-ass grazing: "This is my true picture," said she, and she wrote at the bottom of it, *Ut jumentum apud te*; (I am before God like a beast.) She was then Prioress, and as the Nuns were to present to her a nosegay for her feast, which was drawing near, she seemed to desire so sincerely to have no other offered her but what she called her picture, that the Community gratified her with it.

The earnest desire which she had to humble herself for all her faults, rendered her extremely attentive to use all possible means to know them. An old Nun, of an eminent virtue, and who had been Prioress before Princess Louisa, had submitted to her judgment the pious resolutions which she had taken during a retreat. The Princess, after having read them, returned them to the Nun, saying: "There was but one thing wanting, but so essential, that I have thought myself obliged to supply your omission." She had written at the bottom of these resolutions: "*I will be very exact to admonish and correct our Mother of all her faults.*"

In these dispositions, all occurrences of life served to nourish in her sentiments of humility, and the fear of God. After having laid before her Superiors the different means which she made use of to bring back to their Monastery some Nuns whom Jansenism had formerly led into apostacy, she added: "Alas! we have not been seemingly so guilty as they are: but the prodigies of God's mercy over us are nevertheless admirable. What would have been our fate, in many circumstances of our life, had he not preserved us from death. As for me, in particular, I cannot think on it without terror, and without the most lively gratitude for his compassion in my regard. Pray to him, Father, that he may not deal with me according to his justice, and that I may improve the graces which he has bestowed upon me, and especially this jubilee, which perhaps will be the last of my life." On the occasion of the miracles of venerable Labre which were then published, she wrote to the same: "We have assuredly, every one of us, the means of becoming Saints without going to Rome. We have only to do well whatever we do, and to do it only for God. It is both a very consoling and awful truth, especially for me. It seems that I have been willing to embrace the most perfect life. Alas! if after all that I should come to be lost! Oh! pray to God, Father, that I may be preserved from this dreadful calamity. You are more interested in it than any other, since you have received me in the Order; and as one of your elder children,

I am more entitled to your prayers than any other."

The righteous make every day new progress in virtue; and the nearer they draw towards the increased light, the greater multiplicity of imperfections and spots they discover in themselves. Accordingly, Princess Louisa a few years before her death, rose, as it were, above herself, and ran with greater velocity in the ways of perfection. Taking a more severe retrospect of the past, she bewailed bitterly, and bewailed as crimes the very least imperfections in the years of her religious life, though they had been filled up with virtues which had excited the greatest admiration in the world, and so constantly edified her Sisters. Let us hear how piously deceived by her actual zeal she depreciates her former virtues, and accuses herself of having postponed till then, the plenitude of her sacrifice: "What convinces me more than ever," did she write to Abbé Bertin, "that ALMIGHTY GOD will have me be entirely his, is that the more faithful I am, the stronger I feel myself, and the better disposed to every thing. Now, nothing is more tiresome to me than to be at rest; I have no longer any pains in my stomach, nor in my back; heat itself is not any more troublesome to me. Oh! Father, nothing is so good, as to take at once a strong resolution. No, I will never console myself to have deferred thirteen years to resolve upon it: so true it is, as I now feel by my own ex-

perience, that with courage we can do great and hard things, and that without it our hearts fail us in trifles. But the ALMIGHTY has his design, and permits what he knows is for the best: there is enough in all that to keep me in the practice of profound humiliation during the remainder of my life. Pray Father for your eldest daughter, who deserves to be the last in time and eternity. Yes, indeed, she would be extremely happy, if she could secure a little place in Paradise behind the door. Amen! But she has a long journey to finish before she can reach that term; you will not believe me. I wish with all my soul that ALMIGHTY GOD could think as you do; but he *searcheth the reins and hearts*; he knows all; nothing is hid from him."

In another letter in which she gives to her Superior an account of the happy dispositions with which she was animated, she is very attentive not to attribute them to herself, but ascribes them to various other causes: "As for that, I owe it also to the fervour of my Novices, who truly penetrate me with confusion, when I see them so much occupied with ALMIGHTY GOD, so well disengaged from every thing, so mortified; whilst I, who am set over them to point out to them the road of virtue, keep at so great a distance from them." In her humble virtue, another thing which gave her anxiety, was not to be able to hide herself from her Sisters who, as she thought, appreciated her merit much beyond its real

value. "What gives me pain," continued she, "is that the thing is seen in the House, and that they will look upon it as a sign of sanctity: yes, it is now the only grief which I have; But what shall I do? It is better to edify than scandalize. Here will be found a fine opportunity of making acts of humility; of that virtue which I find so hard to practise, and however is so necessary to salvation. Redouble your prayers for me, Father; I have the greatest confidence in them."

The humble Princess solicited prayers in almost all her letters. Having already recorded many instances of this, we shall add only what follows: "I have a favour to ask of you: pray to-morrow for the King; but pray with all your might and soul, and do not forget the poor Carmelite. You know all the wants of my soul, pray to God to deliver me from them. When you are on the holy mount, and speak to God face to face, say a little word for poor Sister Theresa of Saint Austin, that he would vouchsafe to forgive her all her sins. Pray for me, and recommend me often to the prayers of your holy children. Were I well known all pious souls would earnestly pray for me. It is this day sixteen years since I begun to wear the livery of JESUS CHRIST: but, alas! how unfaithful have I been to my God! Pray for me."

After having laid before our readers these holy dispositions of Princess Louisa, they will not be surprised to hear, that the virtue which

contradicts the most a strong propensity for independence seemed to cost her nothing. She who was accustomed to command in the world, as soon as she was in a Convent, knew but to obey: and the yoke of obedience became so gentle and sweet to her, that she could never consent to be all together discharged from it. Elected Prioress, her great grief would have been to lose something of the advantages of obedience; therefore she imagined means to preserve all the merit of it. She engaged the Superior of the House to appoint a Nun, whom she should obey in whatever might concern her private conduct, whilst she herself commanded over all others.

Always disposed to make the most complete sacrifice of all her opinions and inclinations, as well when at the head of the Community, as when only a simple Religious, she never took upon her to do any thing of importance, without having consulted her superiors, whose advices were always orders for her. When in any affair they let her suspect that they did not agree with her way of thinking, it was sufficient to determine her to think as they did. And if at any time they spoke to her of the duty of obedience, it was only in such circumstances, when they judged it requisite to moderate the ardour of her zeal. Obedience then was a painful duty to her, but nevertheless, she obeyed with the same generosity. In a certain indisposition, they had perscribed to her as a miti-

gation, a diet which she found very unpleasant, and actually afforded her no relief. She obeyed and suffered without making the least representation, for she never permitted herself to make the least that might tend to alleviate for her the yoke of obedience. Her Prioress actuated with more zeal than prudence, enjoined her one day to write to one of the King's Ministers, to promote the success of an affair. The Princess obeyed; but after her letter was written, she represented the inconveniences of sending it. The Prioress insisting, Princess Louisa immediately submitted her judgment, and sacrificed all her reluctance. She was less afraid of exposing herself to be reproached with indiscretion by others, than with the least neglect in the practice of obedience by her conscience.

It may be remembered, that, very shortly after her profession, the Community thought proper to commit to the Princess the direction of the Novices. The Superior of the House having sounded her dispositions in that regard, she did not conceal from him the fear which she had felt lest such a burden should prove a very heavy one for her inexperience; but, she added: "I have made my vows; I no longer belong to myself, but to obedience. All that I beg of GOD, is never to take the least step either to obtain or refuse any thing." Being in this office, she wrote: "I could wish I had not to answer for others, since I am so little capable to answer for

myself; but I make myself easy, because I obey." It is thus, that in the things which thwarted her inclinations and her judgment most, she joined an unreserved resignation to all the sacrifices of obedience with the observations which her delicate conscience suggested to her. Having been informed that, three years after she had been out of the office of Prioress, her Sisters were thinking to elect her again, contrary to the customs of the House; she engaged Abbé Bertin to dissuade them from their project: "It is not," said she to him, "Either out of false humility, or out of sloth, that I speak. The office which I have now to discharge (that of Mistress of Novices), and which they will likely leave me, is not of less importance; and certainly the labour is not light. I know that I am under obedience; and I hope to work all my life under it, some way or other. If I insist on the Superiority being continued in the hands of our Mother, it is because it would assuredly have been so; nor would any one have voted otherwise, had I not been formerly Princess Louisa: it is also because the Community is in very wise and safe hands, as we all perfectly know. I have a sincere resolution, Father, to become a good Religious. Second, this grace of God in my behalf, by procuring me to live still these three years under obedience. You will make me happy in this life, and secure my happiness for the next; for I am quite determined, and have been so, especially these two months, to improve the graces which our

Lord bestows upon me ; and I think that I may assure you, that from that time, I began seriously to do my best to become a good Carmelite." After some other reflections, she added, " Such are, my Father, my true sentiments, and my wants both temporal and spiritual. In the name of God, help my weakness, and the good will which I have of doing every thing in my power to secure my salvation. Though you are a great admirer of a submission to the will of God, still, however, I think, you would not make me a martyr of obedience. Therefore, I leave you to reflect before the **ALMIGHTY** on what is likely to be for the greater advantage of my soul. But, *fiat voluntas* (his will be done) ; provided we go to Heaven, that is the essential thing : but to reach this happy term, we must correct ourselves of such and such a defect, and acquire such or such a virtue ; and it is what I intend doing to my very best."

After having been Prioress for six years, being charged at once with the direction of the Novices, and with the care of the temporalities of the House, Princess Louisa, with the simplicity and all the punctuality of a Novice, went, at every hour of the day, to her Prioress, sometimes to give her an account of the conduct of her Pupils ; at other times to ask her advice concerning the expences to be made for the House, or to ask her leave for the least thing she might have to do. I had the happiness of being one day

myself an eye witness of the religious exactitude of the Princess in that respect. I was presenting to her the *History of the King of Poland*, her grand-father: "I beg your pardon, Sir," said she to me; "owing to my usual giddiness, I must leave you for an instant. I have just asked leave of our Mother to come to the parlour; I knew for what; and I have forgotten to ask leave to accept of your work." Struck at such great punctuality to religious observances, I expressed some surprise to one of the Priests attached to the House, that the Princess had not at least the little privilege of being able to accept a present of such a nature provisionally, with the reserve of submitting the disposal of it to her Prioress." "You little know," answered he to me, "how much the holy Princess is replenished with the spirit of her state, and how far she carries its perfection. It would, undoubtedly, be very easy to her to obtain such general permissions: they have been even offered to her: but she finds too much advantage in feeling the immediate impression of obedience, and she delights in increasing the treasure of her merits, by repeating, at every hour of the day, the acts of submission which remind her of her dependence."

The most painful sacrifice to nature, is that of our own will. The offering of all the conveniences of life is an easy offering for a soul that has made to God that of her liberty. Brought up in the bosom of opu-

lence, Princess Louisa reminded her Sisters of her education and birth, only by the contrast of more absolute self-denial. It was not merely with resignation; it was with cheerfulness and with joy that she bore the privations and all the inconveniences attending the state of life which she had embraced. As the Carmelites have but a very narrow bed in their narrow cells, it oftentimes happened, that, in the beginning of her abode in the Monastery, the Princess knocked her head against the wall during her sleep, and even fell down upon the floor. They suggested to her different easy means to avoid these inconveniences: but, being unwilling to deviate in the least from the spirit of Saint Theresa, she would not comply; saying: "That she ought to learn to be a Carmelite during the night, as well as during the day." It was only after she had been made sensible of the indispensable necessity of it, that she consented, not to the expence of a new bed being made for her, but merely to have that which she made use of enlarged. Nothing ever startled her in the abode of poverty. This Princess, who had been all her life clothed most sumptuously, wore, like all her Sisters, shifts of common serge; and her stockings were made of coarse cloth; her shoes were slippers of packthread without heels; and her habit was of coarse woollen. She had but one single gown; when there were holes in it, she mended them. During the seventeen years that she was a Carmelite, she wore out only three habits;

and the last, for the eight years which had preceded her death. Nothing could present a more striking picture of poverty, than this old habit of the Princess, then Prioress. She had patched it in different places with new cloth, which made it of different colours. A young Nun willing to engage her to have a new one, told her that the Community would be ashamed if some Prince or Princess of the Royal Family were to see her so ill dressed. Princess Louisa chid her for that false delicacy and niceness, and said, "Why should we be ashamed to follow the spirit of our holy state? My friends know very well that I have made a vow of poverty, and that it is especially in the place which I occupy that I must give the example of it." And so she did, at all times, and in all the offices she had to discharge.

Among the Carmelites, their linen is in common; and it is well known that Princess Louisa, would not have any distinction offered to her. As soon as she had put on the habit, they gave her for her use no other linen but that of the House; however, they took care to choose what was new. The Princess having taken notice of it, inquired whether it was the custom that the Novices should beat down the seams for the other Nuns? She added, if this was the case, she would do very willingly this little service to the old Mothers; but that she would be very sorry, had they any other motives, in making her put on all their new linen. When they saw

that this attention was a real grief to her; they complied with her desires. According to her, the linen and clothes which were given to her for her private use, were always either too good or too fine. She wore patched veils; and when she could make a choice, she never failed to prefer what exhibited poverty best. A young Religious, who had many opportunities of remarking her predilection for all that was either coarser or older with regard to all sorts of clothes, told her that she did not despair to see her one day put on a towel over her head instead of a veil: "I confess to you, Sister, that I had rather do so than deviate in the least from the simplicity of our holy Mother." The slippers which she wore being too small, she chanced to find some very dirty old ones which had belonged to a Lay Sister employed in the poultry-yard: she laid hold of them, put them on, found them very easy, and would never consent to exchange them for any others.

The cell of the Princess, even when Prioress, was as narrow and as poor as the cells of the other Nuns. A crucifix, three pictures of paper, a straw chair, and a wooden table, was all the furniture, with a quilted straw-bed, as hard as the boards on which it was laid. For some time she occupied the most inconvenient and dull cell in the House: it was proposed to her to have some repairs made in it, which she would have judged

necessary for any other Nun ; but she looked upon them as useless for herself, and would not suffer that the least thing should be done to it. Her window shut so ill that the wind put out her lamp ; she stopped the chinks with paper, and was obliged to repeat the same every time she opened her window. In order to prevent the dampness of that cell, a Nun had sometimes, during the absence of the Princess, and without her knowledge, carried to it a chafing dish with live coals : but having been caught one day in that exercise of charity, Princess Louisa chid her for it, as for a great fault against the spirit of poverty : "What will people of the world do," said she, to her, "if Carmelites seek by such precautions to guard themselves against the influences of the seasons which ALMIGHTY GOD has made." At a time when she was ill and confined in the Infirmary, the Nuns proposed to her to remove into the apartment destined to receive the Royal Family, which she absolutely refused. The Princesses her Sisters, having paid her a visit in that circumstance, they joined their representations with those of the Nuns, and told her, that, she would be more at ease in that room : "Oh ! *more at ease,*" answered she ; "that is very true ; but our greater ease we are not come to seek for here ; and in a state of illness, as well as in a state of health, we must remember that we are Carmelites." When the Princesses were gone, she said to the Nun who attended her : "However, if my illness were

to grow very serious, and: if my Sisters were to insist upon it, out of charity, not to afflict them too much, perhaps, I might comply with their desires: but, in that case, be sure to have the Infirmary bed removed to that room, for I will never consent to have any other."

Princess Louisa in bringing a comfortable competency into the Monastery of Saint Denis, which removed all the pecuniary embarrassments it lay under, brought at the same time with her, more than any other Religious, the spirit of self-denial and poverty; it seemed that to have given more to the House was a motive for her to spend less. The pension that the King had allowed her, was so much the pension of the Community, that she never asked that the least part of it should be employed to gratify her own inclination. She would even have scrupled to suggest the application of the alms which this pension afforded them means to bestow. When she was Prioress the whole disposal of it was equally reserved to the Superior of the House, and to the general desire of the Community. In the written account of the visit made in the year 1781, it is observed, that the Carmelites of Saint Denis employ part of their revenue to relieve the poor: "We have seen," they say, "with great consolation, that the increase of it has not altered their plain and modest way of living, nor made them lose the spirit of poverty, of which Re-

verend Mother Theresa of Saint Austin gives them so great an example." It was not enough for her to have renounced all sort of property; she was also afraid of being too much attached to the things given her for her use; and how slightly soever she conceived to have an attachment to them, she failed not to seek for an occasion to give them up. Thus, from a principle of virtue, she soon deprived herself of those little presents which she had accepted with leave.

As the world hardly conceives how far a true Religious carries the spirit of disengagement and poverty, Princess Louisa, in whom they always beheld the King's daughter, was overwhelmed in her retreat with solicitations, requests, and indiscreet petitions, which she could not refuse, but by alleging the duties and the spirit of her state: "The greatest poverty which a King's daughter can practise," did she write in an occasion, "is to have it no longer in her power to do good to any one. It is on this account, that the practice of this virtue is the most painful to me: for a Carmelite never has any want for her own self, though she has but the bare necessaries of life. If formerly I enjoyed the happiness of making other people happy, by consecrating myself to God, I have sacrificed to him that very consolation." In a letter to the Prioress of the Carmelites of Moulins, she says: "They ask me, without end or measure, either favours or alms. I answer, that I have nothing but the food and

raiment which the Community are pleased to give me ; that I meddle with nothing but to say my breviary, to sweep, and hear the Sisters ; or that I concern myself only with the affairs of the Order. If I am asked for money, I give the alms of the Convent: twopence, sixpence, or a shilling, and never beyond half-a-crown." Conversing one day familiarly with her Nuns, the holy Prioress told them: " Let us not be afraid to make ourselves poor in order to help our poor houses. Abundance ruins Communities ; labour and poverty maintain them. Perhaps, when I am no more, my family may still remember you : but I advise those who will survive me not to seek for protection at Court. I left that situation to work out my salvation ; those whom any humane motives would bring to it, would expose theirs to the greatest danger."

When Princess Louisa was elected Prioress for the first time, some part of the buildings which were in ruins, were then repaired. The workmen reflecting that they were working in a house inhabited by a Princess, thought that they could deviate from the rules of simplicity prescribed among the Carmelites. One of them who had to fit up the turn-room within the inclosure, had imagined to adorn the wainscot. Princess Louisa reproached him for having given himself more work than was commanded, and enjoined him to begin the work again, with-

out putting the least ornament; but this man, having represented that the boards were cut and fitted up for the place, and that it would be very hard for him to have such a loss to bear: "Well," answered Princess Louisa, "plane all these pretty things, which do not suit our houses; or, what is still easier, put the wrong side outward;" which was executed. Another having received orders to make the windows of an apartment, made them according to the fashion of the day, fit to receive large panes of glass; and as the Nun who had the charge of overseeing the work, had not regulated what was to be the shape of these windows; Princess Louisa thought that it was just to receive them as they were; but judging also that it would be contrary to the spirit of poverty that Carmelites should be exposed to break panes of glass of a high price, she decided that the glazier should put four panes of glass framed with lead in every place where one only was designed to be set in.

Whenever, for the sake of the King, who often entered the Monastery, or otherwise at his expressed desire, the Princess, then Prioress, judged it convenient to have some repairs made in the buildings; having first consulted the Superior of the House and the Community, she took care herself that in the execution the workmen should not deviate from religious simplicity. The Architect of the Convent having shewn her the draught of a balustrade which was for a staircase,

built particularly for the King's use, and at his own expence, she wrote on the subject to Abbé Bertin: "I have found this ballustrade too fine for a poor House, and I was frightened when I heard that it would cost more than a hundred pounds. I have asked the plan of another which will not cost above five." About the same time, the King having proposed to the Community to have the floor of their choir, then in a very bad condition, thoroughly repaired, some of the Nuns were of opinion that nothing ought to be spared to make that floor as fine as possible, since it was to cost nothing to the House: "As for me," said Princess Louisa, "I wish that there may be none more simple in any House of the Order; and that our Monastery may always be mentioned as a model of the spirit of our holy Mother."

In effect, there was not a Community of Carmelites where the vow of poverty was more religiously observed than at Saint Denis. Princess Louisa, when Prioress, allowed merely the expences of necessity, real utility, or charity. As for the exigency of diet or economy, she did what was determined by the Rule, or fixed by the custom of the House. For example: she did not permit the Purveyor of the House to spend more than seven shillings to buy the fish necessary for her numerous Community; and it is generally known how dear fish is in Paris. Fruit in its prime, or of the finest

sort, is not destined to the Nuns; therefore, the Princess caused that of their garden to be sold for the profit of the poorest Communities of their Order. I read in one of her letters to a young Carmelite: "I can assure you that we are not here better clothed, nor more nicely nourished, than they are in our other Monasteries. All that we save is to help our poor Houses: for that purpose we sell even the best fruit of our garden."

Thus it is, that, born in a Palace, and brought up in affluence, a daughter of the Bourbons, by her instructions and examples animated all her Sisters to the most perfect practice of a virtue even unknown at the Courts of Kings. More attentive to multiply the sacrifices of voluntary poverty, than an imperfect Religious is to mitigate them, she gave the greatest extent to the vow which she had made of that virtue, and condemned without restriction, all kind of reserve, whatever might be the pretext under which it was palliated. She blamed one day a Religious who seemed to desire that the Community should employ, to have prayers said for her after her death, the sum of money which the Carmelites were accustomed to spend for the printing of a circular letter by which they inform every House of their Order, of the death of their Sisters: "A Carmelite," said she, "who can dispose of nothing during her life, ought still less to permit herself the manifestation of any wish to be executed after her death. It is not on

a selfish foresight, but on Providence and the charity of her Sisters, that she must rely to have prayers read for the repose of her soul." Princess Louisa reprimanded sometimes those among her Religious who shewed a desire to hear those Preachers who had the greatest vogue. According to her, this sentiment was contrary to the spirit of poverty, and was a great hinderance to the effusions of Divine grace. She took a particular pleasure to praise those who preached with zeal and simplicity: "God," said she, "grants applause to great Orators, and the gift of moving the hearts to good Missionaries."

With dispositions so suitable to the holiness of her engagements, the Princess considered as one of the greatest favours which ALMIGHTY GOD had granted her in religion, to have personally been one day the receiver of an alms. A pious Lady, who, passing through Saint Denis, wanted to give some alms to a poor Community, went by chance to the Convent of the Carmelites, and asked for the Nun who had the care of receiving for the House. It was then Princess Louisa. She offered to her but a trifling charity, and recommended herself to the prayers of the Community. "God reward you," answered the Princess, with humility; "I do assure you that I and all our Sisters will pray much for you:" which was faithfully done through the vigilance and attention of Princess Louisa.

The holy Princess carried even to a pious excess her love of poverty. She calculated the price of the cares necessary to preserve her health, and she was heard to say with the tone of conviction: "That it was undoubtedly because the Carmelites were forbid to let vile things themselves be lost, that a Physician was appointed to take care of her health." But what appeared still more admirable in her than the virtue of poverty, was the manner with which she practised it, always contented and satisfied, and with such an air of ease and cheerfulness which charmed every one. She played, if we may be allowed to use the expression, with the heroism of virtue. What we are going to relate is particularly striking: the Princess was in the Infirmary at the moment that a Nun had just taken a vomit; The Infirmarian not bringing quick enough the vessel requisite in such a circumstance, and it being a fault against poverty among the Carmelites, to let the furniture and effects of the House, however plain and common, be stained or spoiled, Princess Louisa, considering the urgency of the case, went to the sick, holding her hands in the shape of a bason, and said to her: "No ceremony, my dear Sister, use freely of this bason till you get another." She had scarcely spoken, than the thing was done. Then, Princess Louisa added with a smile, "You will see that a little water will do the thing for me, and that our floor will not be spoiled."

Always guided by the same motives of religion; and, moreover, because a poor life is necessarily a laborious one, she applied herself to work with an indefatigable perseverance. No Religious acquitted herself with more zeal and exactitude of the duties belonging to her particular office; and sometimes she had two at once committed to her. Accordingly, we have seen her at the same time both Mistress of the Novices and Procuratrix; Prioress, and again Mistress of the Novices. Being obliged in obedience to the unanimous votes of the Community to supply the Prioress lately dead who had immediately preceded her in the office; she wrote on the subject to a Nun of another House: "If you will know my little secret, I will tell you that I have kept my Novices. I shall get through the fatigues of the charge as well as I can with the help of God. He must support me, or give me his holy Paradise. It is not, however, a thing which is likely to take place so soon; for in the midst of all my troubles I enjoy very good health: besides, I am sensible that I am yet very far from deserving to go to him."

Though Princess Louisa strictly adhered to the principle not to interfere with any thing out of her Convent, but only with affairs that concerned either religion or her Order; still, as people addressed themselves to her on all sides, and as her charity never declined a good work when compatible with

her state, her correspondence became a real labour, which might have occupied the whole time of a person less active than she was. She wrote all her letters herself, and sometimes those of her Sisters. The Prioress of another House making inquiries about an affair which she had desired Princess Louisa to take care of ; the Princess answered her : “ I have not acknowledged to you the receipt of the papers which you addressed to me ; but I have sent them to N***. I receive so many, and from so many different quarters, that, at the end of the week I do not remember what letters I have answered. Formerly I made a memorandum of them, but that took up too much time ; and besides, I will tell you that I was frightened at the number of them. While the foundation of Alençon was in agitation it amounted to two thousand, and yet, they say that I am not very exact to answer.” The complaint was not groundless, for not being able to discharge wholly these occupations which on all sides called for her activity, she was always very careful to make the precept go before the counsel, and never failed to sacrifice her relations with the most virtuous people, to the exact observance of her religious duties. It is what she wrote to a Bishop, for the merit and piety of whom she had the greatest regard, as an excuse for not writing oftner to him : “ Were I to give so much time to writing,” said she, “ regularity must suffer for it ; but I think that the latter is more profitable to me and to others than

writing. And I am sure that you will give me credit, when I tell you with candour, that to one who has passed thirty years at Court, this exact regularity is the thing which costs most, not so much on account of the fatigue, as on account of the constraint."

If after having discharged the duties which her state imposed on, or her charity prescribed to her, the laborious Princess had the least moment left to her disposal, she was seen immediately with a needle in her hand working either for the House, or for the poor, or helping some of her Sisters in the duties of their office. It seemed that she was come into the Convent only to be the servant of all. When she was Prioress, or Mistress of the Novices, she often would rectify the neglect of any duty in others by performing it herself. If a Choir Nun, or a Lay Sister, found her work done, or her cell put in order, she concluded from that, that it was Princess Louisa she had to thank for it. Sickness alone could prevent her from working. When she was only indisposed she continued her work, declaring it was a relief to her. Work followed her even to the parlour, where she availed herself of the advantage of not being seen to occupy herself, whilst she entertained those who had to speak to her. I was myself in the way of witnessing that exactitude of the Princess to husband well her time. As she was making some noise which she supposed I must have

heard: "You do not know," said she to me, "what I am about:" she told it me, and added: "If I do not turn to profit all my moments, I feel overwhelmed with business, and I then know not where I am." To work and to work without intermission was become to her a real want: "I have scarcely finished one thing," said she to an intimate acquaintance, "that I feel that God asks me to do some other, and after that another again; so I could not remain inactive for a moment, without a positive resistance to the voice of my conscience, which continually cries out to me to employ all my time to secure eternity." Writing to a Religious of another Convent, after the few recreation days allowed every year to the Carmelites by their Rule, she said: "You imagine that I have indulged myself much during our holidays, but you are much mistaken; they have been altogether taken up with my Novices, writing letters, and settling accounts: but when we do our duty, we are always contented. The only thing I could wish is, that days had more than four and twenty hours, or that they could grant me to steal one hour's sleep from nights." They represented to her one day that she over fatigued herself by her too great ardour and assiduity to work. "To work and pray," said she, "is our vocation; each moment I should pass with my arms across; I should cease to be a Carmelite."

When the Princess was Mistress of the

Novices; she recommended nothing more to them than application to work, and courage to fight against the inclinations of nature, which is over fond of rest. "When I feel myself fatigued, and tempted to sit still," said she to them, "I look at our Cloister where my body is to repose till the last judgment. This thought, reanimates my courage; and I no longer mind heat or cold." Among several advices which she had given in writing to one of her Pupils, I have met with the following: "The more charitably you will be treated here, the less indulgent ought you to be to yourselves. Had I listened to my feelings when I first came here, I should have been always ill. The bell called me to the office; I had a bad head-ach; the time of mental prayer was come; I felt myself very weak; I offered a little violence to myself, and I went to the office and mental prayer. I was no sooner there, but my pains grew bearable, and sometimes so much so, that I forgot them. As we get up very early in the morning during the summer, I felt acute pains in my stomach, which invited me strongly to lay quiet, and sleep on. I took great care not to yield to such temptation; and as soon as I had breathed the open air I was well. I tell you all that to forewarn you not to indulge the propensities of your body, which always seeks ease and conveniences; and to guard against the Devil, who tries to divert us from our regular exercises, and even against the charity of our Sisters, who by nursing your body with

infirm in the Community, attributed the cause of it to an increase of austerities peculiar to the House; and with the advice of the Archbishop of Paris, Mr. de Beaumont, proposed to himself to forbid them. When he imparted his project to Princess Louisa, she told him: "I understand you very well, and I see clearly what you aim at; out of regard for *Princess Louisa*, it is proper that relaxation should be introduced into the House: but you know that I was as well acquainted with their particular customs, as with the Rule itself, and that I preferred it on account of its more edifying regularity. Were my presence to lessen the fervor of the Community, and yourself bent to prosecute your project; I declare to you, that, not being able to support myself any longer among those to whom I should be so greatly prejudicial, I will the very next day ask leave to pass into another Monastery of our Order." So resolute a declaration determined the Superior to take more time to consider: but he was soon satisfied; as he observed the cessation of those infirmities, which had been supposed to arise from their having, on account of extreme poverty, substituted to wine which they drank, another sort of drink, which therefore had been suppressed a few days before the coming of Princess Louisa to Saint Denis.

It was no otherwise than by deceiving the Princess, or causing to her a real grief, that in the beginning of her abode in the Monas-

tery the Nuns could make her accept some mitigation in the common diet : but by dint of representations, steadiness, and even tears, she soon succeeded to rid herself from these attentions which fatigued her much more than the austerities themselves they wanted to save her. If, in the portion presented to her, she perceived, or even suspected any difference from those given to the other Nuns in the refectory, she contrived the thing with such dexterity, that she made it fall to the share of the Nun next to her at table. When the King, or the Princesses her Sisters, sent her any provisions, she sent them to the kitchen, saying that, it was the alms of the Court to the Community. The Archbishop of Paris having sent her a little quantity of fruit which she liked, at a time of the year when it is yet very scarce ; she had it served to the whole Community, so that there was scarcely enough left for her to say that she had tasted it.

Whatever was served up to her she found delicious ; and fearing, undoubtedly, lest the Nuns and other people should esteem beyond their real merit, the many sacrifices which a refectory of Carmelites must offer to the daughter of a King, she professed, on every occasion, that she had a scruple to eat her portion with so much pleasure and so good an appetite. "No," said she, "never the best cook of Versailles knew so well how to dress a dinner and make it so savoury, as fasting and labour does here." Hence, a good Lay Sister who

was in the kitchen, thinking to have acquired since the coming of Princess Louisa into the House, great skill in cookery, which no one had ever suspected, said to the Nuns : " See how this Royal stomach relishes our pumpions and carrots : I hope that it will be said no more that we understand nothing of cookery." Indeed, it could hardly have come into the head of any one to complain, when they saw the King's daughter contented with every thing. Nevertheless, it happened in a particular circumstance, that the whole Community signified that the beans usually served in the refectory were too hard, and there was a great quantity of them still in the House. Princess Louisa, who was then Prioress, was the only one who had taken no notice of their bad quality : but when they proposed to her to sell them, in order to buy a better sort, she apprehended, that for Nuns who had made a vow of poverty, it would be shewing too great a niceness and delicacy ; therefore, she answered only to the Nuns, that she would consider on their representations. In effect, the first time these beans were served again, after having eat with good appetite her whole portion, which was not one of the least ; she amused herself with turning topsyturvy her little wooden porringer between her fingers, to shew that nothing remained in it. The Nuns could not help smiling ; and so having become satisfied that the beans were eatable, the whole provision was consumed.

The Princess overcame with so much generosity the natural aversion which she had for a particular sort of victuals ; that it would have been a difficult matter to suspect it. The Nuns having learned from one of her former attendants, that, when at Court, she had an extreme repugnance to eggs dressed in a certain manner, they made her a little reproach for not having ever mentioned it, and told her, that she might avoid eating of them for the future : “ I should be very sorry to do so,” answered she ; “ I have been fighting these seven years against this whimsical taste of mine ; and I hope to get the better of it : but if I yield for a minute I am conquered.”

Every thing with regard to the diet, was always, or at least appeared suitable to her taste ; and this to such a degree that, when the Nuns meant to give any dish a bad name ; they said, “ Mother Theresa of Saint Austin herself could not eat it.” As meagre is habitual among the Carmelites, the Purveyors never failed to provide the House with fish, when they met with any at a reasonable price ; but it was sometimes so much spoiled that the smell alone was enough to disgust the Nuns from touching their portions. As for Princess Louisa, she left nothing of her own ; and, without condemning the well-grounded repugnance of her Sisters, she said : “ That she had many thanks to return to the ALMIGHTY for having given her an appetite which nothing could disgust :” it might, we think, be

added, with a love of mortifications, which no one could equal. Of this we shall mention a few instances which worldly wisdom might regard as trifling, but which bear a character of heroism in the eyes of the religion that consecrates them.

The Carmelites who are to take their meals after the Community, are served at the second table with the remnants of the first: when Princess Louisa was in such a case, she exactly conformed to the custom. One day the Cook having nothing to give her; was going to prepare a dinner for her; but Princess Louisa laying hold of the plate of a Sister, on which there were some small bits of omelet served from the first table, told her: "*Sister, make your own dinner, for I have mine.*" Another time, being in the refectory to take her refection after the Community, a Nun shewing her some rests which had been set before her, asked, if truly they were not slovingly disgusting: Princess Louisa, then Prioress, takes the plate out of the hand of the complainer, examines it, says that she is in the right, and commands her to be better served; but keeps for herself the rejected portion, eats it cheerfully, and does not chuse to have any thing else. One of the Sisters occupied in the kitchen, had thrown out upon the dunghill an artichoke full of maggots, but another Sister, having unthinkingly picked it up, sent it with the others to the refectory. The Cook expected nothing else but its being sent back to her with re-

proaches; but seeing no sign of it in what was remaining, she concluded that it must have fallen to the share of Princess Louisa; and so it really was. Extremely grieved at this little misfortune, the Cook went and asked pardon of the Princess, who told her: "That does not signify much, since it has become my own portion; but be sure never to serve any more like it, because all our Sisters have not so keen an appetite as I have." Princess Louisa one day had let an egg already broke, fall into the vessel destined among the Carmelites to receive the washing of the glasses, and the crumbs from the table; but reflecting that it is a fault against religious poverty to let an egg be lost, she took it out of the dirty water and eat it with cheerfulness.

Some few years residence in the Convent having perfectly reestablished her health, habitual fasting became then extremely difficult for her, and hunger tortured her as it were to such a degree almost every day, that some hours before dinner, her face grew wan and pale; however, instead of allowing herself when Prioress, any mitigation in that austerity, she, on the contrary, prolonged it with a kind of satisfaction as often as complaisance and charity required, that during the dinner of the Community, she should grant an interview to any one of her Sisters, or to any stranger.

In a particular circumstance, when she

could not, without deranging her health, eat the fruit which was then the habitual collation of the Community, she accepted water-gruel in place of it, without any oil or butter; and this insipid porridge she called a mitigation, and reproached herself for it, as a nicety and delicacy. She wrote then to the Superior of the House: "They will tell you, perhaps, that I am ill; there is no truth in it: that you ought to forbid me to fast; but I am well able to do it with only a cup or two of balm-tea, which I take in the morning." The Princess by her fidelity in the observances of religious austerities became assimilated to the young Hebrews at the Court of Babylon. The less she took care of herself, the better she looked, and was. "I am so well," did she write, at Easter, "that, to my shame, Lent has made me grow fat, though I have suffered very much with cold and hunger, especially during my retreat; but grace makes every thing sweet and comfortable."

The dress of a Carmelite is an austerity of itself; it is only by patience and courage that they may defend themselves against the influences of the seasons. In winter they wear but stockings of cloth, and scarcely see the fire: in summer their habit is woollen cloth and serge. This double austerity must certainly have been very severely felt by a Princess. Hence, during the first winters she passed at Saint Denis, Princess Louisa had her hands chapped and almost frozen, and that

was for her only an occasion of joke, but never of complaint. "I am frozen," said she, to a Carmelite; "sometimes I think that my fingers will fall off; I cannot come near the fire without pain: however, I have been particularly favoured this winter, because my hands have been but little chapped." The severity of the weather caused her such an acute pain that it drew tears from her eyes; and of this she accused herself as of a childish weakness. I read in one of her letters: "Would you believe that I suffered so much with cold that I cried like a child? but we must have something to offer to our LORD." Such offerings were very familiar to her. She suffered still more from heat in the summer, and always with the same courage: "I thought that I should have been smothered with heat these few days past," said she to an intimate friend; "my resource was to reflect that my sweat would extinguish the flames of Hell, and cool those of Purgatory, which I deserve every moment by my cowardice to bear such trifling incommodity."

One of the most painful inconveniences in common life, for Princess Louisa, was to be obliged to stay long together in close shut-up apartments. She would have preferred to have had always the doors and windows wide open; and sometimes her Sisters, out of complaisance, were disposed to have it so; but she never permitted it. "I know very well," said she, "that to breathe the fresh

air would be very pleasant to me, but it would not be so to some of our old or infirm Sisters; and it is a principle of sound morality that when a choice is to be made, who is to be least incommoded; the greatest incommmodity must fall on those who enjoy good health." Of all the apartments of the House, the Infirmary was the place where the Princess suffered the most of a close confined air. She was sometimes ready to faint in it; but by dint of courage and virtue, she overcame this difficulty so well, that, when Prioress, she was seen going to the Infirmary ten times in a day to visit the sick who were in any danger. A Nun who accompanied her found that the air of the Infirmary was insupportable: "Let us," said she, "pity those who have an illness, and not ourselves, who have only a bad smell to bear." A Religious had a great repugnance to have an issue which was judged necessary for the preservation of her life: "Be of good heart," said her Prioress to her, "I will dress it myself, and no one in the House but me will be privy to it. Often for months together, and several times in the day, she cleansed, dressed, and even kissed the most loathsome sores, the meer sight of which was enough to strike with horror and disgust. In this admirable contrast of the humble functions which she performed, with the education which she had received, she always carried that air of ease and simplicity which increases the merit of our sacrifices

before God, whilst it seems to lessen it in the eyes of men.

Though mortification seems to adhere to all the footsteps of a Carmelite, still the religious companions of the pious Princess attest that she was moreover attentive to lay hold of the least opportunity which might occur to multiply acts of self denial, to repress a little motion of curiosity, to surmount a desire of relating a story, to restrain sallies of wit, to sacrifice the most innocent inclinations to the more sweet and attractive pleasure of keeping close to the cross of our LORD, were her ordinary exercises, and as it were the habit of her virtue. Sometimes without thinking, and quite naturally, she betrayed the secret of her heart, which thirsted after sufferings : " What are we doing in the world, what are we doing here, my dear, if we do not exhibit in our conduct and sentiments the mortification of our Divine Master." Another time, looking at some little oratories which she had caused to be erected within the inclosure of her Convent, she said to one of her Sisters, " Behold, there are many altars here ; the impression which a sight of them ought to make upon us, is to recal to our minds that we ought to pray without intermission, and without intermission to sacrifice ourselves to the LORD. The events the most afflictive to nature ; sensible privations, sicknesses, the death of her friends and relations, always found her resigned and

religious under them. She never startled at the sight of a sacrifice, and those which were most excruciating for her heart were those in which she exerted the quickest fidelity and the most courageous resignation. During the last illness of Mother Julia, to whose zeal she was persuaded that, next to God, she was indebted for the spirit of her holy state, she wrote to Abbé Bertin : " Our lot is, *fiat voluntas* (thy will be done), in all its extent. We must live and die upon the cross. This Mother was my support : with her I always hoped to learn : when she is no more I will do what I can : our Divine Lord will forgive me the rest. I must do penance for my sins. My penance at Saint Denis would have been too sweet with her." And, after her death, she added : " I own that I do my best to divert my thoughts from her, and to occupy myself only before ALMIGHTY GOD, with the awful truths of religion, and the sanctification of my soul. This is the first retreat which I make without our poor Mother. I endeavour to complete the sacrifice begun the twenty-seventh of September, by turning myself towards God every time she comes to my mind : and all goes on pretty well. *Fiat voluntas*. God will be my all so much the more."

Upon the death of the King, her father, her resignation was equal to her grief. She had prayed in hope ; she continued to pray in faith. The very day she received the afflicting news, she did not stay away from any

regular exercise, nor dispense herself from any religious observance. Being then Prioress, she appointed the reciting of the Office of the Dead. The Nuns repaired to the choir; and she herself officiated at the head of her Community. It was not long before the Nuns, being moved with sensibility at the afflicting situation of their Mother, and at the remembrance of the benefits of the late King towards their Community, melted into tears, and the psalmody was interrupted. Strengthened then by the fortitude which a lively faith inspires, Princess Louisa imposed silence to nature. She alone knew to speak to GOD for her father more effectually than by tears: she alone continued singing the psalms. Let us hear the Princess herself pouring forth into the bosom of an intimate friend the sentiments with which she was animated, in this trying circumstance: "I write to you again, to day, my dear, to tell you how I am, though I have but very little time to spare. When the King was carried to the Abbey last night, I bore it well: they had placed me in the remotest part of the House; but, however, I heard all: I slept, wept, and prayed, and now I am very well; it is all that I have time to tell you. I will not now write so often to you: I must return to the business of the House. I shall support this affliction as well as I did the others: since GOD has permitted it, he will be my strength." A little time after, learning the sickness and the danger of the Princesses

her Sisters, she wrote to the same person :
 “ I have had a very severe afternoon, but God has given me strength and courage : be easy with regard to my body and heart ; the latter suffers a great deal, but it is resigned. I think that there is no situation like mine ; to lose my Father, and to have my three Sisters attacked by the same illness ! but, when we have afflictions we must look up to the hand which strikes us, and adore it in silence ; it is the duty of a Christian, and still more of a Nun, who has made a promise to follow, not only the precepts, but even the counsels of the Gospel, and that to death. Pray to God, my dear, that I may never deviate from these sentiments. I am grown a little thinner ; but be not uneasy, and let us pray with all our strength and heart.”

Another time, when she heard the dangerous illness of her favourite Sister, she wrote : “ I own, that the danger of Sophia has troubled me a little ; but, without shaking the firm resolution in which I am interiorly to acquiesce always to the will of God.”

With this spirit of resignation, and the numberless sacrifices which it produced, Princess Louisa joined many other pious sacrifices no less hard to nature. Besides the fasts commanded by the Rule, the rigorous observance of which was very severe to her, she often fasted whole days on bread and water : and for fear the Community should

take notice of it, she had the attention to give herself some occupation at the times of meals, which she could not easily do when she was Prioress. The austere habit which she wore still had other austerities, such as a hair cloth, hair shirt, and all the instruments of a crucified life, which, in her usual cheerful way she called the toilet of a Carmelite. Nevertheless, though the humble and fervent Princess took the utmost care to hide from the Community the austerities which she practised beyond those allowed by the Rule, one of her Sisters, who had seen several times bloody signs of her macerations, spoke to her, and endeavoured to prevail upon her to moderate these pious excesses: "Do not you see," said Princess Louisa to her with a smile, "that ALMIGHTY God having granted me good health, which I did not enjoy at Court, signifies to me the use I ought to make of it by trying to expiate in some degree, in the way of a Theresian, the folly which I have had formerly of wearing the livery and the bracelets of the Devil. But having suspected afterwards, and not without grounds, that the Nun had drawn upon her such representations as tended to moderate these secret austerities, she took the greatest care not to let her know them for the future. It was usually for nine days together that the holy Princess made to God the offering of such extraordinary macerations; sometimes with the intention of obtaining some special grace;

and oftentimes in reparation and atonement for the crimes of impiety and depravation of manners in the age. During the last illness of Louis the Fifteenth, her rigorous fasts and many other austerities, which were witnessed by God alone, had so much altered the features of her face, that one of the Visitors General of the Order, at the recommendation and request of the Community, bid her to look upon it as a duty to set some bounds to her penitential zeal; the humble Princess falling at his feet, told him: "I will obey you, Father, whatever you think fit to order me: but, reflect, I beseech you, that the King is dying; reflect that I am come here for his salvation, as well as for mine; tell me, then, can I do too much for a soul so dear to me?" The Superior struck with admiration, said no more, for fear of opposing the operation of the Spirit of God in this privileged soul.

However, it is this charitable office of these Angels of Peace which Philosophers incessantly calumniate. But let these supposed friends of humanity, who rank among the rights of man the excesses of licentiousness, and place its most depraved appetites in the number of its virtues, blaspheme as much as they please: let these pretended Sages of a new stamp endeavour, before the blind tribunal of a deluded world, to devote to all the ignominy of sloth and laziness the holy activity of these martyrs of penance; though, by multiplying their imaginary

crimes they should succeed to strike with sterility the Land of the Saints: nevertheless, as long as a friend of truth and virtue remains in the French empire, he will deem it an act of justice to extol and celebrate the pure heroism of those courageous souls, that treading in the footsteps of a crucified God, do not hesitate to offer themselves as objects of reproach to a persecuting world; and, after the example of their Divine Spouse, sacrifice themselves out of charity to atone for crimes which they have not committed.

Were we to judge of the interior dispositions of Princess Louisa by the active zeal and uninterrupted fervor which animated her whole conduct, we might have imagined that, carried on the wings of grace, she scarcely felt the yoke of the LORD, and met only roses without thorns in the paths of perfection. However, it was not so. The pious Princess, who had formerly, in the middle of the world, tasted all the sweetnesses of virtue, met with almost continual trials in the sanctuary of piety itself. God seemed to withdraw from this heavenly soul, in proportion as she exerted herself more to advance towards him; and it may be said, that, during the years of her solitude, she oftner dwelt on Mount Calvary than on Mount Thabor. Nevertheless, always faithful to her duties, and always above the weakness of despondency, if she was deprived of the peace produced by spiritual consolations,

she enjoyed that which attends resignation and sacrifice. When her soul began to be agitated with trouble, her faith became her guide; and she never abandoned herself more perfectly to God, than when God seemed to abandon her. She overcame with the most courageous resolution, sadness or dejection of mind, as soon as she felt their first attacks: and though a storm was raging within her soul, serenity and calm still shone in her countenance. Then it was that the thought of the first sacrifice which she had made to the ALMIGHTY, and which her will had never retracted, filled her heart with the greatest confidence. "What ought to support us, when we are in darkness?" said she, one day, to her fervent Religious, "is to think, that, at least, we inhabit the Holy Land; and though our LORD may hide himself from our eyes, he can never be at any great distance from us." Thus she found in her love for God a certain pledge of God's love for her; and her faith made it a true comfort for her to be deprived of all sensible comforts.

Contented to have for witness of her interior pains, the merciful God for the love of whom she suffered them, if she spoke of them now and then in the effusion of her heart, it was but seldom, or when she thought it useful, either for her own edification or the instruction of others. A Religious having confessed to her, her reluctance to certain practices of their constitutions, she encouraged her by the following answer:

"You do not surprise me in the least, when you tell me that such things are hard, for no body can find them harder than myself; every thing costs me greatly: but, my dearest, let us be of good heart; the GOD of Heaven deserves all such sacrifices; give me a little share in all those which you may make." For the least consolations which she felt in serving GOD she returned him thanks, as if they had been most signal favours. I read in one of her letters: "It seems to me, that, by twelve full years of pain I have not purchased at too high a rate the beginning of that tranquillity which I now enjoy."

Knowing, like Saint Paul, how to rejoice in the midst of her trials, she answered to a friend who congratulated her for the comforts and delights, she must, as she thought, have enjoyed in the practice of virtue: "I am in greater need than you imagine of renewing my fervor. Since our LORD has bound me for ever to his service, he does not lead me any longer by consolations. But, his will be done. It is said that this state is more secure: therefore, in the midst of all that, my soul is satisfied." "How could I be comforted," said she to another friend, "if GOD was not above all? But I hope that this cross will help me to work out my salvation: I will not lose any the least part of it. GOD loves me upon the cross. My sufferings do not make me wish for death. I always greatly dread that awful

moment. But to that as well as to all the rest, we must ever say, *fiat voluntas*. Indeed, I could wish to be a little recompensed in my prayers for all these pains. But it is not God's will. Well, let us again say, *fiat voluntas*. However, for this last year my agitations are diminished. This is certainly no small relief, and I ought to look upon it as a very great grace; for these agitations in time of prayer are dreadful to bear."

It may easily be gathered from the whole tenor of the life of Princess Louisa, that, among the virtues by which she constantly edified her Community and the Christian world, piety held the first rank, and vivified all the rest. It was her piety which had commanded her the sacrifice of a separation from the world. Her piety inspired her with the courage of making all the sacrifices which were to follow the first, and bring it to its perfection. Her pure soul disengaged from herself, as well as from the earth, found no pleasure but in her God. Sure to find him in the bottom of her heart, it is there that she sought him, conversed with him, and kept herself recollected in his presence. All her conduct was regulated by her desire to please him, and this desire was immense in proportion to its object. Though she knew how to set bounds with prudence to the fervor of her Nuns, she did not do the same with regard to herself. "Let us do for God, all that our Rule commands us," said she to them; "that is sufficient." This she

said to others, but not to herself. Always afraid not to do enough for God, for whom, however, she did every thing, she wrote to a friend: " Worldlings canonize us for very little: as soon as we cease to be like them, they fancy that we are all that we ought to be. But the judgments of God are very different from those of men. The great sacrifice by which we tear ourselves away from the world, may indicate the fear which we entertain of being damned with the world: but what proves a Nun's desire of pleasing our Divine Spouse, is a continuation of it in daily sacrifices; and, nevertheless, we hesitate, we draw back, when the occasion occurs of offering any to him."

Princess Louisa's delights were to speak of God, and of the happiness of being his. This she did on every occasion, by word of mouth and in writing, with people of the world, as well as with her Sisters. It was usually in few words; but in that natural and lively manner which penetrates the hearts. All the letters of the Princess, those even which she wrote for the temporal affairs of the House, when she had the care of them, bear the stamps of her piety. Among different advices which she traced out with her own hand for a young person whom she had to form to a religious life, I read as follows: " Let us do every thing for God, and in the best manner we can; but with an unshaken confidence and tender love; for who can ever deserve our love like him? Is

a father, mother, brother, or sister, to be compared with him? We are happy in this world by loving him; for what sweetness and delights does he not diffuse into our hearts, when we generously offer up a sacrifice to him. And he, moreover, has a hundred fold in store for us in the next life." The Princess never heard of the alarming progress of infidelity without expressing her profound affliction; but they were sure to procure her a moment of the purest joy who could inform her of some event, either edifying or advantageous to religion. As she was herself capable of the heroism of virtue; she easily believed in it; and a miraculous piety, or even the sight of a miracle, would not, in speaking to her heart, have excited in her soul the least surprise. Though she knew perfectly well how to distinguish that happy simplicity which disposes to faith, from that ignorant credulity which leads astray, she did not like that any thing should be exploded without grounds, when it might be believed without danger: "There are people," said she, "who seem to take pleasure in shortening the arm of the ALMIGHTY: but in punishment of this propensity to infidelity, GOD hides from them the prodigies of grace and omnipotence which he continues to discover now and then to the faith of the simple and little ones." And can we not say with truth, that the holy Princess herself was one of these prodigies of grace, that are unknown to a profane world, and

even undervalued by some of those that compose what is called the Christian world.

Attentive to improve the least graces, Princess Louisa sought every where for subjects of edification, and means to support and enliven her virtue. It would be endless to lay before our readers all that she did in order to entertain and nourish piety in her ownself. To the courage which animated her to do great things for God, she joined the most exact fidelity to observe all the little practices which might be acceptable to him: nay, her whole life formed like a picture of her tender eagerness to please her Divine Spouse. She studied him in every thing, constantly meditated upon him, prayed without intermission to him; in a word, she breathed for him alone. Among the prodigies of love operated by the Saviour of the World in favour of mankind, those which made a deeper impression upon her, were his humble birth, the institution of the adorable Sacrament of his body and blood, and the sufferings and annihilations of his passion. The mere remembrance of these wonderful mysteries penetrated often her feeling heart with such tender sentiments, that she could not express them but by her tears, her gratitude, and love. She found an inexhaustible source of consolations in her meditations at the foot of the Cross. Among several oratories erected within the inclosure of the Monastery, and adorned by her care, there is one where all the mysteries of our

Lord's passion are represented, and which after her death, was called *Princess Louisa's Hermitage*. It is there that, at her leisure moments, the pious Princess liked to retire, to pray secretly to him, whom she ever carried in her heart.

Filled with confidence in the power of the Saints with ALMIGHTY GOD, she was very assiduous to honour them as his particular friends. She neglected no means to obtain their protection, nor any occasion, which the Church might offer to her, of enriching herself with the superabundance of their merits.* She had inherited of the Queen her mother, and she shewed during all her life, the most tender devotion towards the Blessed Virgin Mary. While she resided yet at Court, she had entered into several associations formed to her honour. From the time she entered the Convent, she accustomed herself to spare every day a few moments before the morning prayer, to go and pray in a small oratory dedicated to her, and put herself under her protection. Every day she said her beads, and addressed to her some other particular prayers. Besides the Saints, whose sacred relics were deposited in the Church of her Monastery, she honoured in a special manner Saint Joseph, the Guardian Angels, Saint Theresa, Saint Louis King of France, Saint Louis Gonzague, Saint John

* By gaining indulgences.

Neponucen, under the invocation of whom she erected an altar, after the birth of the Dauphin, to fulfil a vow which she had made.

Princess Louisa displayed also her piety by her zeal for the House of the Lord, which in its activity might have been compared to that which animated the Royal Prophet. A very short time after her admission among the Carmelites, the Nuns thought that they could not gratify her pious inclinations better than by giving her an office in the Sacristy. When Mistress of the Novices, she inspired her Pupils with the same zeal. When Prioress, she ranked among her greatest obligations the care of seeing that the utmost decency should be observed in the public worship, and all religious ceremonies. She thought herself highly honoured when she could work for the decoration of altars, clean the sanctuary, take care of the sacred vestments, or sweep and rub the oratories. In the House of God she studied that every thing should be worthy of God. She inhabited as yet the Palace of Versailles, when one of those persons who pretend to purify religion by the light of reason, seemed to blame, in her presence, the magnificence of our temples, repeating these words of the Scripture; *God is a spirit, and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and truth.* "Yes undoubtedly," she said; "God is a spirit: but he was also a Spirit when he commanded to Solomon to erect to his ho-

mour that celebrated temple, the magnificence of which has never since been equalled in the world. GOD is a spirit, and only a spirit; but as for us, he knows that we are both body and spirit together." At every step you make in the Monastery of the Carmelites of Saint Denis you meet with some sensible marks of the piety of the pious Princess, who inhabited it. Here is an altar, a little farther a solitary oratory, or there are seen some allegorical pictures, or sentences which excite devotion. She wished that the very walls of the House should speak to the eyes of the beholders the language which delighted her heart.

Her attachment for the Church, which was as sincere as her piety was fervent, and her faith pure, was that of the most affectionate child for a beloved mother. When Pope Clement the Fourteenth suppressed the institute of the Jesuites, she kept her profound grief hidden in her heart, and without allowing herself the least murmurings, she adored in silence, the depths of the judgments of GOD over the children of men.* All that

* Who knows if, in the incomprehensible designs of Divine Providence, the temporary absence of these zealous defenders of religion, is not necessary, the better to make us appreciate the importance and the want of their services in the Church of GOD? But, what cannot be called in question, as it seems to us, is, that, if ever that false philosophy which murders Kings, ceases henceforth to influence their counsels, both the civil and religious powers will unite to ask of the successors of Clement

proceeded from the center of the Catholic unity, bore in her eyes a divine character: "All that comes from Rome," said she, "inspires me with devotion."

She testified as much joy in receiving a pair of beads, blessed by the then reigning Successor of Saint Peter (Pius the Sixth), as she had done when she had received from his Predecessor that master piece of Church plate, which has decorated the sanctuary of her Convent. The Princess's faith shewed itself by her profound respect for the Ministers of our holy religion. She honoured in a particular manner all Bishops and Priests. However, she regulated the exterior marks of her esteem for them, according to their known merit. This sentiment even rose to veneration with regard to those who supported the holiness of their character by their personal virtues: they were Angels in her eyes: she fell upon her knees before them to receive their blessing, and ask the assistance of their prayers.

How remote soever from tepidity the active fervor of the Princess was, she had, nevertheless, so great an horror for that dangerous state, that the better to secure herself

the Fourteenth the speedy reestablishment of a Society, the destruction of which has so visibly accelerated all the calamities of France, and by a necessary consequence brought Europe into its actual crisis.

against it, she had imagined to submit her own vigilance to the vigilance and inspection of another. She had given a strict charge to a young Nun, who had been her Novice, to watch over her actions, words, and her whole conduct, and to admonish her with sincerity of all the failings and defects she should observe in her. The better to engage her to do her this charitable office, she communicated to her the resolutions which she had formed in the fervor of a retreat, and told her: "This is what GOD requires of me, and what with the assistance of his grace I am resolved to accomplish. You will give me a real proof of your friendship by judging me without indulgence according to this rule." Her desires were fully complied with: her inspector, in order to shew her zeal for her, exercised the most severe censure over her; and, instead of forgiving her the least thing, she often saw failings where they did not exist. Princess Louisa on such occasions respecting even the errors of the Censor, whom she had appointed over herself, thanked her, encouraged her, and promised to profit by her advices, which she actually did, as often as she thought them well grounded:

Though she sought to surround, and proffer her piety by all the supports which she could imagine, it was especially in prayer that she put her fullest confidence. Her union with GOD was uninterrupted: prayer was the soul of her life; the whole time which her Rule commanded to be dedicated to this holy ex-

ercise, seemed still too short to her to lay before the ALMIGHTY the high concerns which inflamed her zeal. A stranger to the affairs of the state, she was far from being indifferent to its necessities; and it was by her fervent prayers that she endeavoured to provide for them. The preservation of religion in the kingdom; the reestablishment of morality; the relief of the poor; the peace and tranquillity of the public, were the habitual subjects of her prayers and supplications. A worthy Daughter of Saint Louis, she had for all the French the tender affection of this holy King. All that interested her native country, lively interested her piety; and it may be said that France had in her a Minister of Peace always attentive to negotiate her interests with the Father of Mercies. Hence Louis the Sixteenth respected her as the tutelary Angel of France. In a visit which this Prince paid to her on the occasion of the birth of the Dauphin, he told her: "I come, my aunt, to express to you my gratitude for the event which makes this day the joy of my people and mine: for I attribute it to your prayers."

All the moments which Princess Louisa could dispose of, she devoted to prayer. Wherever she might be met with in the House, whether at work or at rest, in her cell or walking about, she was constantly praying. On Sundays and holydays it was by prayer that she filled up the hours of manual labour.

On the days in which she had more leisure to apply to prayer, she found the time still too short to express to GOD all the sentiments of her heart. She devoted to it part of the nights, especially during Lent, and on some particular Wednesdays and Fridays in the year : and also when her piety had to solicit from GOD some important grace, either for herself or for others. It was usually till midnight that she prolonged her prayers on such occasions ; and, nevertheless, the ensuing morning she was seen the first at mental prayer. She even passed the whole night that preceded great solemnities, such as Christmas, Easter, and Good Friday, at the foot of the Altar.

A Nun representing to her that such long watchings might endanger her health : “ Do not speak to me of my health,” answered Princess Louisa ; “ I ought to blush at its being too good. They were the watchings of Versailles that fatigued me ; those of Saint Denis, on the contrary, relieve and refresh me. Besides, I must own, that, when I am before GOD, all my wants occur then to my mind : I think next of those of others ; from the living I pass to the dead, and there is no end.” She had a particular devotion to pray, and to have prayers said for the dead : she solicited and obtained of the Superiors General of her Order, that extraordinary prayers and offices should be said for the relief and delivery of the souls in Purgatory in her

own House, and in all the other Monasteries of her Order.

But of all the means by which the holy Princess endeavoured to arrive at the summit of perfection, the dearest to her heart, that from which she expected, and in reality drew the greatest advantage, was frequent communion. A soul so pure, so thoroughly disengaged from the world and herself, was, doubtless, as worthy as human frailty can be, of the most intimate communications with her God. Frequent communion had supported her when Princess in the world : communion still more frequent sanctified her when a Nun in the Convent. A few months after her admission, and before the end of her Noviceship, she gave such constant proofs of a tender and solid piety, and shewed so much zeal for perfection, that the Directors of her interior conduct thought they might, on account of the holiness of her dispositions, grant her the liberty of communicating every day. Though in her profound humility she judged herself unworthy of such a favour, she was so sensible of its high importance and its great advantages, that she retained it all her life. "Some," said she, "communicated often to keep up their sanctity ; others to acquire it : as for me, I am of the latter." She went usually to confession twice a week, which was not thought too often in a person who communicated every day. The fruits which she reaped from holy communion were propor-

tioned to the pious dispositions which she brought to this adorable sacrament, and extended their happy influence over all those who surrounded her. Her example was a moving invitation, and the subject of a noble emulation to all her Sisters.

When she was at the head of her Community, she recommended nothing more to her children, than the practice of those virtues which could obtain for them the inestimable favour of a holy frequentation of the Sacraments: full of zeal and unction, when she spoke to them on that subject, out of the abundance of her heart she said to them: "Believe me, my dear Sisters, all the strength of a Spouse of JESUS CHRIST is in communion. The shortest, the surest means for her to advance in perfection, is communion; and her most powerful help against all her enemies is also communion. The real presence of our Divine Spouse enlightens and purifies the conscience, dilates the heart, banishes from it sadness and vain scruples, to make room for cheerfulness, confidence, and love."

What the Princess said to one of her Novices when she was their Mistress: "That a Nun ought always to be prepared to communicate and to die," has not been forgot; and such was actually the disposition of her heart; such was the state of her conscience. In effect, the Princess who had in the morning been seen uniting herself to JESUS

CHRIST by communion, was seen the rest of the day acting by the influence of his spirit, and seeking nothing else than to please him. Hence, her pious eagerness to multiply her visits to the Blessed Sacrament: hence that tender devotion which fixed her at the foot of the Altar, when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed to the adoration of the faithful. In such great solemnities she passed sometimes ten hours in the Church; the Church became then her habitual residence; and if any one wanted her, it was in the Church that she was sure to be found.

The days of the righteous, says the Holy Ghost, are full days; they are days without night, all the moments of which being sanctified by a vivifying principle of grace, draw on him immense treasures of merits. He sleeps, but his heart is awake; he is environed with darkness, but the LORD is his light. In the mean while, the humility of the just sets him on hiding from profane men the knowledge of his secret communications with God. However, Divine Providence that designed every feature in the life of this holy Princess should be preserved, for the edification of her age seems to have arranged every thing so as to give the greatest publicity to her most secret good works. The motive of a truly maternal charity had determined Princess Louisa to harbour in her narrow cell a young Nun whom she wanted to cure, as she actually did, of the vain

frights and terrors that haunted her during the night : and it is from this irreproachable witness that we have learned how the Princess sanctified the time destined to sleep. We here copy from her memorials : “ When I was thus alone with Princess Louisa, I endeavoured to edify myself by following her practices of devotion, and to learn what I did not know. I proposed; therefore, to her, to recite aloud the prayers by which she prepared herself to sleep ; which she, out of complaisance did. However, for fear of keeping me too long from sleep, or, to awake me if I had fallen into it, she shortened these prayers ; I mean ceased to speak loud ; but I often observed that she continued praying in a low tone of voice. She had taken holy water in entering her cell ; she took some again at the end of her prayers : “ Holy water,” said she, to me, “ acquires by the exorcisms of the Church a great virtue against the powers of darkness.” And she had a great devotion in making use of it. Among her last prayers, she never failed to say the Psalm, *Deprofundis*, for the souls in Purgatory : she invoked her Guardian Angel, the Blessed Virgin, and all the Saints, and especially those whose relics she wore about her. She placed her beads round her neck, and the crucifix which we carry in the day time at our side she kept in bed ; which, as it seemed to me, must have been troublesome to her. I told it her, and she answered me with a smile : “ It is because I speak to it till I fall asleep.” Hav-

ing asked her, If it did answer her: "Oh, yes," said she, "and the ear of the heart hears its answers." The last of her practices was a preparation for death, which she made with as much devotion as if that night was truly to be the last of her life. All the time in the night she could not sleep, she employed in prayer. If she awoke a little before midnight, she prayed till the clock struck, and as soon as it did, she arose, prostrated on the floor, and said a prayer to honour the mystery of JESUS CHRIST entering into the world to redeem mankind. As I represented to her one day that such a practice was not very easy and comfortable, she answered me, that, "Truly it cost her much, especially when the cold was very severe: but, what is all that," said she, "to testify our love to him who has shed the very last drop of his blood for our salvation?"

Pious at all times, and of still more striking piety since her admission into her Convent, Princess Louisa seemed yet to surpass herself about two years before her death. As if she had then foreseen that she was drawing near her end, she carried all her good works and virtues to the height of perfection. It is worthy of remark, that, when she began to exert this new activity of zeal and fervor, it was precisely at the time, when, in her profound humility, she thought to have most to fear from her weakness; I mean the trying circumstance of the death

of Mother Julia, who had formed her to a religious life, and whom she considered ever since as her Angel and Spiritual Guide in the ways of perfection. It was by losing this human support she understood what God teaches his most faithful servants only by degrees; that, if it be conformable to the simplicity of childhood to receive with docility and gratitude the good offices of a virtuous friendship, the perfection of mature age demands that strength should be sought and found in God alone. The confession which this Religious made a few instants before her death to Princess Louisa, that, she, indeed, had made to God the sacrifice of her separation from her, but that this act of resignation had cost her half an hour's struggle, caused the Princess to make the most profound reflections on the subject. Her piety was terrified at the thought that a Nun, on the point of death, could hesitate, as it were, and be divided for half an hour, between the God who called her to Heaven, and the weak creature that she left behind crawling upon earth. She concluded from thence, that the purest friendships in Communities, and the most holy connections in their principle, may be imperceptibly tainted with some secret treacherous sentiment, and thus become extremely prejudicial to religious souls: God alone became then more than ever her strength and delight; and soon she herself wondered at the facility with which she run in the ways of perfection,

since she had no longer an arm of flesh for her support.

The different memorials from which we have drawn the principal events of her life, all agree that it was especially then, the virtues of Princess Louisa assumed a character of heroism, which commanded admiration as well as respect. A venerable Priest, who had, as Superior General of the Order, frequent opportunities of knowing the Princess, sent us the following short description of her religious virtues: "The confidence and kindness with which Princess Louisa has honoured me, ought, perhaps, to prevent me from saying any thing of her: however, I cannot help telling you, that if she appeared to be a great Saint, she was, in reality; much more so than she appeared. How much does this heroic soul deserve our regret; and all the regrets of the true friends of France and of the Church. She might have been considered as the support of the Throne by her prayers, and the glory of the Theresian Order by her example. She was the comfort of the afflicted, the hope of the virtuous, the support and constant Protectress of religion, and of all Religious Orders. Her zeal was ardent and generous; but prudent, docile, and enlightened. As a true Daughter of Saint Theresa, she wished to have sacrificed herself a thousand times for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. All her actions shewed that she was a miracle of cou-

rage, humility, abnegation, obedience to her Superiors, and of mildness and affability both to her inferiors and to her equals. The Carmelites of Saint Denis will apprise you of what tender affection their holy Mother bore to her holy state, and how eminent she was for her regularity, fervor, condescension to others, austerity to herself, love of silence and poverty, and her unabated zeal towards the preservation and practice of the Rule."

One of the virtues which became more striking than ever in Princess Louisa, a few years before her death, was her disengagement from all the things of this world; it extended to all; it had no bounds. She no longer adhered to the earth, except by the connection of her body with it. She dwelt in Heaven by all the desires of her heart. Of this she made one day a candid, though unguarded confession to her Sisters, who, indeed, were already convinced of it. A person going to the capital of the Christian world, had offered his services to her near the Pope; and, as she asked but very little, he was surprised at the moderation of her demands. The holy Princess then, with that tone of sincerity which comes from the heart, answered him: "I must own, that every thing in this world is perfectly indifferent to me, and that, through the grace of God, I have no desires but for eternity, and for the best means of securing to myself a happy one." The use of some little things conformable to her inclinations, such as reliqua-

ries, books of piety, images and pictures of the Saints was allowed her ; but for fear of possessing them with too much attachment, she made them over to different Religious.

The pious Princess had all her life entertained in her soul that salutary fear, with which the Holy Ghost enjoins man to work out his salvation. She chose, above all, to occupy herself with the thought of death ; and though in her great humility she much dreaded its consequences, it was often the subject of her conversation. At a time when she enjoyed the most flourishing health, eighteen months before her death, she said to a Nun who had been her Novice : “ My greatest fear is to be deprived, at the moment of death, of the grace of the Last Sacraments ; as our Sisters may rely too much upon one another to inform me of my real situation in such a pressing circumstance. Let us make an agreement together : when you see me in danger of death, tell it me sincerely ; and, on my side, I give you my word, that, in a like case I will do you the same office of charity. It was done accordingly. Princess Louisa who was far from being credulous, had told several of her Sisters in confidence, that she could not help thinking she should die about her fiftieth year ; because the term of her life had been fixed to that age, by a person of an eminent piety. She related the thing as follows : “ The Bishop of Langres, Mr. de Montmorin, being at Court on her birth-

day, she told him : " Sir, I am this day five-and-twenty years old : " " Well, Madam," answered the Prelate, rather a little bluntly, " you have then reached the half of your life." It was not, surely, the answer of a Courtier ; but by the event it became a prophecy ; for Princess Louisa died at fifty years of age.

Though all her actions had been a continual preparation for death ; though she had not passed one day without meditating on her last ends ; nevertheless, every year in the month of December, she consecrated nine days together to reflect on this inexhaustible subject of the most useful considerations for a Christian soul ; and this she had done about a fortnight before her death. Her Sisters say, besides, that during her annual retreat of ten days made a short time before her last illness, she had extremely edified them by new proofs both of her delicacy of conscience, and of her zeal for the preservation of regularity in the Monastery.

A life so holy, whether viewed in its whole tenor, or in each of its particulars, could not undoubtedly fail being crowned with the happy death of the Saints : but it seemingly was fitting that one who had marked all her days by generous sacrifices, should signalize her death by a sacrifice still more striking than all others. It behoved that she who had lived as a victim, should die as a martyr ; and it actually happened

so. All those who witnessed the death of Princess Louisa, and chiefly the most intimate Confidant of her last days, became convinced that she joined the crown of martyrdom to the palm of virginity; and God alone can judge whether the kind of martyrdom which she endured through the vivacity of her faith, was of an inferior merit than that, which has lately been suffered in the Church of France by so many holy Confessors, before whom, it seems she opened the bloody career. Be this as it may, we proceed to unfold the very edifying and very little-known secrets of her death. The Princess enjoyed perfect health, though she wavered between hope and fear, concerning an affair which was agitated in the Cabinet Council of Versailles, and which excited in her the greatest anxiety, because religion was essentially concerned in it. The twenty-seventh of November, 1787, a person of her acquaintance desired her to come down to the parlour, and told her: "Madam, ALMIGHTY GOD must be greatly irritated against us: all the exertions of zeal are to no purpose; the prayers of the Saints without effect: the evil is consummated. What the numerous enemies of the Catholic religion and Christian faith could not extort from the wisdom of our Kings, during a whole century, by uninterrupted artifices and importunities, has just been accomplished by the perfidy of a Minister of two days: and this Minister who has betrayed so many sacred

duties, is an Archbishop." At such distressing intelligence, Princess Louisa was struck like the High Priest Hely, when he learned that the army of the Israelites had been entirely routed, and that the Ark of the Covenant had fallen into the hands of the Philistines. At this moment a sword of sorrow pierced her soul; she began to feel all the pangs of death; and inspired, as it were, by the spirit of God, with a single exclamation, she bewailed Religion betrayed, the King deceived, the tranquillity of the State endangered; and, foreseeing our calamities which she lamented, thought henceforth of nothing but of preparing for death.

As, on her leaving the parlour, she already felt the effect of the mortal wound she had just received; she said to one of the Religious: "Let us pray to God with our whole hearts for religion; for her enemies are burning with fury." Having then told her what she had learned, she added: "This news has caused in me a very strange revolution." However, the anguish which she felt, did not prevent her from immediately joining some of her Nuns, who were occupied in the exercises of their annual retreat. She entertained them with the most moving piety, on the advantages of confidence in God, and the necessity of prayer; and disclosed to them the cause of her grief. One of them proposed then to her, to inform the whole Community of it, that they might all pray in common for the same object.

“ I had thought of it,” answered Princess Louisa, “ but two reflections prevent me from doing it : such knowledge may occasion murmurs against our Governors, and we must confine our zeal to pray for them, even when they are lead astray : besides, I dread, that, if they were informed what a heavy burden these sad news have laid upon my heart, they would become too eager to divert my thoughts from them ; and I confess to you, that I had rather die of this, if it be GOD’S will, than to expose myself to the dangers of dissipation.”

The seat of her disorder was in the stomach, which was soon indicated by its swelling considerably, and causing her most acute pains. They wanted to prevail upon her to consent to the inspection of a skilful Physician : “ I will explain the thing to him so well,” said she, “ that it will be the same as if he saw it himself.” They insisted and represented to her, that such extreme delicacy might expose her life to an imminent danger : “ I can scarcely believe it,” replied she ; “ but if I am to choose between these two sacrifices, I declare that the sacrifice of my life would cost me least.” Some simple remedies procured her momentary relief, and steady to her constant practice of never indulging herself in point of health, she braved this mortal illness as if it had been merely a slight indisposition. A few days after she appeared again at the head of her

Community, to direct and follow all their regular exercises : the fear of being to stay away from them engaged her to give them to understand, that she was only indisposed ; and they had persuaded themselves that it was really so. However, this pretended indisposition was, besides frequent head-aches, attended with other accidents, which she could not hide from those Nuns who had more immediate connections with her.

It was not before the tenth of December, that overcome at last by the violence of the disorder, she consented to consult the Physician of the House. A bleeding relieved her from her oppression, but did not remove her head-aches, nor her continual privation of sleep. In vain did they propose to take her to the Infirmary ; she said, " That it would be more painful to her to have her indisposition made much of there, than to carry it herself, as she did, to all the observances of the Community." She considered the most common attentions of charity in her regard, as the effect of an inordinate zeal, as excess in human affection, and consequently, she declined them most carefully. It was only a few days before her death that she yielded to the entreaties of her Sisters, and consented to sleep in the Infirmary, and to break the abstinence prescribed by the Rule : as for the rest, she followed, as usual, all the common exercises of the House ; went to the work-room, to the recreations, to all the prayers and offices of the choir : she regu-

larly communicated every day; and it was by these fervent communions that she prepared herself to receive the holy Viaticum which she expected soon to do. In effect, whilst all the Nuns, at the sight of her tranquillity, cheerfulness, and courage, entertained no fear for her life, she alone, judging more wisely of her situation, spoke of her disorder to her Confessor, as if it would probably bring her to her grave; and she disposed every thing accordingly. She examined all her papers, burnt some of them, and set the rest in the best order.

On Wednesday the nineteenth of December, being an Ember Day, the Princess wrote to Madam Victoire, that she was tolerably well considering her state; that, however, she was forbid to fast; but as for meagre diet, she supported it very well. No one yet suspected her imminent danger. Besides her ostensible courage in every thing, what contributed the most to entertain the illusion of the Community, was, that the oppressions which she had felt in her stomach were followed with fits of a most craving appetite; and they could not imagine that hunger and death could so nearly approach each other.

On Thursday the twentieth, Princess Louisa, went to Mass, and communicated; but had much difficulty to return from the choir; nevertheless, in the evening she still would take her recreation with the Nuns.

On Friday the twenty-first, she passed the morning as she had the day before, and omitted none of her usual exercises of piety ; but she no longer could attend, as she wished, the recreation of the Community. Ever since the tenth of the month she had formed the plan of a letter to the King which she did not write down before the twenty-first ; it was found in her pocket-book directed, "*To the King, my Lord and Nephew ; to be sent to him after my death.*" She wrote also to Madam *Adelaide* on the same day.

On Saturday the twenty-second, the eve of her death, she still took courage to get up, though she had passed a very severe night ; but her strength not being equal to her zeal, she could not go to the choir. A Nun seeing how much grieved she was to be deprived of hearing Mass and communicating, proposed to her to erect an Altar in the Infirmary, as is done at Court in favour of the persons of the Royal Family, when they are dangerously ill : "Are you not sensible," answered the humble Princess, "that you propose to me a very ill-becoming distinction ? Living or dying, I will be a simple Carmelite." On that day she still recited her whole office, and performed all her different exercises of piety. As Christmas was very near, she made all the dispositions which she thought proper, in order to enjoy the consolation of communicating on that great solemnity. Not being able to write herself to Madam *Victoire* as she had inten-

ded, she dictated a letter which she signed, and in which there still breathed the amiable cheerfulness of virtue.

Until the day before her death she continued to direct and receive with her usual goodness and affability her Religious, whether they came to ask the necessary leaves, or merely, which was done by some at almost every hour of the day, to see how she was; and she answered all of them in words of wonderful edification and meekness. Those among them who had the charge to attend her more particularly, received from her thousand testimonies of regard and gratitude. She pitied them, and repeatedly asked their pardon for giving them so much trouble. She obliged them at times, and oftener than they wished, to retire and take some rest; and notwithstanding all that, she accused herself of being a tiresome patient: upon which a Nun having observed, that it would be no easy thing to edify them by greater resignation and patience; she replied: "It is always right to judge charitably of others." As it had been perceived that she was much fatigued in her latter days by the visits of her Religious, who crowded about her, it was represented to her, that, in her actual state, she might lawfully dispense from the door being left open; she answered: "To them all, I owe myself until death; they are all comforted in seeing me; and so am I to see them all." She only desired them so to settle it among themselves, as to come only so

many together, and at successive hours. It was so natural for her to season her answers with gracious expressions of kindness, that she reproached herself for not having, in her present state, the power of testifying separately to each the whole extent of her maternal tenderness. As she had one day given too concise an answer to a Nun who asked her some leave, she said to her Infirmarian : " I am afraid I spoke to N*** very drily ; pray make my apology to her." This she did herself on a similar occasion, in these words : " I beg your pardon, my dearest, for having received you coolly this morning." The Sister astonished, could not even guess at what her Prioress meant. The fact was, that having asked her if she suffered much, the Princess had answered ; " Indeed, I do, but it will soon be over." This laconism in expressing the acuteness of her actual pain, was in the judgment of her virtue, an uncharitable answer. Whenever she was led to speak of her sufferings, her words breathed nothing but piety and resignation. If asked where her chief complaint lay : " In the head," said she ; " I could not close my eyes all night : it seemed to me that our LORD was fixing all the thorns of his crown in my head."

Her zeal for regularity which, in these last moments, she carried to an heroism, that almost might be called an excess, was to be more admired than imitated. It was a month since she had received the stroke of death : she had but one day more to live ; and yet

out of respect for religious inclosure, she had not seen her Physician but at the exterior grate of the Monastery: nor would she on the eve of death, refrain from going down to the parlour, to give him an account of her state, the danger of which was but too visibly indicated in the striking alteration of her features.

No sooner had she returned to the Infirmary, but she felt a very great oppression, which obliged her to go to bed: but though the violence of the pain did not last long, she disposed herself to receive the Last Sacraments, and sent for her Confessor. She intended to have come down to the Confessional; and, assuredly she would have done so, had her strength been adequate to her zeal for regularity. When the Confessor entered the room, she said, "Approach, Father: this is the third Prioress of this House whom you are to attend in her last moments." She had prepared her confession, and she made it as the last of her life; but with the same tranquillity, as if it had been an ordinary one. She then expressed her desire of receiving the holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction: but, deceived as well as the others, by the courage of the Princess, her Confessor, having represented to her that he did not yet see sufficient danger to give her the last rites of the Church, she desired him to consult with the Physician on the subject; observing to him, that it would be a singular consolation for her, if they concluded, that the Last

Sacraments should be administered to her." However," said she, "let the Rules be followed in every thing; I am satisfied: God will do with me as he pleases. I trust entirely in his mercies."

In the midst of her sufferings, the pious Princess enjoyed the peace of resignation, and even, at times, a sweet sentiment of joy, which she could not hide from those who approached her. Then it was she viewed without the least fear, when at her elbow, that death which, when still remote, she could not think of without terror. She spoke of dying as of a common action of life, and told one of her Sisters who still stood in need of being fortified against the weakness of fear: "Doubtless, you will be afraid of me when I am dead: but, pray, make yourself easy; I will never hurt you, or any one else." Then, coming out of a violent crisis, she said to her: "Do you not see that I am in my agony." And the Sister seeming not to think so, the Princess added, "Then give me your word that you will tell me in good time, when you see I am so:" and she was pleased on being assured that she would. In a moment, when her Confessor being by her, thinking on the Princesses her sisters, whom she had not yet informed of her danger, she said to him, "Pray assure my sisters after my death, that my tender friendship for them has always been the same; and that if I obtain mercy, I will not forget them before the ALMIGHTY."

As she could not doubt, but all her Religious were in the greatest anxiety, she sent word to them to seek their peace and comfort in God; and to put all their confidence in him alone, as she did. She would not consent that prayers should be put up for the preservation of her life, but only for the accomplishment of God's designs over her. Being told on that occasion, that the whole Community prayed without ceasing for that intention, she cried out: "They are so charitable! Oh! I carry them all in my heart; and I pray to God to be himself their support."

Throughout the whole course of her illness, Princess Louisa had not omitted reciting the least part of her office; declaring this exercise did not fatigue her sufficiently to call for a dispensation from it; she omitted it only the day before her death, and this because they had taken her breviary from her after she had said her vespers. But now that she was deprived of the consolation of paying the ALMIGHTY her usual tribute of vocal prayers, she supplied them by the affections of her heart; she ceased not to pray mentally. At seven o'clock in that evening she invited the Nuns who attended her, to recite with her the Litanies of our Blessed Lady. At eight, she inquired if the hour of strict silence had not struck: having been answered in the affirmative; "Why did you not let me know it," said she; "to be sick is not a privilege to break silence." She then

continued to occupy herself with sentiments suitable to her situation.

Sickness had not damped in the least her love of mortification; on the contrary she let no opportunity slip by of making acts of it. She was so far from seeking what might be most comfortable in her situation, that she could scarcely be prevailed upon to accept what was necessary. One of the Sisters seeing that her head had slipped on a woollen blanket, was going to pass some linen under it: "I am very well," said Princess Louisa; "would you then treat me here as a Princess?" About eleven o'clock at night, six hours before her death, she was seen sitting in an arm-chair, with her back leaning against a little box, instead of pillows, which she had refused. It was in this attitude that she was found by a Physician of the Court, whom Madam Victoire had sent her to ascertain the true state of her sickness.

As soon as this Physician had seen the Princess, he judged that she was in imminent danger; and without declaring his thoughts to her, withdrew with the Physician of the House, to settle together which way this might be broke to her. Superfluous, indeed, were these precautions; Princess Louisa was less afraid than desirous of hearing she was drawing towards her end. Accordingly; she had desired a Religious to follow the Physicians to listen to what they

should pronounce on her situation, and to give her a faithful account of it: "Provided they agree that I am in danger," said she, "that is sufficient to authorise me to communicate in Viaticum." The Physicians having declared they could not answer for her out-living the night, the Nun returned immediately, and told her that she could, when she would, and even that very evening, if she thought proper, satisfy her ardent desire of communicating. This Nun was the same from whom Princess Louisa, when in health, had obtained a promise of informing her without disguise, if ever she saw her in danger of death. Overjoyed to learn what she longed to know, she cried out: "Oh! what pleasure do you give me, and how grateful am I to you for having so faithfully kept your word! It is a service which I will never forget before GOD; if, as I do hope, he has mercy upon me." "Happy are you, my dear Mother," answered the Religious; "you are going to Heaven; and you leave us upon earth." "Yes," she replied; "I put all my trust in GOD, and I tell you that I will not forget you. But let us lose no time; prepare every thing that I may enjoy the happiness of receiving my LORD and my GOD."

Another Nun being returned from attending the Physicians, Princess Louisa said to her, "You know my real situation; now will you, then, promise me to pray for me when I am dead?" The Nun assuring her that she would do it every day of her life; the Pa-

tient replied, "This will be an excellent way of acknowledging the regard I have had for you." She promised her also not to forget her before God. Perfectly free from anxiety or trouble, she disposed herself for eternity, as for an ordinary journey. Nothing escaped her attention. Remembering then, that a young Nun, who had been her pupil, and whom she loved tenderly, had eagerly petitioned to watch by her; and that she had ordered her to retire to her cell; she sent for her back, saying: "The poor child does not think I am so ill, and as she is not well herself, were she to hear it on a sudden, it might cause some disagreeable revolution in her." And, when she saw her coming in, the Princess said to her with a cheerful voice, as if she had the most happy news to tell her: "Adieu! Seraphina, I am now going for good and all." "And, where are you going, dear Mother?" replied Seraphina, drawing near her with tears in her eyes. The Princess answered: "Far be it from you to pity me. I thought that God had reserved me yet for further trials; and behold, out of his infinite mercy, all is over. I trust he will give me his heavenly paradise. Is not this a signal blessing? No, I never could have thought that it was so sweet to die." The Sister, penetrated with the most profound grief, was advancing to embrace her good Mother for the last time; but the holy Princess, as, if she had been afraid to steal away from God the least motion of her heart, refused that token of filial tenderness. - Another

Nun, while she was doing her some little office of charity, was not able to contain within herself the sentiment of too natural an affection: Princess Louisa gave her a gentle rebuke for it, saying: "God alone; dear Sister, God alone at this moment."

In effect, she would, at her death, sacrifice to God even the most lawful, and the most virtuous sentiments, which, during her life, she had entertained in God alone. Nothing earthly could any longer make any impression upon her. She no longer allowed any thing to nature. Having been asked whether it would be any satisfaction to her, that the Princesses her sisters should be informed more exactly of her situation; she answered: "I am sensible that it would be a comfort for me to take leave of them; but the duty of a Carmelite is to pray to God for her family, without betraying an eagerness to see them." The Community were persuaded, that she would like to see in these last moments, a Superior General of the Order, in whom she had great confidence; and, in order to prevail upon her not to refuse herself that pious satisfaction, they assured her that in four-and-twenty hours he might reach Saint Denis. "But, in four-and-twenty hours," answered she, "I shall be no more." Her Sisters insisting on that proposal: "No," said she; "it is not convenient that a Theresian should occasion to her Community the expense of such a journey: besides, were he to arrive in good time, his presence could

only afford me some little consolation : and, through the grace of God, I desire none."

Her Confessor coming in at that time, she spoke to him the language of a soul that is no longer upon earth, and is absorbed in God: "Well, Father," said she to him, "what you have so often foretold me; that my terror of death would vanish on its approach, is now fully accomplished; God grants me the grace to behold it without trouble; the only desire I have to stay in this world, is to receive my Saviour." She prepared herself for that awful act of religion, by the most fervent prayers, which necessity alone, or a charitable condescension obliged her to interrupt at times. Remembering, at this moment, that she had received from the Pope a crucifix which his Holiness had blessed, and to which indulgences were annexed for the point of death; she said: "That now the time was come, and that she wished to have it." The Nun who went to fetch it, made a mistake, and brought that which the Princess had sent to her Father in his last sickness: she knew it immediately, and said: "I would like it much, but it recalls to my remembrance sentiments of too human and tender a nature for this moment: bring me the other."

A few minutes before she received the Last Sacraments, being then alone with the Nun who habitually attended her, she asked her pardon again and again for all the trou-

ble she gave her, and seeing her much afflicted, said to her: "If for you my death is a sacrifice, reflect that God requires it of you." The Nun having replied; that, She was resigned to it; the Princess expressed the greatest satisfaction; and to give her a convincing proof of it, she exhorted her to remember the advices she had often given her, and continued thus: "Always follow the whole Community; shun all kinds of particularities: when you have another Prioress, give her a candid account of your dispositions, and place your confidence in her. Adieu! I cannot say more: make haste, make haste, that I may receive the Sacraments; for it will soon be too late. O! my sweet JESUS, do not let me go out of this world without having received thee!" She herself made some dispositions respecting the ceremony of her administration, and continued her preparation in recollection and peace. From time to time she expressed the desires of her heart by fervent aspirations. She repeated three times: "*Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay my happiness any longer.*" She repeated the same in Latin: "*Veni Domine Jesu, noli tardare.*" When the Priest was coming with the holy Viaticum, she recited the Psalm *Miserere*, and the Canticle *Magnificat*, after having invited two Nuns, who had staid in the Infirmary, to join with her in prayers. The verses that made the deepest impression upon her, she repeated over and over again:

she exclaimed several times : “ *In te Domine, speravi, non confundar in eternum* : (In thee, O Lord, is my hope, let me not be confounded for ever.)

The sentiments which most strikingly appeared in her last moments, were those of confidence and joy. When she saw the Blessed Sacrament entering the room, she cried out in a pious transport : “ The happy moment is come ! O my Divine Spouse, the happy moment is come ! O ! my God ! how sweet is it to me to make you a sacrifice of my life ! She followed with heroic intrepidity all the prayers which were said for her, listening to the one and answering to the other. As the Priest was deeply affected at so edifying a sight, his speech failed him in the midst of the awful ceremony. She then, with an accent of gravity mixed with sweetness, said to him : “ *Be of good heart, Father ; take courage.* ” These few words penetrated all hearts, and drew from all eyes a flood of tears, which soon became still more abundant, when the Princess, turning to the Subprioress who was close to her, said : “ My dear Sister, I charge you to beg of the Community to forgive me all the subjects of pain I have given them, through my want of regularity, pusillanimity, weakness, and other defects.”

After she had received the Holy Viaticum, the joy of possessing the GOD of her Salvation, seemed to calm her sufferings. She

forgot her pains, and felt within herself such courage and strength as astonished her. At this instant, her piety taught her what use to make of this particular grace of GOD for the edification of those whom Divine Providence had committed to her charge : and her worthy Daughters attentive to collect and preserve every least expression of their dear Mother's tenderness, did not lose one single word of the testament which she left them at the moment of her death : " My dear Sisters," said she to them, " I think it a duty in me, as GOD gives me strength to do it, to recal now to your remembrance the different counsels which I have repeatedly given you, and to which I beseech you to pay the most serious attention. I recommend to you the greatest regularity ; and more exactitude than ever to follow the exercises and observances of the Community. Be punctual to a moment whenever called to any duty. Be faithful in no whispering, no secret conversations, no particular friendships. Cherish all your Sisters in general, without any distinction. Preserve the greatest love for our Rule and Constitutions. Do this, and you shall find rest in it." Then, in a more familiar way, she continued, and said : " I have always looked upon you all, and loved you all, as my Companions, Friends, Sisters, and Mothers ; and at this moment that I am going to leave you, I still feel that you are all that to me : but put your confidence in GOD ; he will be your support and consolation. I hope, also, that for my sake, my family will continue

to be kind to you : but, when I say, for my sake, you easily imagine that I do not aspire at being remembered ; or at least it is only for our House and Order that I wish it." She had scarcely uttered these last words, that the room resounded on all sides with sobs and groans. As for the Princess, always firm and unshaken, she recalled her Sisters to more courageous sentiments : and blaming the want of them as a weakness, she said : " Why all these tears ? to what purpose do you give way to such inordinate affliction ? Yes, I repeat it to you, it is in GOD alone that you must put all your trust ; and he will take care of you. Besides, I hope, that we shall all soon meet together in the place where I am going."

Having then given her Children these general testimonies of her tender affection, as her maternal heart solicited for one of them a particular advice, she immediately sent for her. The person having approached her bed, fell upon her knees, accused herself, and asked her pardon : Princess Louisa blessed her, and said : " I am now, my dear Sister, ready to appear before GOD : as I am at this moment, you will soon be. The earnest desire I have, that you may prepare to yourself a favourable judgment before the tribunal of the ALMIGHTY, induces me to recommend to you, for the last time, to work earnestly your sanctification ; chiefly by combating certain defects which you know." The Nun melting into tears, thanked her holy Mother,

and withdrew penetrated with gratitude for the charitable solicitude of the Princess, who thus loved even unto death.

Princess Louisa, when informed that she might communicate in Viaticum, had inquired whether she might also receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. No positive answer had then been given her; therefore, she expressed a fresh desire of receiving this Sacrament, whilst she still enjoyed the full use of her reason. Accordingly, her pious eagerness was gratified: During this second administration, she shewed the same courage and application to the prayers of the Church, as she had when she received the Holy Viaticum. To judge by the profound calmness which appeared in her countenance, during this awful ceremony, it might have been supposed, that she was not the object of it. As the habitude of her zeal rendered her attentive, even in these last moments, to the observances of the very least practices, she said to one of the Nuns who stood near her, "Sister, your veil does not hang low enough." Saint Paul like, she wished to have it in her power to hasten the moment of her dissolution: and feeling within a sufficient courage to exhort her soul to depart this world, she requested that the prayers of the agonizing should be recited for her: and, as they represented that she was not yet come to such extremity: "No matter," said she, "it will be a comfort to me to be able to join you in

these prayers : sorry should I be to lose any part of them, for I am covetous of the prayers of the Church ; yes, indeed, I am."

By this time the Physician of Madam Victoire being returned to the Infirmary, he asked Princess Louisa how she found herself : " I am completely happy, Sir," said she, " I have received my SAVIOUR ; my JESUS is within me ; I am perfectly calm : " and a few moments after, added : " I charge you, Malouet, with my farewell to my Sisters : give them my love, and relate to them what you see ; that, I die in the greatest peace. Tell them that I desire they will always be kind to this House and to our Order, and that I recommend to them our Physician."

Whilst the Princess, entirely taken up with the care of purifying her soul, seemed to forget the situation of her body, the progress of her illness was visibly increasing. They had already applied Spanish flies to her arm, but without success. The Physician proposed then the application of another topic, to which she expressed the greatest repugnance. Her pure soul, which, during her whole life, had displayed the virtue of an Angel in a mortal body, felt yet at the point of death, the exaggerated alarms of modesty. The Physician having insisted, they gave her to understand, it was for her a duty of conscience, not to neglect a remedy which might have happy effects : " It will produce no

such effect in me," answered she; "and I wish they would let me die quiet; but since they will have it so, I must not refuse to obey, nor to suffer."

Wishing to leave a pledge of her gratitude to the two Religious who had attended her more particularly during her illness, and done it with all the solicitude of the most tender charity, she said to one of them, shewing her the crucifix which she held in her hands: "I wish to leave you this crucifix." Then, addressing herself to the other; "and to you, the little black one which you know, and which you will find in a blue box; but it is on condition, that the Prioress who shall succeed me, seeing in that nothing against the spirit of poverty, will give you leave to keep what I now offer to you: for GOD forbid, that I should dispose of any thing, as my own, by way of testament." Such was the last lesson of regularity which the dying Princess gave to her Nuns; and the whole inheritance of the daughter of a King of France consisted only in two wooden crucifixes.

Continually occupied with the happiness of Heaven, she spoke again to the several Nuns who came near her, but only on the greatness of her hopes, and the joy which she felt in leaving the earth. Indeed, such consoling sentiments fail not to animate the Spouses of our LORD, when they have been faithful to their vocation; but it must be ob-

vicious to any one, what a powerful influence they must have had on the heart of her, who, being born a Princess, died a Carmelite. A moment before her death, she cried out : “ *It is now the time !* ” and a few minutes after, “ *Come, let us arise, and make haste to go to Heaven !* ” These were the last words of the holy Princess, who soon after expired ; having borne for a whole month the mortal weapon that had struck her. Her death, sweet and tranquil as the sleep of the just, was not announced by any convulsive agitation. She breathed her last in the utmost peace. It was on the twenty-third of December, 1787, at half past four o’clock in the morning, that both the Catholic Religion and the State experienced this great loss, which we may consider as the last presage and the forerunner of that deluge of Calamities, which henceforth has never ceased to overwhelm and lay waste all parts of the French Empire.

Our Readers may not be displeas'd to find here the conclusion of one of the Memorials, which have serv'd us to compose this History : “ I have seen many persons die in an edifying manner ; but, I can say, that, the death of none, has made so deep an impression upon me as hers : and, were I to live eighty years longer, I never should forget it. I was then close by her, holding before her the crucifix.

I have mentioned her last words; but, it would be out of my power to express the zeal, faith, and fervor which animated them. She lived as a Saint, and a great Saint, and she died so. It appeared to me, that, when assisting this second Theresa on her death-bed, I was beholding the death of the first. I have most sensibly felt my loss, that of our House, of the Religious State, and all the Church. But, as for her, I could not regret her for an instant. It seems to me that I see her in Heaven: and I own that her grave, where, in praying for her to comply with her former request, I also implore her own prayers and protection, is a place where I always meet with consolation, strength, light, and grace; as it has actually happened to me in several circumstances. Accordingly, I go there with the same confidence with which I always went to her when alive. There I recal to my mind the instructions and advices which that good Mother so often gave to me; and, I may say with truth, that now she is yet my model and guide in the paths of virtue. May **ALMIGHTY GOD** grant me the grace to imitate her the remainder of my life!"

This exalted idea of the holiness of Princess Louisa, and this confidence in her power with **ALMIGHTY GOD**, are not confined within the inclosure of her Monastery. Various letters, and circumstantial accounts from many parts of France, namely, from Paris, Montpellier, Beaune, Rouen, Carpentras, and Poitiers, mention several cures of maladies which were thought incurable, and declare, that they were the immediate effects of prayers addressed to the holy Carmelite. As we have not been eye-witnesses of these facts, and consequently can only answer for the probity and sincerity of the persons who relate them, we cannot tell how far they

would bear the extreme severity of the examinations and scrutiny established at Rome, to ascertain the truth of miracles: but it seems to us unquestionable, that there cannot be any temerity or indiscretion, to solicit the favours of GOD, or that it would be any ways surprising to obtain them through the intercession of her, whose whole life was a real prodigy of virtues, and whose death was a kind of martyrdom.

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