

The Saints and Servants of God.

THE LIVES
OF
ST. CATHERINE OF RICCI,

OF THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. DOMINICK;

ST. AGNES OF MONTEPULCIANO;

B. BENVENUTA OF BOJAN;

AND

B. CATHERINE OF RACONIGI,

OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINICK.

**"Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in
universo mundo."—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.***



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THE LIFE
OF THE
BLESSED BENVENUTA OF BOJAN,
OF CIVIDALE AUSTRIA, IN THE PROVINCE OF FRIULI.

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CHAPTER I.

**THE BIRTH, INFANCY, AND PIETY OF BENVENUTA.
HER SISTER MARIA. HER MORTIFIED LIFE. HER
VOW OF VIRGINITY. HER PARTICULAR DEVOTION
TO ST. DOMINIC. FATHER CONRAD, HER CON-
FESSOR.**

A PIOUS virgin was born in Cividale of Austria, in Friuli, of devout and wealthy parents, on the 4th of May, which was the day of St. Florian, and observed as the feast of our Lord's crown of thorns by the Order of Preachers. Her birth was at first hidden from her father, no one daring to tell him that it was a girl, lest he should be angry, for he had already six daughters and no son. But he charged the attendants to tell him the truth without fear, and when he heard that his wife had brought forth a girl, he answered, with a loud and joyful voice, "She is welcome, and let her be called Benvenuta," which means welcome.

From her earliest years she never knew or thought of worldly comforts, and she began to seek without intermission the company of God and the angels and saints. Sometimes one of her sisters would curl and ornament her hair, that she might go to dances and other vain amusements of girlhood, but as soon as her sisters had left the room, she would take off all the ornaments, and putting on a veil instead, go to her private place of prayer, which she had chosen at the back of the house, in a wood lying in the direction of the church of the Blessed Virgin, which stands on the summit of a very high hill. The ground, which was profusely covered with herbage all round, had become flat and hard in this spot, like a well-trodden path, by reason of her constant genuflections. and the number of fatiguing prostrations which she used to make daily. When she was prevented by the weather, or any just cause, from finishing her daily prayers, she used to retire into her bed-room which she shared with one of her sisters named Maria, who was her companion in her vow of virginity, and with the door shut she used to pray to her Father in secret; and thus passing both the day and night in contemplation, in prayer, and watching, she led a life which was more angelic than human.

From her seventh to her twelfth year, she was in the habit of saying daily one hundred Our Fathers, and the same number of Hail Marys, in honour of the Holy Trinity; she also made one hundred prostrations in honour of the nativity

of our Lord, and the same number in honour of His resurrection. She said one thousand Hail Marys every day to the Blessed Virgin, and two thousand on Saturday. Moreover, on the Annunciation, which was her favourite feast, she used to say three thousand Hail Marys, and make fifty very fatiguing prostrations. She said one hundred Our Fathers and Hail Marys every day in honour of the angels, and the same number in honour of the patriarchs, of the martyrs, of the confessors, and also of the holy virgins, besides her fasts and abstinences.

When she was twelve years old, she put on sackcloth, which she wore for six years and a half. For two years she carried a chain beneath her clothes, and she similarly wore a rope round her waist, next the skin, which, by reason of her growth was buried in the flesh, and what distressed her more than the pain it occasioned, was the impossibility of extracting it without surgical operation, for she felt the greatest repugnance to disclosing this fact. She fled to prayer, which was her ordinary refuge, and begged God to help her in such distress. Then her spirit was raised above the body, as it very often happened, and after the spirit returned to the body she saw the rope not broken in any of its parts lying on the ground before her.

She made a vow of virginity to the Blessed Virgin when she once appeared to her, and took her for her lady and mistress, and the Blessed Virgin on her part, received her for her spiritual daughter. She made a similar agreement with St.

Dominic when he also appeared to her. Therefore, having learnt the abstinences, vigils, and mortifications of the blessed Dominic, she studied with all her heart how to conform her life to his. She drank no wine for ten years and more, and concealed her abstinence from it so dexterously, that her father and family never perceived it. He frequently thought he saw her drink wine when she took none, and she very often hid her portion of it. She also abstained from meat for a long time. She spent many whole nights, particularly those of the greatest feasts, in watching ; and when she was nearly overcome by sleep, she used to put some vinegar into her eyes, to make it impossible for her to close them in sleep.

She used no bed for several years, but took a short repose on the bare ground, with a stone for a pillow, and spent the remainder of her time in contemplation and prayer.

In imitation of St. Dominic, she disciplined herself three times every night with an iron chain, but when in the course of time, her back had suffered too much from this practice, St. Dominic, who often appeared familiarly to her, said to her, in a vision, that she was to tell the state of the case to her confessor, Father Conrad, and be guided by his advice. But when she went to church the next day, with the intention of doing this, her timidity prevented her from saying anything to her confessor. St. Dominic reproved her in a second and a third vision, and told her to manifest the affair without delay to Father Conrad, and added, "You must know that it was

ordained by God that at this time you should be born, and he should enter the order of Preachers, so that by his counsels you might rule your life, and it shall prosper with you for his sake, and for yours he shall receive many blessings." Being thus compelled, she went to her confessor, and making a great effort, and shedding many tears, she told him all, and obeyed his directions. Father Conrad asked her to give him the chain, which he never returned to her, and forbade her ever again to discipline herself in a similar manner.

CHAPTER II.

HER FASTS AND HEAVENLY VISIONS. BENVENUTA FREQUENTS THE CHURCH OF ST. DOMINIC. SHE SHUNS DETRACTION. ILLUSIONS AND ASSAULTS OF THE DEVIL. HER PATIENCE, HER FORTITUDE, AND HER VICTORY.

IN her tender age, before she was obliged to keep the fasts of the church, she began to fast through the whole of Lent, and the other Lent from Martinmas to Christmas; and in some years she observed these seasons with such rigour, that she only ate on alternate days bread and water, and meal broth on the remaining ones. She kept three fast days in all the weeks of the year, and some of them on bread and water, besides observing all the fasts of the Church.

She fled from the society of other girls, and indeed of all persons ; she almost always remained at home, and most of her time was spent in the oratory in her bedroom. In the winter evenings, when her father and family amused themselves according to custom round the fire, she always refused to join in this domestic cheerfulness, and remained alone in her room to give herself to contemplation and prayer. Once when her father was by himself near the door of her room, having retired to finish the hours of the Blessed Virgin, which he was in the habit of saying daily, he heard voices within the room, as if she was conversing with other persons, and being anxious to know what she was doing, he opened her door, but he found her alone, and he said, in surprise, "Where are those persons with whom you were speaking just now?" She replied, "You can see yourself where they are." For as the door was opened, the three holy virgins, the blessed Catherine, Agnes, and Margaret, who had been conversing with her, disappeared, as her confessor said, to whom she subsequently related the event. And her father went away, silently wondering, and henceforward loved and revered her still more.

Her sister also, who slept in her room, said that sometimes she was awakened by hearing voices, as if she were talking with another person. And sometimes she saw a light shine, and said to her sister, "Benvenuta, can you see what this light is?" and Benvenuta would answer, "Go quietly to sleep, and do not think about it." The

father, who wrote this, was told by one of the servants of the house who had charge of the horses, that about the middle of the night, when he returned home with one of the horses, bringing a load of hay, as he passed through the court of the house, he saw such a strong light in the window of Benvenuta's room, that he should have thought the whole place was burning. When, however, he had laid down the hay, and put the horse in its stable, and came back from it, he could not see any light.

She went every morning to mass, and every evening to Compline, in the church of St. Dominic, which was about twice a stone's throw from her house, unless she was prevented by very bad weather or any great obstacle. When it was a festival, she anticipated the time, and went to Vespers, and she did not return home till Compline was over, for she received wonderful and great consolation during the *Salve Regina*. Therefore, when the sacristan shut the doors after Vespers, she used to retire with her sister and her most faithful friend and companion into a house near the church, that they might be able to return to it as soon as possible when the doors were reopened.

She was accustomed to remain in the church in the morning until Tierce, unless her sister, who accompanied her, was obliged by business to return sooner, and she sometimes let her sister go home on condition that she should come back about Tierce to fetch her. Her father readily permitted her to do as she wished in these mat-

ters, for he revered her for her holiness, and loved her more tenderly than any of his other daughters; nor would he ever sit down to dinner till she returned. When she was at meals with her father, she used to take meat and pretend to eat it, but she frequently hid it, and because it was her whole study to subjugate the flesh to the spirit, she daily refused her flesh, not only its desires, but the necessities of life, never satisfying her hunger, and in the midst of her penitence she always preserved a joyful and smiling countenance.

She was very far from speaking against those who were absent, nor could she bear to hear others do so in her presence, and always reproved them for it. Although she knew that many calumnies were spread against her, she never gave way to impatience or anger on that account, but she felt compassion for her detractors, and used to say with great charity and gentleness, "I am more sorry for them than for myself, for they injure themselves more than they injure me."

The enemy of mankind, seeing these and many more signs of sanctity in her, was moved to envy by her holy and happy works, and sought to overcome and deceive her by taking the form of different persons. First, as she was quite young and very beautiful, he appeared to her one day, while she was praying in her secret place in the wood, in the form of a handsome young man, and said to her, "Why do you spend your time in this way now? You will be able to do

that afterwards, so come now, and let us enjoy the pleasures of youth." When she turned away, with the intention of going to the house, he suddenly vanished, nor was he seen more.

He appeared to her a second time in a similar form when she was alone in her chamber, and said that her confessor had sent him to tell her that she was not to keep her vow of virginity; but she answered, "I should not believe you even if all preachers openly preached against me;" and she then called the maid with a loud voice, upon which he immediately disappeared.

Also when the Dominican Fathers held a provincial chapter, or when her confessor was elected prior of some convent, he occasionally appeared to her in the guise of a travelling friar, bringing her very bad reports of the chapter and of Father Conrad, her confessor. He used to say that there had been great divisions and disturbances, and even blows, and many wounds in the chapter; or that her confessor had run away with a woman and left the order; or that he was in great ignominy. When she said, "Where is your companion?" and he replied, "I left him at the door," then she recognized the enemy, and reproached him for having dared to assume the habit of such a great order, and adjured him by Jesus Christ to tell her the truth of all these matters, to which he answered, that they were all falsehoods, and that he had said them on purpose to fill her with sadness and grief.

He likewise came into her room once in the middle of the night, while her sister slept and

she prayed, in the form of a dog, snuffing and running restlessly about the room. She drove him away as she would a common dog, but after a little time he returned, showing the same uneasiness. When this had been repeated several times, she said, "What dog is this that will not leave us in peace?" He answered, "You know who I am;" and she said, "Since you can speak, you are not one of our dogs." He loaded her with reproaches and threats, to which she replied, "I am not afraid of you, you may do your worst;" but he said, "If he, or if they who are by you were not here, I should soon have my will." And after many more threats on his part, and confounding reproofs on hers, she dismissed him, telling him to go away with that malediction which God laid upon him and his, when He banished them from heaven to eternal pain and misery. He retired murmuring and howling; for after he had begun to speak with her he did not dare to go away till she dismissed him.

Another night he appeared to her three times in the form of a cat running about the room, and when she asked what this cat who thus disturbed her was, he answered with menaces and threats in a human voice, and withdrew grumbling when she dismissed him after a dispute with him.

He also took the shape of a serpent twice. One day when she was in the wood, and her sister was at a little distance from her, she saw a great serpent advancing towards her, which disappeared in some hole, when she called out to her sister to help her. And behold the same

night he appeared to her in his own hideous form, and said, "Vile woman, what are you doing?" She answered that she was doing and intended to do what pleased God; and he said, "Still I revenged myself upon you yesterday." She said, "How did you revenge yourself?" and he answered, "When you were terrified yesterday in the wood, and called to your sister to help you." She said, "Was that you who ran at me yesterday?" and he said, "It was." Then she said, "I do not fear in whatever shape I see you."

He appeared to her again in the shape of a serpent one night when she had laid down in her bed, and crawled by degrees under the clothes. She well knew what it was, and waited patiently till he had brought up his whole length into the bed. The monster was so cold that she could hardly wait, and throwing back the clothes quickly, she seized him with one hand by the middle and threw him with such force against the wall, that, judging by the noise it made, he would have been shattered. But he raised his head immediately, and endeavoured to terrify her by threats as he returned towards her. But he could not come near her, and she began to confound him with bitter words, saying that it was by the just judgment of God that he, who was at first an angel, should put on the likeness of a foul and abominable animal. Thus dismissed he retired in confusion, making a great noise.

At two different times while she was praying at night, he threw stones at her through the

windows of her room, and after a little while came in to ask for the stones. She said, "I have nothing of yours," and asked where he had taken those stones from, and he said that one was from the torrent Natissa, which flows past the city, and the other was from the Friars' limekiln, adding, "I went there because I wished to revenge myself on your base priest, (meaning her confessor,) and could not do it while you were praying for him."

He sometimes put on a most terrific aspect, with flaming eyes, with long tusks like a boar, moving his jaws and foaming at the mouth. Still, although she was very weak in bodily strength, she resisted him, showing great constancy in her words and answers. Wherefore, that wicked one once said, "How is it that when you seem nearly dead, and cannot speak, you fatigue me so much that I cannot answer you?"

Moreover, whenever power was given to afflict her person, he did so cruelly and in many ways, sometimes dragging her along the ground so violently, that she spit blood the next morning. Sometimes she was beaten by him so hard in the night, that the marks of the blows might be seen on her face and hands the following day. Sometimes he raised her from the ground, then threw her down with such impetus that her head-dress flew to a distance. Once when she strove most vigorously with him, strengthened by God's help, she raised herself up and cast him down on the ground before her, then putting one foot on his neck, she began to revile

him, and by her weight prevented him from getting away, though he continually cried out that she must let him go, for she had confounded him too much, and that he should be utterly ashamed of appearing before his companions. At last, when she chose to release him, she sent him away with that malediction with which God cursed him and his companions in the beginning. He departed, making such murmurs and such a loud noise, that if they had fallen upon the ears of others as they did on those of Benvenuta, they would have been heard to the distance of a mile. Benvenuta did this in imitation of St. Margaret, whose feast it happened to be, as her confessor had instructed her. The evil spirits frequently molested her in other ways, which have escaped the memory of him who wrote these things.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEAVENLY CONSOLATIONS WHICH WERE BROUGHT TO HER BY THE SPIRITS OF THE BLESSED. SHE SUFFERS FROM NUMBNESS AND TREMOR IN HER LIMBS, AND DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING. HER UNWEARIED PATIENCE. SHE MAKES A VOW TO GOD IN HONOUR OF ST. DOMINIC, AND RECOVERS HER HEALTH.

BECAUSE in these apparitions and combats of the devils the holy Benvenuta was not a little afflicted in soul as well as in body, when her troubles were ended Christ communicated to her the greatest consolations, that that saying of the Apostle might be verified in her: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us; so also by Christ doth our comfort abound;"* for immediately after the assaults of the devil, different saints or angels appeared to her; sometimes the Blessed Virgin, sometimes angels, and sometimes many of the saints comforted and consoled her, praising her for having fought bravely, and telling her that God permitted these trials for the increase of her merits, and the greater glory of her reward, and that at some future time these things would be made manifest. Thus we read of our Blessed Saviour, that after

* Ep. Corinth ii. 1,

His victory over the temptations of the devil, the angels came and ministered to Him.

These temptations and struggles, joined to her fasts and vigils, prostrations and prayers, had so worn out her strength that she became extremely weak, and contracted many illnesses, yet she never left off her accustomed prayers or visits to the church, or her other works of devotion ; so that at length she was not able to move from one place to another without the help of others, and this continued for about five years.

During this period she was unable to retain any food, and lived upon water only. Her hands were affected all the last four years of it with a violent tremor, and at last she became so ill that she could not breathe in a reclining posture, so a seat was prepared for her, in which she sat day and night for some years. And by continually remaining in the same position the skin wore away, and her flesh adhered to her clothes, so that they could not be taken off without pulling it off, and much effusion of blood. But in spite of all these sufferings she never uttered a murmur or one impatient word, but giving thanks in all things, she humbly prayed God to increase her pain according to His good pleasure. And although she could not move her body, her spirit was strongly moved by the holy desires of her will. For she longed to be with her body, infirm as it was, in the church of the Blessed Dominic, where she had received great and wonderful spiritual consolations at the mass and the Salve Regina, and in some of the

great solemnities of the year. Her sister, who was anxious to please her in all things, found a maid who was strong enough to carry her to church once a week. But as soon as she found an opportunity, at the end of two years, the maid went away, and as no one else could carry her to the church, Benvenuta was greatly grieved, and begged with tears that some one might be found who could satisfy her desire. Her sister hired several women for this purpose, but after a few times they became tired, nor could they be induced by money or by entreaties to undertake this task. Her sister Maria, seeing her sorrow, offered to do it herself, and being naturally strong, although she never drank wine, and suffered from a quartan fever in the evening, carried her at least once a week to church. And though many persons in the neighbourhood ridiculed her for doing it, for she carried Benvenuta lying upon her back, and her parents were not a little ashamed of the appearance of it, still neither she who was moved by the great love she bore her sister to carry her, nor she who was carried to satisfy her pious longings, desisted from the practice.

But Benvenuta, pitying her sister's labours, and desirous of preserving her from evil tongues, turned to God with devotion and prayer, seeking counsel and assistance from Him. And the Lord put it into her heart to make a vow to St. Dominic, promising that if she was cured by his prayers and merits she would visit his sepulchre as soon as possible. When she communicated

her purpose to her brother, a noble young man, and very pious, although he followed the military profession, and to her sister, who was a devout virgin, and enquired whether they would accompany her to Bologna to St. Dominic's shrine, if her vow was granted, her brother replied, "Sister, I will not only say to Bologna, but I am ready to accompany you even to Rome if you are cured." Her sister also consented with joy and devotion. Two pious sisters, one unmarried and the other a widow, belonging to a good family of Cividale were present, and they both promised to go also, if the vow should be successful, which they by no means anticipated.

After she had arranged these matters, and repeatedly poured forth the above prayer, the feast of the Annunciation, which she desired, and to which she had a particular devotion, arrived. Early in the morning she set herself to contemplate the joys of such a great day. And while she joyfully reposed in the sweetness of this meditation, her spirit was suddenly taken up to heaven, and she saw there a palace of unimaginable light, ornamented with gold, and gems, and indescribable riches. And our Lord Jesus Christ came forth in pontifical robes, with a deacon and sub-deacon, and two acolytes in their respective vestments. The Blessed Virgin crowned with her diadem, and accompanied by the choir of virgins, came to meet the Lord, and after making an inclination they took their places there. Then followed all the saints in their orders, who, after making a reverence to the Lord, went to their

appointed places. The Apostles began the introit *Rorate cœli*, and the harmony was taken up by all the saints. When the mass had proceeded as far as the purification of the chalice, the Blessed Virgin sent St. Agnes to the spirit of Benvenuta, who said, smiling, that she must now please to retire, for she had seen enough. But the spirit answered that she would on no account retire; so the message was repeated twice, and the spirit made the same answer, until the Blessed Virgin sent a third time, saying, "Let her go in peace, for to-day I will visit her in her own house;" and the spirit immediately returned to the body. And behold, the consolation of all the afflicted, the most holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, the Queen of heaven, and the Blessed Dominic in the habit of his order, stood by the side of her bed. This Queen said to her, "God be praised, my daughter;" and Benvenuta, at once amazed and rejoiced, answered, "O Lady, who are you?" and the Queen said, "I am the Mother of God, to whom you have so often prayed;" and to which the girl replied, "You are welcome, my dearest Lady." After a little more conversation the Blessed Virgin continued, "It has pleased my Son to-day, through the merits and prayers of this thy father, Dominic, to save your soul and body, and when you shall have received your health, He wills you to make it manifest to others that by his intercession you were cured." After these words and many others, which she would only reveal to her confessor, the prior of Cividale, under the seal of confession, that he

disclose it to no one during her lifetime, the Queen returned to heaven with her companion. The morning being now advanced, Benvenuta caused herself to be carried to the church of the Friars Preachers which was dedicated to St. Dominic, where, after having heard mass, she received holy communion, and while she was making her thanksgiving, the glorious Father St. Dominic stood before her, and taking her by the hand, said, "Rise up, my daughter." At the sound of his voice she immediately rose, and felt her contracted limbs straightened without any pain, her trembling hands ceased to shake, and all her hidden maladies vanished at the same time, and her angelic face resumed its usual expression. Thus the Blessed Father Dominic conducted her into the choir, and in spite of the prohibitions of the sacristan, her sister, the two sisters who had joined in her vow, and many other women followed her, being struck with astonishment at seeing her walk and enter the choir contrary to custom, but not seeing him who led her there. When the Blessed Father had brought her before the high altar, which was consecrated to him, he retired behind the altar and she returned into the church. As soon as her thanksgiving was over she rose from her knees in perfect health, and refused all assistance from the women who, ignorant of the miracle, wished to help her, saying that she was freed from all her illnesses; and indeed her steady hands and her walking alone sufficiently proved what she said. Thus without any help she left

the choir, and after a visit of thanks to the altar of the Blessed Virgin, she returned to that of St. Dominic. The fathers who had assembled wondering at the miracle, wished to know if she was also cured of her inability to take food, and brought her some rice and milk of almonds, of which she ate a sufficient quantity, and felt strengthened by it. Lastly, she who had been carried to the church ailing and contracted, walked back to her house without a stick and without the assistance of any one.

CHAPTER IV.

SHE ACCOMPLISHES HER VOW. HER JOURNEY TO VENICE AND PADUA, WHERE SHE MEETS HER CONFESSOR, FATHER CONRAD, WITH FATHER JAMES HER BROTHER, AND HER RETURN TO ST. DOMINIC'S SEPULCHRE. HER MANNER OF LIVING WITH THE DOMINICAN NUNS IN CIVIDALE. SHE IS AGAIN ATTACKED BY THE EVIL SPIRITS, AND SEES HEAVENLY VISIONS.

AFTER a few days, mindful of her vow, and grateful for the favours she had received, she left her native town with her brother and sister, and the devout women, to go to Bologna, to visit the shrine of the blessed Father St. Dominic, telling every one, as she had been commanded to do, that she was cured by his merits and prayers. While at Venice they decided to go by the way of

Chiusi to Bologna, but after they had set out on this road they changed their intention, and went through Padua, and this happened by Divine disposition, for Benvenuta's confessor, the prior of Cividale, and her own brother, also a friar of the order of Preachers, arrived at Padua at the same time on their return from the court of Rome. They were filled with the greatest astonishment on meeting Benvenuta and her companions, for when they had taken leave of her at Cividale, she was so ill that they expected rather to find her dead than alive when they came home. She said, joyfully, "Behold, I am cured ; see my face and hands, that it is I myself !" The prior made her relate the miracle in due order to him privately, for she had not before told the mode of the miracle to any one, but simply said, that the blessed Dominic had cured her. The Prior, however, enjoined her to make known the miracle and all its circumstances to whoever should inquire about it, as the Blessed Virgin had told her to do. He then imperatively commanded her, in virtue of the obedience she owed him as her spiritual father, to give him an account of her past life, and the graces which God had granted to her in it. For he saw by the late stupendous miracle, and the holiness of her life, of which he was not altogether ignorant, how great her merit must be before God.

Thus compelled, with great reluctance, and after having given her a promise not to reveal them to any one during her lifetime, she informed him of many great and wonderful things. She

spoke of the austere life which she had led from her childhood, of how many and what great combats she had had with the evil spirits, the visits she had received from different saints, and their conversations with her, and the way and the number of times in which she was rapt in spirit, and saw great wonders of God, both in heaven and in other places.

The pilgrims after that continued their journey to Bologna, and accomplished their vow with much consolation; nor was this to be wondered at, for, as the Blessed Virgin had promised, St. Dominic accompanied Benvenuta both going and returning. As they passed through Venice, she devoutly visited the church of the Friars Preachers, where, in presence of the lector, many of the fathers, and a great number of ladies, she was asked to relate the history of the miracle. Fearing lest this might be a mark of vanity, she refused, alleging that they might hear everything from her confessor, to whom she had related it, and who was then present. At last, overcome by the importunity of the fathers, and the ladies who were there, she recounted in order the above-mentioned miracle, omitting only the being raised to heaven, which she afterwards confided to her brother, Father James. Finally, she returned to her own home, where she lived in perfect health for some years.

But she did not bear this state of things with patience, and she began to weaken her body with fasts, watchings, and other mortifications, for she always longed to suffer something for Christ, who

had suffered so much for her, and to carry about the mortification of Christ ever in her flesh. So weak did she again become, that she could scarcely go to church, without the help of one of her sisters, and this she never failed to do morning and evening.

The above-mentioned miracle had brought her into such esteem with the nuns of our order who lived in Cividale, and with the fathers who had the direction of them, that they gave her leave to go and stay with them at her pleasure; for her wonderful and most holy manner of living consoled and greatly edified the sisters. Once while she resided there, she was attacked by a fever, and some of the sisters who loved her the most, asked, as a favour, that they might go and live in the adjoining house where she was, to console and be ever ready to assist her. The principal of these was sister Margaret, who was noble by birth, and still more noble by her humility. While Benvenuta was ill, she never took off her clothes at night, nor would she have a bed for herself, but when she allowed herself a little repose, she sat on a board, and laid her head on the patient's bed.

Here the evil spirit, who had formerly assaulted Benvenuta, came to the room in which the nuns and she were sleeping, and assailed them with blows and threats, and even tried to crush Sister Margaret by pressing heavily upon her shoulders, but she adjured him with the following words: "Accursed spirit, I adjure you, by the Father, by the Son, by the Holy Ghost, and by the merits of

this holy person, that you leave me in peace." He left her, making a loud noise, as if some heavy weight had fallen on the floor, and renewed the attack a second and third time, but she always defended herself with the same words. At length he went under the boards, on which their beds were made, and endeavoured to annoy them by raging and murmuring, as if a dog or a bear were underneath gnashing its teeth and tearing the bed clothes. When he departed, he made such a horrible sound, that it is doubtful if there is anything in nature that could be compared to it.

At other times when the windows were so well fastened, that they could not be opened by any one from without, the devil opened them and threw a great stone into the midst of the sisters. Likewise when the house door was shut up, he frightened them by knocking on the iron outside, and when one of the sisters went down with the intention of bolting it more securely, so hard a blow was struck from without, that the bolt flew off the door. Also once sister Margaret found her strong girdle cut in two by an unseen hand.

In these and similar ways did he annoy them for many days, but Benvenuta often said, with a smile, to encourage them, "Be easy, and do not be the least afraid, for he cannot do you any harm."

One night when sister Margaret was asleep in Benvenuta's room, alone with her, while she was occupied in prayer, Benvenuta suddenly began to address some one, saying, "How dared you come up here? Depart at once without delay," and

using other terms of reproach. Sister Margaret was awakened by these words, and much alarmed ; but after an hour had elapsed, and she had fallen asleep again, she was awakened by hearing Benvenuta conversing with some other person. She heard both their voices, but although she did not understand their words, the sweetness of their tones affected and consoled her very sensibly. She enquired of Benvenuta early in the morning with whom she had been speaking at night, but Benvenuta merely smiled, and said that she must forget those words.

Her sister Maria also related of Benvenuta that when they inhabited the same apartment, and she slept, but Benvenuta prayed, she was frequently awakened by hearing Benvenuta speaking to some other person, and sometimes she understood Benvenuta's words, but not those of her companion ; and sometimes she heard expressions of gratitude and humility, as, "I thank you, my lady, for I am not worthy of so great a favour ;" and "Suffer me to go with you." Sometimes she named this sister Maria. Maria also at times saw a great light in the room, and she would say, "Take care, Benvenuta, what can this light be ?" and the answer was, "Go to sleep, and do not think about it."

Once when the two sisters were in the open court in their father's house, at a late hour on a clear night, when a number of stars were visible, Benvenuta began to speak to her sister of the beauty of the stars and of God's heavenly works. And, behold, the sky opened above them, and

gazing through this portal of heaven, they saw a glory and a light which mortal tongue cannot express, and so much light fell on the place they were in, that the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, seeing a dazzling light enter through the windows and all the fissures, were greatly disturbed and amazed, for the light shone for the space of an hour.

CHAPTER V.

THE MIRACLE WORKED BY GOD IN THAT MONASTERY IN ANSWER TO THE PRAYERS OF BENVENUTA. SHE IS REFRESHED WITH MIRACULOUS FOOD BY THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL, WHICH WAS RELATED FROM THE PULPIT AFTER HER DEATH, BY FATHER CONRAD, HER CONFESSOR.

BEFORE Benvenuta's illness, while she lived with the nuns of the monastery De Cella, she spent the night after the feast of the blessed Michael in prayer, while the sisters who were with her slept. Sister Margaret, however, watched and prayed with her, and she saw that when Benvenuta was prostrate on the ground, her spirit went into a rapture, which inspired Sister Margaret with much joy and devotion. After more than an hour, she perceived by the sighs which Benvenuta used to emit at such times, that her spirit had returned to her body. When she rose from the ground she complained to Sister Margaret, that

she was very thirsty, and the other offered to bring her either water or wine, but Benvenuta said, "I would not drink wine at this hour, and I do not wish you to go to the well to fetch some water now." And though Sister Margaret readily offered to go to the well, saying that she was not afraid of going there in her service, Benvenuta refused to allow her. She then earnestly entreated her to take off her gown and rest her head on the bed for a short time, to which Benvenuta, overcome by her importunity, consented. Then Sister Margaret, moved by a vehement impulse of devotion, bent over her and kissed her face, and such sweetness flowed into her soul from that touch and breath, that all the consolations of this life seemed to her unworthy to be compared to it. She could hardly believe that the joy of beatitude was greater than that joy and consolation, which made her soul wish to leave the body. It became a pain instead of a rest to her, to eat, to drink, to sleep, or to partake of any of the comforts of this life. Her eyes became rivers of sweet tears, and her body was filled with a great and unusual heat, which was agreeable and comforting, instead of producing pain or thirst, and there were no exterior signs of it, and this state of consolation lasted for fifteen days and more. Whenever she approached near to Benvenuta, her joy increased. The writer of the manuscript adds, that although the passing of time diminished the consolation which she felt at first, much still remains, and it is thought she will retain it to the end of her life, for she experiences greater sweetness in contem-

plation and prayer, and all that relates to devotion, than she did formerly.

Sister Margaret was subject for many years to an illness every winter, which began on the feast of St. Andrew, and lasted till after Easter. During this time she frequently lost the power of speech, and could only moan like an animal, with such signs of pain that it moved to compassion all who saw her. Once, in Benvenuta's presence, she was seized with this disease, and from the violence of the pain, she threw herself on a couch which was near, and Benvenuta, filled with pity, did the same on the other side of the room, and began to pray. And in a short time Sister Margaret rose from the couch without pain or any other symptom of her illness, which never troubled her from that hour, though the consultations of physicians, and the many remedies she had tried, had never been able to give her any relief.

Sister Bartolota was afflicted with the same malady for many years, until one day she was attacked by it in Benvenuta's presence, and the prioress entreated Benvenuta to have compassion on her and to help her. She took the sufferer's hands, and placed them in those of Benvenuta, who, raising her eyes, looked up to heaven, and the sister was freed at once and for ever from this disease.

At one time Benvenuta was ill, and Sister Margaret waited on her, although she was herself so unwell, that from her head to her feet, there was no part of her frame that had not its peculiar ailment, but the great love and respect which she

felt for Benvenuta, caused her to serve with joy and devotion in spite of this. When she was washing the patient's feet, she suddenly felt herself restored to health. But she perceived that all her complaints had been transferred to Benvenuta, and she exclaimed in great grief, "What have you done! Have you taken my illness to yourself? I will not allow this exchange; restore my disease to me." She continued in the same strain with great warmth, but her disease did not return to her, and then, almost angrily, she threw at Benvenuta the covering which she was going to put on her feet, and went away to a little distance. Benvenuta called her back several times, but she refused to come unless her illness was restored, until Benvenuta's importunity overcame her reluctance, and she returned to her side. Then Benvenuta said, "You must know, Sister Margaret, that you have sinned, and you have displeased God and St. Dominic;" to which Margaret replied, "I beg you to pray God to pardon me, and to punish me as He wills, for I am ready to suffer anything." And, behold, the disease again left Benvenuta and again attacked Sister Margaret, in a much severer form, so that she remained in bed all the following night in great suffering. Benvenuta said to the other nuns who had remained with her, "Sister Margaret has had a bad night."

The same Sister Margaret had a natural defect which she had inherited from her father, of not being able to eat cheese, or any dish which was made with cheese. Even if her food was touched

with a spoon which had been put into any dish containing the smallest portion of cheese, she was unable to eat it, and if she forced herself to eat it, it made her sick. Benvenuta noticed this defect, and once when they were dining together, she said, "Why do you not eat cheese, Sister Margaret?" She answered, "I cannot do it, which annoys me. But I have such confidence in you, that if you will help me, I shall be freed from this weakness." Benvenuta then took up a piece of cheese, and making the sign of the cross over it, gave it to Sister Margaret, saying, "Eat boldly," and she did so with relish, and never after found any difficulty in it.

There was in the same convent a young sister of the age of twelve, of whose name the initial L, which probably stood for Lucia, has been alone preserved. The eyes of this sister began to grow dim and were covered by a film like a spider's web, so that she only saw in a confused manner, as if she were looking through a thick linen cloth. She heard that Benvenuta's merits and prayers had restored many to health, and she went to her, and kneeling down laid her head in her lap, and begged with great earnestness and with many tears that her sight might be restored by her prayers. She continued to do this for a long time, and Benvenuta, who could not send her away because her head was in her lap, at length said, "Rise in peace." Then her eyes, which were dim, again appeared bright, and she saw everything distinctly, and the sisters sang the Te Deum in choir for this miracle. She was quite

well all the remainder of the day, but some one suggested to her that she ought not to believe that she had been cured by Benvenuta's merits; and she began to lend faith to this suggestion, whereupon her former blindness immediately returned. This circumstance was not hidden from Benvenuta, so she called the young girl on the following day, and said, "How are you, Sister Lucia." She was too much ashamed to answer, so Benvenuta pursued, "It has been done to you according to your faith." Then Sister Lucia fell at her feet, and begged her to have mercy on her still, nor would she be separated from her. So Benvenuta sent for a psalter and placed it open before her, telling her to read it. She answered, "I cannot, because it is not your wish that I should be able to read it." Benvenuta placed her hand on the first letters of a psalm, and when she took it off she told her to read it. And Sister Lucia read aloud without any difficulty the psalm that had been covered by her hand, which was the psalm "Voce mea." But when she turned over the pages she found that she could not see anything else, so she left Benvenuta, saying, "I cannot read, because you do not wish that I should be able." The next morning, however, when she rose early to matins, she read them for herself, and saw clearly all the remainder of her life. But Benvenuta could not see all the next day, as she herself testified, that is, for as long a time as Sister Lucia had persevered in her incredulity.

There was a nun named Aicha in the same

convent, who belouged to the noble family of Strafolto, who was afflicted by a violent fever, accompanied by such a bad sore throat, that for some days she was unable to swallow either food, broth, or water, or any liquid. The physician who attended her despaired of her recovery, and advised that she should receive Extreme Unction. In the meantime St. Dominic appeared to Benvenuta who was in her father's house, and said to her, "Go immediately to the dwelling of our sisters at the Cella, and cure Sister Aicha, who is now near to death; but do nothing for her until she has received Extreme Unction." Benvenuta set out in haste for the convent of Cella, accompanied by one of her neighbours, for her sister refused to go with her. The door was opened to her without delay, and she reached the bedside of the sick sister after this sacrament had been administered to her. The patient was much comforted at the sight of her, for she had great confidence in her merits, and she said, "I have great hopes that if you will give me with your hand some liquid, of which I am in great want; after you have blessed and tasted it, I shall be able to drink it." Benvenuta did everything that the sick sister required, and she drunk the draught without any difficulty, and not only was she able to eat, but she immediately became well, and stronger than she had been before her illness. She had formerly not been able to take milk and certain fruits without their giving her great pain, but from that time she ate them with ease and was benefited by them. When the doctor came

the next day, she walked joyously and easily to meet him, and when he saw her thus he fortified himself with the sign of the cross, saying, "That such a change could only have been effected by divine grace, for it was beyond the power of nature;" and went away astonished and edified. These wonders of healing, and many others which it would take too long to relate, did our Lord Jesus Christ work through Benvenuta in that convent of our sisters, to which all the oldest, most prudent, and pious nuns bore witness.

These miracles were not the only ones which our Lord worked for the Bléssed Benvenuta, for He had done greater things for her before she came to live with the sisters. At the beginning of her five years' illness, a beautiful youth appeared to her one day at the ninth hour, bringing a splendid and shining pyx wrapped in linen of the purest white. He took out the contents of the pyx and placed them in Benvenuta's mouth, and then retired in silence. The tongue of man could never describe the sweetness and consolation which that food imparted to her. At length she began to muse on the circumstance, and to wonder why he, whom she knew to be a messenger of God, had not made himself known, and why he had said nothing from God to her. She therefore prayed with much fervour that He would send the same messenger once more, and that he might tell her who he was. And behold the next day at the same hour this messenger came as before, and said, after he had saluted her, that it was the will of God that he should

come in silence the first time, in order that she might pray as she had done, and that he should manifest his name in answer to her prayer. Then he said, "I am that messenger who was sent by the Son to His Virgin Mother, and by the Mother to the Son; I am the angel Gabriel." After he had given her the same food as the preceding day, he departed. This action was repeated daily for five years, until the Feast of the Annunciation, when, as we have related, she was miraculously cured. But after she had eaten earthly food, namely, the rice which they gave her, the angel never again brought her food, as the heavenly manna ceased to rain upon the children of Israel after they partook of the fruits of the land of promise.

This great favour was related to her confessor, the prior of Verona, by Benvenuta, as he compelled her to do so. And by his orders she confided it to a lady named Jacobina, one of her faithful friends and confidant; but she told it to both under the seal of confession, so that they should not reveal it to any one during her lifetime. She confided to them with the same secrecy many more most wonderful favours, and they kept their promise, and concealed them from all as long as she lived.

When she departed this life on the 30th of October, in the year 1292, her confessor, Father Conrad, prior of Verona, related this miracle in his sermon on the following Sunday, in our church in Cividale, to a large concourse of people, who, having had a great devotion to her

while she lived, had assembled to hear this sermon. Their devotion is much greater since her death.

CHAPTER VI.

IN ANSWER TO HER PRAYERS GOD DELIVERS FROM PURGATORY THE SOULS OF HER BROTHER, WHO WAS KILLED, OF THE BROTHER OF FATHER CONRAD, OF HER FATHER, OF THE ABBOT OF ALOSA, AND OF OTHER PERSONS. THE SISTER OF BENVENUTA. SOME REVELATIONS MADE TO HER BY JESUS CHRIST, AND THE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD.

At the very hour in which it took place she told how her brother, who had been killed in a disturbance a short time before, was delivered from Purgatory by her merits and prayers.

The above-mentioned prior of Verona had also a brother in the world, a virtuous youth, who went to a certain festival with a party of friends. As it frequently happened at that period, a violent altercation arose among some of the guests, and the youth was severely wounded in the strife, but he defended himself valiantly and killed one of his adversaries; he, however, did not die at once, but was carried home, where the combatants forgave their injuries and made peace with each other, and he departed this life with signs of great piety after receiving the sacraments of the Church. The prior, seeing the

mode of his brother's death, and being aware, as Benvenuta's confessor, how great her merits were in the eyes of God, and how familiar she was with Christ, with the Blessed Virgin, and the other saints, urged her to intercede with God for the soul of his brother, which he believed to be suffering grievously in the pains of Purgatory. She excused herself, humbly saying that his prayers would be far more efficacious, but she was overcome by the prior's earnestness and importunity, and promised to do her utmost for his brother's soul. And not long after she had commenced praying for him, the dead man appeared to her one night when she was at her devotions, clothed in light, and kneeling down before her thanked her, saying that he was exempted by her merits and prayers from the great sufferings which he was to have endured for a long time, and that freed by them he was going to the kingdom of glory; and having thus spoken he disappeared.

She also liberated her own father who loved her as tenderly as she loved him. His name was Conrad of Bojano, he was a wise and eloquent man, well versed in business, and on that account was made counsellor and the judge of all worldly questions and business, which were not decided by a written law, but were discussed before the Lord Patriarch of Aquileia, and settled according to the customs of the country. When he found that his hour was come, he arranged his affairs with care, and divided his property equitably among his heirs,

and fortified by the sacraments of the Church, departed this life in peace. And since he had the management of many affairs of great importance, he stood in need of many suffrages, and his pious daughter Benvenuta prayed unweariedly every day for God's mercy for his soul. Some years had elapsed since his death, when he appeared to Benvenuta in a pitiable guise, asking for more assistance. Benvenuta could not be consoled, so great was her compassion, and thenceforward she interceded by every possible interior and exterior mortification for him, and gave him besides before God all the merits she had gained in the course of her life, that he might be freed from his misery. And after a little time, on the Feast of our Lord's Ascension, the father, surrounded by intense light, appeared to his daughter, to thank her for her help, blessing the day in which she was born, and announcing to her that by her merits he was ascending to glory. When the next anniversary of his death came round, a widowed sister of Benvenuta's came to see her, complaining that she could not afford to celebrate the anniversary of her father's death as she wished to do. Benvenuta replied, "However, you need not be uneasy about our father, because I am certain that he is in no need of our help." Her sister inquired how she knew this, but Benvenuta would not tell her for fear of vain-glory, till at length, conquered by her importunity, she confided the above-mentioned apparition to her, under solemn secrecy. But her sister broke her promise, and

revealed it with secrecy to another sister, a Benedictine nun, and neither was she faithful to her engagement, for she confided it in a similar manner to several persons. When this came to Benvenuta's ears, she was much distressed, and severely reproved her sister, to whom she had first related the circumstance, nor would she ever again confide a secret to her.

Not only these, but also other persons did her prayers and merits deliver from Purgatory during her lifetime, namely, the husband of her widowed sister, and the abbot of Mosa, who had died in the Roman court, and a nun, a native of Cividale. After they were liberated from their pains they all appeared to her in brightness, humbly and devoutly giving thanks to God and to herself for so great a favour, and after this they ascended with great joy to the kingdom of the blessed. All these things were related by Benvenuta before her death under the seal of confession, and to her faithful friend and confidant Jacobina, thus binding them to reveal them to no one as long as she lived. They were both faithful to this promise.

She was favoured by wonderful and unheard-of revelations, at times when her spirit was in the body, and at times when it was raised above it, for she was very often rapt in spirit. Sometimes revelations were made to her by Christ while her spirit remained in the body, sometimes by the Blessed Virgin, or by Christ and the Blessed Virgin together, and sometimes by St. Dominic.

Thus Christ manifested Himself to her once in the church of St. Stephen, which was close to her house, and where she used some time of the day to say the prayers she had not time to finish in the church of the Blessed Dominic. Whenever the rain or any other impediment prevented her from going to St. Dominic's, she was accustomed to pray in this church, which is well fitted for pious retirement, being far from the houses and traffic of men, and therefore very quiet. Here she saw a little boy of most sanctified beauty, and with a most joyful aspect. Benvenuta called him to her and began to amuse him with pious words. Among other things she said to him, "Have you a mother?" to which he replied, "Have you a mother?" and she said, "No, I have none," for her mother had recently died. But he said, "I have indeed a mother." She enquired, "Do you know the Hail Mary?" and he answered, "Do you know it too?" She said that she knew it, and the child said, "Now will you say it." She began, "Hail! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."—At this last word the Child said, "and I am He," and immediately disappeared.

The Lord Jesus Christ manifested Himself again to Benvenuta in the year in which she died, on the Feast of the Resurrection. During that Holy Week Benvenuta had prepared herself as well as she could, by vigils, prayers, and tears, and other devout works, to celebrate the coming mysteries of our salvation; and one of her peti-

tions had been that the Lord would show her the manner and the form of His appearance to Mary Magdalen. And so while she was praying in her chamber early in the morning of Easter, as she had prayed, the Lord appeared to her. She received Him with as many thanks and as much humility as she was able to command, and then the Lord said to her, "Go to the church and fulfil your duties there, and when you return home I will appear to you again." When she reached the church, one of the fathers, who was the confessor, came from the sacristy to celebrate his mass at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and to give communion to several persons, and she saw that the Blessed Virgin accompanied him. When he mounted the steps of the altar the Blessed Virgin rose above the altar, and remained there until the end of the mass. And when the priest gave communion, the Blessed Virgin humbly made an inclination to each of the communicants. Afterwards when the priest, according to the custom of the time, offered a chalice with unconsecrated wine to all who had received Holy Communion, as soon as it was Benvenuta's turn the Blessed Virgin descended from the altar, and taking hold of the opposite side of the chalice held it out for her to drink some of the wine. When the priest retired from the altar to the sacristy Benvenuta saw the Blessed Virgin follow him into it.

As soon as she returned home the Lord again appeared to her according to His promise. She threw herself at His feet with many humble

thanks, weeping incessantly, and the Lord said to her, "Why dost thou weep so much? Wouldst thou be another Magdalen? Do not weep any more, for a long time has passed since these things which I have shown thee happened."

She had many great and beautiful revelations from the Blessed Virgin. Once when the feast of our Lord's Nativity was approaching, she prepared herself, as was her pious custom, by vigils, prayers, and tears, and other works of devotion, to celebrate that great feast duly, and in hopes of receiving some special consolation from God. And when the blessed night of Christmas arrived, she was in St. Dominic's church, meditating how the Virgin Mother had swathed the Lord in a few mean clothes, and inflamed by her great compassion and pious longings, she besought the Blessed Virgin to allow her to see the Lord in that appearance. As she prayed at the altar of St. Peter Martyr, she saw a lady carrying a child in her arm, and accompanied by an old man with a stick. And the lady said to her, "Return to your home and to-night you shall see what you prayed to see." When she went back to her father's house, the Blessed Virgin and the same old man appeared to her in her chamber, and saying, "Receive what you sought for," she placed her Son in Benvenuta's arms. After she had held Him there for at least an hour with unspeakable exultation of heart and wonderful consolation, the Blessed Virgin said, "Now restore my Son to me, for you have embraced Him long enough." As soon as she had

again received her Son into her arms she disappeared, leaving Benvenuta full of immense consolation.

The Blessed Virgin also revealed to Benvenuta the prayer which Sister Weremburg, the prioress of our sisters, had made for her on the night of the Annunciation, which prayer had been wonderfully powerful. Now by reason of her perpetual genuflections Benvenuta used to have an imposthume, first on one knee and then on the other, and sometimes it was necessary to make an incision to cure them. The last she had came after she had been cured by the Blessed Dominic. She concealed it for several days in hopes that it would subside of itself, but it swelled, on the contrary, every day, until she could no longer bear the weight of it, and on Christmas Eve a skilful surgeon, who was called Master Boniface, came with an assistant to make an incision. A quantity of blood came out, but Benvenuta bore the operation with the utmost patience, remaining quite silent and still, without being held. They put a large poultice on the swelling, and so it remained from Christmas Eve till the eve of the Annunciation. During this time the suppuration had no bad smell, which excited the doctor's astonishment, nay, when he medicated it he said that a sweet odour issued from it; which attested the wonderful purity of her interior and exterior nature. She asked him on the eve of the Annunciation to give her leave to assist at the ceremonies of the Church on such a great day. The doctor reflected a little, and

said, "I wish that God may be her physician." He bathed the knee with hot water, and taking out a large poultice, which was made of the wax of great candle, he put on a certain plaister and bound it up; and said, as he went away, "Do not remove the bandage until I come; and I will accompany you to church to-morrow, in order to assist you if anything should happen to it." On the following night Sister Weremburg the prioress made a prayer to God, that He would deign, through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, to cure her in a manner that would redound to His honour and glory, and that of His Blessed Mother. The next morning when the doctor went to examine her wounded knee, and undid the bandage, he found the wound perfectly healed, and the swelling reduced, which the efforts of the physician, assisted by nature alone, could never have accomplished. Thus they returned thanks to God. After a few days Benvenuta went to visit the prioress, and when she enquired of her what prayer she had made for her on the night of the Annunciation, she received in reply that she had forgotten what it was, and Benvenuta said, "You made this prayer for me," and repeated it. When the prioress recalled it to her memory she was much astonished to find that Benvenuta had repeated it correctly, and said, "How do you know you know it?" to which she answered, "The Blessed Virgin told it to me."

The Blessed Virgin often manifested herself to her in a wonderful manner. She was once passing

the night in meditating on the most Holy Virgin and her blessed Son ; and inflamed by her longing for them, she went out into the open air, under the starry sky, and while she gazed intently into it, she saw heaven open, and the Blessed Virgin with her Son in her arms descended so low towards her, that she could distinctly see the Son and the Mother. After she had satisfied Benvenuta's desires by remaining there some time, the Blessed Virgin returned to heaven. The heaven was closed after a little interval, and a red ray, like a long lance, marked the opening for a considerable space of time. She had this apparition very frequently, sometimes three times in the same night. The prioress and the devout widow, Jacobina, who had heard it from her own mouth, bore witness to this fact.

Benvenuta's great devotion to Saturday made her look forward, from reverence to the Blessed Virgin to this day with great joy, and when it arrived, she used to spend it in watching and prayers ; and thus she deserved a special grace from God on that day. At the fourth hour of the night, which preceded Saturday, she used to sing to her a heavenly song and harmony, which consoled her greatly. She revealed this happiness of hers to one of her sisters who was a nun, not speaking as of herself, but of another person, (for this was the way she used in describing the wonders and revelations which were granted to herself,) and it happened some time afterwards, that she paid a visit to her sister's monastery to spend a few hours with her. They slept in the same

room, and the nun went to bed as usual on Saturday night, while Benvenuta employed herself in contemplation and prayer. But her sister recollected the heavenly melody which Benvenuta had spoken of, and she began to watch in hopes of hearing it. When the time was past, the nun said to Benvenuta, "Why do not you begin to rest? I now see that you are not the person who heard that heavenly melody of which you spoke to me; because, although I have watched until now, and listened with attention, I have not been able to hear anything." Benvenuta laughed, and replied, "Certainly, she for whom it was intended heard it well enough."

She once had a vision of Christ and the Blessed Virgin together. When she was ill, with that sickness which confined her for many years to the same spot, and obliged her to remain sitting in a chair, being unable to lie down, she began to contemplate the grief of the Blessed Virgin in those three days when she sought for the Child Jesus who was in the temple. She desired to keep company with the Blessed Virgin in that affliction, for she had been accustomed to sorrow all her life; and had heretofore sought for suffering, and fled from prosperity and bodily health, so she began to pray earnestly that Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin would deign to grant her this gift, of feeling in herself that grief of the Blessed Virgin. And, behold, an holy and honourable lady appeared to her, with a beautiful and graceful child, who began to walk about the room, keeping close to his mother. His aspect and con-

versation inspired her with sublime happiness; but when once she sought to touch him, he withdrew from her, and they both suddenly disappeared. Whereat a vehement grief took possession of her soul, and which continually increased, and afflicted her so deeply that she was not able to receive any consolation, and it appeared to her that her soul would go out of the body. She was thus compelled to call on the Blessed Virgin to help her, for she could no longer endure it. At the end of three days the Blessed Virgin appeared to her, with her infant Son, and placed Him in Benvenuta's arms, and all her sorrow and grief fled away, and her wonderful consolation was restored. The Blessed Virgin said to her, "You desired to feel the grief I experienced at losing my Son, and you have felt it; but do not desire such things in future."

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER REVELATIONS MADE TO HER BY THE ANGELS AND THE BLESSED SPIRITS. SHE SEES THE PASSION OF OUR LORD. OTHER REVELATIONS FROM HEAVEN.

THE angels also made some great revelations to her. The principal and most astonishing of these, her being fed daily by the angel Gabriel with heavenly food, has been already described. The prudent virgin would not disclose it to any man

as long as it lasted, and when indeed she was compelled to mention it, she refused to do so, unless under the seal of confession, that is, that it should be confided to no one during her lifetime, which promise was firmly made and faithfully kept. After her decease, however, it was publicly preached, in order to spread the glory of God, and to show the merits of the Virgin ; and then the minds of all those who were satisfied, wondered how she could live for so many years, for even if at an interval of ten days, she took the lightest food, she was invariably unable to retain it.

Two angels likewise appeared to her in the last year of her life in this world, in the night before the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, in the following form.

When our Blessed Lady's nativity drew near, she prepared herself according to her laudable custom, for some days before it with many vigils and prayers, and pious works, that she might be worthy to celebrate the coming festivals more properly, and that God might give her some special consolation on that day. When the night before the nativity arrived, she began to contemplate the Blessed Virgin's wonderful birth, her appearance after it, and how she was carried by her mother in those days. And with an ardent desire she sighed for the grace of seeing her in that form, and prayed most earnestly that the Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother would grant this her pious desire. After this, two beautiful youths appeared to her, and their salutation

was, "Servant of God, may God be with you." She thanked them with due reverence, and one of them said, "Do you know me?" And showing his companion, he said, "Do you not know him well?" "I do not know you, but I entreat you to tell me the truth." Then, he who had spoken first, replied, "I am the angel Raphael, and this is the angel Gabriel, who has visited you so often." He continued, "Behold, the prayer which you made to-night has been heard, and the mother and the daughter are coming soon to you. You must prostrate yourself on the ground, and receive them with great reverence and devotion. When the mother shows her daughter to you, if the daughter stretches out her hands to you, do you also extend your arms and receive her in them. But if she does not extend her arms, neither do you extend yours to her." After these words, they disappeared, and the mother with her daughter, and a venerable man, came to her chamber, and saluted her, saying, "May God bless you, true servant of God." The man who was with them, looked devoutly at her, with a joyful countenance, and said, "Blessed be you, O friend and true servant of God." Prostrate on the ground, as she had been taught, she offered humble thanks to God with tears. When she rose up, the mother showed her daughter to her, saying, "Behold what you prayed for." As Benvenuta gazed devoutly at her, she stretched out her arms towards her. And Benvenuta extended hers, and received her into her arms. She began to caress her, and speak to her, but she was

silent, so Benvenuta said to her mother, "I wish you would make her answer me," but the mother said, "You know well that infants of that age cannot speak." After Benvenuta had nursed her for a long time, her mother said, "Now, return my daughter to me, for you have held her long enough." Having taken up her daughter, they returned to heaven, leaving Benvenuta overflowing with consolation. She had this vision fifteen weeks before her death.

She had once a beautiful vision of St. Dominic, while her spirit remained in the body. She had prepared herself for his feast, as she was accustomed to do, by her works of devotion, in hopes that by the merits and prayers of the Blessed Dominic, God would grant her some special favour; and while she was in the church, after the first vespers of his feast, the saint appeared to her accompanied by St. Peter Martyr, and saluted her, and having said, "You have obtained what you asked from God, and before you leave the church to-day, you shall see a consolation which will please you," they disappeared. And behold, after Compline, when the fathers came out of the choir in procession at the end of Compline, singing the *Salve Regina*, she saw the Blessed Dominic follow them in the place of the prior, for Father Gerard de Barbara, the existing prior, was absent. When they had all issued from the choir, St. Dominic went and stood in the prior's place, and when the *Hebdomadarius* went round with the holy water, St. Dominic followed him, and embraced and kissed each of the fathers after

they had been sprinkled, and when he had thus embraced them all, he returned to the place of the prior. At the end of the *Salve Regina* he returned with the Fathers into the choir, and going round his own altar, which was at the end of the choir, was seen no more.

In a similar manner when the fathers came out of the choir to Compline on the succeeding day, the Blessed Virgin came with them in the place of the prior, and stood in his post, and when the Hebdomadarius sprinkled the fathers with holy water, the Blessed Virgin followed him, and made an inclination to each when they had received it. She then went back to the prior's place, and returned with the fathers into choir, after which she disappeared.

Benvenuta also sometimes saw the Blessed Virgin between two acolytes while the *Salve Regina* was sung, holding her Son in her arms with His face turned towards the fathers. When they sung "*Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exilium ostende,*" she stretched out her Son in her arms towards the fathers, and sometimes made the sign of the cross with Him over them.

Moreover, on the feast of Pentecost, whilst they sung the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*, she sometimes saw a fiery flame which concealed the whole choir. Then Benvenuta looked at the people who were in church, to see whether any one but herself saw it. When she perceived that they did not, she was greatly consoled and returned thanks to God.

She received most frequently stupendous revelations while her spirit remained in the body, occasionally many times in one day; and then she beheld the wonders which God and the saints worked on the earth, and the wonders of God and the saints in heaven, but she very seldom disclosed them. This was the manner of her raptures. Whatever state or position her body was in when the spirit left it, it remained in that until it returned. Whether it was standing, or sitting, or in a recumbent posture, it continued in it during the absence of the spirit, and in the meantime it neither saw, nor heard, nor felt anything. When her spirit returned she emitted slow and tremulous sighs. She was not a little confused if she saw that any one had noticed her rapture.

In the last year of her life when the Passion of our Lord began to be sung in the churches, namely, from Palm Sunday through the entire Holy Week, she prepared herself with all her power in mind and body to celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Passion with great devotion, hoping also to receive a particular favour from God at that time. And when she contemplated the Lord's Supper with His disciples, and how He went out after it to the place of prayer with them, and how, while He prayed He sweated blood, how the traitor Judas came with crowds, and with the ministers of the Jews, with lights and arms, how he betrayed the Lord with a kiss, and all those things which followed, she was seized with a vehement desire of seeing the

places, and the persons, and all that was done in the Passion, and she besought the Lord with great earnestness to allow her to feel the sorrow of His Passion, and to keep company with the Blessed Virgin in the grief of it. On Holy Thursday, at the time of the Lord's Supper with His disciples, her spirit was rapt from the body, and she saw the Lord at supper with His disciples, and heard the words He spoke to them at table, and witnessed His prayer, His betrayal, the mockery He received in the house of the high priest, and the scourging at the column.* She said that "the house in which He was scourged was dark, and that no one was in it but the two ministers who scourged Him and one of the Apostles, but it is unknown which of the Apostles it was. The spirit of Benvenuta was also present, in vehement sorrow at the scourges which the Lord endured; and in spirit she approached the Lord, and with bitter tears embraced Him and the column. She afterwards saw the sentence of death pronounced upon Him, and the cross placed on His shoulders, and how He went to execution carrying the cross, and how a multitude of women followed Him, weeping and lamenting over Him. The spirit of Benvenuta went with these women weeping likewise, and

* St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, who is illustrious for her sanctity and her visions, is related to have said in an ecstasy that Christ was scourged by thirty couples of ministers, that is, by sixty men. Cornelius a Lapide in Cap. xxvii. Matthæi, Vita. Part. VI. The first book of St. Bridget's Revelations states that the Blessed Virgin was present at the scourging of Jesus. These are, however, harmless ideas, inspired by the pious meditations of a mind deeply touched by fervour.

crying out. When they reached Mount Calvary, she saw Him placed on the cross and raised on high. She saw the Blessed Virgin weeping and heard the words of her lamentation. The spirit of Benvenuta stood by the cross and embraced it, weeping bitterly. And she saw how He expired in the midst of the crying and tears at the ninth hour, and how He was taken down from the cross and laid in the sepulchre. In fact, she saw everything that was done in our Lord's Passion as well and clearly as if she had been present at it all in body and soul. When her spirit had gone through these scenes in their order, it returned to the body, carrying with it the sorrow of the Passion of Christ, which it felt in its state of separation.

This sorrow made her unable to eat, drink, or sleep, or to do anything, nor could she restrain her tears. After this the angel Gabriel stood before her and saluted her, and said, "Now you have indeed obtained what you desired, and asked from God." She replied, "Yes I have, and I beg you to return many thanks to my Lord for this; and entreat for me that if it pleases Him He will condescend to mitigate my external grief, so that I may go to church to-day and be present at the office, and that the bitterness of my grief may not be noticed by men." The angel answered, "Wait a little while and I will answer." He disappeared and shortly returned, saying, "You have obtained your request; go safely where you will." By the light of morning, however, she perceived several drops of blood

upon the veil which hung from her head; she thought at first that they had issued from her nose, but finding that this was not the case, she saw that the marks had been made by her tears, which were the colour of blood, as they had been on some other occasions. So she changed her veil and went to church, placing herself in the corner which she always occupied, and knelt down and threw herself forward on a bench, where she began to consider the Lord's Passion which she had witnessed supernaturally that night, and poured forth such a flood of tears, that the edges of her veil, with which she dried them, were soaked as if they had been immersed in water. Moreover, the devout widow Jacobina, her faithful confidant, who was praying beside her, saw streams and marks of her tears on the bench over which she leaned, and she said that her eyes appeared red, as if they had been tinged with blood. Her tears were also of a bloody colour, but neither Jacobina nor any one except Benvenuta could see this, as Benvenuta had obtained from God that no one should know her anguish, lest she should become conspicuous among men, or give occasion for evil speaking against her. The tears she shed then, and in the preceding night, were those which an angel collected in a shining vase, and showed to Benvenuta on Easter Day, saying, "These are the tears which you have shed in these days for the Passion of the Lord; behold I bear them into Heaven, because the earth is not worthy to retain them." Benvenuta remained in that grief the

following day and night, and on Holy Thursday until the mass. When the "Gloria in excelsis" commenced, her grief somewhat abated. When the priest elevated the Body of the Lord her grief was greatly calmed, for she saw Him in the form of a beautiful boy. But it was still more appeased at the elevation of the chalice, when she saw the same Child standing upon it, with His feet on the lips of the cup, and thenceforward her sorrow gradually decreased.

Early the next day, that is, on Easter morning, our Lord appeared to her as He had appeared to Magdalen, and she threw herself at His feet with many tears, and called Him, but she could not touch Him. The Lord said to her, "Why do you weep so much? Would you be another Magdalen? If you had lived in her time, then you would have done what she did. But go to the church and do your duty there, and you shall see me again when you return;" and with that He vanished from her eyes. Benvenuta went to church and made her communion, and on her return the Lord again appeared to her, as He had manifested Himself to the two women returning from the sepulchre. *She prostrated herself before Him with many tears, and thanked Him, and the vision ended. He appeared to her on three other occasions on Easter day, but she never said how or where.

After dinner on Easter day, when Benvenuta was alone in her room, for her sister had gone out with some friends, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her with the three other Marys, and

saluted Benvenuta with the greatest affection, saying, "Because in these days you have kept me company in the grief of the Passion of my Son with these your friends, I have come with them to keep you company, and to console you with the glory of the resurrection." Benvenuta thanked her with her whole heart, and with great humility, and the Blessed Virgin conversed with her for a long time. Benvenuta always refused to make known what she had said to her, as well as the names of the persons whom she had recommended to our Blessed Lady. And wonderful was the consolation which she received in this visit from the Blessed Virgin and the two holy women who accompanied her, for they spoke with her during the whole time which lasted between two ringings of the bells which announced a sermon.

Benvenuta had a most sublime and wonderful revelation in the last year of her life, on the feast of our Lady's Assumption. When this solemnity approached, she prepared herself with all the powers of her soul and body, to celebrate these joys with great devotion, always hoping in the Lord that He would give her some particular consolation at this solemnity. And behold in the night which preceded it, she saw the Blessed Virgin with St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Dominic, with the holy virgins Catherine and Agnes, who sung alternately heavenly songs with a heavenly melody. The Blessed Virgin raised her hand as a sign of silence, and saluted Benvenuta affectionately,

saying, "You have prepared yourself for this feast with much solicitude and due devotion ; therefore am I come with these your saints, to whom you are especially devoted, to give you joy, and to visit you, that you may see how to-day's feast is celebrated in the church triumphant by the citizens of heaven. And I wish that you should know that there is not one soul on the earth to whom my Son shows to-day such favour as to you, for He would not send any other messenger from heaven to invite you to my feast-day, but myself ; and on His part and on my own part I invite you to assist to-day in Heaven at the joys of my Assumption ;" and having said this she disappeared. Then the spirit of Benvenuta was rapt from the body, and standing between St. Catherine and St. Agnes, it saw how the Lord Jesus Christ bore the soul of His most Blessed Mother, and how all the angels and saints who were there followed Him with songs and rejoicings, as they ascended in procession according to their rank. At the sound of their harmonies the angels and saints who were in heaven advanced with hymns and exultation to meet her, and thus she was received with triumph in heaven, and rising above all the saints and the choirs of angels, was seated on a throne of glory at her Son's right hand. Then the Blessed Virgin smiled and made a sign to St. Agnes to say to the spirit that it should now retire, for it had seen enough. The spirit refused, saying that it wished to see the whole solemnity. The angels next surrounded our Lord Jesus

Christ, and put on vestments for mass, and our Lord began to sing the introit of the mass, and the others continued it, but our Lord's voice resounded above all their voices. When the office was ended the spirit of Benvenuta returned to the body.

On the feast of the Translation of St. Dominic, before this feast of the Blessed Virgin's Assumption, Benvenuta had another devout revelation. She prepared herself for the festival with her accustomed devotions, and about the middle of the preceding night St. Dominic appeared to her as she was praying, and saluted her piously, and said, that he was sent by the Blessed Virgin to announce to her that our Lord was about to give her a special consolation on this feast of His. Her spirit was immediately taken up from the body, and led to the church of the Blessed Dominic at Bologna, where she beheld the Blessed Virgin standing beside his shrine with the choir of virgins, and by her orders the spirit of Benvenuta was placed near her, between St. Catherine and St. Margaret. And she saw companies of the saints assemble with songs in the church and round the shrine. And after they had remained there singing for some time they reascended with songs, and other companies of saints also descended with music in the same manner. And there followed similarly a third company of saints, and many more according to their order, until the aurora. St. Dominic in the meantime instructed the spirit, and named the saints as they

descended and ascended after their order and dignity. When Benvenuta's spirit saw the friars saying office and traversing the church, she said to St. Dominic, "Can the fathers see us now?" St. Dominic said, "Do not be afraid, my daughter, for they cannot see us by any means." About the aurora her spirit returned to the body, and kept the feast with us in the church of St. Dominic's convent at Cividale. Benvenuta confided this revelation to Sister Weremburg, formerly prioress of our sisters, and to some of our sisters; and she also related it to her faithful and pious confidant Jacobina, on condition that she would tell it to no one during her life-time.

Moreover, in the same year, on the following feast of St. Michael, her spirit went into a rapture and was placed near Purgatory, and she saw many souls delivered from Purgatory who thanked her, and said that they had been set free by her merits. The archangel Michael was there, and Benvenuta begged that he would condescend to pray that God would take her from this life to His glory. The archangel answered, "The hour is not yet come, for your life is yet very useful. As these souls have been delivered from Purgatory by your merits, so are there many others there who entreat your assistance; nevertheless I will present your request to God."

She related many other visions to Father Conrad her confessor and prior of Verona, and the devout widow Jacobina, which escaped their memory. She kept to herself some revelations

which were greater than the rest, promising to relate them in their season, but her death prevented her from doing so.

CHAPTER VIII.

BENVENUTA RECEIVES THE GIFT OF PROPHECY. SHE FORETELLS THE FUTURE, AND READS THE SECRETS OF HEARTS. SHE FULFILS THE DUTIES OF AN ABSENT SISTER IN THE PERSON OF THAT SISTER.

SHE showed the spirit of prophecy on many occasions, manifesting the secrets of their hearts to many persons, and predicting future events. When Sister Wilburgis left the dormitory one morning to go to say Prime, on her way to the choir she was assaulted by a temptation of the devil, by fear and great anguish, for it appeared to her that she had never done one thing that was pleasing to God, and that she must therefore be abominable in His sight, and unworthy of His mercy, and of the society of the blessed. She paused to indulge in these thoughts, and the fear and anguish of her soul began to reveal themselves in her looks ; so the sisters, whom she found in the choir saying Prime, were struck by her pale and altered countenance, and went up to her, saying, "You are very ill, Sister Wilburgis, leave the choir and go to rest." As she went out of the choir, Benvenuta, who was also in the church in a concealed seat which was separated from

the other stalls of the choir, left her place and went up to her, and putting her hands on Sister Wilburgis' head guided it to her own breast, saying, "Fear nothing, my dearest sister, for you are not damned, but your soul is in a good state, and you are a friend of God." Her internal and her external condition were instantly and completely changed; joy, gladness, and consolation entered her heart; her face expressed joy, and cheerfulness, and she became in fact happier than she was before the temptation. Sister Wilburgis herself declared these things in the presence of several sisters.

On the feast of St. Cecilia Sister Margaret prayed for sometime, and when she saw Benvenuta on the same day, Benvenuta recited her prayer to her at length, as Sister Margaret testified before many of the sisters. Sister Bartholotta also, having made a long prayer, went afterwards to see Benvenuta, who recited her prayer to her in the order in which she had made it. Sister Bartholotta herself asserted this to some of the sisters.

A lady in the world sent a fine scarlet dress to one of the nuns, who was her relation, with an anxious request that she would sew some pearls and other female decorations upon it, but as the sister did not dare to do it without leave, she went to ask permission from the prioress. The prioress refused to give it her, but since the sister persisted in asking with great warmth, she yielded, and said that she must do this work in private. She added, that she only

acceded to her desire on condition that she would tell her relation that neither she nor any other lady should trouble them again with work of this nature. The sister moreover was to work at it so secretly that the other nuns should not know of it. So the sister went with one other into a retired corner of the dormitory and began the sewing. Benvenuta was at her own home during this transaction, but the next morning when she went to St. Dominic's church, she addressed the matron, who has been mentioned above, who had the liberty of frequenting the convent of our sisters, and said to her, "Tell Sister Nicholotta that she well deserves that one of her hands should become in the same condition as the other is. She said that she had a disease in one of her hands, and could not use it as much as the other, that she might hide herself in a corner of the dormitory in order to do that work. Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin and St. Dominic saw it well, and it displeases them." The matron did not know what she alluded to, and wondered at her words, and as soon as she returned to the cloister, she told the prioress and Sister Nicholotta what Benvenuta had said reproachfully to her. They also wondered very much, for the transaction had been so private that no other person in the convent knew of it. Many instances of this kind might be recorded of Benvenuta, if it were not tedious to the recorder. The prioress related these things in the presence of many of her sisters to me who have recorded them.

On Whit-Tuesday Sister Margaret did not hear the bell for Matins and was not present at them. Another person, however, assisted in choir with the sisters, occupying her place, and resembling her exactly in height, in appearance and voice, and performing all Sister Margaret's duties. When morning arrived Sister Margaret began to lament, and was not a little grieved and confused that in such a solemn time she had been absent from Matins. But the sisters contradicted her, asserting that she had indeed been at Matins, for they had seen her reading and singing, and performing all her duties. Sister Margaret, however, continued to deny that she had been there, and they affirmed the contrary, to the great surprise of both parties. The principal cause of Sister Margaret's sorrow at having missed Matins was that she feared it might give to some an occasion of speaking against Benvenuta, whose especial friend she was. But some of the sisters said, "There can be nothing else but that Benvenuta has, by Divine assistance, in Sister Margaret's likeness, supplied her deficiencies, lest she who is so devoted to her should be confounded."

The lady Leucardis, that matron who lived in her secular dress with the nuns, went the same day to the church of St. Dominic, and finding Benvenuta, she related the whole affair to her, adding, "Truly it was you who supplied Sister Margaret's omission." Benvenuta neither contradicted nor assented to this statement, she

merely replied, with a smile, "I have done greater things for Sister Margaret."

A similar circumstance occurred on another occasion, when Sister Margaret was out of health. It was the day after the feast of the Blessed Peter Martyr, and the prioress had said to her, "Do not get up for matins, as you are not strong enough." But when the other sisters had risen, and had chanted the greater part of those matins with great solemnity after their custom, Sister Margaret, who was lying in her bed, according to the directions of the prioress, heard the solemn music, and was prevented by her devout feelings from taking any more rest, so she got up. From the commencement of Matins, however, a person exactly resembling her had performed all her duties. As soon as Sister Margaret had risen she went into the choir, and having bowed to the altar, advanced towards her seat, and when she had reached the front benches, which the sisters use when they make prostrations, Sister Catherine, whose place was next to hers, to her great astonishment, saw Sister Margaret coming up, and another exactly like her remaining in her stall, so she went to meet Sister Margaret, and taking hold of her, said to her, "Who are you?" She replied, "I am Sister Margaret." When Sister Catherine turned round she perceived that she who had been standing next her had disappeared from that place, nor was she again seen. Sister Margaret, who had recently arrived, stood in her stall and finished the remainder of Matins

with the other sisters. This remarkable fact was noticed by several of the sisters.

Again, when Sister Margaret was absent from None, another person was seen in her place, resembling her, as has been said, in all things. Moreover, the devout widow Jacobina, Benvenuta's confidant, heard from her who that person was who had supplied the deficiency of one of the sisters who was absent from Matins, singing and reading, and performing all the functions of that sister, in the form of that sister, for Benvenuta almost always spoke of herself in the third person when relating any miracle.

After these occurrences when Benvenuta went to the grate of the convent of our sisters, and the prioress and several of the sisters were there, Sister Margaret thanked her, saying, "My dearest Benvenuta, I thank you that it has pleased your charity to supply my place at those Matins, and to cover my shame and confusion." The sisters who were present confirmed these words, and Benvenuta blushed and begged them to leave off thinking about them, and never again to say things of that sort to her.

CHAPTER IX.

HER FREQUENT RAPTURES AND ECSTASIES, AND THE
CAUSES OF THEM.

Who shall ever know how often her blessed spirit was rapt from her most holy body, for she would never manifest this to any one? If she thought that her raptures had been observed by anybody she was much confused, and her face was covered with blushes.

For many years before her happy passage from this life, her spirit was very often taken up from the body during mass. She once assisted at a mass and her spirit was not in her from the beginning to the end of it, nor did she hear any part of it, except the "Ite Missa est," sung by the deacon. She was often in a rapture during the *Salve Regina*, during her contemplation, and her night prayers.

During the time when Benvenuta lived almost entirely at her monastery with our sisters, which lasted from the feast of St. Augustine until the day of our Lord's Resurrection, they frequently observed her spirit to be in raptures, of which some were more evident and remarkable. The first of these happened an hour after Complin, while the sisters, who had finished their prayers, were leaving the church; Benvenuta prostrated herself before the altar with her head slightly

raised, and thus she remained without sense or motion, to the great admiration of several of the sisters who saw it; for although they called her, touched her, and tried to move her, she heard nothing and remained perfectly motionless. She remained in this state a longer time than it would take a person to recite forty Hail Marys slowly. And although they tried still harder to rouse her, she remained thus for a good hour before the spirit returned to the body.

Another time on the Eve of St. Michael, Benvenuta was sitting under a tree after dinner with the sub-prioress and seven or eight of the sisters, speaking about the angelic spirits. And while they thus conversed with each other, the spirit of Benvenuta was taken away before their eyes, and her face changed, for her eyes became red as blood, and her tears fell profusely, and thus she remained for a whole hour. The sisters who stood round her were amazed at such a wonderful change, and at the end of the hour her spirit returned, and her face resumed its ordinary colour. When the prioress and Sister Nicholotta, who were her particular friends, enquired of her where she had been and what she had seen, she answered with great confusion, and begged them not to tease her with these enquiries. But they asked so earnestly that they at last compelled her to satisfy them. She first made them promise never to reveal it to any one as long as she lived, and then she told them that she had been to Purgatory, and seen the soul of her relative, her sister's husband, who had loved her much in this

life, and done a great deal to serve her, and had been not a little devoted to her, led out of the pains of Purgatory. And Benvenuta was told that he had been delivered by her merits; therefore that happy soul, thus freed from its torments, went up to Benvenuta, and returned the most grateful thanks to her.

The same day she assisted at Vespers in her separate seat where she was accustomed to be. She went into a rapture at the beginning of Vespers which lasted for a long time after, and her body was deprived of sense and motion, for the spirit was not in it. The sisters surrounded her after Vespers, contemplating with reverence and devotion her supernatural condition, which filled her with confusion when she returned to her senses.

Also, on the following morning, when she remained in the room where she slept, her spirit was lifted up in a rapture, which lasted as long as these matins were solemnly chanted. The same thing occurred in the next mass, until the elevation of the Body of the Lord; for her spirit used to return to her a little before the elevation, to adore our Lord, and remain in her until the end of the mass, and this it did in every solemn mass.

The next night, which preceded the feast of St. Jerome, she was in the house where she lived, with some of the sisters, and all except herself and Sister Margaret were sleeping. Benvenuta and Sister Margaret were occupied in prayer. While Benvenuta made a long prostration, her

spirit went into a rapture which Sister Margaret easily perceived. When her spirit returned, her slow sighs showed Sister Margaret that the rapture was ended, and so she went up to her and compelled her to lie down for a little while, dressed as she was. When she laid down, Sister Margaret approached her face to hers, and kissed her with great devotion. And such consolation flowed into her from that kiss, that it seemed that all the consolations of this world were not to be compared to it. This consolation of Sister Margaret's lasted for several days, with a great abundance of tears; and has been more fully described above.

Also, on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin in the same year, she went into an ecstasy at the first vespers and at the mass. She confided to some, that during the rapture she had been in heaven and seen how those vespers were performed there. Likewise, when the passion was sung in the mass in Holy Week, she was in a rapture, and during those matins in which the Lamentations are sung, her spirit was absent from the body before the eyes of all the sisters.

Likewise, on Holy Thursday, when she was at table with the sisters, as soon as she had tasted a little food, her spirit left her in sight of the whole convent, which inspired much devotion, and some wept. She went into a rapture three times in the presence of many, on seeing some relics of saints. The first was on seeing the relics of St. Dominic, which were put in two ivory reliquaries, and one was placed on the altar of the convent of our

sisters. She twice went into a rapture when she saw a head of one of the eleven thousand virgins who suffered near Cologne. This head was sent to the nuns of the order of Preachers at Friuli, and they keep it with great reverence and devotion.

Once when a novice was received by our sisters during Benvenuta's residence with them, the prioress was with the sisters in chapter, and Benvenuta also; they all stood up while the novice took off her worldly dress and put on the religious habit, and when the hymn *Veni Creator* was intoned, they saw Benvenuta go into an ecstasy. As the convent went into the church singing the hymn, Benvenuta remained standing in choir, for she was unable to move. Leucardis, the secular lady who lived in the convent, remained by Benvenuta till her spirit returned, which was not for some time, at the end of which she went into the church, and the other sisters followed.

Because the most devout Benvenuta had during the whole course of her life refused the false consolations of this miserable life, therefore, the Lord, the just Judge, allowed her spirit during its raptures to enjoy in heaven a foretaste of that blessed life which will last for ever, where she saw and heard things which it is not lawful to mention. And because from her infancy upwards she had refused to partake of the delights of the flesh, but had, on the contrary, sought after suffering and pain, and had endeavoured to carry about the mortification of Christ always in her

tender body, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ gave her spirit marvellous consolations ; so that she found by experience, that the weaker she was in body, the stronger and more vigorous her spirit became. Moreover, because she never would converse or be familiar with those who love transitory things, and seek after earthly objects ; therefore, the Lord frequently sent the blessed spirits to visit and comfort her—Gabriel and the angels, the saints and most often St. Dominic, and the blessed virgins, especially Catherine, Agnes and Margaret—all which visits brought her unspeakable consolation ; for the consolations of God are pure and refined beyond expression, and are only given to those who shut the door to foreign affections. And lest the magnitude of these consolations should lift her up, the angel of satan, that is to say, the evil spirit, was given her by Divine permission, who appearing visibly to her under different forms, molested her for many years with divers terrors, sometimes with threats and reproaches, sometimes with blows, and sometimes endeavouring in his multiplied warfare to deceive her with fair words and a beautiful form ; but by God's power he was invariably confounded, and retired from all his assaults with loud cries and with shame. Immediately afterwards, the pious Benvenuta was visited by the angels or the saints, and receiving manifold consolations from them, she was left in immense joy and happiness ; for as the passion of Christ abounded in her, so in Jesus did her consolation abound also.

And as her whole life had been spent in the most devout way, which we have described in these few words, she longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ, especially after she had enjoyed, in a rapture in the church, a foretaste of those delights. She did not desire to leave this life in order to fly from the trials of the world, or the pains of the body, or the illnesses by which she was afflicted beyond measure, but, on the contrary, her patience had arrived at such perfection, that after she had been perfectly cured by miracle, I, who have written these things, heard her say, "Behold, I am entirely cured, and it now seems to me that I have never had any illness; but if it pleases God, I am ready to endure again willingly all the diseases which I had before." But the reason she desired to die, was that she might reach those sweetnesses of which she had a foretaste, and that she might return to Him who had made her for Himself, for her heart was uneasy until she returned to Him. She therefore frequently entreated those whom she believed to fear and love God, to pray for her that the Lord might take her from this life, and this she often asked of me, who have written these things. In the same way she used to ask of the angels and saints, who appeared to her very often, as has been described above, to pray to the Lord for her, that He might take her out of this evil world; and they replied that she should wait with patience, for her hour was not yet come. But because holy desires are increased by being deferred, and if they were to fail through long waiting,

they would not be true desires, her longing to be dissolved and to be with Christ grew daily. She had until then made many efforts to bear the exile of our present pilgrimage with greater patience, because she had two great consolations in this life, which she then lost ; one was entirely taken away, and she lost the other in part.

One of the greatest consolations which she had in this life, was Father Conrad, her confessor. Nor is this to be wondered at, for, as has been related, it was supernaturally revealed to her by St. Dominic, that Father Conrad had entered the order of Friars Preachers by divine appointment, and was to have the especial charge of her, and she was to be guided by his advice, and to obey him in all things. The Lord had also promised Benvenuta that he should be near her at the end of her life, and should assist at her funeral, so when he was made prior of the convents of Trent and Treviso, she could never rest until he had been released from these offices and sent to the convent of Cividale. This is not surprising, for she had disclosed to him all the wonders which God had worked in her soul, under a promise of secrecy, however, that he should reveal them to no one as long as she lived in this life ; and she was in these matters to be guided and directed by him. But now, Father Conrad received letters from the Father Provincial, telling him that he had been elected prior of the convent at Verona, and that he was to go to that convent to exercise this office. Benvenuta was inconsolable at hearing this news.

The second consolation that she had in this world, was being in the church of St. Dominic ; thus, if it had been possible, she never would have left it either night or day. This consolation was now partly taken away by two causes ; the first was the extreme weakness occasioned by her watchings and abstinences, and some illnesses, which made it very difficult for her to go to the church. The second was, that she had no one who could take her there, for her sister Maria, who was accustomed to accompany her, was prevented from doing so by the care of the house and family, which had now devolved upon her.

CHAPTER X.

SHE DESIRES TO DIE AND HER DESIRE IS GRANTED.
THE SIGNS WHICH PRECEDED HER DEATH. HEAVENLY
APPARITIONS. HER DEATH. HER FUNERAL AND
BURIAL IN THE FAMILY SEPULCHRE BEFORE THE
DOORS OF THE CHURCH OF ST. DOMINIC. THE SER-
MON OF HER CONFESSOR, FATHER CONRAD. HER
BROTHER PAUL.

THUS the most pious Benvenuta attained her thirty eighth year, and seeing that no more consolation remained for her in this life, eight days before the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, as she entered the church of St. Dominic with two devout widows, (one was her sister, who had been the wife of him whom her merits had delivered from the pains of Purgatory, as has been related,

and the other the sister of her faithful Jacobina,) she cast her eyes on the crucifix, and said with much love and desire, in their hearing, "O Lord Jesus Christ, by that precious Blood which Thou didst shed for us sinners on Thy most holy cross, I pray Thee to take me out of this life, if it is expedient for me." When they heard this prayer, made with such affection and desire, they feared lest she should be heard, and her sister said to her, "Do not speak thus, Benvenuta, for I cannot live without you without great desolation." But she answered with a joyful face, "Do not you think that I could help your more if I was with the Lord Jesus Christ in the life of glory, than if I remained with you in this valley of misery?" The other widow said with great grief, "O Benvenuta, do not leave us, for you are the great hope of us all, who love you and are devoted to you, and our chief consolation." But her prayer was heard, for on that very day a pain of the chest attacked her, which did not leave her until death.

In the latter part of that and the preceding night, two sisters of that neighbourhood, who had watched until then, saw a globe of light descend upon the dwelling of this virgin. She went to the church the next morning, though the pain was not less, but on the contrary, much worse; and as she returned home, supported by her sister, her illness became so violent that it was necessary to open her mouth by the way, and she emitted a great quantity of blood. Although her suffering continued to increase, and she continued

to spit blood, which had weakened her very much, she insisted on going to church, both the third and the fourth day. On the fourth day, however, she was compelled to take to her bed, and remained there the two following days as the pain became worse. During this time she devoutly received all the sacraments of the Church, and put all her affairs in order, and chose to be buried in the tomb where the bodies of her father and mother reposed, outside the doors of St. Dominic's church. She was visited in these three days by numbers of pious persons, both religious and secular, who had a great devotion to her.

The night after these three days, when almost all expected her to depart this life, as in effect she did, many devout and pious persons, both religious and secular, were induced to watch by her, through their veneration for her sanctity, that they might be present when her happy soul was separated from the body. About the middle of the night she enquired what time it was, and when she was told that half the night was already passed, she said, "Send for the Fathers for they may be too late, our matins are already rung." Father James, her brother, made haste and came first to her, and after him Father Conrad her confessor, the prior of Verona. They found her sinking but still sensible. The prior of Verona began to comfort her, saying, "Fear nothing, my daughter, but be firm and calm, and say the Credo as well as you can." He then began to pray for her with the fathers who were present, and said the recommendation of the soul after

the usual manner. Benvenuta's widowed sister supported her in her arms, with her head reclining on her breast. She uttered a loud groan, and her countenance darkened, but after a short time her joyful expression returned, and she smiled, and looked round to the right and the left as if she had been quite well, and thus she expired in joy and happiness, on the 30th of October, 1292. This groan and the change of countenance at the hour of her death seems to correspond with a revelation which she obtained by many prayers from the Blessed Virgin.

Benvenuta had frequently heard how the ancient serpent lays snares for the faithful at the hour of their death, tempting their souls with despair and divers terrors when they are about to leave the body, and she desired to know what kind of warfare he would use against her. With this desire she besought the Blessed Virgin for many days to make it known to her. Therefore the Blessed Virgin appeared to her, showing her that the evil spirit would then be seen by her in a most horrible form, and said, "You, however, may be secure, for I will come to your aid without delay, and this which I now tell you, you shall experience this very night."

After the Blessed Virgin's departure the evil spirit presented himself to her in a most frightful form, suggesting horrible fears, and saying that she was damned for having led an indiscreet life, and killing herself before the time. When Benvenuta, in great anguish, called for the help which the Blessed Virgin had promised her, the

evil spirit said, "You call in vain, for it was not the Blessed Virgin, but it was I in her likeness who appeared to you, wishing thus to deceive you." But Benvenuta never ceased to invoke our Blessed Lady, and the devil, after trying to thwart her with these and similar speeches, retired at length in confusion. Then the Blessed Virgin, with her glorious attendants, came and consoled her. Benvenuta had long before told this vision to her Sister Beatrice, a nun, who was standing by her when her happy soul left the body. Her groan was caused by the sight of the demon, and the joy of her countenance flowed from the coming of the Blessed Virgin, and her happy society. She therefore said, "Wait a little while for me," and expired.

Moreover, many years before, on that feast of the Annunciation when she was cured from all her mental and bodily infirmities, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her with several saints, and made her this promise; "I will come to help you in the hour of your death, with all these your patron saints." At the exact moment of her death a very old woman who was entering the doors of the court of Benvenuta's house, saw a flame like a burning torch rise from the house, and descend upon St. Dominic's church.

Then arose weeping and lamentation from all her relations and religious friends, and the numerous persons who had assembled out of devotion to witness her happy death. Among them was one of her nephews, the son of that sister in whose arms she had given up the ghost, and

of her brother-in-law whom she had freed, as has been related, from Purgatory, who threw himself upon the corpse with loud cries, and broke into such a flood of tears, that a quantity of blood burst from his nose, and he was cured from a hemicrania which he had suffered for several years, nor did it ever return to molest him. Our fathers, who had assisted at her death-bed because she had belonged to St. Dominic's Militia of Jesus Christ, as it was called at that time, and was a Sister of Penance of St. Dominic, wished that she should be buried the same day, but it was put off at the entreaties of her brother Paul and her Sister Maria, whose love made them seek to satiate themselves with the presence of her corpse, and to have time to make more preparations for her funeral. It therefore remained at the house that day.

Many members of the highest families of Cividale, and many noble ladies, as well as many of the common people of the neighbourhood, came that day to make a visit of devotion to Benvenuta's most holy body, and kissed it with many tears, and touched it with rings, Paternosters, and such other things as men carry about with them, that from that touch they might receive virtue and holiness. Our friars sung the Office of the Dead over her. When the nuns of the Great Monastery heard that she was visited by every one with such great devotion, many of them begged the abbess to give them permission to visit the holy body before it was buried. And since this request was made by a great

number of the nuns, the abbess said, "We will all go, and I will accompany you." Thus the Lady Abbess, with all her monastery, went to the house of Benvenuta. After they had reverently touched and kissed the holy body, they sung the Office of the Dead, with the addition of the *Salve Regina*. When the prior of the Friars Preachers heard that the abbess with all her nuns was there, and a great multitude of people, he came in procession with his whole convent, to carry the body of Benvenuta to the church of St. Dominic. All things being prepared they took the body in procession to the church, the Lady Abbess following them with her procession, and after them the bier, and a great concourse of people. When the holy body was placed in the church, and the Office of the Dead with Vespers was finished, those who were not going to pass the night beside the corpse returned to their homes.

The following morning an immense number of people returned to the church. Father Conrad the prior of Verona said Mass and preached. And because there was no time to prolong the discourse, he spoke for a short time in general of her sanctity, and related two miracles in particular; namely, how St. Dominic appeared to her on the night of the Annunciation, and foretold that on that day she would be cured by his merits from all her infirmities of mind and body, which was fulfilled that day by a stupendous miracle, when, after Benvenuta had received the Body of Christ, the Blessed Dominic appeared to her,

and led her through the middle of the choir to the steps of the high altar which was consecrated to him. When she had lain prostrate upon them for a little while, she rose up healed from all infirmity of mind and body.

The other miracle which he related was how she had girt herself with a rope for two years, which had entered so deep into her flesh that it could not be removed without making an incision, and she did not wish to reveal it to any one. Therefore she sought the help of God, and fled to the safe refuge of prayer, and when her spirit, which had been in a rapture during her prayer, returned to the body, she found that same rope lying before her on the ground, as entire as it had been whilst she wore it. Many men and women however of Cividale, knowing that Father Conrad had for a long time been in Benvenuta's confidence and her confessor, and that he had known many of the secrets of her sanctity, which he could not disclose during her lifetime because of his promise of secrecy, now that she was dead, and that he was released from this engagement, desired to hear from him the wonderful works of God in her regard, before he left the convent to go to his priorate. Therefore a sermon was fixed for the following Sunday, and the greatest part of the city came to hear it, so that the church was much crowded. In this sermon, after having discoursed upon some of the great graces and virtues which the Lord had conferred upon Benvenuta, he related three singular ones which are very great and uncommon to those who are in this mortal life.

The first was that great prodigy by which the Archangel Gabriel nourished her for five years, not with earthly, but with heavenly food, for she hardly touched food once in a week, and then only at the entreaty of the assistants, for she well knew that she had no need of it. And though that food was in such a small quantity that it would hardly suffice to feed a small bird for one day, she used to reject it all after the space of an hour. The Angel Gabriel descended daily from heaven about the ninth hour, carrying a bright vase in his hand, and three times in the day he used to take out the contents with his fingers, and place them in Benvenuta's mouth, and upon this food she lived. Nor did any one ever see her partake of any food during the whole of that time which she was able to retain, except the Body of Christ which she always retained; but when she drank pure water she retained it.

The second fact which he mentioned, was that the evil spirit appeared to her many times in some visible form, and twice, as she had been instructed, she cast him down before her, placing her foot on his neck, said, "Prostrate yourself, most vile demon, under the foot of a weak woman;" and the devil answered, "Alas! I shall not dare to appear before him who sent me; suffer me to go, and I promise never again to molest you."

The third prodigy was this, her delivering from Purgatory at the prior's own request, the soul of his brother who had lately died, by her merits and prayers. The dead man afterwards appeared

to her, and thanked her humbly. But these three things have been more fully described above. And the promise which Benvenuta had received from God was fulfilled, and the expectation of Father Conrad based upon this revelation of Benvenuta's was accomplished, namely, that wherever he might be sent to, he would be near Benvenuta in the hour of her death, and commit her body to the grave.

CHAPTER XI.

TORCHES AND LIGHTS MIRACULOUSLY BURNING ROUND HER TOMB. MIRACULOUS CURES. MIRACLES WORKED BY HER IN THE MONASTERY OF CELLA, AND IN THE GREAT MONASTERY OF THE BENEDICTINE NUNS.

AND as from her infancy until her death, the life of the most pious Benvenuta was full of wonders, so after her decease, the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed the truth of her sanctity by miracles of heavenly lights, and miracles of healing.

She was buried on the vigil of All Saints. The following night, although it rained heavily, three sisters of our order, who belonged to the monastery at Cividale, namely, Sister Nicholotta, who is now prioress, Sister Margaret, and Sister Magdalen, saw great lights shine during the principal part of the night on the façade of the church above Benvenuta's tomb, which is without the

doors of the church. The dormitory of our sisters in that monastery is so arranged, that the sisters who inhabit the cells of the side nearest the cloister, can see the façade and our whole church. And those lights which appear there, have no resemblance to the lights and flames of material fire, for they have no reddish tints, nor any smoke, but they have a glittering splendour of silvery whiteness. Smaller lights, besides, glisten in the large ones, which like flaming banners are discerned among them, by the greater brightness of their rays, and the greater rapidity of their motion.

Also, after matins one Saturday, which day by the advice of the Blessed Virgin Benvenuta used to honour with particular devotion, Sister Mathilda, of the monastery of our sisters, said that she saw, as it were, two flaming banners before the front of our church, which diffused not a little splendour all round, and moved slowly here and there along the walls of our church, and disappeared after a considerable space of time. But after a short interval another blaze of light broke forth, which was so large, that it hid the whole church, and so brilliant that the church seemed on fire; which glory also lasted for a considerable time, and the sister was infinitely consoled by the vision.

Moreover, on another night, the same sister, with another nun of that convent, named Eusebia, saw a great light round the church, and it seemed that the principal light was within it, so that the roof shone like glass, and appeared all shining. Also, on Holy Saturday, the same Sister Mathil-

saw a great light before the front of the church over her sepulchre. She and Sister Magdalen saw this repeated on Trinity Sunday, and likewise on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and on the octave of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin. Thus, on another night, Sister Eusebia saw an immense brightness in that spot, and within the great light there was another in the likeness of a flaming banner, and this splendour was visible to her five times in one night.

Likewise, in the night of St. Thomas the Martyr, sister Eusebia saw such an intense light above the dwelling of the fathers, that their whole dwelling seemed on fire, and two other lights proceeded from that one, in the form of blazing banners. On another night, Sister Weremburg, formerly prioress, Sister Margaret, and Sister Nicholotta, who is now sub-prioress, Sister Mathilda, and several other sisters, all saw a great light over her sepulchre. Another time several sisters together saw a great light near the church, and the same night Sister Weremburg and Sister Leoncina saw the same repeated three times. Sister Wilburgis also twice saw a great light there on the feast of St. Dominic. It was repeated on the nights of the two following Saturdays, although it rained heavily at the time. On Holy Thursday, when the night was far advanced, Sister Gisla saw a great light before the church moving to three places, and pausing a little while in each. This light was also seen by twelve or thirteen secular persons both men and women, who were under the porticoes of the houses facing our stone

bridge, as we will relate further on. Sister Wilborgis saw the same light on the feast of St. Luke, and Sister Eusebia also saw it the second night after the feast of the eleven thousand virgins. These were not only seen by the above-mentioned religious, but by many persons in the world, principally by those who inhabited the houses which are only separated from the face of our church by our stone bridge.

Some women who live in those houses saw a great light shining over Benvenuta's tomb on the seventh day after her funeral. Also, on the thirteenth day after it, which was the feast of St. Andrew, they saw it again, and three of them went to the grate, which is at the entrance of the cemetery, and although they stood there in the rain as long a time as it would take to say one hundred Hail Marys, while the light lasted, in spite of the rain, they asserted that their clothes were not even damp when they returned.

On the feast of St. Anthony the hermit, many women who were under the porches of those houses, saw an unusually bright light above the sepulchre, and three women in white standing by it. One who seemed greater than the others was in the middle, the other two stood at the head and at the foot of it, and they were all three raised a cubit from the ground; and although it was so late in the night, the doors of the church were open, and those two who stood at the ends of the tomb went into the church, while she who had the middle place remained in. After all these things

had lasted for some space of time, they disappeared and were never again seen.

Further, on Holy Thursday of the next year, 1293, a wonderful prodigy of light appeared. From the rose window of our church there issued a light which spread itself so that the air which was at that time very dark and filled with rain, became so clear that men could discern a piece of money lying on the ground, and this light remained a long time before our church. Then passing through our wood it went towards St. Peter's and the house of Benvenuta, and while it remained there it appeared as if one large house was burning, and a silvery light rose from it. It returned to the convent of the Friars Preachers, and disappeared after making the circuit of the Dormitory, the burial ground of the Brothers and the whole Church. This was seen by many men and women who were in the porches of the houses opposite the church of the Friars Preachers ; some were standing there when it first appeared, others were called from their beds to see it. It was also witnessed by sister Gisla from her cell, as we have already described. Many more lights were seen by other religious and secular persons about the church, and her tomb, and the house she had formerly inhabited, and are still seen at times, but it would take too long to record them severally.

NOTE.—The family of Bojan subsequently changed their sepulchre, and after the year 1492, were buried within the church. The old sepulchre outside the doors was hidden by earth and stones.

The body of Benvenuta was repeatedly sought for with the greatest anxiety, in order that it might be removed to a more suitable place, but it could never be found. A document on this subject says

"In the year of our Lord, 1447, on the 27th day of May, the tomb which is immediately in front of the doors of the church of St. Dominic, in which it is said that the holy Benvenuta was buried, was opened, and her body was not found. In it there were six heads, and all the bodies were reduced to dust and ashes. There were present at the aforesaid opening, Ser Francisca de Virgiliis, Procurator of the Commonwealth of Cividale, Ser Conrado de Bojan, Ser Nicolao de Portis, Ser Martino de Santo Daniele, Maestro Leonardo of Udine of the Order of Preachers, Fra Pietro of Ancona, Prior of the Convent of St. Dominic of Cividale, Fra Bartolommeo di Fermo, Lector of the convent of Cividale, Fra Hectore de Udine, and other fathers of the aforesaid convent.....I, the aforesaid Maestro Leonardo, have written this with my own hand."

After near two centuries the remains of Benvenuta were sought for with greater diligence, but they were not found. Bernardino Gosellino left to posterity the following account of this search:—"1609, February 16. In the one thousand six hundred and ninth year after the birth of the Virgin's Child, on the fourteenth of the Calends of March. Since we had many proofs that the blessed Benvenuta de Bojan of Friuli, a virgin of the third order of the holy Father St. Dominic, had been laid in the tomb of her parents, which is without the great door of the church, having first, during eight days offered many prayers to God, and recited the psalter of David, which Fra Constantius of Fabriano of our order of Preachers said to be most efficacious in obtaining those favours which we seek at the hands of the Divine Majesty; and having recited the hymn Magnificat nine times, which we read that that blessed Fra Aloysius Beltrando, of Valentia, whom we hope soon to venerate as a canonised saint, was accustomed to say in order to find lost things, and which frequently proved its efficacy by heavenly miracles, and having further invoked the aid of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, that she might use her influence with her Son, and that by her prayers and intercession we might more easily find the most precious treasure of the relics of Benvenuta, having this intention before our eyes, namely, that of promoting the honour and glory of God, and His handmaid, Benvenuta; we commenced digging in front of the great doors. When the stone sepulchre was laid open by the removal of the flags which covered it, it was found to contain nothing but seven or eight heads of dead persons, a great many bones, two girdles of gold, and as many of silk, which were all finally replaced, and we praised the blessed God, whose will we suppose it to be that the bones of Benvenuta should lie hid until the day of the last judgment. There were present at the opening of the sepulchre, the Reverend Father George de Longis of Udine, the worthy Prior of the Convent, Father George Bavio, of Feltri, and Father Dominic, of Venice, Professed Novices, and Father Bernardino Gosellino, Lector, who have written these things, and many others, whose names I omit for fear of prolixity."

Gosellino further adds that "the Lord Frederic de Bojan believes that the body of Benvenuta is at Bologna, and states that it was taken by a Friar of our Order shortly after it had been placed in the tomb, and carried to that town and convent." The author must answer for the truth of this statement. Marco Antonio Nicholetti asserts that it was taken to Ravenna, but has only the authority of a popular belief.

