

Note on this edition:

to facilitate understanding by a modern audience, the text has been re-punctuated; occasionally an extra letter has been supplied in square brackets to make the meaning more immediately obvious. The original spellings are retained, except that 'l' is replaced as appropriate by modern 'j', and 'u' by 'v'. Originally published in *Obituary Notices of the Nuns of the English Benedictine Abbey of Ghent in Flanders 1627-1811*, contributed by Lady Abbess and Community, Catholic Record Society, Misc. XI, Vol. 19, 1917. Page numbers correspond to this volume.

OBITUARY NOTICES OF THE NUNS OF THE ENGLISH BENEDICTINE ABBEY OF GHENT IN FLANDERS.
1627-1811.

CONTRIBUTED BY THE LADY ABBESS AND COMMUNITY OF ST. MARY'S BENEDICTINE ABBEY,
OULTON, STONE, STAFFORDSHIRE.

The Benedictine Abbey of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady was founded at Ghent A.D. 1624 for English subjects. It was a filiation of the monastery at Brussels established in 1598 by Lady Mary Percy, daughter of the Earl of Northumberland, and was colonised by four professed nuns of Brussels, namely Dame Lucy Knatchbull, Dame Magdalen Digby, Dame Eugenia Poulton, and Dame Mary Roper.

The community at Ghent prospered and increased, and in time sent out filiations to Boulogne, Dunkirk and Ypres. When the French Revolutionary army invaded Flanders in 1794 the community fled to England and settled at Preston in Lancashire; then (in 1811) it was transferred to Caverswall Castle in Staffordshire, and finally in 1853 to Oulton near Stone, in the same county, where it still exists.

The following obituary notices comprise all that have been preserved from the foundation in 1624 to the removal to Caverswall Castle in 1811. The constitutions of the house lay down the following rule: "Let a Register be made in which are to be sett downe all the names of such Religious as in the Monastery departed this life, and in the same also is to bee written if anything of noate hapned to them, either in their life or at their death, that it may serve as an Example to Posteritie, and lett these things be reade the day before their yeares yndes or Annyversaries, that peculiar care and memory may bee had of them." (*Statutes*; Ghent edition of 1632.)

It is in consequence of this rule that an obituary notice of each member of the convent is drawn up after her death, and read aloud in the Refectory on the eve of her anniversary to this day.

The first thirty-seven of the following notices compose the First Book of Obituaries, which ends with the death of the last of the four foundresses in 1659. The next book was unfortunately lost in the hurried flight to England in 1794. We have filled up the gap to some extent by inserting a collection of "Death Chapters" belonging to the period between 1741 and 1759, which by good fortune were preserved on loose sheets of paper. It may be well to explain that the "Death Chapters" are exhortations made to the Community by the Abbess on the thirtieth day after the decease of a member, when the religious assemble in the Chapter-house to recite the Seven Penitential Psalms for the departed, and the Superior gives an exhortation on the lessons to be drawn from the life and death of the deceased sister. At the present day the obituary-notice and the death-chapter are habitually blended into one.

2

The later paper on the Lady Abbess Mary Baptist Phillips (died 1781) is copied from an undated document bearing the appearance of the beginning of the nineteenth century, which seems to be a translation of a Latin circular that was sent out at the Lady Abbess's death, and of which we have a copy. Finally the third batch consists of the obituaries of the nuns who died at Preston, where

WHO WERE THE NUNS? PROJECT 2009

the community was located from 1795 to 1811. The style and orthography of the papers will, of course, be found to vary according to the period in which they were written.

Those belonging to the period 1741 to 1759 have had the spelling modernised, the originals being in such wretched preservation that they were destroyed when copied, now many years ago. The style of all, however, remains untouched, and may afford interest to many readers. A. L. W.

PART I.

Mortuary Notices from A.D. 1627 to 1659.

[From an old MS. of 83 pages, apparently of the seventeenth century, preserved at St. Mary's Abbey, Oulton.]

A Commemoration of the Deceas'd Religious who were profest In the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception of the Glorious Virgin Mother of God of the holy Order of St Benedict. In Ghent.

Nimis Honorificati Sunt Amici tui Deus.

Thy friends O God are Very much Honour'd. psl. 138. And in St Matth. C. 26 we read how our Saviour defended the Penitent Magd., saying to those who murmur'd at the effusion of her precious oyntment upon him: Why do Ye molest this woman for she hath wrought a Good Work upon me. &c. Amen I say to you wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be reported, for a memory of her; these, with many Other Warrants in holy Scripture, as also the continual practice of our holy Mother the Catholick Church doth authorise, the exhibiting of all due respect, to the true servants of God Almighty by Recording their Good works. 'Tis then both Just and reasonable we honour the consecrated spouses of our Saviour who lived and Dy'd so happily amongst us, having as many wittnesses of their pious Good examples as there were Religeous then alive in this holy Monastery, confident t'will be the more pleasing to God; because t'is conform to our Statutes, and profitable to posterity, by noteing down a Collection of some of their virtues and religious practices, Desiring most humbly the Divine Spirit of Truth to direct the begining proceeding & ending of this work according to the pure and sincere truth sith where is fallacy nothing can edify. May the Eternall God who ever lov'd these hapy souls with an Eternal Charity, drawing them by a holy vocation in time Convenient to his especiall service, have the Sole honour praise & Glory now and through out all succeeding ages World without End. Amen.

3

A Cathalogue of their names and the pages wherein their virtues are Described. Of Dame Mary Knatchbull. Anno 1627.

On the 15 of August Departed Most hapily this life our Dear beloved Sister in Christ, Dame Mary Knachbull, profest on the Visitation of our Blessed Lady 1626. Her most notable Vertues amongst many others was obedience, silence, Punctuality in all observances and charity. She Dyed att the age of 19 Deservedly esteem'd the first Saint of our house.

Dame Mary Knatchbull, Daughte to Thomas Knatchbull Esquire of Kent, was born in Irland. After her Parents Death God call'd her very young to Religion. Being att an Uncles house, She ineured herself before she come over, to do what practices she thought nuns did use, as Riseing in the night to pray and the like. She come hither about the age of sixteen and Inter'd into the Practice of holy Religion with great fervor. She Received the holy habit on Low Sunday & made her vowes a twelve month after In July. She was of a most pure Conscience and Innocent life. She ever Retain'd a great esteem of the Least Rule, exactly observing each in their Due time. She was noted to be one of the first in all observances & faithfully complying with all her obediences, which in her was eminent. She was a Lover and practicer of Silence. She had an Extraordinary aptness to mentall prayer, And God was pleas'd to lead her unto him by the way of sweetness. She had quickly attained to Great progress in Spirituality by a Good understanding & diligence in spirituall things; and in other matters she was never seen to loose time, having also a Good tallant to do things both well and with a Quick

dispatch. She gave herself much to interior recollection, Retaining the presence of God so constantly, that as She confess'd herself to those that had authority to Examine her she never lost it from her profession to her Death, being very sincere & candid in manifestation, both to Superiors & spirituall Fathers. She was never hear'd to speak the Least defect of any and in the absence of a 3rd person she allways had a feavourable excuse to cover their defects, taking occasion to rehearse their workes, having a most sweet disposition. And being so young and of a Sanguine complexion she suffred very much In the extremity of her mortifications, courageously bearing an indisposition of a feverish heat a great while before she would speak of it that Tongue was sometimes even parch'd [parched?] up. At last she was confin'd to her bed which brought her to her Death, in the flourishing Growth [of] youthfull vigour. Her life amongst us was full of fervour & consequently full of Days, having compleated much in short time to the Glory of the Divine Majesty. She Dy'd like a True child of our holy father St Benedict of a sharp and

4

short fever Armed with all rites of the holy church, leaving a sad House full of the odour of her vertues; but the Resentment of her sister novices was exceeding Great, saying Now we have Lost the light of her Dayly Good Example. She was the first Mary God call'd from the world hither as well as the first Person and the first that Departed to a better Life out of this our beginning Monastery of the Immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary In Ghent.

In the year of our Lord 1629 Most Happily Departed this Life Our most Pious and Right Reverend Mother In Christ My Lady Lucy Knatchbull of most happy memory on the 5th of August the 19 Year of her Profession the 45 of her age and the 5 of her being Prelatrice.

My Lady Lucy, Belov'd of God and man, was in baptism call'd Elizabeth, Daughter to Reynald Knatchbull Esquire of a very illustrious wise and ancient family in County of Kent. At the age of seventeen, by considering the vanity of the world & the Danger of Death, [she] found the strong inspires of Almighty God calling her to Religion, yet loath to forgoe her Liberty or loose those pretended hopes of advancements which she had an ambition to pursue, shutting the ears of her soul against the voyce of Almighty God (as she terms it, for much of her life, both at Bruxells and Ghent, by Order of her spirituall Guids, is Extant in her own hand writing). God of his Goodness at lenght still persevering to knock at her heart, she declares the result in these words: Between the Desires my soul had to embrace the Divine Vocation and the extream repugnance since found in it, my heart (as it were) was torn in pieces; and she Greatfully Concludes with humble thanks to God that after three Years struggling she made her Resolution and broke those Chains which had so fetter'd her affections. After this for half a Year she experienced great quiet of conscience but then the Enemy brought Into her mind how intolerable she was to suffer all days of her life in undertaking such a Course soo Contrary to her naturall Inclination to freedom. Yet for all this strife within, she sett a Good Shew by Exterieur Cheerfullness, entring Bruxells Monastery with allacrity, though her heart was seiz'd upon with an Extream sadness, through her many apprehensions, but for her Honnour's sake she kept it very secret. After a while they gave her an Eight Days Exercise and she took this spirituall retirement very seriously, wherein God Almighty was pleas'd to Give me much light and by little and little apeas'd the tumult of my heart (said she) making me forgett those follies which had been cause of my Disquiet. When she came out, she set herself with a resolute spirit to do all which was ordain'd her. and she found Great Comfort in her obedience. Yet now and then even weary of a solitary life, which had ever been hatefull to her, thus the Enemy cast clouds and mists before her, yet by the Light of God's Grace vertue appear'd so amiable in her Eye that she continued in her resolves to Go through, speaking thus to herself: I will doe what I can though it will cost me Dear to compass it. In all the time of her Interior trouble she most

5

seriously with all Diligence prepar'd her self for holy Communion, though her feelings of almighty God in times of Receiving was so very little, that she did even wonder at it. But our mercifull Lord rewarded most liberally all her combats against sense and nature, with many singular favours.

The first was after she had been only 9 months a scholar. One Day newly set to kneel in her place after holy communion she saw with the eyes of her soul a most Glorious and Supernatural Star distant as far as heaven, and it alone seem'd to enlighten the whole world. This Vision struck her into a great apprehension of the Greatness and Majesty of Almighty God yet left in her soul an abundant Comfort together with an exceeding fear ever to offend so good a God and this fear never departed from her (according to the first degree of humility). After this some of her best pretended friends out of a Good pretence (as seem'd to them) got her out of the monastery to begin a house of an other Order, but her vocation it seems was so strong to be a Child of our holy father's that she had scarce any Comfort or quiet till return, which was on the feast of our blessed Virgin's Nativity: after she was again in the Monastery, thus she Expresses herself (having before had great fear that our Lord was offended at her): my fear grew to an end, that I could pray, read, sing, sweep, wash dishes, or whatsoever else with pleasure; for God I humbly thank him gave me a greater Desire to serve him and suffer for him; and I was glad to feel pain when it did not Indanger my Going forwards in Religion. On St Thomas of Canterbury's day I Received the holy Habit, a day of Exceeding comfort to me, for then I felt myself begining to be happy. And then, alluding to the feast of the nativity, she resolved, In Imitation of our Saviour to become a child, humble, obedient and subject to her mother holy Religion. After this, God laid her on both by the way of comforts as also by very Great aridities. Yet when she had repugnance in matters of humility, she said to herself: In despite of thy heart thou shall do this or that. In the Exercise before her profession God gave her an unaccustom'd feeling of his Divine presence: and heart being tendred in affections of ardent love towards him, she had the favour to see him in the form he was when he conversed with his disciples upon Earth. From this time she began to walk much as in the presence of God. Within the octave of the Epiphany on the 11th of January with Great Joy she made her holy vows of profession, continually increasing the desires of burning love and thirst to become wholly God's, insomuch that the ardour of these affections and Desires even spent her corporal forces.

Half a Year after her profession she was Employ'd in humble actions for three months together, and in that time she was so amorously united to Almighty God, and had so clear an understanding of his admirable and immediate assistance that she scarce desern'd her own operations performing the Good purpose which she made at her Cloathing, of pulling up all her imperfections with all the indeavours she could, and that by the roots without reserve, when she came into the number of those who might be Elected for officers.

6

She was chosen thowreer and confesses that sincerely she was very little distracted in that office, but, in other occasions wherin her Superiour imploy'd her, they were so contrary to her, that for two whole Years together, she was in a continuall combat with herself against her aversions being Daly strenght and efficacious grace of almighty god, for her hart was often with him. "Then it was (said she) that I grew to have stronger comforts in my prayer; sometimes I have wonder'd to see how in an Instant, and whilst I was kneeling down, I have been chang'd, from an Extream in sadness, to a kind of an excess in comfort, yet the motions I had to impatience was so Great, that I liv'd perpetually in extream fear of offending God. Notwithstanding he was infinitely mercifull and Good to me, and never suffer'd me to break forth into passion by which any were, for ought I know, disedify'd by me". Heer we may see what a command she had over her passions, subdueing them to reason, and reason to God. Once at prayer in her cell, seem'd to be surrounded with Divils, who cast into her thoughts, a dispair of ever attaining to perfection: yet never stir'd from her meditation, though they essay'd even to snatch at her, at last she smell'd a sweet perfect odour of Violets upon her oratory, and the[y] as it were vanish'd. Yet again they assaulted her with a second temptation, of

an other kind, but through God's Grace before her hower of prayer was ended it ceased and she remained Victor. Upon Corpus Christi day at Evensong, her heart being full of tender devotion before the blessed sacrament she saw our Saviour as at the age of 12 years, in strenght reching out his right hand, who gave her his benediction. Hear the effect in her own words: "My soul hereby was exceeding much comforted and I hated to think, that there should be any moment of which should not be employ'd in the service of this my Dear and mercifull Lord. It Grieved me that all my affections were not on him. and for him. For alas I found that much of my heart was divided amongst a few creatures and the Distraction which the love I bear them caus'd me, made me to understand, that charity, was not order'd in me". After this, for a Whole twelvemonth together she Pray'd constantly and Earnnestly, beseeching our Lord to take all her own affections & those also whom she loved so passionatly that they might all be pleaced on him. And about the End of the Year our Lord grant'd her long suite, and it was on the feast of our Glorious Master St Placidus. and also the Day (in those times) when St Theresia's order served this holy Virgin, she being a Peculier patroness of my lady Lucy's, after communion then 5th of October when many pertictilars of Dear union had pas'd between our Saviour and her she saw our Lord Draw all her affections to him, as the sunbeams draws up motes from the Earth: "And thus" she proceeds, "with this my soul began to be wise," for she was made soberly Drunk, and in an Instant turn'd from those follies, in which she had taken unlawfull pleasure. And henceforth she took Delight to tell our Lord she Lov'd him, she

7

cast her thoughts many times (more than she could number) Into Every corner of the World, and upon all the Pleasures it affords, but found nowhere to rest but in God, her proper object and only center. An other time in a spiritual Exercise, her Soul being in Pursuite of the Incomprehensible Good, weeping bitterly for her sins and Ingratitude, and as an addition to her affliction, she knew not how to secure herself from falling, or being subject to defects, beseeching our Lord to tell her what she should doe. Where upon he Let her see him in her heart, in this manner: his Right hand was a little lifted up ready to support, and in his left hand he held a Cross, and thus, as she understood, she was in all Dangers, to behold him, believing assuredly that he would defend her. His form at this time was as that which she had in her Exercise fore her profession in the same manner as he convers'd with his Disciples. Her soul by this feavour was much comforted, and she obtain'd hereby a regular mortification of her Eyes as she humbly confesses, saying It was to the Eye of my mind as if some thin vail had shadowed him yet not so, by that I did see him. My soul received hereby much comfort, and my Eyes were Drawn within me so, that I had then, and Divers Times Since, upon this occasion, difficulty to look up. Always when she Presented herself to our Lord in prayer, it was with Humility and Love, and the Greatest Ambition she had was to take Pleasure in nothing but to suffer for him. Before she made her Prayer, she Particularly invoked our Blessed Lady, St Bennet or holy father St Paul her Peculier Patron, St Joseph and the rest of Saints whom she was most Devouted to, then turn'd her humble address to the holy Ghost, Prostrating twice or thrice etc. and this was her Practice both at Bruxells and Ghent. She had a most Special devotion to Great St Gertrude Abbess of Elpidia in Saxony, and to all her works, writing out with her own hand, most, or all that book of her Insinuations, etc. Upon St John Evangelist's day in Christmas she had the Great feavour of sucking from our Saviour's Right foot the most Excellent Vertue of humility which from that moment to her Death was never separated from her, because she practic'd all the degrees of humility in our holy Rule upon Every occasion. Once according to her accustomed filial fear, she in Great distrust of her fear'd that by living longer she might some time or other incure some offence against Almighty God therefore she most humbly begg'd a speedy dissolution to be Secur'd, but our Lord Immediately answer'd her thus: THOU SHALT NOT YET DYE BUT SERVE ME & SUFFER FOR ME. To which with most humble Conformity she resign'd her. On the feast of our Apostle St Gregory's day she had this most prizable feavour of feavours: after holy Communion, her Spirit being united with our Lord's in a most special manner, he suspended in her the malice of free will, and took from her the power of ever

Grievously offending him. O the excess of God's goodness hidden for those who fear him, Expos'd & Confer'd when the Love him only and alienated from all affections to Creatures.

In Lent following on the Great Festivity of our holy Father St Benedict, after Receiving the Blessed Sacrament all involved in

8

the Divine sweetness according to custome, she began to think what could there be for her to Desire more? Sure nothing: seeing she had within her the sume of all perfection, the Treasure of heaven and Earth, in the sacred Host. Notwithstanding, our Lord bid her ask of him whatsoever she would; she most humbly Declining, refer'd all to him: and she understood he was pleas'd she done soe; and perceiv'd he meant to bestow upon her suffrance, and that he would do well for her: and effect shew'd it, seeing she remain'd for whole 9 months together after this, as one Deeply struck in Love, and upon all occasions of hearing thinking or speaking of God, her wound and pain increas'd. Yet sometimes it was more or less as business occur'd. Yet in one of those fortnights she Declares a continual Excess of Languishing, her soul thirsting and pining away after her spouse crying out and telling him tha[t] none but himself could comfort her; she knew she was near him, but so, as in a Prison, but could not break out.

In an other Exercise, for most of her feavours were either at those times of retire[ment], or after holy Communion, at Mass, or in the Presents of the Blessed Sacrament. In those Days of Recollection then it was, [s]he plainly perceiv'd, that she had Received from Almighty God Great Increase of Strenght in spirit, and a Presence of God by a certain reflexion of Divine Grace, in so much that whensoever she enter'd into her heart she found her spouse already there before her, and she saw her will, being the key of her heart how our Saviour took it and kept it in his own Dear Custody, and she was made thereby Superiour to all that which uses to tos or Sway our weak minds. Otherwhiles, she perceiv'd herself, wonderfully full of God, interiourly crying out Holy Jesus, Holy God. Iterating these words without ceacation, for a long time together, No other words contenting her.

These following words are out of another Paper of hers: On Munday last, after Receiving the Blessed Sacrament it seem'd to me that our Lord Entred into my Soul, as in his temple and at the self same time, methought, my Soul was vested with our Lord. This is a kind of spiritual language which your Reverence knows better than I.

Upon the feast of our Blessed Lady's Presentation, the Blessed Sacrament being expos'd, and she at the last Evening song full of her accustom'd amorous affections, rather indeed in an Extraordinary manner uttering excellent Colloquies, Inviting the whole world to love and serve so Good a God casting all their hearts into the Incensary as a sweet perfume &c. Midst of these ardours and Excesses of mind, she found that her spirit was not only fasten'd to our Lord, but was as it were so converted into the same spirit that she was made one with him. O happy soul, who (as it is written) by adhearing to Our Lord, became one spirit with him, the Eternal father performing the request of his Dear son when he Pray'd, that all true believers in him might be one, saying: as thou father in me and I in thee that they also in us may be one, &c, that the Love wherewith thou hast lov'd me, may be in them, and I in them. In midst of these

9

high feavours, she descended as low by self contempt, unfainedly confirming to her spiritual Guides, that if her Dearest Friends Lov'd her no better than she did herself, they would not (said she) care three straws for me. As for the Divine feavourable signs of God's Love towards her in so many Dear and intimate comforts and intire unions they are so hidden that even by her own Expression they are onexpressable being so very Delicate that, indeed, she could not remember them all, much less be able to write them. Yet what she could call to mind she humbly obey'd her Ghostly fathers by affording us, those we have out of her own hand relating with all that it was by the gifts of God ever

in her power to remember the Practical parts of prayer, and her Good purposes. She had a very Great Dependency of all mighty God, deeming all meerly but trash and foolery, only to serve him. She Performed the office of cellarier at Bruxells with very Good satisfaction and edification to all, and no wonder, because humility, prudence, patience, silence, meekness, a compassionate and General Charity, were her constant assistance. Whilst she actually exercis'd that office, she was translated hither with three other Reverend Dames of the Quire, 2 novices, one, for a Dame, an other for a convers sister. Coming to Ghent on Great St Antony's day, and the very next being St Peter's chair at Rome they had a mass said, at their own Poor alter in a Room assigned for their Chappel. On the 18th Day of January 1624 she was elected Abbess of this Little flock by all their consent and singular comfort and satisfaction, and upon our holy fathers Day the very same Lent after the[y] came to this citty, was solemnly Bless'd in the 15th year of her profession, and about Forty of her age. Almighty God having so peculiearly chosen her to personate his place, in this our new monastery. Her chief care was to build the succeeding edifice upon the Deep and solid foundation of profound humility and perfect Evangelical poverty, these two vertues shining eminently in all her future practices, true effects of her former Good purposes, amongst divers papers write by the ordaine of her Ghostly father and most carefully by Gods providence in his keeping. From them we here Expose some of her accounts, feavours &c. the Rest you may please to read out of our Records in the book of our foundation, page 152 . 153 . 154 and so on. To begin with her Good purposes, These are her humble Expressions: "To the End I may Generally keep my heart better recollected: I will carry my Eyes more upon the Ground. Every time I go in or out at any door, I will adore God in my soul and make an act of indifferency, to what soever it shall please The Divine will to ordain—so oft as I shall find myself to have neglected the Divine presence, I will cast down my Eyes with a lowly internall Reverence to the Divine Majesty. I will often remember that all they of this Community are God's dear Children; and that I being his poor Servant, ought to be very Carefull of them, and to proceed with much love towards them, though methinks it be farr from my heart to admitt of any thing either in Dyet or Lodging or apparell more than what is the ordinarie, and apointed for us all by our Rule and Statutes yet hereafter least I should fall into any

10

Desire of Liberty in that kind I do not only make a purpose against it, but resolve, with the help of God as farr forth as my health will give me leave, to deprive myself of some such Commoditys as are Lawfull. I will hold it for a great vice to do anything of moment without the advice of Ghostly fathers or the Convent. I will make it a principal endeavour of myne that Silence may be well kept in the Community. I will diligently procure that superfluous Conversation be not used at the Great. That I never enter our Cell without kneeling, adoring Christ in my heart and saying some prayer, that Every Time I hear the clock strike I make an act of Contrition, that I never permit any in my hearing much less myself, to speak of the Defects of others. These and many more points of perfection Did she practice most faithfully and Constantly, as well as resolve so feavourously and Piously. But concerning this last purpose of hers, in point of Charity it is not to be express'd, how earnestly upon all occasions, she did Inculcate it to her Children, and she has been often heard to say, that indeed, nothing whatsoever could bring her Greater affliction then to see or hear the least breach of perfect union and Charity in this Community, this was her continual invitation in life, and her last Legacy at Death: Peace, Unity and Charity. It was found amongst her papers with [what] exceeding austerities she did use on so weak sickly and infirme body, thrice a week wearing Iron Chains, Hair Girdles ,Disciplin and the like ,Standing in a tub of Cold Water etc. She giving her whole Indeavours to our Lord so continually, on the feast of his holy Circumcision, he resolv'd to Give himself to her (as she understood he did in holy Communion) for a precious New Years Gift, Giving her with all freedom, at the same time, to make herself so happy and blessed as she would: on a Contemplation on ECCE HOMO She had the feavour to refresh her amorous heart and soul, by reposing her head upon her Dear Redeemers Left side.

Besides, many other Signs of mutual love and indearments past between them in Divers other meditations. On Whitson Tuesday she obtain'd at the same time and Instant when she swallow'd Down the Sacred Host that our Lord inclos'd her whole spirit within himself, to the increase of Strenght in her soul without imparting those wonted sencible Gusts. On the feast of St John Baptist, she saw after holy Communion, the ensuing Great feavour. And these are her words: "I Desern'd a kind of heaven within me Receiving in the Sacread Host, the Most Sacred and Ever Blessed Trinity, etc. I had a sight as if it were of three Divine Persons, full of Majesty seated in my soul, as in several mansions, yet undivided One and Coequal, who to my Seeming had made Choice of my heart as his habitation and rest, and was to me trough his infinite Vouchsafing, a most strong refuge, and benigne Protector." And you must know she had this Last feavour, after a most Deep and profound humbling of her self in the sight of Almighty God.

Once in masstime after acts of humility, contrition, confidence in God, etc., she heard with Great strenght and sweetness these words interiously insinuated to her heart: Be Intire To Me. At

11

that she remain'd in Great peace and quiet adhearing to our Lord, and immediately after Communion, she was incomposed as it were in with the Divine presence, whilst her soul remain'd in that state like to poverty of spirit, seperat'd from all things of this Life. In an other place she expresses, a new pain and Great languishing thirst after God. From the feast of the circumcision to the octave of St Maurus (being St Vincent & St Anastatius Day) her whole soul and forces were in a kind of excess of mind, breathing forth ardent acts and fervent jaculations, Inviting all the whole world to serve, Love and praise almighty God. On the feast of St Paul's conversion after she had communicated, the saviour our lord shut himself sacredly up in her heart, as it were bolting himself within so as not to be seen known or hear'd to be there, and she came to understand that for reasons best known to himself, he shut himself within her heart soe. In that instant she conceiv'd and partly Experience'd that the sensitive part of her soul was to be Depriv'd of much of those spiritual Guifts which heartofore his Goodness had so frequently vouchsaft her. At which, Growing a little sad, fearing she had offended our Lord, beging mercie, she found a Great comfort at least that he was to be always within her very heart. And so with fear, hope, and thanks-giving, the time of recollection being ended, after the sign, kneeling (at her departure) in the midst of the Quire, to adore the Bless'd sacrament, she was given at that Instant to understand, that as a shut Box of exquisite perfumes, could not cast out its odoreferous savour untill it was open'd, so when the time Expedient was expir'd he would open the treasures of his Goodness and power upon her soul such Excellent savours as should cast the sweet odour upon many, at which she made an act of contrition, humility, Gratitude, conformity and an intire oblation of her total all, to his service and Greater Glory.

Here we might produce many other feavours out of her own writings, but Divers having been lent and so lost, others through her humility she caused to be burn[ed] before her Death, there remains only to assure all posterity in the word of truth, that all these feavours by her cooperating with them brought much fruit to the edification and example of every one: inciting them to praise and Glorify allmighty God who so liberally inrich'd her happy soul, which he had created to his Image, and compos'd it to so Good a temper, admirably connecting such oposits, in such an harmonious concord of true regular vertue. For she was adorn'd with profound humility accompanied with a Generous heart, and a most Religious gravity mixt with cheerfullness, a great reservedness loyn'd with a sweet affability, a more then ordinary wisdom, with such innocency. A strict poverty attended by a noble liberal charity. And indeed as concerning her practice of poverty it was singular in her. Her ambition was to be meanly treated, And was soe, because she would have it soe. In midst of Greatest affairs (insident to her state of superiority) she maintain'd God a punctual silence and recollection, so that solitude and prayer were the continual food that fed her pious soul, the Habits of humility was Ground so Coonatural to her, that in her Daly practices,

12

she beautifi'd all her actions. She exposed a constant and heroicall patience midst of Greatest suffrances, and in a manner still thirsting for more. She knew that it was God's holy pleasure many years before, that she was as long as she liv'd not only to serve him, but to suffer for him. Another Time our Lord gave her suffrance, as the Richest gift of his Love, and she most resign[e] dly courageously and Joyfully took this pledge of his Dearest affection; and according to the fourth Degree of humility in our rule was never weary of suff'ring: for she suffred slanders, hard censures, deem'd a Dissembler, had Aridity, temptations, King's evil, Consumption and other corporal infirmitys. At last being worn to only skin and bone, confin'd to her bed, the sharpness of her fever (from April to August) consum'd the little remaining flesh so away that the bones broke through in many places, having thereby a great Encrease of Torment by those several wounds, besides being tiner grown she was in a manner nail'd to her cross, not being able to lye on either side. And to make her more conforme to her Dear Spouse and Saviour, she Experienced with him on the bed of her cross a certain Dereliction for a time, which she suffred with singular conformity, humility confidence in his mercies and ardent Love, uniting all in Union of his Sacred Passion. At last with most pious sence and true Devotion and Application she Receiv'd all the Rites of the holy Church, breathing forth aspirations In midst of pure suffrance. A little before her Death Almighty God reveal'd to her, some of his secrets which she told to spiritual father which concern'd the Glory of God and Good of others. She hear'd also a celestial and melodious consort of cells, after which in midst of the prayers and sorrowfull Fears of her mourning Children, she Dyed as she had lived, like a Saint and was Buri'd with that honour Due to soo Great a servant of Almighty Gods. Some years after her happy Death those Papers and notes of hers were produced, out of which relation is abbreviated, together with the assertion of those of her devout Children who surviv'd her. Amongst many other comfortable particulars which credibly have been, from time to time upon occasions related concerning her obtain'd favours for this holy community, one is what our Reverend Ghostly father had from her own relations; how our lord Granted a happy Death at her request in a recollection after Communion for all those of her Charge then living: and to his Eternall praise honour and Glory, hitherto we have experienced the Comfort of the same mercifull effect in the most pious and sweet Departure of every one that has Dyed in this monastery. Another feavour told from one to another was, how this our Dear lady Abbes saw all her Religious shroud'd under our blessed Lady's mantel, as a sign of her perticular protection; a third that once humbly beging of our Lord to grant her a foundation for this monastry, he sweetly made this Benign answer that his providence should be our foundation. She liv'd to profess and receive into this her beginning house, about thirty Persons, who all resented deeply to loose so Dear a mother, and so indulgent an Abbess, living but a year in the new little building she had made: Dedicating our monastry

13

to the All Immaculate Conception of the glorious Virgin Mary upon whose pure feast of Dedication cald ad Nives she sweetly Expired, at the same Hour when Christ our Lord rendred his spirit into the hands of his Eternall father, at which hower she had a good custome of Devoutly reciting five Paters and five Aves daly, in the honnour of the five precious wounds of our dear redeemer, which Devotion by some pious Good people was conceiv'd to be so acceptable to the rewarder of every Good act done in honour of the holy passion, that he would have a memory of that perticular after her Death, express'd by the green sprig sprung in a very short time after her burial out of her Grave, bearing only 5 branches, each one Grounded upon its several knot of that one stem, which was so unusual that no man of this town could Judge what it was, or like to be, had it been suffered to Grow on.
Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1630, the 23 of June

Most happily Departed this Life our belov'd sister Sister Cecelie Price in a Good old age, and in the 26th Year of her holy profession, which was the 28 of October Anno 1604. Her most remarkable vertues was Humility, poverty, Great Zeal and self contempt.

Sister Cecelie Price born of a Very Ancient Family in Herefordshire Daughter to Mr John Price was call'd Jane in Baptism. Sir William Price her uncle intending to make her his heir, bred her accordingly at his own house, he being a Heretick as she and the rest (or most) of her friends were. Once, when her masters were newly Departed (for she had rare qualities: spoke French, excellent at all curious works etc.) and walking allone suddenly appear[ed] some six glorious and most beautiful virgins in the habit of Benedictines and, in a courtious gracious manner they told her they came to make her a visit, Desiring to know of her, if, for the Love of God she would voluntarily leave the world and all those fortunes she might enjoy, and that they came to assure her in behalf of Eternal Truth, that if she would forsake, and become a poor religious woman of their order, she should experience the promise of Christ Jesus their spouse of possessing a hundred fold in this Life and life everlasting afterwards. She it seems (as being an heretick or struck into admiration, or the Like) made some Demurr, the[y] urging her final answer, at which she faithfully promis'd she would; then with a most gracious regard, as it were smiling upon her, they instantly vanished, leaving her much comforted and full of Desires to put it in Execution. To be in brief she went to my Lady Wisemans, Disguis'd in Chambermaids cloaths, and there she was Reconcil'd and made Catholick, stealing home again; but as soon as her uncle (who was pervers in his sect) perceiv'd she refused to go to their protestant service, his Love turned to rigorous severity, persecuting her to Extreamity, casting her into the common Goal at London, in the very Dungeon, amongst the rascall crew. All which she most Patiently and Joyfully courageously suffred. At last when she was almost sterv'd and eaten up with vermine, God inspir'd a Catholick Gentlewoeman Living in St James's to have compassion of so Delicate and young a

14

creature who, being but newly converted to suffer so constantly for profession of the True faith, sending her some releifs and by means of powerfull friends got her out of prison [and] kept her half a year at her house, cleaning and cloathing her. Then hearing my Lady Wiseman had some Daughters to come shortly over sea she went hither, and procured of that Lady (who was her aunt) to come with her Cousins to be a nun. But she said for the order she was not yet to Declare till she saw them. When she came to these Country's, in all the monasterys they pass'd by, yet she saw not that habit the holy virgins appeared to her in till she came to Bruxelles. And then she said this the order and the same Dress. Therefore humbly beging and obtaining her admittance, she enter'd in for a Convers sister with great fervour of spirit, resolving now to become a poor Religious woman according to her former purpose, so to be made capable of that high reward promis'd her. From this time forward she never lost her first fervour and Gott leave like a poor beggar to ask for God's sake the little things she was necessarily to wear, begging a wimple of one nun and a crosst cloath of another, and so forth. Retaining to her Dying Day the true spirit of holy poverty, she was excellent for punctuall obedience, and had arriv'd to a great contempt of the world and her self.

She was naturally Cholerick, Yet most Heroically combatted with her Passions, having a great spirit, and Great Zeal accompany'd with a most humble heart, and given much to prayer, yet her exact complying with labouring for the Common Good in humble offices, according to her state made her ever scarce take any Extraordinary for it. She was of a Delicate tender constitution, yet mortifi'd (by the rigour of austerities, fasting, chains bracelets hair cloath and the like) her poor body even to the last moments as it were of her life, for she Dyed upon straw in the infermery though she had a Long sickness, excusing herself from softer accommodation, because that was grown more easy by custome. She ever had a most tender compassionate heart towards all but in a speciall way to new beginners, encourageing them upon occasions, Doing in all times curtacys and charitys for them, but most of all praying for their perseverance &c. Thers one Example may be produce[d]

concerning one of the noviciate at Bruxells who was so fair tempted to Go into the world again that Sister Cecely had the charge to put up all her secular cloaths, for she was upon the present Going for England; meanwhile, she continually prayed for this poor... [*The latter part from "Thers one" is lined over, and the document continues.*] The latter part of this Holy Religious woman's life was unluckily lost by some seculars who for their edification Desir'd the reading of it. Requiescat in pace.

Of Dame Elizabeth Bradbery.

This our Dear Dame had a high esteem of Religion, and of every Rule and constitution, and Delighted much to see young beginners apply themselves seriously to the Grace of their vocation. Zealing exceedingly the Good prayers of this our new monastery, and because

15

she was the most antient of all (as was said) who followed her, she was very soon put in offices discharging both Thourier and sacristine at once with Extraordinary Good satisfaction, and though she never loved that of the Great, yet Did she edify everyone there, in so much, that by her prudence and modest comportment, accompani'd with a Great regularity, and naturall civility, she Gott a true opinion of a saint, amongst the externs who profest the[y] Greatly profited by her conversation, and though she was so wise and Rather, indeed, Eloquent, yet did she shun affected language or any secular Discourses. She order'd all things with Exquisite nateness, concerning her office of sacristine and such pritty and curious works for the sepulcher in tenebre times, accommodating the Alter and all pertaining to the church, so clean, Desent and handsome, that it moved to Devotion, being truly carefull to avoyd the leas Danger, which she held a Great fault, if by her negligence any should happen there. She was notable for the practice of holy poverty having always poor and few accommodations for herself and cell, never letting a rent or hole apear in her linnen or wollen Garments but for the Decency of religious poverty, mended them In Due time. She was of a Great Spirit and had the world with all its vanitys in high contempt. She was apt and able, by her nature, witt and abilitys for any imployment, but God laid her to him at last by way of his holy Cross sending her infirmitys which brought her to a Consumption, and with all the impediment of Deafness. In her last sickness, having been in the Infirmary some mounths with edification, she prepar'd herself devout for her last passage, Beg'd and obtain'd to Speak with every one apart in the Community, ask't pardon most humbly of all, craving their prayers and promissing hers. After that she disposed her self and receiv'd most piously all the last sacraments, from that time to her Death (surviving some 5 days after and in perfect sense) she would never have any more commerce with creatures but wholly attended to God in Quiet silence as if she had been in a spiritual exercise, only Desiring her Ghostly father now and then. When she was in last extreanity she Desired and had all the Religious present and prayers, rendring her most happy soul to God in the Dedication of our Saviours church the 9th of November, hastning to praye for all eternity, her creator and spouse in the temple of his Glory. Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1634 on the 6 of February Most Happily Departed this life our Dear Religious sister Sister Chatherine Thorold in the 8 Year of her profession. Her most remarkable virtues was obedience, Zeal and fervour and charity towards all.

Sister Chatherine Daughter of Thomas Thorold Esquire was in her very young years bread with M^{is} Ward at Liege and had her Liegyvyce French and other good parts. She was little of stature and by some accident crooked, therefore consequently less strong and able for the state of a convers sister yet she was so humble and Desirous to take that course of life in holy religion here at Ghent, that all her friends, though vehemently against it, could not shake

16

her resolution. She therefore enter'd very fervourously & was clothed and profest in my lady Lucy's time of happy memory, making her vows of religion, on our holy father St Basills day the 14th of June Giving to the monastery a full portion for the quire. She went on with Great alacrity, and tis a little wonder what a Deal of manuell and laborious work she Dispatcht. She was so Zealous to comply to holy obedience in the Due observance of those things belonging to her state, being very neat and industrious, therefore she performed all things most Dexterously and Cleanly. She was extraordinary for obedience, and would not admit of the least assistance in those things which were her peculiar obedience. When therefore any of our sister compassionating her weakness did offer their help in occasions, she would answer: God reward you Dear sister, I need no Charity in this particular I'll do it myself with God's Grace, least another get my merrit from me. She was of a lively pleasant humour and very well beloved of all. She was singularly devout to the Glorious Apostle St Peter and every night before sleep made her Confession to him, and beg'd his absolution. The eve of the purification, having been at sacramentall confession, and newly said her injoy'd penance, being celler keeper, her obedience was to Draw the Beer for collation, which done she beg'd leave publickly to acknowledge her faults in the refectory and she did it most humbly and with Great edification asking pardon and prayers att every table, kissing everyone's feet by that time she had prostrated, it rung att the Gate, being appointed to look to it, she speedely went, and in her return some 3 or 4 steps off, fell down, taken with an apoplex. Thus suddenly, but not unprovidedly, was she carried to the infirmary never speaking word, though she lay 4 days looking most innocently and sweetly. She had the holy oyle, assisted by the presence of our Reverend Ghostly father and the Religious, and rendred her soule to God most peacably & quietly on St Dorothea Day all praying about her.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno 1634, on the 11th of August Dame Mary Trevillion, Most pious[ly] went from this to a better life in the 4th Year of her Profession. Her most notable Vertue's were many, chiefly Zeal, Fervour, Humility, Obedience, Charity and Thirsting Desire to Encrease God's Glory: &c: She was profest 1630 Oct. the 20th.

Dame Mary Daughter of Antony Trevillion Esq in Exceter or Cornwall, came to Religion about the age of 18. She was of a Zealous and courageous spirit, confin'd in a tender constitution. After she had been scholar she was forced to go back in to England for her portion, which, being Dispatch'd, she fervourously Return'd. There was another Gentlewoman who had the like Desires assign'd by her friends to come with Dame Mary hither and Enter into our Monastery together. Now, they being upon the point to begin their journey and both in one bed, Dame Trevillion saw the Enemy come to their bed side in shape of a Doctor of Phisick. She not discerning it till his going away, but took him really to be that Phisitian, who her family

17

made use on in occasions. The subject of his Discours was that out of meer Good will he came of purpose unsent for, hearing of her Intentions for beyond seas, to tell her, that of his knowledge, in her Constitution being so Delicate tenderly bread and weak of body, that truly it was impossible she should go forward or persever in the Cours she was resolved on. And so, in fine, with much Rhethorick he persuaded her to Desist from such a Journey, which she with a great deal of fervent zeal contemn'd as a pernicious councill; the fiend, being horribly confounded, said in an angry manner, that since she had soo foolishly slighted his kindness, he hoped her companion would be wiser, and so I shall prevail with her. Disdainfully he turned away and Dame Mary at that very instant plainly saw his ugly Club foot. But alas concerning her companion the event proved to true for this her friend never came over, not only loosing her vocation, but also her Religion, for she fell from the faith & went to protestant churches. But our Dear sister in Christ D. M. Trevillion (God's holy Grace assisting her) enter[ed] with Great Resolution, alacrity and fervour which heer to her Dying moment she Maintain'd Good with an increas. For indeed she was like a flame of fire ever

mounting and exalting the Glory of God & great Desire to Do Good to all in the exact observances of our holy Rule, these being her ordinary words: the Glory of God, the Glory of God, Charity, Charity, Charity. She was most singularly devout to St Joseph, and most excellent for obedience, performing not only even the last particular, but any Generall ordain of superiours, so faithfully & constantly, that she was never known to infringe them; for example, because it was generally forbid not to Go through the old Dorter in silence times or prayer hours, she being in an employment (and the new Quarters unbuilt) which necessitated her oft to go through, yet would she never do it, but went a great way about many times in such occasions. The like concerning entering into the kitchen never setting so much as her foot within the Door unless expressly sent to perform humble offices. And this not out of scrupulosity, for she was of a generous mind & liberall heart having a great confidence ever in almighty God and of a courageous spirit to Resist the Devil and all his suggestions, but meerly out of a delicate and tender conscience in all whatsoever she conceiv'd to be Gods holy will or the ordain of superiours: seeking still his Greater Glory. She was most exact to acknowledge faults either in publick or private according to our holy Rule, and so fervent in prayer that she was oft seen even as it were transported in reciting the Divine office.

She was consumptive and Growing into a feverish disposition was sent to the infirmary where she carry'd herself with Great courage, patience and resignation. All the Religious, as Deservedly esteeming her for true sanctity, when it was fear'd she should Dye, came flocking one by one, of a Great Desire to speake with her, and commended themselves to her prayers. After this, the Small pox appear'd upon her and all forbid to come any more, save two of our Sisters who tended her, she Grew violently ill, and the last

18

sacraments was administer'd which she Receiv'd most devoutly. The enemy who had always a spite against in her life assaulted her fiercely at this Last extremity, first trying to tempt her to vain Glory, who all her life had so Zeal'd the Greater Glory of God to her utmost ability. But she still by the Grace of God gave him the foil. At last she became most vehemently tormented, and indeed was struck with the Plague, suffering extremly which put her for a time Into That Exceeding pain, that it took away her Senses Some hours. At last rashing open her Curtains, throwing off the plasters of-- her eyes she call'd for holy water, came perfectly to herself, took a Crucifix defi'd the Devill who appear'd at her beds feat like a munkie. She contemning and resisting him in perfect sence and tender devotion, she rais'd up herself praying fervourously & earnestly, with our two sisters who pray'd most hartily for her, but because they utter'd their Devotions somewhat softly, Dame Mary intreated them to read and speake so loud, that she might hear them, answering herself to all the litany's and commendations. Falling into Great and terrible convulsions which she supported with a Christian fortitude, in admirable patience, the Cruell beast having no power to touch her Innocent soul, perhaps had permission from God to touch her body with the poyson of his malicious infection. Whilst She like a Valiant Soldier of Christ suffer'd all St Laurence's Day, and the night after, as though she had been upon a Rack or torture, and continued so till past 7 next mourning, she still calling upon God with Great fervour of spirit in most ardent prayers. She Dyed Downward so that when her Eyes was dead she moved her lips in prayer, consumating her combat, with intire victory over the wicked enemy; Going Triumphantly, as we piously believe, like a Martir of love to heaven there to Receive a Laurell of honnour, from the Great king of martirs to his own eternall praise honnour and Glory. She was Buri'd in Great privacy in our Church by the mercy of Almighty God (who we are confident at her earnest supplication for us) none after her took any infection, but all from her life and Death received true edification. Requiescat In Pace.

Anno Domini 1634, on the 27 of September: Most happily reposed in our Lord Sister Dorothy Barefoot in the 4th Year of her profession. Her most notable vertues was humility charity and Great Patience in infirmity with a Love of mortification.

Sister Dorothy Daughter of John Barefoot (A Profest Doctor of Phisick) enter'd into the Trial of Religion when she was about some six or seven and twenty; She receiv'd the holy habit on St Francis Day in October and made her holy vows for a Convers sister a Year after on St Brunoes day the 6 of the same month. She had a Great Zeal and very fervent in seeking her own mortification, God Leading her to heaven by the secure way of the Cross, was pleas'd out of his infinite Love to his elect to send her both Continuall infirmity's of body, together with Great Temptations, desolations and ariditys of mind, which she by the Grace of Almighty God supported with much merit and edification Heroically, out of her

19

Love to Pure Suffrance refusing those Little Comforts she might lawfully Injoy. Once at which time she was ill Disposed, with pains and Corporall griefs, having a Dear friend in Town, who out of Charitable Compassion sent her many Cordials and other Confortatines at least to Give an ease (if not a remedy) for her Infirmitys. But she (though she had leave to keep and use them) never would do it, but made a shift to Gett them given to others in the infirmary, saying to a friend in Private that in Deed she Desired to suffer purely with and for Our Saviour ,who in midst of extream torments in his passion had no other Cordial offer'd him then Gall & vinegar. For the Greater exercise of humility & mortification, she beg'd and obtain'd to be treated and try'd like a Novice, after she had been more then 3 years profest, wearing a novice's vail for half a Year, subject and obedient to her Junior sister. The Greatest Comfort in all her Desolations was in frequenting the holy sacraments, and speaking with her holy fathers. This for the love of God and to mortify herself, she willingly Deprived herself of the more to participate of pure suffrance, being to take Care of one who was to be shut up in the infirmary having the small pox, wanting thereby the former benefit for a mounth together. Not long after this, herself was forced to keep her bed through the increase of her Continuall pains, of a more than 2 years Dropsie, she lasted about another mounth in her last sickness, tollerating all with admirable patience and piety. When it was thought she would then dye, one that was novice for a Convers sister having experienced many Charitys from Sister Dorothy, and having a very Good opinion of her for the apparent vertues she had seen in her, Got Leave to speak alone with her. Commending herself to her prayers and beging as a Curtacy from a dying friend what legacy of pious practice she would counsell her to take to heart, at which very humbly she recommended the reading dayly some what out of our holy Rule, so not to be ignorant of her Duty, secondly by earnest prayer and indeavour to take to heart the practice of all even the least Rule Chiefly 12 Degrees of humility. She had a foreknowledge of her death, telling it to one of our sisters in Great secresie. Growing near her end, she Receiv'd all rites of holy Church in perfect sence and most pious devotion, and happily expired on St Cosmas and Damion's Day, she being a member of the sodality. She was a most pure sweet Coars. Confident by the merits of our holy Saviour she had her purgation in this Life.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1635 on the 9 of April Dame Aloysia Beaumont most happily departed this life, in the 4th year of her profession. Her vertues amonst many was humility, charity, Zeal and fervour.

Dame Aloysia call'd Helin in holy Baptism, Daughter to St John Beaumont Barronett In Leistershier at Grazedew came to be religious at the age of 17 and profest at 19 the year 1631. She was of a delicate and tender constitution and pure complexion, she had many internall difficultys, following our Lord close in the high way of the holy Cross and she died of a consumption.

20

Her naturall witt and Tallants were Very Great. She understood and spoke Latin, translating Divers pious things into English. She had a fine sweet voice, and an excellent quire-woman, and very zealous performing the Divine office strong, sweet and Gracefully. She Delighted much in humble employments, doing them very frequently and laborious, and did (the little time she lived amongst

us) do most true service to God and the community. She was of a sweet and curteous humour, very Gratefull in conversation, truly pious attending much to God, and spirituall things. She was singularly devoted to the mother of God; one of her practices in her honnour was often to visit every Image of our blessed lady In the whole monastery, kneeling at every one's cell door whilst she exhibited some pious salutation prayr and petition, and this was (if not every day) at least, every Saturday & Our Blessed Lady's eves. She Graced her demeaners with a constant humility, and the more because it was adjoyn'd to such excellent parts.

A little before her last sickness she grew very infirme and had an indisposition in her stomach, retaining but a very short time any food she took, bringing it up again; she was in a consumption and remain'd some time in the infirmary, Giving all that whose Good Satisfaction and edification, being ever of a pleasing Disposition to every one. When it was perceiv'd she Grew near her death she piously demanded all the rites of holy Church and received them most devoutly. Yielding up her happy soul to God on the 9th of April, her fervent life andorn'd with a Generall charity, & Zeal, made us sensible to loose so Great a prop to our Quire's service and in the flower of her Youth, and doubtless the uncertainty when our Lord would call, made her always watchfull.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1635 On the 22 of July

Dame Hieronima Waldegrave Changed this Transitory for a better, in the 8 year of her profession. Her most notable virtues was Great Zeal, Punctuality in observances & Prudence.

Dame Hieronima So call'd in the world, Daughter to Nicholas Waldgrave Esquire, enter'd to the tryall of holy Religion about 20. She made her profession about 4 years after the very Day of our Great festivity December the 8 when we celebrate the immaculate conception of our Blessed Lady the Year of our Lord 1627. She was of a weak and sickly constitution, but of a mature and Grave disposition. She was little & little timber'd, very well favour'd, and of a Gracefull comportment, so that her very countenance did move to a religious composure, being eminent in the perfection of the eleventh Degree of humility in our holy [rule], and endowed with an extraordinary prudence Adjoyned to a naturall Sweet Civility. She was Consumptive and had a sweet but no strong quire voice, being so weak, yet of soo Great a zeal To Put it forth in the publick Service of the Divine Office That she never fail'd in that particular, and was heard upon an occasion to say to one that supposing her voice was no stronger then then that of a little mouse, she would be sure never to keep it in, or feavour herself seeing God had honnour'd

21

her so very much as to call her to so sublime a state. This one example shew[ed] what Great Zeal was lodged in that weak body: for continually in a manner she was upon the Daly Cross of a suffering life, beginning even in the very noviciate, having then red hott Irons run into her neck which she supported very courageously. In fine, to say the plain discription of her, in one word, she was an exact regular religious woman. She had exercised the office of Portress and Infirmary with very good satisfaction and in this last office she Died most peacibly and Piously, having Received with great sence and Devotion all the rites of holy Church, Going with the wise Virgins, to meet her most beloved bridgroom on the feast of Glorious St Mary Magdalen. Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1636 the 14 of December

Dame Tecla Bedingfield most happily Departed from this to a better World in the 6th year and half after her holy Profession. Her most Remarkable Vertues was meekness, peace, fortitude, patience &c.

Dame Tecla, call'd Phillip at holy Baptisme, was Daughter to Francis Bedingfield esquire: Born att Bedingfield in Suffolk, came to triall of holy Religion about the age of 19 or 20. She was of a pure sanguine complexion, very straight and proper of personage, lovely in corporall features and

concerning that which is much more praisable, she was of a rare Interior temper, having a Gracious, sweet and most meek disposition and with all of a Great courage in suffering, and induring much with invincible patience, amongst others in this kind, by the surgeons incisions once her knee was cutt and slice'd up into sippets, she had always a Great confidence in Almighty God. And in her last sickness was over heard to ask herself: how comes my Good God to give me so much confidence of his feavour, I having Deserve'd so very little at his hands? To which she again answer'd: the attending to myself and meddling with nobody els, doth give me this security. And that she would warrant all those who were eminent in this practice (in behalf of allmighty God's infinite Goodness) that they would enjoy a Great peace of mind at their Death. After the happy departure of our dear and Reverend Dame Hieronima, this our beloved Sister in Christ Dame Thecla was by the Convents election chosen to succeed her in the infirmary office, which she performed with Great satisfaction, recreating the sick with such innocent and pleasant conversation, that it was an excellent devertisement to see her mix mirth and piety, with such a Dexterous facility. She had been likely, if God had preserved her in life and health, to have exhibited very good assistance to the whole Community in the well Discharging of any office, especially being so free from any passion. But the Divine Majesty was pleas'd to call this his Dear spouse in the prime of her youth to himself by a consumptive fever which grew most vehemently towards the end, tollerating this her last sickness according to her wonted sweetness, peace and patience, Receiving most piously and in perfect sense all rites of

22

Holy Church. After that having had resolution, and the assistance of all the Devout prayers commonly said for those in the last agonies, both by her ghostly father and the religious, she fell into a slumber, att that very time translated from Death to Life and happily slept in our Lord with the octave feast of his glorious mother's Immaculate Conception, leaving the whole Convent most sensible of our loss. She was so grateful to everyone and truly beloved of all for her virtues Life, Innocent, sweet and gentil Disposition. Requiescat in pace.

Anno Domini 1637 February the 1st

Dame Eugenia Bedingfield, most happily Departed this Life having been profest 26 of June 1633. Her most notable virtues was a singular Devotion to our blessed Lady and a Great Desire of self contempt etc.

Our Dear Sister in Christ Dame Eugenia in Baptisme was call'd Mar[g]arita Daughter to Thomas Bedingfield Gent: commonly call'd Captain Thomas Bedingfield. She enter'd very Young to the triall of holy Religion. After her profession, She was much imploy'd in humble offices, having charge of the celler a long time together which she perform'd not only laboriously but also very cleanly and exactly. She had many interior difficultys and tryals in the midst of which she was ever most punctuall in her examins, and was observed to be always more then ordinary serious. At those times she bore a great respect to her (even immediate) superiours and loved them intirely. She oft affirm'd, that she hated to think, that any one should value or esteem her, for she never had done ought that Deserved estimation, her frequent petition to Allmighty God was to Dy. At last she Told one in Confidence a little before (or in) her last sickness, that our Lord had granted her Long request. She Dyed of a Consumption being strenghtened with all the last Sacraments happily expiring upon the eve of the Blessed Virgin's Purification to whom she had been singularly Devouted, And had reposed a Great Confidence in her as the mother of mercy, and advocatrice with her most Blessed Son Sweet Jesus. Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

In the Year of our Lord 1637 on the 4th of Aprill most piously Reposed in our lord Dame Margarit Knatchbull having made her vows of profession the 8 of December 1627. Her most Remarkable vertues were many but chiefly silence, recollection, punctuality in observances, and

most intence application to all matters of Spirit. Our most Dearly Beloved Sister in Christ and Mother, Reverend Dame Margarit, eldest daughter to (my Lady Lucy of happy memorie's eldest Brother) Thomas Knatchbull esquire, and sister to our dear Dame Mary, who was the first that Died in this our beginning house, having by earnest prayer obtain'd a vocation for this her only sister Dame Margarit, and Lived to see her half a year a Novice, seriously applying herself to the grace of her vocation. It is verily affirm'd by those who knew her from her entrance to her Death, that after

23

the time of the exercise at her profession, she never spoak an idel word, as far as may be said of any who had the Ghift of Silence, and speaking in perfection, for Almighty God out of his infinite Goodness, gave her efficacious grace to comply exactly with our holy Rule according to perfection. We truly Deem her one of our primitive, and whilst she lived cast our eyes upon her, as a true example of regularity. She was much united with Almighty God, and 'tis said by those who knew her conscience that she had always in effect his passive presence. But to descend to those particulars, which did so greatly edify us in her practices, was a constant exterior recollection of sences, and a punctuality to be for most part to be the very first in all religious observances. Of so modest and pleasant comportment that we scarce ever saw her look up, and yet her countenance was in a manner always smiling. She generally carry'd her ey's as greatly affected to every one. She was chosen deane, the Change before she died, having already performed the offices of thourier guardrop and infirmarian, with singular Good edification. Her manner of humour being not only gracious, but active, having a quick and good dispatch, and never loosing time, but always well employed. She was a Great lover and practicer of holy poverty, both in diet, cell and cloathing. She ever avoided singularity; She never was seen in the refectory to refuse the ordinary of particularitys. She was very humble (erecting her tower of perfection upon this solid foundation) even from her novishship, being then oft for her triall, chapter'd and humbled for things she was most innocent of, yet she was never heard to Justify or excuse herself but with eyes fix'd on the ground, took all with humility and silence. And this humility she ever maintain'd, not en'during to seem Desireous of (but rather Declining) offices, and promotions unless by obedience put upon her. She did not at all meddle with others actions or affairs and most free from taking notice of their errors, and was never heard to speak one word of the Defects of any creature. She had a high esteem of spiritual things, and of every rule, ordination of superiours and observance. And therefore when it was her obedience to recreate, it was with a sweet and plesant Gravity, shunning all curiosity and secular vanity, for she spoke little, rather complying with a sort of smiling alacrity, having a Lovely pritty countenance, her complexion and features suitable. She died of a Consumption, being of a couragious heart, tollerating her infirmity with great fortitude and patience. And indeed at Last she was brought to the extreimity of weakness, For she consum'd inwardly, scarce exteriorly att all, but had terrible frequent and most painfull gripes in the interior. Yet for all the time she was in the infirmary she never omitted coming Down to communicate every Sunday and Thursday; to her Death her Zeal, love and respeck to the ever blessed Sacrament was so very Great. And though she was ready to faint, every step stairs being narrow, steep and incommodious for the sick, yet Did she persevere; coming to receive her Dear Lord on Thursday in Passion week, she Dying on Saturday mourning after. In time of health she had writt out many pious Devotions and practical methods which spirituall

24

fathers had given in direction of spirit; and though this was so good a spent time, yet when she came to Dye, she had a regrett that it had not been employed rather in mentall prayer, so to be a means of more Dear union with her best beloved spouse & God. When her Death Grew nearer and nearer she in perfect sence and true Devotion Received all the Rites of our Mother the holy Church. She died as she Lived, in great opinion of sanctity which was most amply testified by her Ghostly and spirituall

fathers, as also by all the Religious, truly resenting our loss of so rare an example, and so main a support of our house in all respects; but our Lord gave her to us and our Lord took her away: blessed be his holy name for ever. Amen. Requiescat in Pace.

Anno Domini 1638

On the 15th of August most piously Departed this Life Dame Justina Corham, having been profest 1635 on the 14th of September. Her most notable vertues was Charity, Liberality, fervour and Piety, etc.

Our Dear Sister in Christ Dame Justina, Daughter to John Corham an English Merchant in Antwerp, her Grandfather Robert Corham, Gent, of Hampshire. She Inter'd into the Tryall of Religion together with her own sister Dame Cornelia, after they had been some eleven or twelve mounths convictrices. But Dame Justina being sickly, before their time of Cloathing their father sent for them to Antwerp: when we thought indeed not to have seen her return, because she was in a manner always sick in the noviciate. And though amongst her friends she found many persuasions and reasons, humanly speaking, to deterr her from tying herself to a State whereby morall probability, she was not to enjoy a Day of Perfect health; Yet God's Grace assisting, she fervently Persever'd and Came back again with her sister, intering with Great resolution, one saying to her after she was within the monastry, that she was double welcome in respect, the Doctors had told her, that inclosure, & solitude was mainly opposite to her constitution. She very civily thank't that party, & as one transported with new Joy, said: if I had been sure never to enjoy one hour of health in this place, yet I am com'd (thank God) att least to Dye in the monastry amongst the Religious. After this second entrence she beg'd most humbly & earnestly of Almighty God so much health as might inable her to Go through in her observances, till her Profession, and then do with her as it best pleas'd his Divine Goodness. Her prayer was heard and the truth is, immediately in a manner, after her bride Days she was carry'd falling into an inward consumption And remain'd there three years Exercising both patience and piety. She was of a high spirit and did greatly overcome herself and did in this time of her sickness apply herself very much to union with God Allmighty. She thirsted excessively to be Dissolved, so to enjoy her spouse and saviour. The Reverend Dame who was then infirmarian ask'd her seriously if indeed she had a Desire to Dye, she being so young, who retura'd this answer with a Generous contempt of this Life that

25

indeed she languish'd much to be with God and enjoy him. She was endued with a noble humour, having a free heart and a generous spirit, and liberally with leave distributed charitys as the[y] were required, she was overheard to say to herself in perfect sence and Great fervour of spirit: Break heart and Go to thy Jesus, break heart and Go to thy Jesus. Att last God Granted her ardent wishes: for her fever began to be more intence and being very Particularly Devout to the blessed virgin (after she had Received all the Last sacraments most piously) she sweetly expired on the Great festivity of her most Glorious Assumption, in the prime of her Youth, remaining fat & good liking exteriorly, her consumption being all within. She had a pure complexion; and we are confident her soul in the forge of three years sickness was purify'd and made fitt to enter there where no Defil'd thing may be admitt'd. Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1640 on the 20 of December

Most Piously Departed this Life our Dear beloved sister in Christ Dame Alexia Grey, having been profest in the year 1631 on the 24th of June. Her most notable vertues were many but chiefly Intence prayer and application to Spirituall things, silence & punctuality in all which was obedience.

Dame Allexia Grey, in Baptism call Margarit, Daughter to Edward Grey, Esq: her father Dying when she was young My Lady Kidson her Aunt took her and bred her in a high rank according to the Gallantry of this world. She was indued with a Good witt and a prudent Gracefull comportment. The

Relation of her Conversion to Religion as from her own mouth is in this manner: At what time she was in the hight of transitory Glory for youth and bravery, being ever a Chatholick, but otherwise vain enough, according to the strain of worldly humours, & following those principles whereby it inveagles youth, her features being excellent good, and her personage Comly, helping her beauty with some little art, earnestly pursuing her pleasures in all kind of Recreation, Balls, maskes and the Like. And this she acknowledged (with weeping eyes) her case was then so miserable, and so much affected in those Terrean follies, that she could have willingly been Content to have lived heer always. One night in this Disposition, in sleep she had this wonderfull dream or vision. To her seeming she was brought before the Tribunall of allmighty God in a Place of Judgement and att the same Time a multitude of people, of all sorts and conditions with her, expecting before the Judge, the doom of their finall sentence. She saw our Lord sit In Great power and majesty, Attended by many saints and angels, his sacred Mother the Queen of heaven being also present; instently a Great Globe was turn'd round before her and she was Call up by her name Margerit Grey. Then she saw in that Globe a world of names, reading distinctly her own together with all her sinns from the use of Reason in thought word and Deed, and so as that every Circumstance was sett out most lively before her; seeing also many sins of others, amongst which she most plainly

26

red one, which concern'd one in the same house with her. Att last full of fear and trembling she perceived a perticular sin of her own, which either for want of a Diligent Search into her life, or not light to see it till then, her never been disclose[d] in sacramentall Confession. Hearing withall to her thinking, the sentence of her Damnation Given, which put her to such a horrible fright, that she instantly Came to her self. The effect of all was that remembring her sins now so Clearly, she without delay by instant prayer, and serious examine, prepar'd for a General Confession, deploring all, but that foresaid sin in particular, then she wash'd her soul by the Sacrament of penance in the precious blood of our Saviour, to her singular Comfort and satisfaction. She went also to that other party and told them that sacred [secret?] sin of theirs. At which ready even to sinck att her feet they turn'd as pale as ashes, knowing that no mortall creature was ever wittness of it. Yet she Comforted them and imparted Good and effectuall advice how to proceed in order to their soul's benefit. Notwithstanding, for all this, she herself followed on her vanitys, still yet in reality she lov'd modesty, had a Good repute, and was much Desired in all Companys, but as yet not weighing the hazards and dangers her soul run into, and the oblivion of God, which the inordinate love to Created objects Caused. Till at last, Almighty God, out of his infinite mercy whilst she was actually dancing, even in one of the turns of the same dance, turn'd her hart wholly towards him, Calling her efficaciously to religion, making no Delay, having her former vision, or Dream as she call it afresh represented to her memory. She presently prepared for her Journey and Came to Ghent, being then some two or three and twenty years. After her admittance she run'd on a full race towards perfection, and having a high esteem of the Least tittle of our holy rule and Constitutions, and because none might be ignorant of the excellent perfections Contain'd in this rule of ruls, she was at the Charge of printing it in English, for before it was only extant in writting hand, the injuries of the Times in our hereticall poor Country having defaced and destroyed those Coppys of former prints in our Mother's tongue. This our dear beloved Dame Allexia never lost her first fervour but went applying herself Continually to spirituall matters, Growing eminent in all regular observance, giving herself much to mentall [prayer]. She was as concerning her passions of an excellent temper adorn'd with great prudence, having a most religious gravity mixt with affability, so that in times allowed for recreation she was a rare companion, greatfull to all by a pleasent free Conversation. And yet she had the gift of silence in such an eminent manner that she was very oft observed at the very first toll of a bell, to break off[f] in her discours at the middle of a word, when it has rung for recreation, etc. By those words of our blessed Saviour to St Peter, Checking as it were his inquisitiveness concerning St John, saying: what is that to thee? follow thou me. She gained the vertue of neither observing, nor Curiously inquiring

after those things which belonged not to her. And this vertue procured her a great recollection, both interiour and exterior, which was apparent

27

in her, for besides the Regular Custody of her senses, she could not hide the frequent and fervent exercises of her mind for [s]he had a Great knowledge of spirit, and Clearly illuminated, to perform the most excellent practices to perfection. Having been ayde to divers offices, at last she herself was chosen Mistress of the novices. But alas not long enjoying any reasonable health to performe it, being already fallen into a consumption which grew more intence; insomuch that she was sent to the infirmary where she lived some two years a Dying life; and least she should doe no service to the Community she herself making and footing the stockings of the religious with admirable Charity. She was most intirely Candid with Spirituall fathers and Superiours, and, being so truly a Good and regular religious, her example shone brighter and brighter to her dying Day, sufferring with most singular edification, both piously and patiently, her long and tedious infirmity, taking, with heroically victory over herself the most unsavory medecins and this very frequently, for much was done if it had pleas'd God to recover her. Towards her death, according to the happy ending which God of his infinite Goodness has bless'd this house of his holy Mothers withal, she humbly beg'd and received all the Holy sacraments with true devotion and perfect sence, environ'd with the presence and prayers of all the religious, at which time our reverend Ghostly father was turning from her to speak to the whole Community (according to custom) in her behalf, she humbly beg'd leave to speake herself. Then rying up, her weake body being nothing but skin and bone, with ardent Zeal & tender devotion, first she beg'd pardon of every one with Great humility; then most hartily with sincere and Cordiall expressions, she gave thanks to Almighty God, and to this Community, for her being religious, blessing the divine goodness especially for being religious in this very house, saying: O how do I bless God for this happiness, of being a Child of our holy fathers amongst you; in this world none Can Dive into the infinity (in a manner) of benefits included in so holy a vocation, unless illuminated by allmighty God, and so neer the Confines of eternity. After many such moving expressions and acts of humility thanksgiving and pray[er]s which drew tears from all, the Convent departed for that time. After some hours, assembled and praying again, on St Thomas the apostles day at night, She Sweetly expir'd, having been only eleven Year in the School of holy religion and yet had arived to such an art of Dying and Living wel. After she was wash'd and dress'd according to religious Custome Laid out in our sisters quire in her Great habit and vail, the Grates being left open for the neibours to see and pray for the soul. A young but venerable man in the habit of a priest came and looked attentively upon her saying so loud as that he was heard; This Dear soul did not so much as pass trough the fire of purgatory, but went presently to enjoy the fruition of God; Which said, he went away and none that ever we could hear of did either see him before or after whoever it was. We hope her long sickness, so continually offering it up with so many acts of piety for the Glory of God, and Good of her soul and others, her most exact obedience,

28

yea even most punctually to our sister convers, who assisted to serve the sick, and exactness in the distribution of the infirmary, might obtain her purgatory here through the mercy and merits of our Lord and Saviour to whom be all prayse.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1641 February the 12th

Most happily departed this life our most belov'd sister [in] Christ & mother Reverend Dame Mary Southcote having made her Vows of holy profession 1627 on the 8 of December. Her most remarkable vertues was singular devotion to our blessed Lady and Zeal concerning the quire service. &c.

Dame Mary Southcote Daughter to Edward Southcote Gent, came timely to serve God in Religion being about 14 when she enter'd into The Noviciate. She was a lively and active humour, A straight timber'd Little creature, had a fine naturall witt, a sharp and quick capacity, excellent att her book and pen, understood the Latin tongue, indew'd also with a good voice both for singing and saying in the Quire which she perform'd strongly, movingly and sweetly, being skillfull in musick. With these helps she went on in religion in an ordinary way untill two years before her Death: for then it [was] when the Divine Goodness most efficaciously did begin to roose and raise her up to an eminent degree of perfection, first casting into her interiour many prevailing arguments, to Convince her in the true knowledge of what she had of her own stock and what she had of extraordinary liberality. Some six weeks or two months, she was thorowly tryed in the forge of Anxietys, Ariditys, scruples and temptations, and the like but behold the event (told by herself to a vertuous Dear Religious friend) God allmighty determining in the latitude of his mercies, to Give a period to those her troubles; beginning this new and particular Conversion of hers by inspiring her to treat with spiritual fathers. For before she seldome came at them, determining by their approbation to make a Generall Confession, tho withall she had great difficulty to go about it. In respect thus in her whole life she never had experienced such perplexity of Conscience and such Interiour difficulties, earnestly beging prayers. Two nights she spent in watching, preparing seriously all that while for this great and extraordinary Confession; at the end of which time as little satisfy'd as before; being still in a Laborinth of difficultys & a Cloud of disturb'd doubts, Casting herself before her oratory thinking what should [she] do; (O the mercys of God) at that very instant all the sins of her whole life were presented before the eye of her mind as Clare as the Day in every particular circumstance, which with Gratitude to allmighty God she acknowledged then and ever after as a Singular great favour, after which she made a Generall Confession. And from that moment in the whole two year[s] of her remaining life amongst us, she lived as though she had indeed been rais'd to Life, Living a new life of grace in strict poverty, casting all superfluous things out of her cell, in exact Silence, Great Zeal in punctuall performance of all religious Dutys, very much attending to spirituall matters. In fine she appear'd by her perseverance in these things as an example

29

of admirable perfection. Coming forth (by the mercies and merits of our saviour) like pure refined Gold out of the furnace of affliction, giving a new luster to the day of her Death. She had performed very Laudably the office of Chantress, Mistress of the Juniors and Dean, keeping the Young religious (who were her Charge) most exactly to all regular observances both by word and example, duly applying themselves in every hour of the Day, according to the misterys of our Saviour's passion devid'd to that number, having purposly a time keepe[r] who turn'd the hour Glass with a sign then given at each hour from morn to night. She was of a more then ordinary devotion to our Blessed Lady doing many pious practices in her honnour, singularly addicting her Self to Reverence and Serve all the Glorious Virgins perticular friends, as St Joseph, St Joachim, St Ann, St John Baptist & his holy Parents, St Bernard & the rest of her Chaplins, St Cassamirus. Etc, making all her Charge eminent in this. She had an extream Desire that all the Community might doe her some peculier service above the ordinary, so that Divers with her invented and Consent[ed] (by leave of Superiours) to sing upon Sundays after evening song her Hymn of praise call'd te matrem, att, or before Loretto; which is in use to this Day. Whilst she was Chantress allways when she sung the Martyrologe on Christmas eve it was so movingly perform'd, that it mov'd even to Tears of Devotion. At last in this full pursuit of perfection, she was struck with an Ayre into a kind of a palsey, which turn'd to a mixture of appoplexy & falling sickness. These infirmitys came to such a violence, that in some ten days it Caus'd her Death. She Receiv'd notwithstanding, blessed be God, piously all Rights of holy Church, and most happily repos'd in our Lord the 12 of February; within the octave of our holy Mother St Scholastica, Leaving a sad house full of resentment to lose one of such eminent qualities, Natural & supernaturall. But She being wholly God's 'tis but Just, and right, at what time to his eternal sweet

providence he knows most Convenient, that he take possession of his own. She died about the age of thirty having Liv'd 14 years in the world and sixteen in religion. Requiescat In Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1641, the 7 of March

Most happily Departed this Lif Dame Scholastica Rooper. She was profest 1628, the 14 of September. In Baptisme she was call'd Margarit. Daughter to Christopher Rooper Barren of Te[y]nham etc., of [Linstead] Lodge in Kent. God, of his most fatherly sweet and adorable providence intending to exalt her by the holy Cross made her begin very timely to Drink the holy Chalice of suffrance, being visited 12 years with a continuall infirmity. The Doctors instead of Cure in the first year of this visitation, even in a manner did stupify her, yet not so but that she was Capable of the holy Sacraments. And truly we all Receiv'd Great edification, in respect of her singular mansitude having ever a sweet and peacable disposition, never, upon any occasion was she seen to give disgust, She had even such a naturall Civilit[y]. Att her first Coming over out of

30

England she went to Brussels, where her Curtious sweet behaviour drew all the eyes of the Court upon her, saying they had scarce seen so fine a Lady Come into these parts. Somtime before her Death growing a Little distemper'd she was sent to the infirmary, where she most quietly and patiently sustain'd her Last sickness, and told one that Came to visit her, of her sister, my Lady Huddlestown's Death a Little before the news was sent hither. Saying my sister came for me, and how she had seen her all in white, this, our Dear Deam Receiv'd all Rites of the Church, And peacably repos'd in our Lord on St Thomas of Aquins Day in Lent. Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Mistress Chatherine Rooper Convictrice most happily Departed this Life Anno 1641 on the 26 of March.

Mistris Chatherine Rooper Daughter to William Rooper Esq: Grandchild to my Lord Christopher Rooper Barren of Tenham, was sent by her parents to be bread heer amongst our Convictresses where her two Aunts were Religious, And both alive, My Lady Mary Rooper then mistris of the Novices and Dame Scholastica Rooper. She was of a most Innocent Disposition. After being 2 year in the Convict being about 14 years old, she having a vocation to be a poor Clare would willingly have put it in execution but doubtless Allmighty God seeing, as we probably believe, that her delicate and tender Constitution might be the obstacle to hinder her parents consent, sent her a Gentle fever which within some Days Grew more violent and being most piously Disposed, Receiving Devoutly all the holy Sacraments, our good God was pleas'd to take her to himself even in the hight of her fervent Desires on the very day after the annuntiation of our blessed Lady. This pure innocent virgin was buri'd in a fine white Linnen habit Girt with a St Francis Cord looking all the while she was laid out most delicate fair and rather indeed like one in a sweet sleep and tho she was Dead yet her angelicall Countenance mov'd to Devotion. Requiescat in pace. Amen.

In the Year 1641, the 8 of July

Most piously Departed this Life, Dame Mary Digby having made her vows of profession the 5 of August 1637. Her most remarkable vertues was fervorous Zeal, Great Devotion, punctuality in observances, &c.

Our most Dear Sister in Christ Dame Mary Digby, Daughter to John Digby of Seation, Gent, born in Rutland, came to Religion about the age of 23. Coming heer to our Great with Desires to enter, there was some Demur in respect of her want of portion, and we not founded, she being a most singular honnourer of our blessed Lady the mother of God, said then, that wersoever she could learn of any monastery more devout'd then ordinary to her, there she would indeavour to be. And

hearing some of our religious speake of all those particular Devotions Tie and Tittles, whereby this holy monastery Doth so peculiearly portain to the queen of virgins, then

31

all transported with Joy like one inflam'd with new fervour, O said she; heer I must be: here I must be then. And God so provided for her, that she quickly enter'd and from that time to her Death, never lost her first fervour but went on with Great edification in the practice of holy obedience, Poverty, Humility, Devotion & Zeal. She was a lovely creature of a passing sweet and civill Disposition, weake of constitution, yet had a Giant's courage, attempting more then her poor strenght could go through with, as well in fasts as other austerities, emulating still the most strict observance. She was indeed singularly pious, And besides her constant practices and service exhibited in our blessed Lady's honnour, she was most peculiarly Devout to our holy father St Bennedict, highly praising even the Least particular in his rule. She behaved herself ever most respectfully and curiously to every creature; wholly attent to all her spiritual matters, aiming most frequently to do all with perfection. She was singularly addicted to Do every thing of her actions according to pure intention, and, if through human frailty she had forgott to Do it, she had a certain remors; very sincible if she had not thought upon God by Directing all and everything to him, and for him. She had a very charitable hart and indued with a noble free mind, being allways gratefull to the whole community, and as Dearly beloved of all for her humble sweet manner of humour. She was of a candid Disposition, and once confessed to her superiour that for a long time God was pleas'd to try her [with] ariditys, and that sometimes in the whole hour of prayer she could not win so much of her self as to think of God att all, or consider him in any kind. Yea in an eight Days exercise it fair'd little or not att all better with her. Yet afterwards it pleas'd our Good God to crown that humility and patience of her's, with an abundant consolation, for she had real and supernatural feavours. And 'tis credibly believ'd she had a vision of the most blessed Trinity itself with many other feavours best known to her Ghostly and spirituall fathers, for none else could tell them she was so humble and silent in them, only this one particular she told her superiour which concerns the overcoming of sleep in our blessed Lady's honnour. This our Dear Dame Mary was much assaulted with the temptation of sleep especially at mattins. One night finding herself very heavily Dispos'd, and oppress'd with a sleepy Dullness, she thought to ask leave not to go that night to mattins. But, reflecting that it was St Casimirus's eve, and remembring his Devotion to the mother of God, resolved, that, in her honnour, she would go to the quire. When the[y] were saying then the Divine office, according to custom, she began to grow very Drowsy; but being as we have said, of a fervent Zealous spirit, she resisted again and again, without intermission as t'were, as they may very wel imagin who is troubled with this troublesome temptation. But alas she found her still as sleepy as ever. At last she thought in her mind, to what purpose Do I stand here? neither saying nor Doing my Duty. I'll rise and Go to my superiour and Gett leave to go out: yet God's grace assisting her, calling to memory how she came in honnour of our blessed Lady, therefore for her sake she would persevere

32

to the end. And as she cast her eyes up to the blessed virgin's Image to renew this Intention, she beheld a brigh[t] star which increased by Degrees very much, both in splendour and bigness appearing very Glorious upon the Image. When Instantly from the same Image an internall voice speake to her in these kind of words: As you see the Greatness and resplendant brightness of this star's increase so Did you increase and augment my Glory, every time you resisted sleep in my honnour and for my sake. At which she found such a comfort in her soul, and experienc'd afterwards such effectual grace that from that time to her Death she never was molested with that sluggish temptation, but wrought Day in God Almighty's service and nightly too with these two instruments of Good works in our holy rule; not Drowsy, not slothfull in whatsoever spirituall exercise she was

employ'd in. Thus then she run on at full speed, in all regular observances accompany'd with a weak body, that at last she Got a Consumption cough, which in process of time brought her by [her] superiours ordain to the infirmary where she Lay some months, languishing to be free'd from the impediment of flesh, that her spirit at full Liberty might exult in the living God and praise him incessantly. Her Desir'd wish was to Dye about the feast of our blessed virgins visitation. A week or more before this festivity she Grew so much better that it was thought that perhaps indeed she might recover; or att least in all liklyhood continue a Long time, att which she Grew a Little sad saying to that Religious who was sister of the infirmary: Dear sister tell me what Do you think for I rely much on your opinion, pray give me better comfort; who in answer told her truly morally speaking it was very likely she could not long continue and who knew but that perhaps our blessed Lady would take her about her feast Day. At which she was so Joy'd, that she resum'd a kind of new vigor and Life she did so thirst to be with God. In this disposition with pious preparation she resign'dly expected the Good pleasure of our Saviour. At last 2 or 3 Days before the visitation she fell into a slumber (as she call'd it) after which the infirmary sister coming into the roome found Dame Mary all in a fervent Joy, who in a cheerfull manner said; O Sister, [I] have in my sleep seen two souls of purgatory who came to me and bid me be of a Good courage, for if I Dyed not upon the visitation day itself, I should not stay here many Days after, telling me with all that they were appointed to accompany me to heaven. Now you must know that she in her Life has been extraordinary compassionate to help and relieve the faithfull Departed and had a Great faith that as the[y] were the friends of God the[y] could and would obtain many Good things for her and really the event of this Dream proved (as concerning her Death) very true, for she Dyed Arm'd with all the rites of our holy mother the Church upon the sixth Day after the visitation and within the Devout octave, with exemplar piety, perfect sense, and not only sweetly, but serenely, for after she had given a kind of a Gracious [...] to all, praying about her instead of sighing or striving between Life and Death. She expir'd indeed

33

Smiling, Looking pure and fair like a bride Going to her nuptiall solemnity, Leaving us all much edify'd at her sweet angelical Life amongst us. Requiescat In Pace. Amen.

In the Year 1642 on the 20th of February Most happily Departed this Life Sister Tecla Bedingfield. Her most Notable Vertues were Humility and Sincerity.

Sister Tecla, in Baptism call'd Margarit, Daughter to Matthew Bedingfield Gent. She Came to Religion about the age of 16, her Complexion pure fair, her Constitution sickly. Having Past a Year scholar she very Joyfully Receiv'd the holy habit, Going on in the Tryall of religion with Courage and zeal, being Consumptive, holding out as Long as possible without Going to the infirmary, for she would not Yield nor shrinck under the burden of her Cross but did all those usuall humble offices wherein the novices were try'd for the exercise of humility and mortification, without Desire of being exempted. She was of a Candid and Downright plain Dailing humour, not att all move[d] by human respects, and had a great Contempt of the world even from her tender years, never giving way to be set vainly out by Curling her haire and the like, but allways, when she was call'd to be dress'd in that sort like her other sister she would weep most bitterly and beg with many tears to be excus'd. This resolute spirit in point of vertue she mantain'd in Religion. In time of her Last sickness, being sent to the infirmary, she behav'd herself very religiously and was most willing to Dye, humbly beging to be admitt'd to make her vows of Holy religion which she obtain'd and did perform them very piously, receiving Devoutly allso all the Last Sacraments; having all rites and prayers piously Done for her she was bid to repose, and in that Disposition slept in our Lord quietly without any other sign, so that those who were kneeling at prayer about her, did not perceive when she Dyed.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1642, the 12 of July

Mistris Elisabeth Wakeman Very Piously repos'd In Our Lord. Her Vertues Innocency, prudence, fervorous Piety.

Mistress Elisabeth Wakeman Daughter to Edward Wakeman Gent, of Beckford in Glostershire, being sent by her vertuous parents to be educated in this house, of the immaculate Conception, together with a sister of her's, In the [year] 1640. After she had been about 2 years in the Convict, being eleven when she Came, profitting much in piety, having a fine witt and of a mature & prudent Judgment more then ordinary is seen in those years, found God Almighty inspire strongly Calling her to Religion. But because she had an Aunt of St Theresia's order att Antwerp and her sister already fixing her resolutions to the holy order of St Benedict here, she Determin'd to take to be a Teresian. Before they settled into any Course the[y] both went to make their aunt a Visit, who was very kind to her in particular, which in those tender ages works strongly with a reciprocal tye of Dear affection, which came to be her case. Notwithstanding,

34

in Midst of all that kind welcome, she suddenly found herself strongly touch'd to be a Benediction, yea more and more, in so much [that] all the persuasive motions, to move her for St Theresia's order, she was resolved and did indeed with Great generosity of spirit civilly part with her Aunt, though she confessed the strife between nature and grace did even in a manner split her hart in pieces for she was [assailed?] with Batterys [which] might have shaken a masculine spirit, yet the obedience to God Almighty's inspirations mad[e] her break through all. Coming therefore back again to this monastery, she thirsted for naught more then to be of age to enter Into the noviciate: her heart scarce yet at quiet since the Last storme, for she had taken it unkindly of some who in a manner had forcibly persuaded her to be a Teresian. Her Ardent Desires so bent then to the Contrary but it was not Long 'eer our Good God, whom she Lov'd so entirely, took her to himself, in hight of her fervourous affections and Resolution. For be[ing], as it is thought, struck with an ayre she fell into a fever, and Growing near her Death beg'd and obtain'd to make her vows of Religion. In respect she was but 13 our Reverend Ghostly father told her beforehand that, when he Drew them in writing for her, he had put in a clause that, if she recover'd, she was at Liberty again. She heard him with Great attention, and prepar'd herself most seriously and Devoutly; therefore whilst she was pronouncing them aloud upon her Death bed, many of the Religious with her Ghostly father being present, when she was at the foresaid Conditionall Clause (of her own accord) she omitting it, added, for ever and ever and ever, uttering her vows, and this for perpetuity, so Devoutly and fervently, that it moved all to Tears of affectionate Gratitude to allmighty God who had so prevented her in the sweetness of his benedictions. The little time she surviv'd in midst of the Greatest Distemper of fever, she would still have a black vail and scappeler about her kissing them with Great Devotion. On the Votive feast of our holy father the 11th of July she most piously and in perfect sense Receiv'd all rites of the holy Church; the very next Day she sweetly expired. She lived and Dyed Like an Innocent sweet little virgin; to our exceeding edification this Terrestriall Angell, was buried In the Holy Habit of a Benediction.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno 1643 our most beloved Dear Sister In Christ Reverend Dame Mary Pease, most happily Reposed In our Lord on the Eight of December, having made her holy vows of profession 1626 the 12 of August. Her most remarkable vertues were prudence, mansitude, frugality and Piety Besides many others.

Dame Mary Pease, Daughter to Andrew Pease (then steward to My Lord Peters) Inter'd for scholar Into Brussels Monastery, and by reason of her want of health was forced to return into her native soile; being therefore pritty well recover'd by the Change of air, knowing most of those who

Came from Brussels to begin this house, she resolved to add to the number of this little flock, being peculiarly Devouted to our blessed Lady. After her admittance here

35

she went on with very Good edification to all, Superiours ever taking particuler satisfaction in her proceedings both before and after her holy profession, as well when she had no office as when she was thourier, Cellarier and Procuratrix, all which she perform'd most faithfully, frugally Despening the Goods of the monastery, according to the offices then in Charge. She was perticularly Drawn on in the way of vertue by sweetness, having ever a tender and affectionate devotion towards Almighty God and matters of spirit, her discours always tending to Love, for which Cause tis probable she was so very singularly Devouted to Great St Augustin, much vers'd and Devouted to his works, having upon all occasions som of his amorous sentences at hand, which she interlaced in her discourse, which for most part, indeed, was spirituall. She had a good witt, and a prudent mature Judgment and [was] exceeding affable, mixt with a pleasant Gravity with a Curtious Civillity to all, which made her very well beloved. She mantain'd good the Constant Devotion, which was Desired by all to be advanced in this Community, towards the mother of God. She had a naturall deprehension of Death: besides she did emulate to be near her dear spouse in heaven, which she knew a Long Good Life (as She said) might be a means to attain it. And, therefore, she was most earnest in prayer, when the religious Lay Sick, to obtain their recovery, as she did for one in perticular, promissing for a whole year to perform Certain paters and aves recitall all [*sic*] her bear knees, which was Granted her, for that party, being given over for a Dying woman, became healthy and Lived Long after that. And when she was Carry'd herself to the infirmary, she had a Good mind if it pleas'd God to Live still: but some 3 days before blessed Virgins Immaculate Conception she began to be so wholly changed, that her soul did indeed thirst for nothing more, then to be dissolved from this mortall body, and, if it were according to the Divine will, upon that very Day. And God was pleas'd to hear her prayer, for on this festivity, when the religious were at Dinner she fell into an agony; all flocking by Degrees to Come to her when they saw her in perfect sence, and so very Joyfull, that it moved them to praise God with admiration. She appear'd rather like one ready to sett forth to a nuptiall solemnity, saying with a pleasant smiling countenance, [I] shall Dye now within a few howers; behold in my eyes and nose, the welcome signs of Death. Taking her handkerchief with her ow[n] hands to assist herself, Desiring that her viaticum & holy Oyles might be brought as soon as conveniently. But because of the sermon and solemn Evening Song, t'was thought fitt to Deferr till after vespers was done. Meanwhile the two Doctors came, assuring there was time enough, and no such present Danger, but that she might live some hours. Her infirmity was a Dropsy which swell'd her most in her Leggs and stomach for which cause, she was not able to Lye Long in bed and then being actually up in a chair. Therefore in evening song time as they were getting her into the bed, for the more Decent Receiving the rites of holy church, she fell into an other agony. An Ancient father of the Society who was our spirituall father

36

and our Reverend Ghostly father with the two Doctors were instantly brought up for it was fear'd she could not Live to be annoyld: but o how Good is God and how admirable Glorious is his Saints? this our Dear Dame was of the confraternity of St Barbara: and 'tis recorded by many experimentall truths, that none of that sodality dyes without the sacraments, as we were confirm'd in the belief thereof by this example. For, on that very mourning she had Devoutly received the blessed Sacrament and that of confession and though now we should have really thought she had bin Dead if Phisitions had not been there; but the Holy Oyles being brought, the more ancient which was Doctor Basill, held her puls, giving assurance that she Lived, and so still as they were applied. He follow'd her puls higher and higher crying: Vivit Vivit and thus she went, arm'd against the assaults of the enemy, to meet her beloved spouse and saviour with her Lamp full off oyle amongst the true virgins

to celebrate the eternall nuptials in the Great feast Intitle'd the Immaculate conception of the Queen of virgins.
Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

In the Year of Our Lord 1645 On the 30 of May Our beloved Sister Dorothy Skrimsher most happily Departed this mortall Life having been profest on the 24th of May 1642. Her most noted vertues was ardent prayer, silence, abstinence and meekness.

Sister Dorothy Skrimsher, Daughter to Thomas Skrimsher Esq, came to Religion when she was about 28, being of a most sweet and civill Disposition, full of curtasy and respect to all. She was most singularly addicted to prayer And verily persuaded herself in the world, that nunns applied themselves scarce to any other exercise then continuall prayer. She undertook a religious state, meerly to unite her self wholly to God by means of so Divine an exercise, but when she found that the state of a convers sister was to labour much in the active life, for the common service of allmighty God and the community, she was somewhat sensible she had so mistaken her aime, yet civill sweet creature, she seem'd Desireous to persevere in that course she had undertaken, butt with all now and then getting all possible time for Devotion, Deliberately giving offence to none, and very well content to undergoe any Chapter humiliation or penance so that she might but have time to enjoy the conversation of her Dearest Lord in whom she only Delighted; for she was in a manner wholly alienated from all things in this world, being carryed on with most sensible sweetnesse, tears and Devotion in time of prayer. Thus she went on in that settled dictamen till an eight Days spirituall exercise, which she took about the middle of May 1645. In this retirement God allmighty was pleased to illuminate this Dear spouse of his, who loved him so intirely and let her know, that obedience is better than sacrifice; and being thus truly inlighten'd, She saw it was an error not to find God and his holy will in every thing ordain'd by superiours; finding withall the effects of an efficacious Grace to turn over a new leaf, being, in a manner, over whelm'd

37

with sorrow, contrition and sensibility, that in the 5 years she lived in the monastery, She had not believed thus much, but now most truly Convicted and Conform'd she resolved to make an extraordinary Confession, and in this exercise she had all supernaturall favours and Comforts Concerning the ever blessed and adorable Trinity. To Conclude, she Came out inflamed all with the Love of God and obedience, doing Great penance, fasts, Austerity and the like, beseeching allmighty God rather [than] that she would fail in her purposes to take her out of this life, and really to say the very truth (setting aside the bytimes she would formerly steal for her prayers, rising in the night etc.), She was an eminent regular religious woman in all other things: most spearing in her speech, modest, humble, silent, neat, laborious, meek and patient, civill, respective and abstinent, and this without exaggeration. But now, the few days she live[d] in health, she was so exactly obedient that she prefer'd it before all Devotions whatsoever, and indeed for some 4 days, for that was all till she fell sick, she appear'd as a True saint Labouring in the hardest works Continually, never desiring or admitting rest, Yet so silent, humble, modest, and obedient in the Least thing that it was a singular edification. The 24 of May being the Aniversary of her profession, having with Leave done hard pennance the night before, fasting, prayer, watching, Disciplin etc. she was so spent that in Mass time she fell extreamly ill; being Carryed away, she earnestly beg'd to receive her Viaticum, and holy Oyles, but it was defer'd to see the event; in six Days the fever did so increase that it turn'd to a frenzy, but, a little before she Dyed God of his Goodness did so bring her to herself that she piously and sensibly Desired and Received all the rites of holy Church, exchanging this mortall misery for an eternall Glory, between Assention and Whitsontide. She confessed to her superiour in her health, that, when ought trouble[d] her she never made her Complaint to Creatures, nay even instead of troubling superiours or spirituall fathers, she allways went first to God and made her address to him, and from him ever found all true and solid satisfaction, Comfort and redress so that she needed neither to speak or seek for human comfort. The Continuall tears shead at her prayers had all most

quite taken away her eyesight, and in prayer again she gott the Clear strong eyesight of her soul to the Eternall Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ who illuminates everyone that Comes in to this world.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

In the Year of our Lord 1646, on the 9 of November Most happily Reposed in our Lord our Illustrious and Venerable Mother in Christ My Lady Eugenia Poulton, the second Abbess of this our holy monastery of the Immaculate Conception In Ghent. In the 44 year of her profession, of her age sixty five, havin[g] been 16 year prelatrice, and Living 3 year after she had humbly resign'd it up. Her most Remarkable vertues was an extraordinary Great Zeal, humility, Devotion, Compassion, Innocency of Life, and a most singular honnourer of the most blessed and Glorious Virgin.

38

My Lady Eugenia, In Baptism Called Jane, Daughter to Ferdinande Poulton, Gentleman of a very ancient familie, enter'd to Brussels for the Tryall of Religion at 19. She received the holy habit together with two other Gentlewomen on our holy mothers day the 10 of February. She was a most Lovely hansome Lady: and the Solemnity was perform'd by the Pope's nuntiate himself, with great state, he being discended Linially of the same family of our holy father St Bennet: a Great Concours of people came to see the Cloathing amongst whom were a company of English hereticks with their minister; he was so well pleas'd with the Ceremony that Composing a little Book of the solemnity and all what past he had it to shew amongst the winders of his Travails. She was profest the 12 of May 1601, and proceeded in Religion with progress in perfection, being ellected to many offices, and perform'd them Laudably, having been Guardrop, Procuratrix, Cellarier, Dean and Prioress. Besides the beauty of her interieur Devotion, she was graced with an angelicall Countenance, att all times but especially in prayer. She was a Chief agent in negotiating the busines of this beginning house, being then actually their prioress att Brussels, and was the most ancient of those 4 Reverend Dames who came hither to Ghent. After my Lady Lucie of happy memory was seated in the Charge of prelature, my Lady Eugenia was Chosen mistriss of the novices, which she discharged with admirable Good satisfaction for above five years, and then the Chief superiority was put into her hand, having been by common consent elected, to succeed my Lady Lucie, upon St Laurence day. And no doubt but Almighty God was the prime elector, having endued her fitt abilitys for such a government, being of a singular good nature, of a most tender conscience, very pious, having a sound and good understanding, besides Great experience both in spirituall and household affairs: She was blessed solely on the 16 of September and truly in ordering all things so religiously and frugally, all her children thought themselves most happy in having such a mother, and she again may be compar'd to a hen feeding and clocking them all to-gether under the wings of her tender soli[cit]ude, brooding and warming them with the fervent zeal of common order and disciplin. She was remarkable for humility and compassion, for (being naturally a Little cholerick) when Zeal urg'd her reprehensions; she would according to our Statutes examin how she had Discharged her obligations, an[d] in this reflection she never fail'd to spend Daly half an houre; wherin, if she fear'd that any of her children had been too severely mortifi'd or contristated upon her account she would, when she found it her fault, send for them that night before sleep, and with weeping tears beg them to pardon her, and for the most part kissed their feet, and if upon any other occasion she came to the knowledge that any one was in temptation, affliction or whatsoever difficulty she would as soon as possible send for them and be sure with a motherly heart [to] comfort them, and see them quietned. It can hardly be expressed the exceeding Zeal she had for the General Good Disciplin of the whole monastery, and most particularly for a right gracefull and

39

distinct tone, in the well performance of the Divine office, not enduring nor suffering the least Danger without imposing some penance according to the quality of the fault. She herself would be present

assisting as much as possible; maintaining also the musitions endeavours not only by approbation, but singing musick song with them. In her time began the solemn musick masses and such like advancements in quire service; she also sett out the holy processions on St Mark and rogation dayes. In fine, all things were Duely perform'd which might add to the Decorum of regular Disciplin as farr as time and circumstances could permitt; she and the religious on our holy father St Benedict's feasts, went procession wise down to his cave, the banner of our holy father and holy mother caryed before whilst the quire Dames sung his littyans. My Lady Lucy of happy memory living but Just a year after the coming to the little new building (which she built) t'was impossible to introduce so soon matters to that pass as the[y] were afterwards, though she saw things brought to as much Good order as then could be; but My Lady Eugenia In process of time by her exceeding Zeal (her predecessors prayers assisting Doubtless her indeavours) performed much in that nature. This our Dear mother my Lady Eugenia was most truly Devout to the most blessed sacrament, frequently visiting it with blessed Devotion and in especiall tender manner, affected to the Glorious mother of God, no Day omitting, whatever business, constantly to recite besides her other devotions (as her littyans beads etc.) the Little office of her immaculate Conception, ever Chusing as near as Conveniently Could her feast days or within the octave, or some Saturday at Least, to Cloath and profess her religious in. Continuing that pious Custome which my Lady Lucy had begun, of Communicating every Saterdag in honnour of the Mother of God, and, as It was reveal'd when my Lady Eugenia repair'd on Saturdays to the Communion place, our blessed Lady personally attended her most divine & dear son thither which we esteem both a great benediction and singular feavour to this Community. 'Tis certain that my Lady Eugenia had supernaturall prayer for she has been at these times for a quarter of an hour together alienated from her senses. Having also had a particular feavour Concerning our holy Mother St Scholastica's appearing to her, she being always, but most particularly after this, singularly devoted to this our great patroness (and to all the saints of our holy order), making yearly upon her eve Chapter and keeping her festivall most solemn. The dear & fatherly providence of allmighty God was seen over her in the advancements of this Community, for in her time his infinite Goodness was pleas'd to encreas those that would be saved dayly together, many in those Days flocking hither, not only by twos or threes, but eleaven at once Came out of England into the monastery under her Goverment, some to the noviciate, some to the Convict for education; in fine all of them att least became religious. Finding them, therefore, much strain'd for want of roome, and many of her Children by reason of that disaccommodation falling into Consumptions, she was in a manner forced by this occasion to proceed to the hastning

40

of a new building, Concerning the particulars whereof we refer you to the records in our foundation page 291. Only this you must know that this our dear and venerable abbess being of an infirme body, had the stone, an Ulcer in the kidnies and other indispositions, being also well struck in years; and we tasting the effects of persecuted Chatholicks in England in the withdrawing and loss of temporall means, and our building amounting to more then at first she was made believe it would, Come to her sensibility least we should run into debt, great [was her] Care for Corporall necessarys, with an Intence application to piety and solicitude both for the bodys and souls of her Children, in the tenderness of a motherly heart. At last (Allmighty God permitting it) her memory by Degrees began to fail; after all remedies procured but without success of the desired and intended effect, thro the mercifull Goodness of God, she never [sic] notwithstanding retain'd a most pious sence & knowledge of habituated vertue and Devotion, speaking very pertinently of any present spirituall thing, though at the same time absolute nonsense in other matters. Therefore of her own accord with Great humility and singular edification, she resign'd up her office of prelature the 19 of November 1642. And for the 3 years she survived, it was very remarkable to see the respect Love and submission she render'd to my Right Reverend Lady Mary Rooper, her Lawfull successor, preventing her with honnour, asking her blessing & the like. In a word after she had Lived very

Laudably, as well when she was a private religious, as when she was in office or superiority; advancing 44 years in the way of regular observance; remaining to her dying Day pious and holy, never in this last time of her 3 years visitation, uttering any unseeming extravagancys, continuing most Innocently, offensive to none, attending Constantly to the recitall of the Divine Office (with one of the religious to say with her as they were appointed) adhearing to the holy sacraments & other devout and usuall practices. At last, when her death drew near, she was blessed with that great benefit of receiving all the rites of our holy mother the church with very sensible Devotion; whilst the community was praying on their knees about her bed, the[y] earnestly beg'd her benediction (she having profest & cloathed most of them) which she sweetly gave to all. My Lady Mary Roper our Dear Abbess being present humbly askt her blessing in particular which she as humbly declin'd; but, the other insisting more earnestly, then, obediently condescending, gave it to her with a most gracious countenance, having again received holy absolution and piously arm'd in all kinds for her last Journey, she sweetly expired on that very Day which her own kinswoman Dame Elizabeth Bradbery 15 year before had rendre'd up her soul to God, having been both also profest (though many years between) on the twelft of May. To the feast of Dedication of churches my Lady Eugenia was much Devouted, but especially to this of our most blessed Saviours who by his infinit merits we are confident quickly went to sing his Divine Praises in the Temple of his Glory.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

41

Anno 1647, on the 25 of February:

Our venerable Dame Bridgitt Gildrige most happily Departed this Life having made her holy vows the 14th of February 1640. Her most remarkable vertues was humility, obedience, contrition, fervent prayer and Union with God.

Dame Bridgitt in Baptism was cal'd Dorothy, Daughter to Hugh Dorvolie. Widdow to Thomas Gildrige esquire, she came into the Union of our Lord to labour in Religion about the age of 60, after she had incountred with many opositions from those who seem'd to understand the asperity of a regular life, yet she for 3 or 4 years urging and reasoning against their expostulations; but they Desisted not [and] alleaged for a strength to their argument her old age and tenderness as also her usuall and extreame Good accommodations, for diet Lodging and the like, that morally speaking it could not chuse but render her incapable of undertaking such a cours. At last by reading Father Platoes happiness of a religious state, she resolutely broke through all difficultys, giving no ear to the wisdom of flesh & blood, though she was then actually house keeper and widdow, and not only nicely treated, but also obsequiously attended. Yet with fervent Joy leaving all she submitted her neck to the Yoake of holy obedience, in which vertue to her dying Day she excell'd in, her superiour saying of her (as a high praise) after her Death that she was as submis[ive] and tractable as a child in every occasion. And indeed after her admittance as well in the time of her probation, as the 7 year after her profession she gave us true example of piety and eminent virtue: attending much to prayer & union with Almighty God who Liberally rewarded her with present payment for she had always a tender and sincible experience how sweet God is: shedding many tears ever when she perform'd any spirituall exercise. She made her meditations every mourning, out of Great Poyntus and the colloquies that are there printed; at the end of the points she gott by heart in the forenoon to recite them at work, and in a manner continually, all the day after. And though her sight Decayed much yet would she never be Idle: knowing it to be an enemy to the soule but learnt in that old age to knit here in religion and would be exercising that humble work in Doing charitys to the religious to her Dying Day. She would in a most humble sincere manner be oft acknowledging what a poor ignorant creature she was and how onknowing in matters of spirit, deeming herself (in humility of heart) not only an unworthy but also an unprofitable member of the holy community, although in very truth she had an excellent Good capacity, extraordinary Devout, and a heart ever burning and dissolving in the Love of God & her neighbour. She could not endure to be thought vertuous; but well pleased

whe[n] she conceived she had met with an undervaluing: once upon an occasion one told her in passion, God permitting it for her merit, that she was more troublesome then any in the house; who was not the least exasperated at it, nor replied a word at all, but after an hour or two gott Leave to come again to that party, telling her that she had licence to speak with her, casting herself presently on her knees thus she proceeded:

42

my Dear sister, I ever deem'd you my speciall friend and in your plain telling me the truth, you have now mos particularly shewed it; others alas will be casting out words, tending to my praise saying, Dame Brigit is this and that, attributing to me I know not what holiness: which in reall truth is not true, but you my Good Dear friend said the very truth, for I am indeed the most troublesome of all others and the most undeserving of either feavour or kindness (and this she said kneeling) and for this Cordiall friendly part of yours I am purposely Come to thank you. Then rising up (the other forcing her as it were) in an humbled Continuance, with a low bow and weeping tears, she said, God allmighty reward you my Dear Good sister, And so went away, who left the party most truly Confounded both at her own passion, and at Deam Brigit's humility, having ask'd her pardon for that disrespectful hastiness, but Good Dame Brigit would not hear of it as such, rather esteeming it an act of [...] Charity. This one example might lead on many more but by this we may see her sincere heart, & deep Grounded self contempt, and knowledge of her nothing. Concerning her diet, Lodging and the like, It is a kind of mirakal how she accommodated herself to religion, not so much as Lying in Linnen sheets, but she Died in her wollen ones and her wollen Garments next her. God of his infinite providence, sweetly dispos'd for her a most happy death. In the time of her health amongst us, she has been heard upon occasions to say how much she dreaded to Dye in the infirmary, or Lye Long sick there because (according to her Custome) she acknowledged herself a poor ignorant Creature, void of vertue to bear the Commendation of the place. This God of his Goodness was pleased to free her from it being Leap Year then, And St Matthias's Day following on a Sunday, she went to Confession the Saturday before in the afternoon, and though she had the Gift of tears in all spirituall actions (for she never Came from Confession and Communion with dry Eyes) but now in a more then ordinary manner, she was even drencht in tears and devotion, powering out her usuall acts of contrition, humility and divine Love. And the next day at the receiving our sacred Lords body, att mass, prayer, reading she seem'd all infleam'd with tenderness of Devotion, performing her ordinary obediences in every distribution and religious observances to the last of her life having drawn this fruit from her continuall prayer, subjection not only her will, but her judgment to the union of superiours, though she was 73 year old; and in a manner her conversation was continually in Heaven; in recompence whereof she found (by the mercy of God) her lost [*sic*] amongst the saints about eleven o'clock on St. Matthias Day at night, the religious praying, and assisting her last passage, which was precious in the sight of our Lord who doubtless gave her the same hire promis'd those which were call'd to work in his vineyard at the first and third hour; for 'tis lawfull & laudable in him to do what he will, to whom be Eternall prais, who chuses the weak things to confound the strong.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

43

Anno 1650 on the 20 of April

Our Right Honourable & Venerable Mother in Christ and Lady, my Lady Mary Rooper of happy memory, most Piously departed from this vale of misery to celebrate in heaven her jubele in the 8 year of her prelature the 31 of her profession, & 52 of her age. Her most remarkable vertues were many, chiefly Prudence, Modesty, Zeal, Gravity, recollection silence, Devotion and Charity to all, especially to the poor.

My Lady Mary Rooper, the belov'd of God and Man, Daughter to the Lord Christopher Rooper, Barren of Tenham, was born att Lodge in Kent. She was the youngest of the 4 Reverend

religious Dames that came from Brussels to begin this monastery being but then 4 years and some two months profest: She performed very Laudably many offices in this our holy community with singular Good satisfaction to all: She was prioress three years, having before that been sacristine, cellarier, Dean: three times she was chosen & exercis'd the offices of mistress of the novices, teaching them effectually, both by word and example. And from this she was exalted to be Chief mistress, Mother and Abbess; being the 3rd Prelatrice of this Re[li]gious Convent of ours elected to this Dignity & Charge the 4 of December, my Lady Eugenia having resign'd it up the 19 of the precedent November, and upon that Day sinnight my Lady Mary Rooper was elected. She was solemnly blest Abbess December the 4 by the Generall Consent, good likeing and Love of all as well the religious as the externs. She Laid a Good firm foundation of humility, Deeming herself as the footstool of her subjects; as was know[n] by her own Confession, and once she affirm'd to a Dear friend, that she was never exalted to any superiority which brought her not Great Confusion and humility. This our Reverend abbess had a very Lively faith and a firm Confidence in God: wholly relying on his fatherly providence, that it would ever mantain & keep us. She was indued with a singular prudence, & had an ardent zeal of the Divine glory, very much upholding, yea, augmenting Church and Quire service, ordering all things in a Gracious decorum that Concern'd the House of God. Having herself not only a Sweet but a greatfull Good manner in her singing musick & plain song, which did both attract and move the ears and hearts of auditors as well to devotion as attention, edifying all by a devout animating of her words, which might be the more because at Certain times, she enjoyed a sencible kind of presence of God; and those who have seen the fruits of her spirituall exercises say that they testify her ardent desire of perfection & union with our blessed Lord. She had by an habituated mortification attain'd to a strict guard of sences, in a perticular manner her eyes, and it was rare ever to see her Look up, being arrived to the 12th Degree of humility in our Rule. Whensoever she exhorted her Children to perfection, [*sic*] by especially at those times she made Chapter, God gave her such a singular grace in the delivery of herself, that she drew tears from their eyes as also from her own; so that the tenderness of Devotion made a most moving Consort amongst all. Her ordinary discourse was pleasant, grave &

44

Spirituall. There appeared in her Countenance and garbe both a majesty and modesty: many Hereticks by the hearing and seeing her were Converted to the orthodoxall faith. As well they as other externs have ingenuously confessed that the[y] not only received great satisfaction, but a singular edification by her presents and Conversation. Divers notable examples Concerning the Zeal of souls might be produced, and how very much Almighty God Did bless her indeavours, not only making them Convinct to be Chatholicks but also by a reformation of Life, becoming good Christians. She was of a most sencible and Compassionate nature, tendering the good of her children as the apple of her eye. O how exceedingly did she rejoice when she saw any one aspire more & more to perfection, and how afflicted, if she saw a remissness. Her heart seem'd even to dissolve in compassion towards the poor, and miserable distressed persons, relieving them to the utmost of her ability. She extreemly hated the vice of detraction; and dearly Loved that her Charge[s] should wholly attend to themselves; She knew they were the temples of God, and could not indure any merchandize should be bought or sold in their hearts; the Zeal of this Generall recollection made her seem to that point a Little rigorous sometimes in imitation of our saviour, of whom it is said the Zeal of thy house has eaten me. She caused a writing to be sett upon every Common passing door in the monastery, containing these words: IN SILENCE AND RECOLLECTION shall be our profit and hope. As also a pious purpose which she Composed in behalf of all, ordaining every one to Copsy it out, and place it upon their oratory which begins as followeth in these words. "To the Greatest Glory of Almighty God, and in union of his Divine Charity, and in satisfaction of my former Defects herein, I will this day be very wary to avert my eyes from seeing, my thoughts from Judging, and my mouth from speaking against Charity towards any spouse of my Saviour in this holy house, but will excuse

all, And only be my own accuser". And this she most earnestly Commended to all for a Constant recitall in the mournings as a prime and particular Good purpose, to offer in our oblation to Almighty God. She was most singularly Devouted to the most bless'd Trinity, to the mother of God, and to our holy father St Benedict and Saints of our holy order, admitting in her time the celebrating of their solemn feast 13 of november; even when she was prioress, she much exhorted all new beginners to indeavour by earnest prayer to gett a constant & affectionate devotion to our holy father and his blessed children in heaven; that by their intercession, they might be true observers of his holy rule. For the advancement also and for the Good progress both in perfection and necessary temporalys of this community, she peculiarly chose Glorious St Joseph for our common patron, and steward of this house of God. Procuring the setting out of that prayer which is usually recited by the religious before his oratory which she rec[i]ted in his honnour. She had many pious inventions and used much fervent prayer and indeavours to mantain and increase the true spirit of our vocation in every one of her charge, confiding much in that universal devotion,

45

which she desired might be dayly and fervently offer'd for the souls in Purgatory: using a pritty practice herself, inviting her children to the same, which was in all times going trough the passages & cloyster, to be iterating De profundis for the souls of the faithfull. & this she did besides the charity to the faithfull deceas'd as a means to stop all occasions of speech in our passing to and fro. In a word she was a dayly light that did shine through the whole monastery, exciting us thereby to Glorify our heavenly father. Amongst her other vertues she was mos[t] religiously neat and clean both about herself, cell and all she went about which shewed the purity of her Interiour. For a Long time before her Death she Grew very weak and sickly, bearing to the Last day of her life her infirmitys, with Great piety, patience and conformity. Upon the Annunciation eve precedent to her last sickness, our young King Charles the Second, a Little after the beheading of his father, in his first passing through Ghent, was received into our monastery by this our Reverend Dear Lady Abbess And religiously intertain'd, her Ladyship having a serious and private Conference with his Majesty, she noting down what pass'd between them; this was but a month before her happy dissolution; And after her buriall the paper was found amongst the private writtings in her oratory where she did not spear to speak plainly & most piously, in order to his eternall and temporall Good; who was so well pleased at her humble, prudent & Cordiall sincerity that then and ever since his majesty shewed himself upon all possible occasions, peculiarly and graciously affected to this our Community: After his Departure he put us all in mind of our Dear Saviour, how he was deserted by his own people, having this thought when we saw the King in his purple Coat mourning for his father, which moved my Lady and us all (at her Ladyship's precise ordain) to pray hartily for his Conversion, and the good success of his bleeding affairs. Not long (I mean) a few Days after this our most Dear mother my Lady Abbess was struck with an air upon her forehead, falling instantly upon it into a Cold trembling, etc. Yet after that so recover'd that she was able to sing and say in the quire, upon Palm Sunday, when her Ladyship to the Anthim before the magnificat singing: I will strick the Pastor and the sheep of the flock shall be dispearit, she fell then again suddenly ill; and forced to go out of the quire and so growing worse and worse, she Lived but ten days after. We never knew a sadder Easter then her Children experienced when we began to fear she Could not recover, for the air which first took her in her forehead had Caused in her head a most violent fevery heat which highly increas'd her fever. All possible means was used for her recovery, both by the doctors industrys as also by her children's vows & earnest supplications to God his holy mother and the saints, but his divine majesty was pleased for all this to take her out of this vale of misery (after she had been purifi'd as we hope in his sacred passion) to be partakers of his Glorious resurrection. She suffer'd extreemly much in three Last Days of her life; and the while of her sickness, spirituall as well as Corporall phis[i]tions continually

in a manner assisting her. The king himself sent his own doctor out of Holland purposely as soon as ever he heard she was in Danger, but to no effect. Death by our Dear Lord's permission had Laid his siege to[o] strong for a removall: then all the sacraments of the holy church was administer'd to her, as her chiefest comfort, which she piously received, when the Last night of her Life (as it was feard) approacht our spirituall father, a most holy man of the Society of Jesus, & his companion, together with most of her children watcht all with her, Assisting her with their prayers and the Good father with absolution & other spirituall cordials. In the mourning our venerable Ghostly father & two Fathers of the Society constantly staid praying about her to the very Last expire, saying all the accustom'd commendations in the rituall with many other pious devotions, she most sweetly concurring in midst of her extreimity of suffrings. Incompassed also with the mourning tears and prayers of her community, she gave to them all, as well absent as present three distinct blessings, at the instance of her spiritual Father: the firs[t] invoking the blessed Trinity, Second the mother of God, and the third our holy father St Bennedict. About eleven o clock, which was an houre before she died, she shutt her eyes with her own hand keeping them ever after to her last close, modestly declin'd so that she never open'd them more, and 'tis no marvail she did not sett them fix'd upon something as usually Dying people naturally Doe, seeing she had mortifi'd them in her life by a regular custody in so constant a way. She died like an innocent Lambe without Groan or struggle, upon Easter woensday about noon, on the eve of Glorious St Anselme to whom she was specially devoted; one of the fathers purposely delaying his mass which immediatly after her expire he offer'd up her happy soul in the holy sacrifice, to Almighty God (in our own church) for her speedy rest. This our ever Dear Abbess of happy memory was honnour'd with a more then ordinary solemnity at her buriall, the Bishop sending his own churchmen and quiresters who sung both mournfull and moving musick in the requiem solemn mass. There had not been seen a more Generall grief in the whole house, every one's heart being brimfull of sorrow: Abundance of tears did not mitigate their sadness, the Loss of so dear a mother, and renown'd an Abbess, our nei[gh]bours yea the whole Town in a manner seem'd to deplore, so much did they resent our affliction, but whilst we did sow in tears (we are confident) she reapt in Joy, the fruit of a plentiful harvest of good works, which is Laid up in the Celestiall granary to the eternall praise of Christ Jesus our Lord, our health, Life & resurrection.

Requiescat in aeternum In pace. Amen.

In the Year of our Lord 1650

On The 12 of May most happily Departed this Life our Venerable Dear Dame Teresia who came to the triall of religion Anno 1640, of her age 53; profest two year after on the 7 of May Living 8 year a religious woman amongst us; and went from this to a better Life when she was 63 year old. Her most remarkable vertues was Charity, meekness, prudence & modesty.

Dame Teresia, In Baptism Call'd Jane, Only Daughter Heiress to Aurthur Bream Gentleman of the County of Essex. Widdow of Sir Thomas Gardiner, a Year and more after his Death she voluntarily left the world, together with her self to follow Christ, shutting her self in the narrow Limits of St Bennetts holy rule. She was indeu'd with a Great witt and extraordinary prudence & a Charitable free heart; her personage was proper & besides most Lovely handsome, having a Singular Good nature and of a most sweet Disposition. Her humour was pleasantly grave, having ever, not only a rare temper, but an absolute Command over her passions that in the ten years She was Conversant amongst us, she was never seen discomposed, proceeding always according to the rules of reason; and though she was extremely tormented with the Goot, yet in her greatest of pangs her patience was not obscured.

Her charity Even in the world was very remarkable, using the utmost Industry (especially after her conversion) to provide for poor orphans and servants destitute of masters, and such like distressed: over whose concerns she was even solicitous, to see them maintain in Chatholick religion and necessary Livlyhood. The manner of her own conversion was thus: being onfortunatly married at 12 year old to an ancient protestant knight, a Debayst man, her parents and self no Chatholicks neither, she being so very young began to be extreemly averted from him; to be brief, after the Death of her father and mother she fled away from him privately to France, accompany'd with a kinswoman and a servant, so in hopes never to see her husband more. But Almighty God, whose property is mercy, whose vertue draws Good out of ill, had adorn'd her body with such an exquisit Beauty & frame, and had graced her demeanour with a kind of admired modesty, would not let her soul, which he had Created to his Image, remain Long in the dark mist of Heresy, for she Coming oft to a monastery, as 'tis thought, of Bernardine nuns, grew by their pious Communication so in Love with their angelicall state in the religion she was of, Could most willingly have been Content, to imbrace their Cours of Life being so exceeding much taken with their pious Conversion; retaining in her memory their frequent discours of the excellencys, priviledges & titles of Gods Immaculate Mother. After this she went and Lived at Paris some few months (for that monastery was in the Country). The Queens Ghostly father took much to heart her Conversion, unbeguiling her of the errors of Heresy, whilst an English minister, a Doctor of Cambridge reciding then there, Undid all what the Good Catholick priest Doctor Cotton had done. Thus she was perplext on every side yet finding strong arguments of the truth she made her Confession to the Queens oforsaid Confessarius, but Bamberge the Heretick doctor wrote her a heavy Life, [*sic*] bringing such seeming reall Convincments on his side, what an errour to her prudence and Judgment, she had Incur'd by that Confession & a deal of such like foolerys, glossing them with his Flourish'd Rhethorick that at Last he forced her to his service & sermons. Yet Doctor Cotton left not of the good work he had begun, went to find out his poor straid

48

sheep, indeavouring by the Truth of Chatholick Doctrin, to bring her back to the Roman faith, Insomuch that she was perplext on every side, environ'd in a Laborenth of Difficultys not knowing who to believe, for the Enemy had Cast new Clouds in her onderstanding. Now she was but two or three and twenty years old, rarely qualifyed and Deservedly accounted the prime beauty of England; this drew the eyes of Great ones upon her, as well French as English, but wanting the Light of the true faith, her souls beauty was eclipt. One night, being exceedingly disturb'd in Conscience, having heard Bamberge to labour very much to disparage our blessed Lady, affirming she was not mother of God but of Christ as he was man, And therefore had no priviledge nor power with God more then other women, and that she was no virgin having had more Children besides our Saviour, and such like Hereticall blasphemys; revolving these things as she Lay in bed, sleep being banished from her eyes (in effect) for three whole nights together; Comparing in her mind what the minister & what the priest had in severall opinions told her, remembering also what the Good nuns had utter'd in the Glorious virgins praises, fully awake she shutt as it were her eyes, for a moment, whilst she addressed her invocation in this manner, saying to her who is not only the refuge of sinners, but also Comfortress of the afflicted, O Blessed Virgin Mary, if you have that power with God as Roman Chatholicks would have me believe, shew it now in this my Great distress, and obtain me a Clear Light to Discern the true religion, that I may Constantly embrace it. She had no sooner said this, but Casting up her eyes again, She saw a most excellent and beautifull Lady in the midst of the rome, which as soon as She beheld 'twas Given her Clearly to und Stand that it was the Mother of God, but with all perceiving by the turning away of her Countenance that she was displeas'd at her, making as it were instantly towards the door. At which she Immediatly leapt out of her bed, following her, whilst suddenly the Glorious Virgin Disappear'd the door still remaining fast shut, then at the same moment falling Down upon her knees she gave allmighty God most humble Thanks for this feavour,

for she found herself strongly Comforted and Confirm'd in the true belief of the Catholick Roman faith, In so much, that in the whole 40 years of her Life after this she ever Remain'd a most constant catholick, making a speedy confession to her Ghostly father, and after he had fully instructed her, she Devoutly appear'd to the life giving sacrament of holy communion and staid not long e'er she went into England keeping company with the most vertuous Chatholicks and Ladys, exceedingly esteem'd amongst them for her modesty, and most passionately Loved for her vertue. Sir Thomas Gardiner Living the whilst no very Good Life (remaining in his heresy) for which cause she never came near him, he in the country, she at London; at last after a world of crosses, suffering patiently the Detracting slanders of ill Tongues (from which she was most innocent) much losses and wrongs concerning her Temporall means, it pleased God to free her from the Tye of a married state by the Death of her husband. And when upon the very day of the

49

presentation of our blessed Lady after he was Dead tim[e]ly in the mourning she came to a Dear and vertuous friend of her who lived in the same house with her, and who had long been minded to become a nun, sayin to her: Now unexpectedly I am come now to tell you how I am resolved to be a Religious woeman, and that as soon as possible I'll go over sea with you. The other struck with Joyfull admiration, told her that her Ladiship had chosen a blessed Day to fix upon so good a resolution, and amongst other Good discourses said sure Madam our blessed lady has had a chief hand in this vocation of yours, adding pray tell me confidently madam has she not? My Lady Gardiner reply'd the truth of it is our blessed Lady has been very good to me: and so humbly Declining to tell the particulars, the other being a most intimate Dear friend suspecting she had been most particularly favour'd by the mother of God, urg'd the disclosing of it, but neither then or in her whole Life after having fair occasions would she ever Discover it; so backward she was in declaring anything which might Cause her own esteem. Both of them went then immediately and ratify'd before the Alter this their Determination with pious Devout oblation of themselves to God and the Glorious Virgin his Immaculate Mother: and from that Day forward began to order all her affairs, and as Soon as possible the[y] Could be settled they both Came over Sea, enter'd, Cloath'd and profest together. This our Dame Teresia Conform'd herself with admirable edification to a Religious Devout Life, and though she was as excellent at her pen as any of her Sex both for writing and inditing, yet would she constantly Decline those Correspondences; unless pressing business inforced her, and then She would only write after an others dictate, nor that neither, but when it was requisit that her own hand must be produc'd. Once indeed she writt to a Catholick niece of hers in this Country about a spirituall Concern of her own inditing; otherwise she would Civilly excuse herself, saying she had now Left the world wholly, and did not desire to intangel with it again. And she did in reall truth make it her business to attend to her Self. Never was she heard to meddle or make with other's affairs, nor speak the Least word in the Dislike of any. And indeed she was very Spearing of speech upon all occasions, relating [*sic*] still her deep Capacity and mature Sound Judgment in everything, as also her former Great Compassion and Charity to the poor and towards all. We recite this insuing example for all: being indisposed with a Cattar, for she was subject to a Cough, there was a Good box of Conserve of Roses Given her as a remedy, frequently to take as need required. She then was in her Cell one mourning, And heard a poor Labouring man whilst he was digging in the Garden Coughing most extreamply. Presently her heart in the tenderness of true Charity and pittty desolving sent the box untoucht, and intire as it was, Caus'd it to be Given him, saying it was given me for my Comfort, therefore I being old and Good for nothing, there will be no loss at all, when I dye; but this poor honnes Labourer has a charge of children, maintaining them & his wife with the sweat of his brouws so that I am Glad with all my Heart I have

50

this comfort to afford him. A number of the Like, & Greater particulars of this nature might be produced both in the world & religion. To conclude, after a long time of Great suffrance in the Infirmary, coming down every Communion Day to hear Mass and to Receive Our Dear Lord as Long as she could in a manner stand or Goe. At Last Growing weaker & weaker, she humbly Desir'd and Received in perfect sence & devout attention all the sacraments of holy church, having her senses to the Last expire. A Little before her Death she suddainly in a quick Lively way cast her eyes up, looking towards one way crying twice together with a Loud voice, St Gertrude, St Gertrude. And so calling again & again, with a soft voice, upon the saint, sweetly render'd her soul to God. 'Twas presently reflected [*sic*] by some that she Imitating this virgin Saint of our orders, Generall charity, sweetness and confidence in God might have her peculier Assistance at her last passage, who had so much Glorify'd the Divine majesty in her happy life & Death amongst us.

Anno Domini 1650

The 27th of November our beloved sister Teresia Very happily Departed this life, the 49 of her age of her profession 26. Her Remarkable vertues was a Generall charity, a Religious simplicity and obedience to others, having the Rule in perfection.

Sister Teresia, In Baptism call'd Chatherine, Daughter to Thomas Matlock. Till she was come to womans estate, she remain'd a kind [of] schismatick, frequenting heretick churches. Once as she was Reading St Steven's life upon his day in Christmas she found herself so confirm'd in the catholick faith that she never went to protestant churches more. And upon this Glorious Saints Day again she had her vocation to holy Religion for which cause she had this saint in Great veneration, She enter'd Brussels monastery for a convers sister about the age of twenty or twenty one, and there received the holy Habit of St. Benedict. But after this house began she obtain'd where she was novice to be translated hither, and the next Agust after She made her vows of profession on Great St Augustine's Day 1624, being very Devout to this Glorious St as also to St Steven, saying 3 pater's & 3 ave's every Day to this blessed Protomartyr to obtain a Constant union & Charity in this holy Community, And eleven Aves to St Ursula & her associates for a happy Death for herself; which, praise be to God she had in a most eminent Comfortable manner. Whilst she lived here amongst us She gave a Generall Good assistance at all Services of the Community; for she was very handsome handed att all occasions, and had Great knowledge how to Do everything, and most exquisit in her skill at silk work, being the chief Inventress of all those Curious Imitations of Naturall flowers, which was a perticular guift of God; as also the art she had which Concerns the printing of Leaves. For one day walking in the Garden and viewing much variety of flowers and leaves (according to her wonted Customs in those occasions) she Contemplated with admiration the wonderfull works of Allmighty God; seriously observing every

51

Single Leaf, vain & Indenture wishing she had an Inventive skill, to expresse them to the Life in silk work. The very next night it Seem'd to her in Sleep, that she found herself in a garden full of all sorts of Curious plants & flowers, beholding likewise there a Comly venerable and gracious old man; And she presently understood it was her Great patron St Augustin he, addressing towards her, to[Id] her that to fullfil her earnest wish and Desire, he would teach her ho[w] to Imprint those leaves in Silk work, Instantly Derecting her in all particulars. Awaking therefore she retain'd this in memory, And the next day printed them as we See in practice to this Day amongst us, teaching all her art in this kind the reverend Dames of the quire, An by obedience much employ'd in it her self, the Chief Care and Contriving lying upon her. For many Years together She had the Charge of the Apothecary office & perform'd it not only Justly & laboriously, but also with a Great and Generall Charity. She was noted for that Constant humility of acknowledging her faults in private to her Superiour, and for observing exactly that Rule, of striving to obey one an other, tho morally speaking by a third person it was Somtimes thought more Convenient; the present action should have been Done otherwise.

And in those occasions they would be asking her, saying Sister why Do you this thing so? She replying most innocently, Because I was bid, shewing a most practicall religious Simplicity. In that Year she Dy'd, many has oft heard her say, I am Sure I Shall Dye this year and not long before she was laid up in the Infirmary, She took her Dean into the Still house, and humbly beg'd pardon upon her knees for all her faults with weeping tears; saying dear Mother I grow old and fears my time is not long, I humbly beseech you Good Mother as You have ever Loved me Shew it still in peticular, by allways telling me of my faults, that so I may both see and amend them. She was much troubled for a long while before her Death with a Great defluction, which not only brought her to a Catter now and then, but also to a Sharp Cough. In her last sickness she remain'd about a month in the Infirmary, And as she was observed in time of health to have Good Judgment in Spirituall matters, and would discours very understandingly of such things in occasions, though she made no shew of it, being allways prepar'd & in a Good humour to speak of good things, but now in a speciall manner, it was noted whilst she was in the Infirmary by her own liking she car'd to hear no other discours and would herself speak of nothing else. In this last visitation She Spitt up her lungs & by the vehement tearings of her violent Cough she was grown exceeding weak, and for a bout a fortnight Confin'd to her bed remaining in a manner Upon a Rack, as she acknowledged the very mourning before she dy'd: when she was wishing to be disolv'd, Sighing that her sojourning was prolonged, one by way of Comforting her, bid her in that Constant extreimity of hers to think of the tortures of martyrs, who in reply to this said, at the day of Judgment it will be known, what a Torture & rack I now hang upon. All the while of her sickness she thirsted incessantly to be dissolved and be with Christ and when some would

52

say Sister, you are not yet so, and we hope you may recover and Live; we cannot Spare you - who shall Do the silk work when you'r Dead? You know what a help it is in those hard times for Supplys to the Community: but she would never relish the Least thought of Living, Saying she was Good for nothing, what Should She live for? Besides, said she, God Almighty never lets there be a want of any, but when he was pleased to take any away of the religious out of this world he rais'd up some other to supply their place, & be as usefull to the Common Good. Growing therfore very weak, and near her end she had all the rights of holy Church, receiving the with most true application and Devotion. After which she fell into many severall agonys, our Reverend Ghosly father my Lady abbess & the Religious praying about her bed; She answearing and with perfect sences (having them to the last expire) breathed out Continually sweet acts of piety, and indeed all the time She lay in her extreamest sufferings for a whole fortnight she attended wholly to most intence prayer; She Dearly loved to hear our Saviours last Sermon read to her in this her last sickness, meditating upon every full and Comfortable Sentence, & therefor ever anon, she beg'd the reader to stop a while and after she had Devoutly ruminated upon it, she would say, Be pleas'd to go on. The last time she had these sacred words of our Saviour red, she made them rest at these two verses: I am the True Vine my father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me not bearing fruite he will take it away: & every one that beareth fruit he will purge it, that it may bring more fruite. Enough, said she, at which she composed herself to Serious meditation. And the watchers have affirm'd that for whole nights in midst of her greatest and sharp pains, she would in silence quiet have her soul and affections most intencely imploy'd and at the very point of her Death she utter'd short sweet aspirations & so many pious acts that it was a singular Comfort to see & hear her. A very little before she Dyed one of the religious seeing her so perfect in sences and so Devout, holding St peter's picture towards her, said: this Saint, Sister, must Lett you in to heaven: beg his absolution and intercession. Presently with her dying hand she took and kiss it, smiling upon the picture whilst her lips moved softly. She often saluted every wound in the Crucifix, and sign'd herself with it, kissing also our blessed Lady's Image saying: Maria Mater Gratiae etc. In fine, for the Last hour or two she breathed nothing but amorous aspirations and acts of Contrition, receiving the whilst Divers times Sacramentall absolution.

Immediately before she expired my lady abbess in a Cheerfull toon said (we all being rather in Joy then sadness to see so blessed an end) Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi, She instantly in a kind of gladness answer, In Domum Domini ibimus, and this was her Last word. In this manner she most sweetly render'd her soul to our Lord: on the first Sunday of Advent when we Celebrate the Coming of the incarnate word into this world, she most happily took her journey towards heaven. She had by all Love and feavour adjour'd the mother infirmarian not to spear her after Death when she acknowledged her faults in my Lady's

53

Chapter but to confess them most Clear and home, which was done according to her humble desire, a remarkable evidence of her humility, & Zeal of the Divine Justice's satisfaction.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno 1652 on the 7 of august

Most happily Departed this Life my Lady Honora Burck, convictrice; she made the vows of holy Religion upon her Death bed.

My Lady Honora Burck, Eldest Daughter to my Lord Marquis Clynriket, a nobleman of Ireland, having only alive this Daughter and another younger, my Lady Margarit, cooheirs of his fortune. In the time of those Great and Generall Broyls which Crumwell the cruell Tyrant and usurper had made in England and Ireland, my Lady Marquis came to Ghent with her two Daughters to recide a while, but my Lady Honora was so taken with the monastery that she never left, begging of her mother till she gott her suit, intering for her education amongst the victrices In this our monastery of the Immaculate Conception. And she had not been here Long till Allmighty God touch'd her heart with prevailing motives to become a Religious woman of St Benedicts order, but her mother would not hear of it, nor countenance her Desires att all, nor Durst she by Letter aquain my Lord her father, by reason of miscarrying, hoping rather to see him, and win that of him in presence which she could scarce hope for in absence. Being very Discreet in so young years as about 14 year old, she was most piously inclin'd not withstanding all distracted occasions which over run our poor nations, yet by the care of her vertuous parents she had been bread most Innocently: even from the knowledge of evill, this purity of her soul was beatify'd by her earnest thirst of consecrating her self to God in the state of virginity & through a Generous renuntiation of all things for God. Now in the Hight and heat of these Desires she was struck with an Air & fell into a violent fever which appear'd in spotts (being a Generall infection which run over the whole town) so that many Dy'd of that infirmity: She lay sick only 4 Days, and the Doctors could not give hopes of her recovery, being att the first struck with Death, and as trully willing to Dye, for her heart was not sett all on the fortunes, honnours, varietys, riches & pleasures of this world; She bore most patiently this her Last infirmity as she before in her health had quietly tolerated the contradictions of her mother, who ever had a severe way towards her. When her death Drew nearer she beg'd & obtain'd not only the strengning comfort of all the last sacraments, but allso the Long Desired benefit of being a vowed child of St Benedict (upon whose feast Day she was born), making her vows & receiving the rites of the Church with singular Devotion; being a[!]most revived to a new Life at the Joy of being a Benedictine nun. With her dying hand she sign'd a Letter to her father the Marquis which she had caused to be writt to obtain the Grant of a noble legacy, as a testament how much she desired to Leave the

54

monastery (but nothing was done according to her desires - the miserys of the Times hinder'd the success) and doubtless she had the merit of her Good will. She sweetly expir'd, all the religious praying about her, on the octave day of St Ignatius Loyola, and was buri'd in a Benedictan habit, looking very Lovely like one in a sweet sleep. The very Day of her obsequies, the Marquis Clynrikett had sent an express to town for her convoyance away from Ghent to prosecute the agreement of a

match between my Lady Honora and one of the nobles, little knowing how his family had been lately Illustrated in her espousalls to the king of all true nobility, whose kingdom is not of this world though his provence over all events is admirable, his Judgments adorable & his wisdom most powerfull, reaching mightily from end to end and sweetly Disposin all things.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1652 the 25th of December

Dyed our Good old sister Benedicta Corby who came to Religion hither when she was near four score, and Liv'd more than twenty years in our monastery, having been profest on St Catherine of Siena's Day 1633 And Cloathed some 2 or 3 years before on St Calixtus in October at Brussels. Her most notable vertues was a Great Zeal Devotion and Constancy.

Sister Benedicta Corby In a Secular & mari'd state lived many years. Her own name was Isabella Richardson, her husband Gerard Corby yeoman, both good and sound catholicks and had constantly suffer'd Great many persecutions for the faith of Christ, expell'd and forced from place to place. Their native soil the north of England, the[y] fled to Ireland, Lancashire [and] at Last to St Omer's for refuge and safty of conscience & for the more quiet and freely serving of God; and in their Last voluntary Banishment over sea they chang'd their name to Corbington. Whist the[y] removed thus to make their abode God rais'd them Good friends, & prosper'd their faithfull service, by a happy of sprink of Good children and when the[y] actually recided at St Omer's the peculiar and tender providence of God was seen over the whole family In calling them efficaciously all to a Religious state of life. They had put their 4 sons to be studients in the English Colledge there. Three of them Liv'd to be priests and profest fathers of the Society and the 4 Dyed a Student with Good Desires to enter and had the happiness to make his vows on his Death bed. The rest were exemplar for Learning and piety, only the 2^d, Reverend father Ralphe, sent from his studys in Spain for the want of health, could not conclude all his courses, but by a profound humility, piety and diligence in catichising he supply'd the Lear[n]'d sermons and Labour'd so faithfully in Christ's vinyard of England, that by publick Injustice he suffer'd a Glorious martyrdom att London on our blessed Lady's eve their 7th of September but in our account on the 17 on the feast of St Francis Stigmats, the aniversary Day (tho Divers years after) of his own holy Good father Brother Gerrard Corby who had rendred up his happy soul to God at Watton, having been many years a brother of the Society of Jesus. For after their sons were thus

55

laudably provided for in a religious course and their only two Daughters profest convers sisters of St Bennet's holy order att Brussels, the father and mother, with mutuall consent, Left their house and all things to follow Christ. He followed the example of his sonns and she of her Daughters, and by an accident after her cloathing, was admitted here at Ghent, made her profession and Lived amongst us in great Zeal & many exercises of pious edification. She was very Devout[ed] to the most holy sacrifice of the Mass and to the ever adorable blessed sacraments and by reason of her old age had Leave to pray and hear all the masses and to exercise her usuall Devotions with all freedom. As for Masses she never would be absent from any, though very many were said of a Day and her custome was ever to adore our Lord att the elevations on her bear knees. She had a speciall and constant Devotion to the holy Time of advent, fasting it strictly to a meal and Lying on straw all that mounth. This practice she did use also in Lent and in this Devotion & abstinence she continu'd to the Last advent of her life, only this Last was by Superiours express ordain, that she should not fast being in her 100 year of age; yet would she wear in those two holy times her wollen next her, most constantly without excemption. She was much devoted to our blessed Lady, to our holy father to St John Baptist & to St Steven, saying dayly a world of prayers and took her disciplins and other austeritys with a constant Zeal. And very much compassion she had of the souls in purgatory, offering up many Devotions for their ease, comfort & delivery. She was most Greatfull for the Least curtasy,

allways offering the saying of her beads, saying God reward you I am bound to requite in what I am able. For all her old age she would make still her bed, sweep her cell & mend her cloaths herself. She would oft be acknowledging her faults with great sence & sorrow but particularly both in the Chapter & refectory, she did it so humbly, heartily and movingly with tears and sorrow that she ever gave Great edification; Some six days before her Death she had made an extraordinary confession to the spiritual father of the monastery. And the Last mass that ever she heard in this Life was some 4 Days before Christmas, and at elevation being upon her bare knees as accustom'd doubtless an extraordinary fervent Devotion God allmighty had then peculiarly bestow'd upon her, and 'tis certain she was so farr Gone that quite forgetting how loud she speak she utter'd in a fervent & moving toon these kind of aspirations at the elevation beginning thus: Good God pardon my sins, Jesus my sweet Jesus wash my soul in thy precious blood; for thy bitter passion have mercy on me o my Dear God: my Good Jesus let me never be separated from thee, with divers more such darting Ardours as the holy Ghost had thought [*sic*] her, and it was with such tears and affectionate Devotion express'd, that all who knelt near her in our sisters quire, in an admiration lookt one on an other. That very night she was taken with an apoplex, going well to bed, and saying all night prayers as accustomed, but was found speechless in the mourning. Yet blessed be God by Degrees became sencible for being brought from her cell to the infirmary, she understood what

56

was said to her, helping herself very much. When her wollen was taken of, and she put in to Linen, upon Christmas Day she spoke and Desired all the rites of the holy Church. Having had the sacrament of pennance and our reverend Ghostly father Going from the infirmary to the church for her viaticum (it seems by the success) she thought he stay'd long for in the interim she lookt carefully about as though she wanted somewhat being Decently accommodated according to the usuall custome; against those times, and all the religious expecting and praying about her, whilst she Cast her Countenance a little about, one said, Dear sister what would you have? She presently reply'd : The blessed sacrament. Then being told our blessed saviour was now a Coming to her for a viaticum to strengthen her in her Journey she said no more, but sweetly Composing herself receiv'd most devoutly. On Christmas day after noon being anoild, and all prayers als [*sic*] said and done for her she most Innocently & quietly expired between 8 & 9 o Clock, the same day at night being a hundred Year old . She was buried on St Steven's day. Looking after she was dead with such a wise Countenance & majesty that an English Gentleman who Seen her Course askt what noble Countess or Lady that was; And he might have been told she was greater than a Lady being the Spouse of Christ & mother of a martyr, thoug in the world she was wife to an honest yoeman.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1653, on the 3 of Aprill Most Piously reposed in our Lord our beloved Sister in Christ Dame Dorothy Cary in the 31 Year of her age and the 15 of her profession. Her most remarkable vertues were obedience, Constancy in her spirituall exercises, Industrious Zeal for the service of the Community, And Charity in Denying nothing that Lay in power to Do for any, Livin & Dead.

Dame Dorothy Cary, In Baptism call'd Catherine, Daughter of John Cary Esq In Devonshire of Exceter House, came very young to religion experiencing by her future perseverance how Good it is bear the Yoak of Christ from ones Youth, entering into the noviceship at 14, Cloath at 15, and made her holy vows 1638 on the 14 of September being but 16 year old. She allways addicted herself to piety and Zeal of her state & being very expert both at her needle & pen she did very much service by a singular industry both to God & the community, being the only employ'd writer for the Generall occasions, as the meditations exercises & Directions of spirituall fathers. There is extant a whole book of a years meditations in her hand and much more. She was of a sweet sinceer & candid disposition, being humble and obedient and very charitable and truly observant of All religious observances. She was most neat about herself and cell, but perticularly pure and clean in her soul,

having been exemplar for an innocent pious life, as well when she Liv'd in the world as that in holy religion which was ever not only in great purity from any noted sin, but also Greatfull to all, & offensive to none. Her statur was little, her mind active, her humour pleasant & grave, her constitution weak. She took great

57

pains and care to copy out an Aniversary brief memoriall of every one of our faithfull Departed religious of this monastery, setting every of them upon the quire Door on the eve of their year Day, and on her Death bed, seriously comended the continuance of that practice, to the care of an other religious Dame. She was very inventive to find out Little pritty ways of application, according to true piety, and most diligent in the practice of purity of intention, and a singular Lover of holy poverty, mending & ordering all her little necessarys so frugally and handsomely, never keeping, borrowing Lending or Giving any thing without Leave. She carri'd a long while the infirmity of a most troublesome dropsy about before she would be brought to the infirmary; after she Grew worse and worse by obedience she was sent thither where she remain'd a Good while, much swell'd in her Legs, especially retain[in]g in all that time of suffrance, her sweet affable and pious Disposition, and never Idle as Long as she could Do any Little work & by her spirituall diligence (doubtless) reapt a Great harvest of meritt from every occasion; when she grew near her end she got Leave to distribute the little crosses, medalls, pictures & such kind of pious poor things allow'd for her use, among those religious who had beg'd a memory of her or had oblig'd her most. Then she askt humbly the holy sacraments of the church, and received them with true sence and piety, having had also the benefit of all the religious prayers to accompany those said by our reverend Ghostly father in the rituall, having indeed a happy Death, according to her Good Life and though so young yet leaft us by her unweari'd charity many motives to praise Allmighty God for all his preventing mercys towards her, for which be his holy name eternally Glorified. Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1655 on the 27 of July

Our Dear Sister Martina Departed this Life of her age 44 of her profession 10 having made her holy vows July the 6, 1645. Her most noted vertues was a Great charity, a constant Devotion and a singular Zeal to serve the community.

Sister Martina Decken, Daughte[r] of James De Decken an honnest and pious husband man of Flanders near Ghent, enter'd into the Tryall of holy religion at the age of 32 for a Lay Sister. After the time of her holy profession she was much employed in buying and doing the necessary outward affairs of the monastery, for she had a Good understanding, could write & read, cast account and quickly did Learn her English, being ever most Zealous for the Common Service & good of the Community Labouring with an unweari'd Charity. She had a most Singular and tender Love to all the religious, as thoug she had been of our own nation, and had a very Compassionate heart to all, but in a perticular manner to the poor, namely to the poor English, &, notwithstanding her Continuall imployment in businesses abroad yet would she so forecast her matters that it was rare to see her absent from any Common observance of the Community; such a zeal had she to obedience and order. When at any time my Lady had appointed for the Generall Good of

58

the Church, or poor Country or Necessitys of the Community etc. any particular prayers said in Common as 5 Paters & Aves with Arms a Cross, prostrations and the like, if Sister Martina Could not possibly Come punctually at the Just time, as soon as ever she Came in she would presently go before the blessed Sacrament to perform all those and other prayers of obligation, never omitting her accustom'd Devotions, Applying herself ever very seriously in time of spirituall exercises. And when any Generall manuall works of the Community was to be Done, as washing, Schouring, washing houses & such like, she would so order things that she might give her assistance in these

occasions, as much as possible. She was endu'd with a Liberall and free heart, & God inabling her, she never wanted occasions to exercise her Charity. At Last the Divine providence permitting it for best ends unknown to us, she fell into a violent frensy fever, after she had been most happily prepared in her soul by severall immediate foregoing acts of vertue and Charity, & before her Death (which indeed all prais to God was truly Comfortable) she so Came to herself that all the rites of holy Church was administer'd and she received them with sencible piety. Going out of this miserable Life on St Pantalion's Day Confident in the mercys of God, She had here her purgatory, and now injoying & praising her Lord & Spouse in a blessed Eternity. Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Anno 1656 on the 28 of October, Most happily Departed this Life The Right Reverend Lady Catherine Wigmore, Abbess of the English Religious of the holy Order of St Bennet, then at Bollogn, But now translated from thence to Pontoyce. She was Cloathed on Low Sunday 1625 and made her holy vows 2^d of July 1626. Her most remarkable vertues was a most singular Great Charity & exactness in all Regular observances, humility, obedience, patience, compassion & self contempt, with a Continuall zeal of the Divine Glory, Love of Spirituall exercises & union with God. She dy'd in the Years of her profession 30 & 4 months, of her age 60, & 4 months of her Prelature.

My Lady Catherine Wigmore Daughter To William Wigmore A Gentleman Not only Renown'd for the Antiquity of an Illustrious family, but chiefly for his vertue, and being father to so holy a progeny ,God allmighty being pleas'd to call two of his sons and a Grandson to be Priests and religious men of the Society of Jesus, this Daughter of his to St Benedict's order as also three more of his Grandchildren, His Daughter Helin with three more Grandchildren to be Teresians, besides Divers others of his kindred and nieces were Religious; This shows from what a Good Tree this Good fruit my Lady Catherine sprung; who in baptism was call'd Elizabeth. She came to religion at the very beginning of our monastery here at Ghent to-gether with Dame Mary Knatchbull 1624; our Reverend Ghostly father Mr William Vincent, brought them with him when he came out of England to be our confessarius. The[y] were the two first God call'd out of the world to this place, and proved both most eminent s^{ts}. They were cloathed and profest to-gether, but God allmighty quickly took Dame Mary to himself after she had been a year and six weeks

59

profest ,Leaving this her happy sister in Religion who run on in the exercise of monasticall Disciplin 32 years, Approaching more & more to-wards Allmighty God. She begun this holy cours in fear and ended in Dilated Love, for at first she was somewhat scrupulous and timorous, but following the councill of our blessed father in his prologue to his rule she did not thereby fly the way of Salvation which (as our holy father says) is allways straight and Difficult in the Beginning. But in proces and continuance of this holy cours and conversation her heart being enlarged she run in the way of God's commands & counsellis with unspeakable facility and charity. Being a young religious she attended wholly to be perfecting of herself; by some 4 years after her profession, God chose her to attend to the care of others: for from that time to her Death he charg'd her with offices of superiority: having been cellarier, mistris of the novices, Dean & prioress performing all those offices according to true regularity, allways edifying her charge both by word & right vertuous example; it may be apply'd to her what is verify'd to the parents of the holy baptist, that she was Just before God, walking in all the Commandments & Justifications of our Lord without blame (Luc. i) and this in reall effect was attested by her spirituall father to whom and to her Ghostly father & superiours she was ever most obedient candid, free & clear in manifestation as also truly humble in acknowledging those faults which appear'd to herself as such, though others universally may affirm, that they never could tax her with one voluntary breach of rule or statute, she did so exactly comply with regular observance, both faithfull and constantly. She had totally overcome her passions and whatsoever had propention in so much that she was exceedingly patient wheras she was naturally cholericke, and sure naturally she had a high mind, but had arrived to that humility and Generous contempt of herself, that in

frequent occasions of humiliation (and God permitted many to befall her) never usurer was more Joyed to increas his horded treasurs, then she both interiourly and exteriourly and rejoic'd in such occasions. Her manner of way was not so very Greatfull in everything, yet cannot anyone say she behaved herself ungreatfully, but rather gracefully, because indeed she had an Heroicall victory over herself, and the habitts of Grace did appear in all her proceedings. Above all her vertuous Charity had the predominancy in all the degrees therof; as what concerns the perticular of speaking of other defects she Immitated that Rule, which St Ignatious Loyala observed, insinuating by way of advice sometims to her charge that if even speaking to one superiour, the fault might be remedi'd, they should never utter it to two, attaining to work excellently with the instruments of Good works in our own holy Rule, of not loving contention, not a Detractor, not a murmurer, not to give way to anger, [not] to do any injury, patiently to suffer an injury done, never to forsake Charity, and so of all the rest which be 72 for her whole indeavour was to use all the means prescrib'd in our holy rule, to advance her in perfection and this was her continuall Study, in the 26 years she liv'd amongst us here at Ghent. Her compassion over all, but especially those

60

under her immediate Charge, was both tender and Constant; providing them with all necessary Comforts: as well as good penances, which She never fail'd (according to our rule) to impose to the Culpable, so both to make them give some satisfaction, as to keep them in humility: for her generall way of Guiding Souls to God, was with Zeal of Justice; but before her death it was with mercy and sweetness, both in her irreprehensible and fit for present and perticular Circumstances. She order'd all so prudently, and truly God so bless'd her indeavours, that her commands were in a manner deeds, as we read our holy fathers was upon an occasion Dialog 2^d. C. 23^d. For example, once she exhorted her Charge in Generall to use violence to themselves Concerning a Devout and humble posture at mass, and for Reverence to that Great and behovefull Sacrifice, to overcome nature so far as never to sit down but kneel upright all the while, and there are Some who affirme that since that time She recommended this, they have been able to Do it, though before that indispositions of infirmity and human frailty made it appear impossible, nor were they able then to kneel so long together, but now without difficulty. She was most singularly Devouted to the most blessed sacrament; and though her exteriour humility was dayly exemplar as sweeping the house and such like cleaning & washing Dishes; yet always against the feast of Corpus Christi, she would steal the performance of some extream laborious and abject employment, having been sometimes seen (though against her will) all inflamed with heat coming out of the Hogstie or Cowhouse, where she had been making those pleaces clean with a Great, a fork & a broom, frequently washing and sweeping other little places. Once particularly she was as it was [observed by the sequel] preparing her soul for spirituall communion, and it was upon a Saturday (or some other Day) when only one did communicate: Just at the time when the priest brought down the sacred host, she was seen in an extraordinary posture and manner (perhaps it was more than naturall) alienated, and wholly attent to that one thing which was necessary, so that some who observed her believes verily that she neither heard saw, nor minded any thing that was done save only, interiourly how to enjoy and entertain her beloved, and there are some in this house will affirm, she had many supernaturall feavours which upon the bond of secrecy they beg to be excus'd and will not revail them but by some other way we hope to know them: there are others also in this house who assures for a certain truth that when my Lady Catherine was their Superiour she told the secrets of their heart, when no mortall creature but God above knew them; And upon an occasion she was heard to say, in a most sincere truth that she had never askt anything hartily of allmighty God, whatever the petition was, but she had obtain'd it. and withall that when it was more inclining to his Divine will, not to Grant such a request, she apparently found a disposition in herself that she could not possibly ask it, though others ever so much press'd her to it.

In what concerns Her mortifications sure enough she deem'd herself a brute beast before Almighty God, and yet allways with him

61

as is sett down in the sixth degree of humility in our holy Rule and accordingly tis thought by the instruments found, that she dayly did chastise her body: for certain it is she never Lett the Least error or imperfection pass unpunish'd upon herself; She never complain'd of any disquest from others, but was a true friend of peace, supporting one and other, with great signs of vertue. In fine, if we went to particularise every Rule, she was observant of it, would extend, farr beyond the bravery intended. One thing was ever observed: her obedience was so excellent that she was as submissive to superiours as a Child, which was the cause she Govern'd others so well. When My Lady Mary Rooper of happy memory Dy'd, she pray'd in a manner incessantly and Gott all the prayers she could of others, that the Chief superiority might not be Laid upon her and God in his chief providence provided otherwise most comfortably for us and reserved her for what in his eternall decree he had determin'd concerning her supream Government elsewhere. For in the year 1652 the beginning of January our Right Reverend & Dear Lady Abbess My Lady Mary Knatchbull, sent a little colony of virgins to Bollogn and Dame Catherine Wigmore being then our prioress, her Ladyship and my Lord Bishop had order'd her for their chief commander. It is almost incredible what this Journey and settling there cost them in point of suffrance; the cruel enemy Dose so spite the increase of religious familys, but this our Dear Mother my Lady Catherine must needs bear the Greatest share as being by farr the most ancient in years, as also very much worn in Regular strict observance, and withall consumptive; for all the time she was even Cellarier itself she would admitt of no dispensation from the Quire, constantly going to all the hours and sett quire times day & night. Now whilst they were in their mid Journey in this mission to Bullen it was a sudden thaw, being a very bitter and terrible frost when they set out, and so continu'd till this change of weather. All the rest of incommoditys that occur'd was nothing in comparison of the extream suffrance & difficulty for their admittance into the town, the bishop and all opposing them: - the accursed beast is such an antagonist to all Benedictans: he begun this warr with our holy father throwing Down the walls of his monastery at his foundation of Mount Casino and the malice he bears his Children will never end till we meet in the valley of Josaphat. And here he plaid his part of a visible & Invisible enemy, but by the mercyfull providence of God over his little flock, and his Dear holy spouse their Leader all things att last, Concur'd not only for their Greater merit and advancement in his feavour but also Caused their farr more esteem even amongst those very persons who were their Chief opposers. After ten mounth, she was blesst solemnly their abbess upon St Lukes day 1652. Her life there and prudent Government accompani'd with a great Zeal mixt with a Mothers Compassion, together with her exactness, not only to teach, but also to do on all times and occasions the perfect will of God, in the most punctuall observance of our holy Rule and statutes is most Constantly affirm'd by all her Children in that New plantation, and for the Greater authority,

62

by those also, into whose hands she put the charge of her soul, unto whom she perseverently remain'd most Candid and Clear in the account of herself. Retaining in that Chief Dignity her wonted spirit of holy poverty, humility, patience & Charity, not only mending the poor and few accommodations for her own use, but also patching her Children Cloaths and mending their stockings; excusing herself from better works, being so blind and unable to Do anything of neatness. And she was so Carefull of expence of time, that even the hours allowed in our statutes for recreation she would always be mending or making somewhat for Common Good. Nor did she grow slack in her ordinary penance & austerity, which were Rods, discipline, bracclets, Chains and haircloth, still punishing herself for any thing amiss in her actions. And the summer before she dyed being vehemently hott yett would she not be dispensed from wearing wollen, which indeed is feard

did hasten her death for she gott a fever and other great indispositions by it. 'Tis Credibly believ'd she had a certain knowledge of her Death, running on in her first fervour to a mid day hight, She had the vertue of modesty in a most eminent manner, and allways blush'd att her own praise. She Loved God intirely and would all her life in religion seem transported speaking of him. She wore an hour Glass at Ghent in her pocken, secretly turning it each hour, renewing acts of vertue & memory of our Saviour's passion, with an invocation to the nine quires of angels & orders of Saints. Her prayer was allways pure & intence. Her Death was like her life: remarkable for piety. Some Cleargy of the Bishops & Some Seculars too were present at her most saintly & happy Departure, who receiv'd such edification that in their whole life the had not experienced the like. 'Tis believed by them that has know her exercises of Spirit that she had Chiefly bent her whole indeavours to emulate our Saviour to the utmost of her power, in her Life and actions. She received all the rites of holy Church in perfect sence, breathing out the ardent affections of her heart to our blessed Saviour, her only Lord & Love, and sweetly expired in midst of her truly afflicted Children, powering forth tears and prayers. Her virgin Body in his manner of buriall, had some resemblance with our blessed Saviours, for it was inter'd in a Garden where yet never any had been laid. Her most sad and Good Children put out a bill Containg those worthy Inconiums verbatim, translated out of French, the insuing is part of it: In the Year of our Lord 1656, the 28 of October Died the Right honourable & Reverend Lady Catherine Wigmore Abbess of the English religious of the order of St Bennet In Bollogne etc, Leaving her Children in Tears & sorrow for the Loss of so Good a mother. She was sent from a monastery at Ghent of the same order as a modell of a religious perfection, to begin that of Bollogne. Her humility in her Dignity, her obedience in her Superiority, her patience in adversity and sickness have been Singular, her Zeal for the Glory of God, and observance of regular Discipline, her poverty, her modesty, her mortification, Her prayer and Charity had never any relaxation And having advanced always in perfection she never Lost her first fervour. In fine her Life was

63

so exact, that those with whom she Lived and who most nearly observed do assure that the never saw her fail purposely in any point of her rule, etc. This we are more willing to incert because indeed this is an abridgement of a volume that might be extracted from her severall holy practices of Regular vertues, but feeding our hopes that her Children at Pointoise (latly translated from Bollogn) will dilate themselves in setting out her holy Life at Large we content ourselves with this only to stir up our memory never to forgett her Good example, as also for a motive to Love and praise Almighty God for all his Dear mercys and feavours to this happy and holy Spouse of his who leads his elect of our holy order securly into the order [*sic*] severall mansions of his Glory through St Bennetts Holy Rule.
Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1657 on the 15 of February

Most happily Departed this Life our Dearly beloved sister in Christ dame Cornelia Corham in the 22 year of her profession. She was cloathed and profest together with her own Sister Dame Justina 1635 the 11 of September they made their vows of holy Religion. Her most remarkable vertues was Devotion to our blessed Lady, Abstinence, modesty, meekness, frugall poverty and a neat cleanlyness.

Dame Cornelia Corham was born at Antwerp her father John Corham merchant who was an Englishman of Hampshire (his father Robert Corham Gentleman) sent these his two daughters, to this monastery, for education in the convict, where God call'd them both to Religion. This our Dear Dame Cornelia survived her sister Dame Justina 18 year and a half from her very child hood she was of a modest pious and sweet Disposition. She never could indure the Least Jarr against peace and quietness. Almighty God had endued her with a Good sweet quire voice and with a prudent neat husively way, so that she Did God and the community very Good Service in every thing she was employed in, performing the office of Sacristine, cellarier and procuratrix not only prudently and

neatly, but also with a Great deal of f[r]ugality and good satisfaction. She was given much to abstinence and austerity, the walls in her cell (discovering against her will) what bloody disciplines were made there. She was more than ordinary most singularly devoted to the ever Glorious virgin mother of God, and constantly for her sake honnouring all her friends and speciall servants with peculiar Devotion, performing also perseverantly all her other spirituall exercises. Thus [thus] she run on her course in regular disciplin, till in the 22 year of her profession being taken with an infectious Aire which brought her to the Grave with in 8 or 9 Days sickness. In this time she suffer'd most violent torments, not only with a Great catter and sharp fever, but also her very Joynts seem'd to her (by the extreimity of pains) to be torn a Sunder, as the phisitions being askt discrib'd her sufferings to be a kind of dislocating of her nerves and bones. A little after seven the very Last mourning of her Life she had one of those fitts in Great extreimity and may be number'd

64

one of her sharp agonies. Divers of the religious being then praying about her bed, the torments forcing her she cry'd out with a loud voice: o my God how am I tortur'd? o, what excessive pain is this? o my Jesus have mercy upon me. o blessed mother of mercy have pittty upon me, o refuge of sinners, o Immaculate virgin hear a poor sinner; o God, o God how am I tormented? o my Lady, holy Mary: o Blessed St Joachim, St Ann, St Joseph, St Elizabeth, St John baptist, St Casimirus, now help me, now pray for me, o all you dear friends of our blessed Lady assist me in this extreimity: o my Good God have mercy upon me o Sweet Dear Jesus why do you torment me this? then turning her countenance towards all present, for God's sake all of you pardon me for my impatience; but being still in her excess of suffrance she sweetly turn'd her speeches again to her most compassionate dear and only helper, saying: o my God pardon me, for asking you why I suffer so much, I know why you give me this torment, 'tis out of Love, indeed 'tis out of Love, I very well know my God: 'tis out of Love, your Dear Love to my poor Soul now shewes itself, o love o love, o Love, I offer my Self truly Content for your only Love (my God) to indure this till the day of Judgment, I deserve to be thus punished, truly I deserve it indeed I deserve hell, but you o my God is full of mercy. I hope in you and I Love you, o my Dear God I love you and as you give this suffrance out of Love so will I suffer it for your Love. Thus she uttered all those Colloquies alow'd and she spoake them so amourosly, piously and movingly in that bitterness of pain that it dissolved our hearts into Compassion, accompany'd with eyes full of tears whils all pray'd heartily for her. This very Day before 4 o'Clock She most happily expired, having some hours before receiv'd most sencibly and piously all the Sacraments of our holy mother the Church and had all the usuall Commendations & prayers said for her by our Reverend Ghostly father over and over. She render'd up her sweet soul to God incompomed with the presence and prayers of all the religious on thursday in Cleaning Days the 41 year of her [age]. All being much edify'd and Comforted at so blessed an end, which to the eternall praise of our most mercifull God we still experience as a Speciall Benediction to this holy Community, by a life of Great innocency & Piety.

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno 1657 on the 23 of march Our Most venerable Dear Dame Mary Ignatia most happily Departed this life in the 18 year of her profession, and the 80 of her age. Her most remarkable vertues were many, Chiefly fervour, prayer, mortification humility, Charity to all both Living and Dead and a true Contempt of the world and her self.

Dame Mary Ignatia, In Baptism Call'd Margarit, Daughter to Robert Corham Gentleman in Hampshire and widdow to Sir Richard Coninsby. In his life and after his Death, did a world of good Deeds, even whilst She lived in a Singular state, relieving the poor, helping distress'd Catholicks, visiting and Comforting prisoners, Succord

65

orphants and widdows, prefer'd Servants to higher promotions, harbour'd priests, and many Such Charitys. At Last God inspired her to put in execution the Highest act of Charity, which was to renoun all things to follow Christ in a religious state when she was 60 year old, as Couragiously putting her neck into the yoak of holy obedience as though she had been but 20; for it almost incredible with what excessive Joy She enter'd the inclosure door at first admittance, seeming all transported, and as one that did rather fly to the quire to give God thanks, then go on her feet. The same alacrity she shewed at her Cloathing on the nativity feast of our Blessed Lady and at her holy profession a Year after on the 11 of September 1639. On the very same day 4 year before her own neeces Dame Justina & Dame Cornelia had made their holy vows. And this our Dear Dame Margarit Ignatia lived to survive them both, and in Reall truth for her exemplar life was an illuminating light, having arrived to a great Contempt of the world and of herself: and though she had been in its high esteem, her husband and Sir Richard Coningsby being a courtiour and in a noble office under king James, and she much feavour'd in a particular manner by him, who said that after her knight's Death he would be her protector; and so she found it as long as the said king James Liv'd. Having been cause, I mean a Chief Instrument of Allmighty God, to obtain her husband's Conversion, at Last, suffring much loss of her temporall estate, she cast her care upon God and took only care faithfully to serve his divine majesty, persevering here in religion to her Death in the Light of her first fervour. Her piety and constant prayer was extraordinary: never by her Good will would she be relax'd from continuall prayer. Her hearts content was to be perseverently before the blessed sacrament; and truly she was so, as oft as obedience would permitt, and there for the most part upon her bare knees did she kneel upright. And this very strenght of kneeling she obtain'd strangely, by an heroicall act done in our blessed Lady['s] honnour, and thus it was related by her own self upon an occasion: She said, her indispositions was such, once in the world that she could not kneel at all. And for a totall vittory over nature, she purpose and perform'd in our blessed Lady honnour, this wonderful remedy for curing and strenghtning of her knees: say for nine whole days on her bare knees every Day nine times the Salve Regina, to the Queen of Heaven, and ever since that time, she never had to her death any impediment for that humble posture. This shows of what a courage she was in point of Zeal, fervour and mortification, which disposition she carry[ed] in vigour with her to her Grave. For ever in a manner she was crucifying herself upon some cross or other, for she had the hidden art to mortify her poor old body 3 or 4 ways at once, kneeling not only on her bear knees but extending her arms across, having Iron nails a little blunted at the points, thrust hard against the palms of her hands; bowing her fingers to inward none could see them holding one leg up unperceavably as she kneelt. At other times in presence of others, she would shaddow her hands under her vail, and extend for a long time to-gether her fingers as though they had

66

been on a rack, this is as much pain oft as arms across it self, having the whils her feet held up as before. Frequently wearing Iron chains, braceletts and the like, she did so addict herself to mortification and prayer that they were the very meat and drink that feed her happy soul. Acknowledging her faults upon all occasions, not only in private to her superiours but publicly in the refectory, and this with much inflamed affection as was admir'd to see how her humility conquer'd all self esteem. She oft ingeniously acknowledged in a secret to a friend that God Laid her by the way of temptation, aridity, dessolation, etc. but her loving heart and vigerous couragious mind surmounted these, finding God in all occasions & occurances. The truth is she was of a passing sweet disposition, affable, civill, obliging, of a generous noble humour very gratfull for the Least Curtacy and of a charitable heart, keeping her self free from the Least Detraction or undervaluing any. In fine she was all Zeall, all Goodness, all Devotion. She was most specially Devouted to our blessed Lady, to St Joseph, and to the souls in purgatory, but in a particular manner to the sacred passion of our saviour; applying all the treasures of his precious merits to her soul, by the frequent use of holy indulgences, gaining many times in a Day as much as she could. Towards the latter years

of her aged life she grew very short of breath, and the winter before her Death had gott a catter, and therefore by obedience was ordain'd to sitt in the infirmary that could season of winter by reason of the benefit of a fire; yet for all that occasion of relaxation did she not disite from her wonted devotions and austeritys, saying dayly her Great office though she was fourscore years old, her eye sight as Good as any att the age of 40, so that she could work still those curiositys which she was excellent att, having a rare invention for all manner of Silk, Gold and Silver works which came so nately out of her hands as was admired att. After her Dear neeces Death Dame Cornelia, this our holy religious Dame Dame Mary Ignatia came about the house again, till some 3 or 4 days before her own happy dissolution (for no longer did she keep her bed in the Infirmary) when the doctor gave his sentence that she could not live, she desir'd the holy sacraments: having all the consent [*sic*] assembled, after sacramentall confession she was annoil'd and with perfect sences and most pious heart she devoutly received her holy viaticum. After which according to custom, our Reverend & venerable Ghostly father gave the benediction of the blessed sacrament. She most humbly bowing the whilst, following with her eye in a kind of sweet and sencible devotion till it was past and Gone out of the rome; bowing her head with hands erected, then casting her eyes up to heaven, it was apparent how seriously she apply'd herself to the entertain of so Dear a guest, whom she had Loved, served and suffered for, so faithfully and constantly, immediately in a manner. Reverend Father Vincent came up again to the infirmary: and began to read all commedations as accustom'd she in the Intrim, most sencibly, sweetly and piously Yielded her soul into the hands of our Dear Saviour within less then a quarter of an hower after she had receiv'd him for her viaticum. And we confidently believe that his infinit

67

Goodness carry'd her himself to heaven Immediately. She dy'd like a child of the holy cross on Fryday in passion week. All unanimously saying, we have now lost a true saint indeed, adding, doubtless God blessed the whole hous for her sake. And both spirituall and Ghostly fathers, speaking of her, voted her a very holy woman. Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno 1657 on the 19 of Aprill most happily Departed this life our dear Sister in Christ Dame Alexia Maurice having been profest on the 28 of January 1648. and nineteenth of her age. Her most remarkable vertues were obedience, fortitude, Zeal of Quire service, And humility in the performance of laborious and humble offices.

Dame Alexia In Baptism call'd Catherine, the Eldest Daughter of Walter Maurice Gentleman In Monmouth Shire in Wales, Being a most pious & Good Chatholick had a Desire all his 3 children should take to religious courses, having only one sonn and two Daughters, Askt this his eldest if she had a mind to be a Nun? She to Plaise her father said Yes. Whereupon he sent her here to Ghent, though Interiourly much against her will: after her admittance into the monastery, she became a convictrice being only 15 years of age but very tall. There in the convict she stayed som two years, where God of his infinite Goodness gave her a true vocation to Religion: and upon her humble beging admittance was put into the noviciate, and Gave very Good satisfaction in her proceedings. Immediately before and after her holy profession she had the happiness to take Spirituall exercises so that in the space of a year and less she had taken them three or four times, which was very extraordinary; God permitting it for her Greater means of Laying a true foundation of vertue, which shewed itself in the appliing of her indeavours in this her first fervour to regularity, carefully performing humble offices both laboriously and Diligently. She was most serviceable in the Quire, being very Zealous of the Divine office, having in the recitall and performance of it a singular Good Grace, as also in all rest of ceremonys, singing strongly & tunably, with a Good manner. Concerning her mentall prayer, she has been observed to kneel whole howers without motion. In her obediences she was most ready to be disposed on by superiours. She was of a Generous spirit, and gave us many examples of Heroicall vertue. Allmighty God out of his infinite Goodness intending to

Draw her forcably to himself sent her many corporall pains & infirmitys, first permitting a fire to catch about her face, insomuch that she was so tormentably scortched, that it swell'd like a monster: whilst she was in excessive torment, yet she indured it with an invincible courage: And by her Devotion and recours to St. Xaverius, in a very short time was perfectly cured, with out scarr or blemish. After this it was not Long 'eer our most loving God whose Delights are to be with the children of men, would have her follow him close with the Load of a heavy cross, for she fell into a Dropsy, or as others thought a Tempany, but in fine it proved a Dropsy. She being then in the very flower and prime of her youthly vigor, and so she remaned in the forge of a three years

68

purgation, in the infirmary bearing her swelling which was arrived to an incredible bigness, with singular fortitude. All that time Zealous to adhear twice a week to the holy Sacraments as also on holy days or any other Communion Day, omitting never the Coming Down on those Days though it cost her an unspeakable pain and Difficulty, and unless God had endued her with such a Courage as she shewed upon all occasions, it was impossible she should have been able to have Done it. Oft she would say, if for gaining all pleasures the world affords, she would not put herself to that trouble and suffrance, but to Come to her Dear Lord always too to little; nor would she except the offer of bring the blessed Sacrament up to her, though indeed she was oft failing at every step, her body being swell'd as big as a Tun incredibly great. She was of a proper comly personage, a most gracefull presence, had an excellent good nature and a most Compassionate heart towards all poor and Distressed people. At first she had a Great desire to Live and recover (if it had pleased the Divine Will) but all medecyns failing of the intended effect (God permitting it) they Still rather added to an increase of her infirmity; at last she became truly Conform'd to live, Suffer and dye, when and how God and his sweet providence best pleased. About a month before her Death she grew extraordinary ill, so that all thought she Could not Last Long, yet she bore it out with Singular patience. On a Tuesday She most piously prepared her Self for her viaticum, and received all rites of the holy Church most Devoutly. Asking humbly pardon of every one earnestly beging their prayers but particularly she desired of all who Came to visit her that the[y] would obtain of God, even for his goodness sake, not to Detain her long in this world, now having been so particularly arm'd and strenghtned for her last Journey, And chiefly, she said, least by Living she might incur some new offence. These petitions she did so incessantly beg (by mediation of others) that God gave her the Desires of her heart, for she live[d] but one whole Day after the receiving of her viaticum & holy oils. & doubtless in this time she rather highly increas'd her merit then the Displeasure of Almighty God. who must needs be even delighted to see her dye like a conqueror with a sword (as one may say) in her hand, Distrusting herself, firmly hoping in God, and much confiding in his servants prayers. For the very Day she dyed which was Thursday, and our Glorious Bishop of Canterbury and Martyr, St Elphegus's day, in mourning by times early, She had a notable strong agony so that she was even a going out of this life Immediately as it was thought. One of the Ancient Religious being present took a crucifix, holding it before her, adjur'd her saying: Dame Alexia I charge you by vertue of holy obedience, not to Dye till Father Vincent come: for the[y] had sent for him, Divers of the religious being present, and the rest instantly call'd. O strange thing: All of a sudden as it were, she came to herself, so very much, that there appear'd no Danger for some howers, so that all being Dispearced to prime & other Obediences, four or five only of the religious staid about her, it being about this time 7 of the clock, when unexpectedly with a Loud Strong voice as though she had been in

69

perfect health, and entering into a field for a single combat, she said: If ever you pray for me pray for me now, all promising her they would, most seriously and heartily. A little after, all (but one or two) went to communicate & hear Mass. In the Intrim her agonys and pains grew more and more which she supported with pious application, great patience in most perfect sence even to her last breath.

She lived till about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, our Reverend Ghostly father havin given her Divers times absolution. Formally going to Confession once or twice that Day, and his Reverence saying all the prayers the holy Church has apointed for those Lying in Agonys, about a quarter of an hower before her last expire, all kneeling and praying about her, with a very clear and strong voice again, she cryed alow'd (as though she was then about the complatment of her victory) now pray for me. At which the reverend chantress (in our venerable Ghostly fathers absence) began our blessed Lady's and Great Littanys of Saints, allowed; all the assembly answering, and the dying religious herself answer'd too. And when our blessed Lady's name, our holy father St Bennet, St Scholastica, St Augustin, St Alexius, St Catherine was invoked she distinctly bowed her head very reverently at Each. After which she often kissed the holy crucifix saluting every wound, as also our blessed Ladys Image in a vigorous manner helping herself higher up in her bed. She instantly turn'd on one side, inclin[ing] her head upon the bosom of one of the religious, she said with a soft Low yet Distinct voice, I go now to my Saviour, and immediately render'd her spirit into the hands of her creator, being 29 years old, & in the 10 of her profession. She had a Lively faith of Gaining in her Last Article of Death, the plenery given to her Brother in her behalf by his holiness Pope Allexander. and according to her undoubted great faith, we hope it was done unto her.

Anno Domini 1658

Most Happily Departed this Life our most Reverend and Beloved Mother and sister in Christ Dame Mary Mounson on the 8 day of Aprill, the 52 of her [age] & 28 of her holy profession. She dyed in the 6th year of her mistris of the novices and Dean. Her most remarkable vertues were many, chiefly humility, obedience, contempt of the world & of herself, great & heroicall mortification in all kinds of Austeritys, punctuality in every regular observance.

Dame Mary Mounson, Daughter to Antony Mounson, a Gentleman of an Ancient & noble family, was born in Lincolnshire. Bein bread in her younger years at Lieds, when she Grew bigger, her father sent for her home. From her infancy she was much Devouted to our holy father St Benedict, And allways would on his Day give her school-fellows some feast or handsome entertainment; and God was pleased to give her to this Glorious saint, as his peculier charge, for at the age of 22 she enter'd into the Tryall of holy religion under his blessed rule here at Ghent, and upon the feast of the most adorable & sacred Trinity she received the holy habitt, and the twelve mounth after, on St Barnabas's day she made her solemn vows of religious profession 1630. She never relaxed in her first fervour, but went on in a dayly

70

increas of perfection: Gracious in life and Death to her heavenly Spouse by the practice of true Regular vertue, particularly in humility of heart. Her Delight was to Debar herself of all Delights, even of those things also which was of the Spirituall. For she has been heard most sincerely to affirm, that her Desire was that God would not Laid her by the way of his sweetness: She was indeed a valorous champion of the cross, though she Lived all her Life in continuall fear of God Almighty, Dreading the Day of Judgment, and being affraid of hell. And never forgetting herself, her own nothing: She put herself much on the performance of humble offices, Dayly doing one abject thing or other, and most part, that which was the most humble and most hard. Constantly without fail, once or twice a week, she publickly confessed herself guilty in the refectory before all, of faults which others thought her innocent of, and then at every table, with her armes a Cross she would beging say: I humbly beseech you to pardon and pray for me that I may constantly practice our holy rule in a meek humble and contrite heart. And in very truth 'tis apparent her heart was adorn'd with those three vertues: She apply'd her self to all regular dutys, and to her spirituall exercises most punctually, rather for the most part prevent the times. All howers of recreation she spent the better part in prayer, piously & silently slipping a way, to adhear to God, by averting herself from the Creatures and Created divertisements, ever also upon all occasions withdrawing herself from the affairs and business of the

world, shunning the Grates and all Conversation with seculars, annoying [*sic*] to the utmost of her power all occasions of Distractions, attending to herself, never meddling or making with other folks matters, though she had Divers offices here in the Community: which in her latter years she was forced to accept (as the known will of God) albeit in her former times she never could be drawn to admitt of any. She has perform'd very laudably the infirmarian office and in the Last 6 years of her Life, she was both Dean & mistress of the novices, and In this office she Dyed. The austerities and penances which she voluntarily & constantly underwent, is a kind of wonder, for she did persecute & punish her poor body to an extreimity: martyring herself continually, for it has never been observed that ever she gave her flesh the Least in particular cherishing, exposing her hands & body to sun in summer, to frost and bitter cold in winter, neither wearing muff nor mitton, but rather finding out ways to taste the utmost of suffrance. And God blest this couragious soldier of Christ's with such necessary strength, in a weak and worn body, that all her Life in religion she strictly observed all the regular f[e]asts, abstinences & other penall rules to her dying Day, and that constantly with superaragation, not so much as tasting bitt of Bread, or Drop of Drink at no time whatsoever, but only att none and night, nor did she ever find fault with anything. It has been noted that she would in occasions eschew even speaking a word, that might redound to her own satisfaction, she had such a perseverent hatred of herself. Nobody ever heard her inquire, of this or that news, but keeping herself solitary and sequesterd as much as by obedience she could, for concerning

71

this vertue of obedience she was most submissive, ever tractable to all superiours and spirituall Guides. Tis credibly believed by her fervent and perseverent prayers and penance, she obtain'd vocations for two of her neeces, who she cloathed and profest being mistress of novices, and Doubtless her Life was so pleasing to God that not only her own family but even this holy community was in a peculier manner blest for her sake. To the very last whole day of her mortall pilgrimage, she constantly was assisting in all the hours and times of Divine service in the quire. She dyed upon a Munday and the very Saturday before she Labour'd (all the spare time from her spirituall obligations) in most painfull humble offices all the Day, sweeping the great dorter, emptying the bucketts, scrubbing and scouring, in what concerned the refectory having all the time the fatall stroaks of Death assaulting her yet as Long as she could stand she never complain'd nor yielded. At Last washing her own feet fitt for her viaticum, a little before supper, she spoake how she was more indisposed then ordinary and indeed ready to fall down. After supper, she (eating nothing) fell a vomitting, much tormented the whilst with graping in the gutts, which was a disease the town had tasted, and the Doctors scarce yet experiencing the best remedys; this brought her the next mourning to the infirmary, where she lived but one Day. For the truth of it is, she dyed alive, being nothing but skin and bone, all her forcable labours and austerities for a long time before may go in the account of strong agonys, her hair Cloaths, braceletts, Iron Chains and sharp disciplins were the torturours. Besides she had a great while experienced a violent pain in one arm that had kept her from sleeping, often times even whole nights together, yet would she never feavour her self or excuse from being servant in the refectory or the like, saying thought it was painfull to exercise or Carry a turne yet it was better, for it Cause a heat to Come unto her Arm. The Truth is, she rejoyced on all occasions to suffer, to Contemn and hate her Self. In a word her life was a rule of vertue, exactly observing our holy rule both in exercising the instruments of Good works and 12 degrees of humility included therein, punctuall in the Chapters of silence, never detracting or speaking a miss of any; her vertue and Constancy in God's Service may be more admired, in respect his divine majesty laid her to him by the way of aridity, temptations and Continuall fear of her salvation; but she found grace with God to merit by all insomuch that in the Chapter after her death (my Lady Abbess making that of the dead herself) this high inconium attested by her Ladyship that in all respects we have not had soo many examples in vertue that Dyed amongst us. On Passion Sunday she was sent in the mourning to the infirmary, and on Munday the Day after, at 4 o'Clock in the afternoon she most

piously received all the Last Sacraments, being not only assisted with the presence and prayers of all the religious, but had also both her Ghostly and spirituall fathers who continually animated & prayed for her, oft giving her absolution; She spok little but interioarly applyed herself very much, consenting to all the Heroicall Acts they insinuated to her. She promised to pray for all and every

72

one of the religious, And to beg an ardent Love of God & true contempt of the world for this community. One of the religious beging her to pray & obtain of Allmighty God that she might be a perfect regular Benedictan, she answer'd that she had promised to beg that for every one in the house. She offer'd up her sufferings to the Last, for the souls in purgatory especially for that soul who loved God most. She askt pardon of all and gave infinite thanks to Allmighty God for the Great benefit of her vocation to be a child of our holy father St Benedict. She took, a little before she expired, the crucifix, which laid before her, and with her trembling and Dying hand, of her own accord kissed every wound and made the sign of the holy cross upon her with it. She Dyed most peacably & quietly, like a holy saint as she ever Lived, yielding up her happy soul to God on Munday on passion week between eight and nine at night leaving her crucify'd body, worn out with austeritys; as though it had been newly beaten & tormented with hard usage. One who had been a wittness of her perseverant sanctity wonder'd that her body did not cas forth some rays of splendor but if Christ himself did not shew himself Glorious till the third day; we will not marvill to see her dead and deadly mortified since her life was hidden with Christ in God, and confident we are when Chris[t] our Life shall appear, then she also shall appear in Glory. (Collos. C. 3.)

Requiescat in Pace. Amen.

Anno Domini 1659 on the 1st of September on a Munday about six in the mourning Our venerable Mother Dame Magdalen Digby most happily reposed in Our Lord. Arm'd with all the rites of holy Church the 74th year of her age, & 49 of her holy profession. Amongst the many remarkable vertues noted in her she exceedingly edify'd all by a Great conformity to the Divine Will, & exact obedience to Superiors, by an intense application to prayer, and a singular esteem of all religious observances, accompany'd with a magnanimous Zeal together with a very tender and unweari'd Devotion to the ever blessed & adorable Sacrament, and behovefull sacrifice of the holy mass.

The Reverend & Venerable Mother Dame Magdalen Digby, was in Baptism named Elizabeth, Daughter to Edward Digby Esquire (of Tilton in Lastershire), A family very Illustrious & Ancient, came to Religion about the age of 2 or 3 & twenty, In the prime of her youthfull vigor & beauty. She was (as all the Digbys Generally are) of a more then ordinary high stature, yet withall very well proportion'd to her bigness, & accounted extraordinary handsome, her humour pleasant & lively, of a Great & couragious spirit. She came oversea into the Low Countrys with my Lady Knatchbull of happy memory, Enter'd with her into Brussels Monastery for the tryall of religion on the octave of St Peters & St Pauls Day, on a Saturday, my Lord Matthias Hovius being the Archbishop of Mechlin, My Lady Joane Barkley first Abbess of that holy begun house of St Benedict, under the Tittle of our blessed Lady Assumption. On St Thomas of Canturbury's Day 1609 she & her Dear Sister in

73

Religion, my Lady Lucy, received the holy habit, & a year after on the 11th of January, were Joyntly profest remaining ever after most Dear in union of affections in order to their spirituall advancement. This our Dear Mother Dame Magdalen had laudably perform'd the office of sacristine & in respect of her good voice, which was both clear sweet and strong, she [was] chosen chantrice, after that was made Dane (*sic*) in which Dignity she came hither, being one of the 4 that begun this house not foun[d]ed in temporall Dignitys renews as yet, but strongly founded on God's never failing providence. The manner was thus, she having been the very first that was inspired by

Allmighty God to sett forward a monastery in honnour of the mother of God's Immaculate conception: she instantly and earnestly besought his Divine Majesty to perfect this Design, & she told the success severall times To Divers of our religious here. And once it was on an occasion that one tooke notice of a Great Cross which she had caused to be made which for her Devotion hung in her cell, hanging also an other of pritty large size which she wore Dayly about her, she told that religious that the cross in her cell was not made according to her mind, for she would have had it much Greater, and otherwise. But seeing [s]he did not understand her, this did serve to put her in mind of a Great cross which she had seen. Then that party askt her what cross that was? and she told her, that when she was once praying in the quire at Brussels, very earnestly before a fair Great crucifix (and this was in her recollection after holy communion) she had an internall sight of a huge Great cross - these were her very words - & understood withall, if she obtain'd her petition, she must carry as Great a Cross all the Days of her life; at which, with a most humble Reverence & conformity, she assented to the Divine pleasure, so inflamed were her Desires of setting forward this Good work to the Glory of God and his blessed Mother, whatsoever it cost her by the currant money of suffrance. From that Day forward it went on, though with Divers oppositions & difficultys, & meeting her Dear sister Dame Lucy Knatchbull after this, she said in a recreative way, I must have you an abbess of the Immaculate Conception before I dye. The profe of which was happily brought about, to all our comforts that succeeded them in this holy convent. But how did our Dear Mother Dame Magdalen Go about this work? In my opinion with an invention not only pleasant, but virtuously witty, she wholly addressed to Glorious St Joseph telling him with a most affectionate confidence, that this affair must be wholly his trust, and with all gave him to understand, she would not have the Least distrust in his power to accomplis it. In regard she besought this of him, in honnour of his pure spouse the Immaculate Virgin; as a satisfactory work for the affliction and Grief he caus'd her at his suspition and the event shew'd how Greatfull her Innocent confidence was, seeing this powerfull saint, did not frustrate her hopes. In the year then 1624 she and three Reverend Dames move[d] together with two novices, were settled in Ghent, as you may read more amply in the book of our foundation to the Glory of Almighty God, his blessed mother St Joseph and St Benedict. Here also our Reverend

74

mother Dame Magdalen exercised (as a sign of her prudence & Zeal) divers burdens of offices in religion. As procuratrix, cellarier, sacristine, Infirmarian Dean & prioress, though even presently in a manner after their comin[g] to Ghent, she began to carry the burden of Great Infirmitys. Almighty God, as it seems, more Delighted to see her managing the office of Crossbearer then all her other offices put together, since her time Lasted longer in this. Besides the stone, a certain rawness of humours and coldness of stomach caused in her a dayly indigesture: but above all an extraordinary Deafness made her soon incapable of public assistance at the Divine office in the quire, as also of many human comforts which that quick sence affords, yea even of those also which were of the spirituall, not being able to hear distinctly either mass, sermon, Reading or Chapter. Yet her Zeal was carryed on with such a fervorous esteem to all what done in common, that she indeavour'd (not withstanding all impediments of either indispositions) to be present att all, where the convent was assembled. And she would oft say that she should be very Loth to be absent and said: what do I know what graces the Holy Ghost intends then to bestow on the whole community and if [I] be not there as farr as concerns my particular, I loose all. And really on those occasions it was an edifying sight to observe how she applyed herself internally to God: the like has been frequently noted when others have been at allowable times recreating at harmless divertisments, she hearing a noise in Gross and some transport would apply her self to her recreation, by a devout cast elevate her eyes, then with an humbled countenance looking Down with her hands Joynt or a cross upon her breast, would be Delighting her soul in God with fervent Jaculations. And this more specially towards the latter end of her years, and in very deed this was not one days practice, but in all days all nights I

may say. In so much that I believe her stock of meritts amounts beyond our expression. She was extraordinarily Devouted to the ever adorable and most blessed Sacrament, and we perswaid ourselves Almighty God rewarded her, with a peculier sweetness of Devotion & continuall thirst towards the holy Eucharist in regard of a Long and wearisom Combat, which she had with the enemys temptations, concerning incredulity of the reall presence, being among other times assaulted both actually & fiercly, Just when she was making her holy vows publickly before it, att the time of her profession. But afterwards as a stout Champion of our Lords, she Gott by his Divine assistance an intire victory. Growing strong in spirit by an intense application to prayer, never willingly absent from all the masses that were said, and almost all Day present, when the blessed sacrament was exposed, and God having given her the Guift of tears we believe she had as an earnest penny, of that great recompence, Laid up for her in a blessed Eternity. In the Intrim she went on in the secure royall way of the holy cross; though her many internall suffrings and lingring indispositions mad[e] her cross appear not so conspicuous. This put our Dear mother into some fear, least any weak soul should be less edifyed at the constant privileges

75

& dispensations, allowed for the sick, which she dayly had offer'd. Therefore having a particular instinct as she prayed (one of our holy father's votive feast days) when the blessed sacrament was exposed, being in the Quire, at high Mass, she besought Almighty God as he was really present in the blesse[d] sacrament and eternall God, exposed there for her comfort, as she believed him to be, that he would vouchsafe to shew a sign up on his poor servant Magdalen Digby, as an evidence to all how dayly ill at ease she was, for much did she regret, that being an Ancient, and consequently bound to yield true regular example to all, to be hinder'd by any seeming infirmity; for now her stone of a Long time was in a manner cured, only simptoms and lingring pains made her Laid a Languishing Life. Praying therefore as a fore said, behold all of a sudden, she grewd deadly sick sounded [*sic*] in the quire, so that being taken out into a more commodious roome, att coming to herself, she vomitted a Great Deal of black corrupt blood and from that time the kancker in her breast began; and this was seven complait years before her Death, and she was heard to say in that time of overplus, I have intirely served out my apprentisship. And blessed be God she was grown a free woman in all kinds in respect of being two mounths before she Dyed freed from a most troublesome temptation, which as a heavy cross interiourly afflicted her, and had begun not Long after the exterior sign of the kancker and it was a continuall distrust of her salvation. This temptation of being damn'd was as a perpetuall sword of sorrow at her breast; in so much that one of our convers sisters, nay Divers, besides as it was their obedience to look to her, would oft find her bitterly weeping in her cell when yielding our Good Mother all the comfort they could, would have many times for a reply, o my Dear Sister Do you think I shall be saved? and then she would weep again most heavily. Notwithstanding all these desolations, and a world of cross accidents, which according to her humour frequently towarded her, yet did she not desist from all her spirituall exercises; but rather retired herself more, prayed more, rose early meditated often, still presenting herself before the blessed Sacrament, and had for her greater comfort a commodious prospection in her cell, to see the elivation & demonstrance. She was noted also to have not only herselfe a great Zeal of religious observance, but also took a special Joy to see any new comer apply seriously to observe the Rule of pious customs of the monastery, and as sencibly did she feel the contrary but particularly she gave very Good example by doing all by order, or approve of the superiours. And she was most exact in Giving account how she disposed of herself, not presuming at any time or for never so triviall or short space to absent herself from the community, or workhouse without Leave. By reason of her Deafness not hearing the bell, she came sometimes after or late, yet would she never fail to address to the superiour kneeling & kissing the Ground tho she might Justly be excused, and this in the publick refectory, workhouse, Chapter house &c. She was ever most ready and willing to do the Least charity and has been observed to run

from the workhouse to her cell even for a needlefull of tread, so to yield any other an Immediate Curtasy or supplying a present need. She oft would be deaming herself the poorest needy creature in the world, incapable (as she said) of any service to the community, humblying herself to the Lowest Dirt. She had a very hearty & comfortable way to animate and comfort any in Dejection temptation or Desolation, and for the Least curtasy or ser[v]ice done to her would return all ways this benediction, "the king of heaven receive you into the kingdom of his Glory" and this she constantly utter'd in a most cordiall manner. I cannot let pass one of her most respective and fervorous acts towards the blessed sacrament when she was sacristine: observing a Great wont of some necessary Greens for the church and finding the procuratrix destitute of many for a supply, she gets Leave of her superiour & disfurnishes her cell of all she had, saying Shall I be accommodated with carpets & covers for our table, cubbart & oratory and my dear Lord wont? o no, God forbid, he shall have all what I have, with a most ready heart. And in very Deed her devotion to the sacred mass, alter & Church was so very Great, that when she was apointed by reason of her terrible weakness, to Leave her cell & infirmary both to retire and remain in the new building, she felt it to the very heart, by reason of being Deprived of so Near a nei[gh]bourhood (as I may say) to Almighty God as also of the comfort to hear mass dayly and to see our Dear Lord at elevations. For though she lay in the infirmary three or four mounths before her removall thence, yett had she the Zeal & commodity to ascend a few stares to her cell there to hear an extraordinary or high mass, but by reason of the noysomness of the cancker in her breast the Doctor apointed a place apart for her in the new rooms, and withall found her so weak that he did not allow her to come to Mass, save only on holy Days and Sundays: after a mounth or two she was forbid to come then also, having such an imbecillity which made her even staggar in going, ready to fall at every step, yet as long as ever she could be let on she obtaind in respect to our saviour to meet him without the Door at St Josephs alter every communion Day, and there she would sitt half spent (with early rising and application) expecting the blessed sacraments coming to her, and as a reward to St Joseph, St Joachim & St Ann her peculier patroons she had the honnour and comfort of communicating Divers weeks before their Alters in the cloister, sanctifying them both with our Lords being placed upon them. As allmighty God had given her a Great faith so he gave her a Great application, for in All the time of her being in the new room, she supplied the wont of personally hearing mass by acts of faith, mentally & devoutly hearing it at a distance as she expressed to Divers. Once, one of the religious entering to visit her, told her mass was newly done; but for all that, said she, it is now but past elivation with me. And I thank God (and this she spoake smiling) I am present at many masses in a Day yea and at many elevations in an hower as knowing that att all moments both Day & night the most blessed sacrifice of holy

mass is offered up to Almighty God at one place or other in the world. And her ghostly father said upon this occasion that no Doubt but she heard mass in the effect as having the meritt of her faith and Devout application. Besides, as a peculier recompence, as we piously believe, she had many masses of requiem said for her at the Day of her buriall, God inspiring a Lady in the town to procure all the Capusheen masses that Day, and in the space of 5 immediat Days after her Death she had three solemn sung Masses in our church. As she was Devouted to the holy mass, so was she to all relations, namly to the feast of corpus Christi in a speciall manner. And obtain'd when she was sacristine, to have the blessed sacrament exposed as often as possible she could, as also on those Days as early as might be. St Peter, St Bennedict, St Magdelen and St Scholastica were her peculier patroons, but especially and above all the Glorious Mother of God. And she had the honnour for her particular comfort to have 3 days before her death the miraculous Image brought to her cell by my Right Reverend Lady Abbess and the whole community, procession wise Singing Psalms and hymns

placing it on her oratory. Dame Magdelin Desired an ave Maria might be sung, after which she [s]poake so movingly and so heartily that she drew tears from Divers. The Convent being Dismist she had near an hours time to apply herself before the blessed Virgins Image, which she did most Devoutly; and this was after mass and communion the very Thursday before she Dyed, our blessed Lady as it were brin[g]ing her the welcome news of her near approaching happiness, for when the Bright aurora appears, we know the sun of splendid Glory is infallibly at hand. O how Deceitful and fading are the promisses and rewards of this world? and how Liberall and certain are those of heaven, and tho all ages gives convincing examples of this truth, yet in this our venerable mother Dame Madelen's happy Death we have many perticular arguments of Gods speciall and benevolent Love, for as he never forsook her in her former crosses & tryalls, so towards her end his gracious providence towards her was most evidently eminent. And she reciprocally Loved him to the very end, and thirsted perpetually after him as appears by her absolute Desires never to loose one Communion Day. Now you must know that from the time that her breast break, which was some 8 months before her Death, it was held by the Doctor that her Danger of Death was continuall. And the reason as he said why she revived so long was the strenght of her courage; her magnanimous heart in single combats with Death fought Duells Day after Day, yet still she gott the victory, notwithstanding as it was her own earnest Desire, so was it both her spirituall and corporall Phisitions, to order matters that she might have the Last sacraments time enough, apoint St Bernads Day for the receiving them, imbracing the good news with most particular Joy, and perfect conformity. But when the Day came indeed she was found to have a Great Deal of interiour courage & vigor, though she was worn even to skin & bone. Therefore she was told that perceiving she was very hearty

78

still, the[y] Desired to know her mind, for if she took her viaticum on St Bernards day, which was Thursday, for Reverence of this sacred & Last Sacrament she must abstain from communicating some time after (if she Lived), at last [?least] could not be permitted to Receive the Thursday next which was a Generall communion Day for the community. O then, said she, for Gods Love Let us defer it. I have such confidence in my Dear Lords Goodness and Love that he will so Dispose of all concerning me, that I shall have the Last sacraments in Due time and yet for all that, not Loose on Communion Day. Upon which Desires of hers it was put of[f], and her firm hope in God was most effectually accomplished, he giving her the courage & Zeal to remain fasting all the Days of Common Communion, & had the Last sacraments within less than 24 hours before she Dyed, receiving them with such sence & devotion as caused Great edification to all. And as for those Heroicall acts which she frequently made in the Last mounth of her Life, they shewed with what a Dilated and disintress'd Love she sought the Honnour and Glory of God, offring not only eternally to suffer those sharp pains she indured, But also to suffer the very Torments of hell so to yield our Lord more condigre [*sic*] satisfaction, or to be more conform'd to his Divine pleasure, shewing admirable patience & fortitud in her Greates[t] Dolour & anguish. Her breast still run very pittifully, and was boken out into five holes, having with all a most noysom swell, [*sic*] which sence in her was not only very quick but naturally also extraordinary nice, in by which we may Ghess how her meritts on all sides increased. The two has severall Great fountains (as it were) of blood that came gushing out in a strange & extraordinary manner, as if a spear had been thrust into her side, under her breast (and this was on Sunday and Munday Immediate before her Death) Caused in many a reflection that as she had obtained this exteriour sign, by way of feavour from God, so it remain'd to the very Last a kind of supernaturall wonder as a Dart where with the Divine Archer had wounded and made a conquest of her Love. She particularly uniting the 5 sores in her breast to the 5 wounds of our Lord & she said but some 17 hours before her Death, to the Doctor, who had appointed her the time of taking her viaticum, that Day in the afternoon, it then being about nine in the mourning. "Good Mr Doctor, said she, Lett the cordiall you appoint me be a strong one, not to prolong my Life, but to the

end I may have more strenght & courage to receive in perfect sence my God, as my Last viaticum." And this was after she had taken the holy oyles, the Doctor and reverend father Gerrard having return'd again for the aforesaid appointment, she at taking Leave answered her Ghostly father when he said that he was going to sing mass for her (it being Sunday): God Give you an angelicall voice father I'll sing with you myself to-morrow, and this in her accustomed witty & pleasant way. But in fine Allmighty God was pleased to anticipate the time, for she received within an hour after that her Lord, so near upon the brinks of Death she seem'd to Go thus being arm'd on all sides, with sacramentall confession, with

79

holy oyles, her viaticum, and severall pious acts, as having asked pardon of all before she received them speaking very movingly, Desiring her Ghostly father to prosecute for her. Beging my Lady and all the whole community not only to forgive but also to pray for her, promissing hers, pardoning all from her heart. She passed all that remaining Day (assisted by the religious's prayers) in prayers herself, interrupted with Dying slumbers; the next Day at 4 in the mourning, her confessor & My Lady Abesse with the convent were all come together, where having assured her Ghostly father that nothing troubled her mad[e] act of contrition, receive[d] Absolution, kissed the crucifix calling true on Jesus. All the prayers and commendations that holy church appointed to be said for the benefit of her agonizing children being again and again Iterated for her, she most peacably expired assisted by the presence & devotions of a full assembly of God's servants, namely our Reverend father confessarius, our Reverend Lady Abbess and all the Religious, her happy soul taking its flight, to sing as we are confident eternall praise to the most blessed Trinity (Just by the compitacion of time) when Reverend father Vincent was at mass which he offered up for her, saying, Sanctus, Sanctus. Sanctus. And when the Ave bell went to signify the Death of this our Good Mother even then was the elevation of Christ's body and blood, as a propitius sacrifice offer'd for her speedy rest. And about an hour after a mass of requiem was said by our Ghostly father, & two more successively by two moncks of our holy Order, such a perticular providence and mercy, hath allmighty God over those who put their trust in him, and serve him with their whole heart, and according to his benign and Just equity liberally paying them in their own Coyn. Having such a priviledge and benefit, as to have so many masses said for her Immediately, to communicate twice in one Day, to have all the community trice congregated in 24 hours, at her taking oyls, at the receiving her viaticum and at her agonys and Death, she being ever ready and forward in the like assistance to others as far as she was capable. And as she was the first that God made instrumentall to begin this house, so she was the Last of those 4 reverend Dames that Lived amongst us, having seen Dye before her 37 out of this little nursery of our blessed Ladys. And Live to se [sic] an 100 profest religious, four only of which made their vows on their Death beds, and had the comfort to see our blessed Lady honnour'd so far as to have another house of her Immaculate Conception spring out of this and founded at Pontoyce: and tis a thing worthy of note that she should be the first that had the compleat ceremonys performed at her taking the last sacraments, Death and Buriall, Dying in the new quarters: so that the processions and singing went in a magnificall Decorum as becomes the house of God. For by reason the ceremoniall of our holy order is not in our Mother Tongue, and our Monastery as yett not all built, nor founded, matters could not so conveniently be accommodat nor ordered all at once, but by degrees. This our venerable Mother Magdalen as she was most Dear to my Lady Lucy Knatchbull of most happy memory

80

in their Life time, had the honnour by a particular providence to lye close by her after Death: My Ladys Toomstone being taken up for that purpose, and therefore now in a manner covers them both, and by the mercys of God, confident we are, they will be Joynt Intercessors to the Divine Majesty, that for Reverence of his Immaculate Mother, this house of her holy conception, may

happily flourish & increase in True regular Disciplin to the Greater Honour & Glory of IESUS MARIA BENEDICT, Amen. Requiescant In Pace. Requiescant omnes fideles in Pace Christi. Amen.

PART II.

[Death Chapters 18th Century.]

Dead Chapter. Sister Mechtilda. 1741.

Although our dear deceased Sister did not seem to have a disposition so properly suited to the state she embraced as might be wished, notwithstanding, the kind Providence of God appeared very much in her favour, both as to this world and the next, by calling her to it; for by her engagement in a Religious state, though some weakness & frailty did appear, yet still it kept her more within the verge of God's holy laws, & screened her from many dangers which her natural propensions perhaps might have rendered her liable to, had she remained in the world. And as to this life, she ever experienced religion a true Mother to her, by an indulgent consideration in all her infirmities, & more than she could ever have hoped for had she been obliged to provide for herself. These considerations I don't doubt but often occurred to her mind, with gratitude & thanksgiving to God for his mercy to her; & by her humble, sincere & undisguised manner of acknowledging her faults in public, she seemed sensible of her infidelities, & desirous of making some atonement for them; & though naturally of a warm temper, which rendered her sometimes obnoxious, to the displeasure of others, yet she seemed never to take any resentment to heart as not willingly to pardon the offender, & show a readiness to serve them in all that lay in her power. This happy disposition, I don't doubt will obtain her a more easy pardon of God for what she might have incurred his displeasure in, for "according

81

as we measure to others, it shall be measured to us again;" – & "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." These comfortable assurances, the Almighty himself gives us, & cannot but be a subject of great satisfaction in regard to our dear deceased, as well as incitement, to a charitable continuance of a memory of her in our prayers, for the obtaining a more speedy release of her soul. I recommend to everyone the frequent consideration, that death is certain to everybody, but as to the circumstances that attend it wholly otherwise. By consequence, the only way to secure to ourselves to die the death of the just, is to imitate them in a virtuous life, that when God & Nature requires the tribute, we may pay it with a cheerful heart, & with comfort to our minds by having made God the chief object of our affections & His greater glory our constant endeavour.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Dame Mary Ann Joseph Fermor. 1743.

Me thinks it ought to be a particular subject of comfort to us poor weak creatures, that God's goodness is such, as rather to be moved with pity than displeasure at the great grief & natural resentment we commonly experience in ourselves, when deprived by death of anyone of our dear Sisters in Christ. Nay, I may say that Christ Himself has been pleased to authorise it by His own example when on earth. The grief he expressed so undisguisedly for the death of His dearly beloved Lazarus was more than common. The Jews were astonished to see a person of His gravity & firmness of mind so affected; for He not only wept, but groaned in spirit which made those present express their amazement in these words "Oh! how he loved him!" . This tribute, then, is lawful for us to pay, provided it be accompanied with an humble acknowledgement & profound submission to his sovereign right & dominion of disposing of us as best pleases him; & sure if ever due it is to the memory of our dear deceased Dame, who had a more than common claim to our love & gratitude in life, & by consequence, to our sensibility for our loss in death, she being snatched from us in the very flower of her youth by a death so sudden, so painful & so unexpected. As for my own part, some

melancholy circumstances that attended it has made too deep an impression on my mind easily to wear off. What an unparalleled courage & constancy did she show under the severe operations of the lance, seeming to have less dread to feel, than we to see its cruel effects. How silent & submissive to all about her, either in taking or leaving, just as they Judged most proper; ever serene & cheerful both in humour & countenance, notwithstanding her sufferings, her many wounds, high fever & so much loss of sleep must have occasioned that she herself could compare it to nothing under Purgatory; telling me with her usual serenity, she thought her whole body was already there. For my part I know not what claims our admiration most, her courage & fortitude in death, or her innocent dovelike disposition in life, which seemed incapable of giving an offence to anybody. A sudden, disobliging or reflecting word, was never, I believe heard out of her mouth.

82

Never better pleased than when in a capacity of serving anybody, this made her not only willing to part with any little convenience of her own, but a great encouragement to others frequently to apply to her. She ever received the appointment of humble offices with a respectful submission, though herself, in her secular life, obsequiously waited on by others; nor did this consideration, nor that of a plentiful fortune, make her think herself exempt from the common duties, or treatment of Religion. She herself even entreated that the small allowance to the kitchen of her suppers might yet be lessened & never was heard to complain or call for it, though the hurry of the place in those occasions had made her wait long for it sometimes & when it came, less suited her appetite than what was provided for the common. In these & many more instances of an humble & peaceable disposition, she was a great example & not less so in her pious practices, her frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, her long prayers in the choir on the days It was exposed, her regular recitement of the Divine office when absent from the Choir, & seldom failed of dedicating some time to Spiritual reading even on the days of greatest freedom which argued a great fund of piety; The which continued till her last breath, she earnestly desiring & devoutly receiving all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, joining in with the Religious in prayers as long as she could articulate, & so rendering her innocent soul to God; which we may confide was soon admitted to the embracements of the Divine Spouse & adds to the happy number of the wise Virgins, her lamp being replenished with the oil of good works proper to the rank of the blessed souls.

Requiescat in pace.

Dame Teresa Martins. September 7th 1755.

All here knows, or has heard, of the great opposition our dear deceased Dame met with from her secular friends, upon her pious intentions of being Religious, & much more so when they found the choice of place determined among strangers. But the all-powerful hand of God that called her to this state strengthened her to slight all the usual baits a wealthy inheritance could suggest: & for the place, her motives were so truly kind & generous in regard to the Community that she is Justly entitled to a further remembrance in our prayers, in the concluding service of this day. Her judicious answers to the questions put to her upon taking the first habit, why she choose this house preferable to any of her own country, her answer was, she had taken a great kindness to the community when pensioner, & knowing we had no foundation, & few friends in the country, she thought she might be of service to it by her language & knowledge of the customs of it, which in many occurences during her life, we have found the benefit of in extern affairs. Nor was she less zealous in assisting the community within, by her peaceable & ready compliance with all the appointments for its service, assisting as supply her Junior Chantress for fifteen years together, without the least complaint: nor did she ever excuse herself from the weekly duties of Officer, Reader or Servant, though many times

83

a double time to others, and sometimes with great difficulty to herself, as being very infirm of late years. She was a constant riser in the morning, a constant chorister, & punctual in all the duties of religion. Our dear deceased sister was a woman of great worth & secrecy, a great lover of peace, & ever carefully avoided any representations that could bring umbrage upon any; & was never heard, upon any reprehensions or humiliations given in Chapter, ever to excuse herself or to express the least murmuration. These & many more truly Christian & religious virtues Almighty God was pleased to reward by so happy a death, which although naturally reluctant to her, yet finding it was God's Divine decree, she embraced it with perfect submission, and to our great edification departed this life with all the sentiments that showed a soul truly pleasing to God.

Requiescat in pace.

Dame Maura Grosvenor. October, 1750.

The suffering life & pious death of our deceased Dame gives us the comfortable hope that she either is already or soon to be admitted to that eternal rest from which all pains & sufferance are banished.

Kind Providence, designing our dear deceased Dame to add to the happy number of his elect, made use of some of her Catholic relations to incline her father to send both herself & her sister over, with full permission to return to the faith their pious Mother had by word & example instructed them in, in their early years. This they both did not only renouncing to all heresy but desirous to dedicate themselves to God in a religious state; which was answered to by our dear Dame, whose courage was more than common in embracing a penitential state notwithstanding her infirm constitution, which obliged the other to return to England. She was ever a silent & patient sufferer, & though I believe few days in her Religious life passed without pains in some part or other of her body, yet seldom complained or seemed desirous of dispensations till Superiors or physicians Judged them proper. She was notably cautious & prudent in her words, rarely interfering in the concerns of others, especially where charity might be weakened or offended, ever ready to undertake little courtesies or services for others, though often to her own inconveniency. This I commend as a very charitable practice when bounded within the rules of obedience & prudence & not intrenching upon times & duties required, or neglecting a due care of what religion entrusts them with, either as to their own persons or employments.

Her natural inclination was to have lived longer, had it been the Will of God; but finding it was otherways with humble submission to his sovereign dominion over her, she resigned herself wholly into his hands, preparing herself with great devotion & piety for the last Sacraments, & rendering up her soul to God with an uncommon serenity & peace. As there are few present, but what has had the happy opportunity of seriously considering what may best secure them a happy death, & the consequence of it, – a blest Eternity, I

84

need not touch upon it, our time being so straitened. Let us but remember a good life will certainly be attended with a happy death.

Requiescat in pace.

Dame Ruperta Browne (of Kenmare) Sept. 21st 1755.

Our honourable dear deceased Dame had many distinguishing marks that the Almighty designed her to add to the happy number of his elect. Her education, from her tender years was singularly pious. Whilst in Ireland she lived with an Aunt, a lady of noted virtue and was instructed by her in many little practices of piety, which I have heard her often speak of. At her return for England, she was sent to Hammersmith, a school famous for their training of youth in the fear of God, and all that is obligatory to a true Christian life, & not long after she left them was sent to our Convent at the age of between 13 & 14. She there edified her companions by her good humour, submission to

those God had placed over her, her humility in never requiring any particular consideration, though she knew her pension exceeded that of her companions.

In a spiritual retreat which her piety inclined her to take, when in the Convent, God called her to the happy state of Religion; which she willingly answered & embraced with great cheerfulness, and from her first entrance amongst us, to her last breath was eminent in charity, innocency of life & maintaining Superiors. Her good nature and compassionate temper was such that she choose often to inconvenience herself, rather than not to relieve the distressed, and was ever more ready to excuse than accuse any. For several years before her death she mortified her sense of seeing, denying all gratification to whatever could be presented by windows & doors which a natural curiosity might make agreeable. What little weaknesses and irregularities might sometimes appear in her conduct & behaviour, I believe we may justly impute more to her misfortune than fault, & as such, I make no doubt, very excusable in the sight of God.

I hope gratitude which is a great virtue, in the eyes of God as well as man, will prompt a memory of her in our private devotions; as we may really acknowledge her as a benefactor to our Community, for besides 1,500 pounds received by us in principal and interest she at her own expense built the new grate, and Good Angels House, which was upwards of another 100 pounds: & in all occasions of improvement or reparations for the good or conveniency of the Community, was ever one that generously joined her part.

Almighty God, designing her soon for himself & all that was to attend the manner of it, inspired her with a particular zeal & tendency to all duties of piety; her visits to the Blessed Sacrament both long & frequent, her regularity at being present at the Divine Office several days together without rest, and her more than usual silence under the pains & sufferings of a weak & diseased body, all which were proper dispositions for a happy end, which, though sudden, gives great assurance was not unprovided; & I doubt not but our Blessed Lady & her good angel, both which she was singularly

85

devoted to, particularly assisted her in her last moments, being destitute of all human help.

Let us remember a good life is the best preparation for a happy death. A religious person that is fervourous & exact in all the duties of her state, cannot choose but be ready for the summons though never so unexpected.
Requiescat in Pace.

Dame Mary Michell Tyldesley. 1759.

Our dear deceased Dame was an example to all of regularity, and submission to the Divine appointments, under many afflictions, even before she dedicated herself to God in religion, as, the losses her family sustained in their temporal concerns for their religion & loyalty, which disabled them to comply with her pious desires, that from her very childhood was to dedicate herself to God: The trials also he was pleased to give her in her probation by prolonging for some years her Profession, in all which she ever showed a great submission & conformity to the Divine Will, applying herself to all the humble duties obedience imposed or which could render her most serviceable to the Community even to the humble duties of a sister, in a particular exigence the Community was then in.

In aidships & offices confided to her, she was ever careful, cleanly, & made necessary reparations to the best of her ability; & was ever regular in all religious duties, never making her employments a cloak to irregularities. I think it may be said of her with truth that in place of an abatement in fervour, which is but too common, she rather increased, especially during the last 6 years of Prioresship. Though weak & infirm she never failed of making the morning visit & was an example in all the duties of that regular employment declining all dispensations & necessary considerations as much as possible, even to the very last, though fully two years before her death she needed all the indulgence a kind infirmarian could give, but would not hear of it, still persevering

in the fear of being troublesome, & quite a useless member of the Community. And thus she persevered to the end, & Almighty God was pleased to bless this edifying zeal with a most serene & easy death. Requiescat in pace.

Sister Scholastica [*no date*].

The great goodness & mercy of God to our dear deceased Sister Scho: appears in a very particular manner by giving her so happy a disposition for her last hour & we must be grateful for being made sharers in the comfort & edification we all received by her frequent communions & great application to piety, during her long sickness. As God best knows what mould he has framed us of, & why he is pleased to dispense his favours so differently, bestowing so happy & orderly a disposition on some that makes virtue sit easily, & even as it were natural to them, in others nothing but repugnance & opposition to all that is good, which obliges them to be ever striving against the stream, these are secrets of Divine Providence not for us to comprehend or fathom, but adore & reverence. It pleased Almighty God to give a taste of these difficulties to our dear deceased

86

by a great singularity of temper which though it might obscure her in the eyes of men, I hope notwithstanding, she was not less pleasing in the eyes of God, as having a greater subject for humiliation. Her frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, & other pious practices, was doubtless to obtain those strengthening graces that might assist her to overcome all that rendered her less pleasing in his sight, or edifying to her neighbour. I recommend the continuation of your prayers for her soul, which I don't doubt but is in a fair way of being happy. Though it has pleased Almighty God to afflict this Community with the loss of several of its members by death, yet at the same time we ought to regard it as a fatherly design of his, for our profit & benefit; it being the subject of all others, the most prevalent to make us enter into ourselves, & consider we are under the same condemnation yet ignorant as to all the circumstances of time, sickness, or whatever else may attend us in so critical important affair: By consequence the necessity we are under of being prepared for what is so certain yet attended with so many uncertainties. This preparation consists in first dying to ourselves & all that engages our affections to earthly things which death is sure to separate us from, in making good use of time, which hurries us on to eternity with more rapidity than the swiftest bird cuts the air. – What is past we cannot recall; what is to come is wholly uncertain; it is the present we can only call our own; let us then make due use of it by a constant tendency to the duties of our state, the mortification of our passions, & all that may incline us to a little sensual seeking of ourselves; in fine, to carry our cross cheerfully, & never lay it down till we are summoned by death to receive the reward of its hire. A life thus spent will make death even welcome, & in place of carrying rigour or terror in its aspect, it will appear amiable, & a subject of joy & comfort that the happy time is now arrived when we are to be dissolved and to be with Christ, freed from this body of clay, which it has cost us so many mortifications, pains & care to keep under, & subservient to its mistress, the soul, that is to reason & duty. This I beg may be the frequent entertainment of our thoughts & our actions will not fail of corresponding with them.

This calm, serene, happy death is ever the attendant & reward of a virtuous life, which God of his infinite goodness grant us all to lead. Requiescat in pace.

[*From a later manuscript.*]

Lady Mary Baptist Phillips, Abbess.

In the year of Our Lord 1781 on the 9th day of November, at Ghent, in the convent of the Immaculate Conception of the English Ladies of the Order of the holy Father Benedict,

The most Illustrious & most Reverend Lady

Mary Baptist Phillips,
Abbess.

Being fortified with the Sacraments of Our Holy Mother the Church, after enduring with patience most exemplary the bitter sorrows of a protracted sickness, with peaceful & pious resignation,

87

gave back her soul to its creator, amidst the prayers and tears of her beloved children in Christ, who tenderly bewail the loss of a Mother dear to them above all, and of a Superioress most deserving of their veneration; in the 60th year of her age, the 51st of her Religious Profession, & 20th of her Abbatial Dignity. From her tender years she possessed a wonderful innocence of manners & sweetness of disposition & a heart prepared for every virtuous impression. As she had been taught, among the chosen spouses of Christ, to bear from her youth the sweet yoke of her Redeemer, she made in a short time such rapid advances in the practice of every virtue, that she herself began to pant with vehement longing after the chaste nuptials of the Immaculate Lamb; preferring [*sic*] for love of him entirely to forego the experience of this world's perishable enjoyments, rather than to taste the proffered cup of pleasure ere she renounced the draught. Her holy purpose being accomplished, after undergoing with scrupulous exactitude the rigorous trial of her Noviciate and being admitted by the suffrage of all to the solemn profession of her religious vows, it is astonishing with what ardour of soul she ascended by the steps of humility, obedience, poverty, chastity, observance of the rule, prayer & every other virtue to the summit of religious perfection. Indeed so much did she excell in virtue that she was deemed worthy to be elected Abbess in the Community. In this high dignity she was slow to exercise the authority of her superior station, so as to stimulate her spiritual children by admonitions or reproof to the practice of virtue & the attainment of religious perfection, but loved rather to allure and entice them by her own example, that spoke a language more powerfully persuasive than words. Of her it was particularly observable (to be silent on her other numberless excellencies) that when engaged in mental prayer or employed with her sisters in chanting the praises of God, her recollected demeanour and absorption of thought in God seemed to bespeak one that belonged not to an earthly society, but to the choirs of celestial spirits. Nor did the Divine Spirit appear to shed his sweetest influence less abundantly over her soul when the duties of her office required her application to her various concerns, all tending to the divine pleasure & promoting the greater glory of God in herself and her children. Not that she was insensible to the heavy responsibility of her charge: she sensibly felt her burden and the sole weight of that burden was the oppressive apprehension that some fault of hers or some involuntary error in her government might have affected or might hereafter affect the welfare of the Community entrusted to her care. This undoubtedly was often the subject of anxious consultation with her spiritual director, to whom she declared that for the salvation or improvement in virtue of any of the souls entrusted to her, she would have most cheerfully part with her reputation or her life. Thus adorned with virtues and ripe for Heaven, though tardily removed to bliss, in consideration of her children, after being tried in the furnace of tribulation like gold in the fire, & purified, as we hope, from every the least stain of imperfection, Jesus Christ her Spouse called her to Himself

88

and his divine embraces on the day, the month and year above mentioned. Lest however some earthly spot adhering to her soul and yet unexpiated may impede her Journey to eternal bliss, we earnestly recommend her to your prayers and sacrifices.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

PART III.

[Mortuary Notices from the MS. kept by the Ghent Nuns while at Preston.]

Jesus Mary Benedict.

Rt Revd Lady Mary Magdalen Arden.

In the year of Our Lord 1797, on the 18th of June in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady and of the holy Order of St Benedict most happily departed this life our beloved Mother in Christ. Rt Revd Lady Mary Magdalen Arden, Daughter of James Arden Esq of Manuel Hall in Worcestershire, in the 61st year of her age, 42 of her Religious Profession and 16th of her prelature. Her Ladyship was ever a tender mother to all under her charge, and careful to provide for each one's necessities. She suffered much from constant ill health, and the fatigues of a long journey, with many inconveniences in our removal from Ghent and settling in England. Her death was rather sudden, being seized on the 16th with an Inflammatory fever, attended with immediate delirium so that she was only capable of receiving the Holy Oils. She had the happiness of Communicating the day before she was taken ill. We trust in the infinite mercy of Alm[igh]ty God, that she will soon receive the reward of her patient sufferings. But least any human frailty should retard that happiness we recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and Suffrages.

Requiescat in Pace.

Dame Mary Baptist Farrar.

In the year of Our Lord 1797 on the 30th of June, in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Bd Virgin Mary, and of the holy Order of St Benedict, most happily departed this life, our dear sister in Christ Dame Mary Baptist Farrar, Daughter of Mr John Farrar of Down Holland in Lancashire, in the 66th year of her age, and the 18th of her Religious Profession. Tho she came late to Religion, she went thro every duty with great fervour and punctuality and never exempted herself from attending the Choir, and all other Religious duties, tho constantly afflicted with rhumatic pains, and other infirmities, which she bore with great patience and resignation. She had been at Mattins on the Tuesday night and was found the next morning at 5 o'clock in a profound Lethargy, in which she remained till Friday following without ever giving the least sign of sense or feeling so that she was only capable of receiving the Holy Oils. We trust in the infinite goodness & mercy of Almighty God,

89

that she will soon receive the reward of her sufferings, but least any human frailty should retard that happiness we recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and suffrages. Requiescat in Pace.

Dame Mary Clare Throckmorton.

In the year of Our Lord 1798 on the 24th of November in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Bd Virgin Mary and of the holy Order of St Benedict most happily departed this life Strengthened with all the rites of our holy Mother Cath[oli]c Church, our beloved Sister in Christ Revd Dame Mary Clare Throckmorton Jubilarian. Daughter of John Throckmorton Esq in the County of Essex, in the 85th year of her Age & 61 of her Religious Profession. She was very exact in her Religious duties & attended the Choir as long as she was able. She was particularly remarkable for making an excuse and begging pardon, before night according of our Holy Rule, if she thought she had given any one an occasion of offence. She was very Charitable in assisting any one in distress, & was happy to render them any service in her power. She was seized with a Paralytic Stroke which chiefly attacked her head and side and she continued nearly three weeks without taking any nourishment, or being able to move herself. We trust in the infinite mercies of Aim[igh]ty God she will soon receive the recompence of her long life spent in his service. But least any human frailty should retard the speedy enjoyment of her heavenly Spouse we recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers & Suffrages.

Requiescat in Pace.

Dame Mary Xaveria Boone.

In the year of Our Lord 1798 on the 5th of January, in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Bd Virgin Mary, and of the Holy Order of St Benedict, Most happily departed this life, our beloved Sister in Christ Dame Mary Xaveria Boone. Daughter of Francis Boone in Maryland, North America in the 55th Year of her Age and 30th of her Religious Profession. She was a very exact good religious woman and performed the Offices of Mistress of Novices, Chantress, Infirmarian & Celerier, in which last she died. It pleased Almighty God to deprive her in some measure of her judgment, which greatly added to her sufferings, a year before her death, by a stroke of the Palsey. She was seized with a relapse on Christmas day and totally deprived of her senses & speech, so that she was only capable of receiving the Holy Oils; she had been at Holy Communion the day she was taken ill. We trust in the infinite mercy of Almighty God, that she will soon receive the reward of her sufferings, but least any human frailty should retard that happiness we recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and suffrages. Requiescat in Pace.

Dame Mary Anselm Tempest.

In the year of our Lord 1799 on the 3rd of January in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Bd Virgin Mary, and of the Holy Order of St Benedict, most happily departed this life, strengthened with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholic Church, our

90

dear Sister in Christ Dame Mary Anselm Tempest, Daughter of Stephen Tempest Esq of Broughton in Yorkshire, in the 45th Year of her age, & the 24th of her Religious Profession. It pleased Almighty God to afflict her with constant ill health from the time of her profession, tho she performed the Offices of Portress, Sacristan, and Infirmarian in which last she died. She had an inward complaint two years before her death, which brought on her last sickness. She gave us great comfort, by the edifying manner she prepared herself for death, and expired with true sentiments of piety and devotion having her perfect senses to the last moment. We trust in the infinite mercies of Almighty God, that she will soon receive the reward of her suffering life, but least any human frailty should retard that happiness, we earnestly recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and suffrages. Requiescat in Pace.

Dame Mary Bernard Lucas.

In the year of our Lord 1802 on the 16th of March, in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the holy Order of St Benedict most happily departed this life Strengthened with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholic Church our dear Sister in X^t Dame Mary Bernard Lucas, daughter of Benton Lucas in Warwickshire, in the 23rd year of her age, and first of her Religious Profession. She was left an Orphan very young and most of her friends were Protestants. Almighty God in his infinite goodness by means of her Uncle, sent her to us at Ghent, at eight years of age. She was of a most innocent disposition, and suffered with great patience and without complaint a long and tedious illness of a consumption.

We trust in the mercies of Almighty God, She will soon receive the reward of her sufferings, but lest any human frailty should retard that happiness, We earnestly recommend her dear soul, to your holy prayers and suffrages. Requiescat in Pace.

Sister Scholastica Rimmer.

In the year of our Lord 1804 on the 7th of September in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the holy Order of St Benedict, most happily departed this life, our beloved Sister in Christ. Sister Scholastica Rimmer. Jubilarian – in the 84th year of her age, and 62nd of her Religious Profession. She lived a pious innocent life, & was ready to assist every one, in any thing that laid in her power, and had been a good labourer for many years, till age & infirmity made her incapable. She was seized in all appearance with a paralytic stroke a week before

her death, which rendered her speechless, so that she was only capable of receiving the holy Oils. She had been at confession and holy Communion a few days before. We trust in the infinite mercy of Almighty God that she will soon receive the recompence of her long life spent in his service. But lest any human frailty should retard that happiness, we earnestly recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers & suffrages. Requiescat in Pace.

91

Dame Mary Placida Jones.

In the year of Our Lord 1806, on the 4th of September, in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Bd Virgin Mary, and of the holy Order of St Benedict, most happily departed this life, strengthened with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholic Church, our beloved Sister in Christ, Revd Dame Mary Placida Jones Jubilarian, in the 72nd year of her age, and 51st of her Religious profession. She was daughter of Richard Jones Esquire of Dingherston, in the County of Monmouthshire in Wales. She had a very high esteem of her Religious Vocation, and a great contempt of herself, and all Secular vanity. Never wished to be preferred before any, tho much her juniors. She was exact in all her Religious duties, as far as her weak Health from her profession would allow of. She performed the offices of Prioress, Mistress of Novices, Portress, and Guardrobe. She suffered with great patience and resignation a lingering decay, and many other infirmities. We trust in the infinite mercies of Almighty God that she will soon receive the reward of her long life spent in his Service, but lest any human frailty should retard that happiness, we recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and suffrages. Requiescat in Pace.

Rt Revd Lady Mary Frances Hesketh.

In the year of Our Lord 1809 on the 24th of November in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the holy Order of Saint Benedict, [most happily departed this life], Strengthened with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholic Church, Our beloved Mother in Christ, Rt Revd Lady Mary Frances Hesketh, Daughter of William Hesketh Esquire, of Maines in Lancashire, In the 81st year of her age, 54th of her Religious Profession, & 13th of her being Abbess. Her Ladyship from her first entrance into Religion, led a most exemplary life. Although she had been her own Mistress in the world, and enjoyed the amusements thereof, She was particularly remarkable in the observance of holy poverty; also Prayer, silence, and a recollected carriage, with a strict attention to Religious discipline in every point of our holy Rule & Statutes. She gave great satisfaction in the several offices of Prioress, Mistress of Novices, Procuratrix, Thouriere and Chantress, which she occupied at different times. Her disengagement from all propriety, appeared very conspicuous since our return to England, when having a large pension at her own disposal during the remainder of her life, she generously gave it up, for the support of the Community, reserving only what was requisite for her own necessities and the relief of the poor, who with reason lament her loss. The latter years of her life she employed a great part of her time in working for them. During her last and tedious sickness of a decay which lasted nearly eleven months, she gave us a great example of patience and conformity to the will of God; was always satisfied with every little attention that was paid her and never complained of her sufferings. Her death was truly that of the just. Having always been very exact

92

in frequenting the holy Sacraments, and a great promoter of the devotion of the seven Saturdays, in honour of the Dolours of our Blessed Lady for a happy death. Almighty God was pleased to grant her according to her ardent desire the happiness of receiving all the last Sacraments twice during her last illness, and the last time which was the day before her death, contrary to our expectations, as she was troubled with frequent vomitings. She was sensible to the last moment and calmly expired in perfect tranquility and peace of mind, being assisted with the prayers of her Confessor and

afflicted Children who surrounded her bed, and will ever regret the loss of so tender a Mother, and kind Superioress. We have no doubt but her long life spent in the service of God will entitle her thro the merits of our dear Redeemer to eternal bliss, but lest any stains of human frailty should retard that happiness, I earnestly recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and suffrages.

Requiescat in Pace.

Rt Revd Lady Mary Benedict Bedingfeld.

In the year of Our Lord 1811 on the 27th of March, in our Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Holy Order of St Benedict, most happily departed this life strengthened with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church – our dear and most beloved Mother in Christ – Rt Revd Lady Mary Benedict Bedingfeld, Daughter of Edward Bedingfeld Esquire of York, in the 54th year of her age, and 2nd of her being Abbess Elect. Her Ladyship was ever a most tender Mother to all under her charge and anxious to provide for each one according to their necessities. She served the different offices of Mistress of Novices, Procuratrix, Cellarier, Sacristane & Wardrobe with great satisfaction. She was a most exact, good religious woman, and very particular for her humility and charity in assisting every one to the utmost of her power. She had laboured many years under very painful and complicated infirmities, which she bore with the most edifying patience & resignation. She had a particular devotion to Our Bd Lady and the holy Sacrament of the Alter, and had the singular favour of receiving the latter about two hours before her death. She had the comfort of the united prayers of her Confessor and afflicted Community during her last moments which were truly edifying. She expired with impressive sentiments of piety & devotion.

We trust in the infinite mercy of Almighty God that she will soon receive the reward of her suffering life, but lest any human frailty should retard that happiness, we earnestly recommend her dear soul to your holy prayers and Suffrages.

Requiescat in Pace.