

LETTERS OF BLESSED JORDAN

1. (*ms. no. LI*)

December, 1222.

This is perhaps the first letter Blessed Jordan wrote to Diana, certainly the first one still preserved of that correspondence. It was written after May 22, 1222, for in the address Blessed Jordan calls himself "an unprofitable servant of the Order of Preachers," an expression he seems to have used as an official title. It was written before June 29, 1223, the day Diana took her vows, for Blessed Jordan speaks of her as the "Lady Diana" and not as "Sister Diana," the address usually given later. The reference of the longings of the Patriarchs for the coming of the Messiah, a theme that runs through the Holy Office for Advent, suggests that the letter was written in December, 1222. Blessed Diana was then living at the convent of Ronzana whither she had fled for the second time on All Saints, 1222. That fact must have suggested the statement "not to dwell on the plain but to fly to an elevated castle," for Ronzana was the name of a hill that overlooked Bologna.

Diana wrote from Ronzana to Blessed Jordan telling him of her longing to become a Dominican Sister and appealing to him for help. Taking her letter as a cue Blessed Jordan instructs her on the value of holy desires.

All the Saints have insisted on the value of forming and intensifying holy desires. The Prophet Daniel was favored by God because he was "a man of desires." When the sister of St. Thomas Aquinas asked what she must do to become a saint, he answered, "Desire it." One does not have to read much of the life of the Little Flower to see that she was consumed by holy desires. In the formula of her act of consecration on June 9, 1895, she wrote, "I perceive in my heart

desires that are infinite." She changed the word "infinite" to "immense" on the advice of a theologian, but the other word expressed better, she thought, the vehemence of her aspirations. Blessed Jordan points out that holy desires will lift up her soul to heaven and make her live with God, His Angels and Saints. By communing with them she will come to learn the language of heaven; she will then be able to draw profit out of spiritual works and conference and to glean food for her soul that will help her to 'endure the ennui of living on earth.

This letter deals only with the generalities of the spiritual life and its tone is quite impersonal, indications that the two Blesseds had not yet met or spoken to each other.

Notice that Blessed Jordan's habit of living in the supernatural comes out in the very address of his first letter. He thinks and speaks of Blessed Diana first, not by her name in the world but by the titles she has by reason of sanctifying grace. It is a good practise, for it reminds us of our dignity as Catholics and urges us to live up to high standards.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to a daughter of the Father in filial fear, a sister of the Son by reason of the adoption of sons, ¹ a beloved of the Holy Ghost because of charity, a colleague (of mine) in the unity of faith, the Lady Diana: greeting ² and (the wish that she may) "soon be freed from present sorrow and enjoy eternal beatitude." ³

The letters thou didst send me were prompted by ardent desire, and therefore will I tell thee something about heavenly desires. Dearest Sister, it was the longings of the Patriarchs that invited thy Spouse, Christ

¹ Romans 8-15.

² The Latin word is "health," the word used in greeting another by the Latins.

³ From the prayer in Our Lady's office and Mass "Salve sancta parens."

the Son of God, to suffer pain, -and He came. ⁴ Why would He not, then, if invited by thee with ardent desires, come to thee to enjoy delights? Pinion all thy desires therefore in heaven, for he who does not wish to be pinioned in hell must pinion himself in heaven. He who lives out in the open plain does not live in security because he is exposed to all his enemies, but he who dwells in armed camps and castles is secure. Therefore, dearest, pitch not thy tent out on the plain, but fly "like David did from before the face of Saul to strongly fortified cities" and then wilt thou dwell by desire within celestial ramparts.

I believe that thou dost not know the German tongue, and no wonder since thou hast never been in German territory. In this world there is no idiom used except that based on material things, for "he who is of the earth speaks of the earth." Do thou therefore, dearest, keep living in the heavens with (holy) desires, if thou wishest to learn (its) idiom in order to understand whenever thou shalt turn to a book written on spiritual subjects or to a preacher speaking on spiritual matters. He would not understand (them) who had never been in the realm of the angels.

It is not unknown to thee that man is composed of two parts, a body and a soul. The body, as thou knowest, does not cease to satisfy its desires for corporal things lest it perish of hunger. But the soul is of greater value than the body. Therefore deliver not up thy soul to thy body, dearest, but lift it up at times to the spiritual realm in order that it may obtain for itself

⁴ The pain of His Incarnation, Human Life and Cruel Death.

a food that it does not find on earth, (a food) bought not with money but by (holy) desires.

Who would be so foolish as to die of hunger for lack of a food obtainable by desires alone? Say with the Prophet: "My eyes are always upon the Lord as the eyes of a poor man are upon the rich from whom with great desire he awaits an alms." From the flowers of the earth bees collect an earthly honey and, solicitous for their future they bring it when collected to their hive. Thy spirit will die unless refreshed with spiritual honey, for I know that it is delicate and disdains to use coarse nourishment. Do thou therefore, dearest, "send forth thy spirit" in order that it may gather the honey by which it lives. In the gathering, however, let not all the honey be consumed but let some be stored in the recesses of the heart so that, if ever thy spirit tire of desiring, it may find at home within itself something by which it can be delighted. And, dearest, when thou shalt find thyself blessed in such desires, be not unmindful of the poor man writing to thee.⁵

⁵ I Kings chapters 20 and 21; John 3-31; Psalm 24-15; Luke 16-21; Psalm CIII, 30.

2. (*ms. no. XXXV.*)

Venice, July, 1223.

There is a very noticeable difference in tone between this letter and the previous one. The two Blesseds have met and understand each other. Bl. Jordan reminds Diana of her promise to pray for his success as an apostle, and recommends especially the mission at Padua. In return he gives her motives for bearing patiently and joyfully with the trials of this life, namely, the joys of the sacred banquet celebrated on earth during Holy Mass and eternally in heaven. The close of the letter proves that Bl. Jordan did not confuse spirituality with inhumanity; he knows how delicate Diana's sensibilities are and he tries to spare her all possible pain.

Blessed Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter most dear in Christ, Sister Diana:--"dew" along the way of love, and a "torrent of delights" in the home of love.

Behold me, led on by the grace of God, quite safely arrived at Venice, as the bearer of this letter, a Milanese, can also make known to thee more fully. And now while girding myself to go to Padua, I wish to remind thee to exhort the other Sisters to pray to Jesus Christ the Son of God, that "He may give to His voice the voice of power" so that I may effect something unto His honor.

At all times, dearest, "be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of the power of God," and confirm the other Sisters. And rejoice always in Him "in whose right hand are delights even to the end." For behold quickly will come "the nuptials of the Lamb" whose "right hand is filled with gifts" to give comfort to those grieving with desire for the fatherland, and sweet wine to those bitter in soul because of love; "to wipe away

the water" of present dissatisfaction and sorrow (and change it) into the wine of the Holy Vine, that excellent wine, "the wine that rejoices the heart of man," the wine by whose sweetness His beloved ones are inebriated, the wine of eternal joy, the new sublime wine, which is poured out to His Elect at the table of the heavenly court by the Son of God Who is blessed for ever and ever. Farewell. Pray for me.

The Brothers who are with me, Archangelus and Brother John, lovingly greet thee. Archangelus is very sorry that he did not see thee before leaving Bologna. He had indeed planned to do so, but neglected it because of trouble over the baggage. He does seem to be negligent at times, yet I think thou hast a place in his heart and affections. Excuse him therefore, and remember him in thy prayers. Greet the Sisters for me. "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit." ¹

¹ Psalms LXXI, 6 and XXXV, 9; LXVII, 34, Ephesians VI, 10; Psalm XV, 11; Apocalypse XIX, 7; Psalm XXV, 10; Apocalypse VII, 17; Psalm CIII, 15; Galatians VI, 18.

3. (*ms. no. XIX.*)

July, 1223.

Bl. Jordan is now in Padua. Prospects of winning over the students are not bright. He is too busy or perhaps too downcast to write much. The best he can do is to remind Diana and her companions that the true, the best Consoler is the Holy Ghost. Then he adds an earnest appeal for prayers.

To his beloved daughter in Christ, Diana, at Bologna, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers an unprofitable servant: -eternal salvation.

Since I am at present unable even by letter to console thee as I would wish, I hope that He, the Paraclete our God, who consoles the humble, will fill thee with all consolation. His consolation is mixed with no alloy but infuses all truth, for "He is the Spirit of Truth and is correctly so-called." In Him meanwhile seek thy support, in Him patiently await the time of my return. Into His custody I commend thy spirit and those of all thy Sisters, my daughters most dear.

I give to thee and to them the task of faithfully beseeching the Lord that He may deign to strike the hearts of the clerics and draw them to Himself for their salvation, His glory, and the upbuilding of the Church and our Order; the hearts of those, naturally, whom He knows to be suitable for us. All of them are extremely cold, and I have not yet been able to win over more than one. It is necessary for them to get or seek elsewhere the fire they have not in their own hearts. ¹

¹ Acts IX, 31; John XV, 26.

4. (*ms. no. XX.*)

July-August, 1223.

How Diana and her companions must have prayed for those clerics! Jordan hastens to let them know of his success and theirs; this letter is a song of exultant thanksgiving. Some think that Albert the Great was one "of the two sons of great German counts" ; others assign 1229 as the year of his entrance into the Order. He had long been attracted to the Order, but, tormented by a fear of not persevering, he had hesitated to enter until Bl. Jordan showed him that the fear was only a temptation of Satan.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, an unprofitable servant, to the Sisters of St. Agnes in Christ most dear: -nzay you become in all things worthy handmaids of Christ.

Celebrate a festal day and give thanks to the Dispenser of all good gifts because "the compassionate and merciful Lord" has deigned to visit the earth during these days and to water it "more abundantly than we had hoped."

After I had long preached to the scholars at Padua and had seen little or no results, I was siezed with discouragement and thought of returning. Then behold suddenly the Lord deigned to strike the hearts of many, to pour forth His grace and "to give to His voice a voice of power." Ten have already entered the Order, among whom are two sons of great German counts. One of these was a grand provost, held many other high offices and possessed great riches, while the other had a great income and is truly noble in body and soul. We hope that still more students, and excellent ones too, will enter. Pray much to God for them that He may as soon as possible turn hope into reality. Farewell. ¹

¹ Psalm LXXXV, 15; LXIV, 10; LXVII, 34.

5. (*ms. no. XXI.*)

August, 1223.

This letter continues the story of Blessed Jordan's success at Padua, but it was written principally to reassure Blessed Diana of his unfailing interest and protection. Friar Ventura, Diana's friend and director, will soon return to Bologna; moreover, there is a well-founded hope that nuns from Saint Sixtus will come to aid in the spiritual formation of the Sisters of St. Agnes. Cf. Chapter VII.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, an unprofitable servant, to Sister Diana beloved in Christ:-eternal salvation.

In regard to Brother Ventura let all anxiety cease, because it was not with the intention of making him Prior that I called him to Padua. The Prior of the province of Rome wrote me about the negotiations with the Sisters of St. Sixtus who are in good health and well disposed.

I beseech thee by thy love for the Lord, "let not thy heart be troubled neither let it be afraid" if thou sufferest tribulations for Christ, because "if we are partakers of His sufferings, we shall also be companions in His con-solations." "Let thy service be reasonable" so that thou mayest please thy invisible Spouse. "Be strengthened in the Lord" ; whatever shall be apportioned to thee, accept and endure in sorrow, and in thy humility have patience. The Lord be with thy spirit.

Pray for me and recommend me to the Sisters that they may pray the Lord "to perfect in us what He has begun." By the grace of God I have received thirty-three Brothers, and all are eminent, well-educated men, except two who are to be Laybrothers. Among them are many who are of high birth as you may have learned

from other sources. We await many others, and there are moreover six very capable men already bound to the Order.

Again I say to thee, do not fear. "I shall be to thee a father and thou to me a daughter" and a spouse of Jesus Christ, and I shall pray the Lord for thee that He may deign to watch over thee.¹

¹ John XIV, 27; 2 Corinthians I, 7; Romans XII, 1 ; Ephesians VI, 10; 2 Corinthians VIII, 6; 2 Kings VII, 14.

6. (*ms. no. XXVIII.*)

Milan, September, 1223.

Dr. Altaner (p. 73, n. 2) quotes a document that proves that on August 8, 1223 Blessed Jordan took part in a solemn procession accompanying the translation of the relics of Saints Faustinus and Jovita to the Dominican Church at Brescia, over which Blessed Guala presided. Blessed Jordan fell ill of the fever that was common in Italy during August, but happily recovering was soon able to go on to Milan.

*Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to
Diana beloved in Christ:-eternal salvation.*

Because I cannot see thee with the eyes of my body, as I wish and as thou wishest, I have written to thee several times since I left Bologna, lest by hearing various and inexact rumors about me, thy spirit might be disturbed. Know then that at Bresica I fell ill of fever, but by the mercy of God I have recovered and arrived safely at Milan. I hope in the Lord Jesus to be able to proceed farther. Therefore, console thyself in the Lord so that I too may be consoled, for thy consolation is for me "a joy and exultation before God."

Farewell in the Lord. Greet all the Sisters for me and recommend me to them. Fare you well. ¹

¹ Luke I, 14.

7. (*ms. no. XVII.*)

October, 1223-June 2, 1224.

This letter is an exhortation to the search for and practice of the virtues of poverty, charity and humility. It is somewhat puzzling at first, for B. Jordan alludes to some allegorical

interpretations of Holy Scripture which, though strange to us, were common in his day. However, a second perusal will place the reader where Blessed Jordan desired Diana to be, at the Right Side of Jesus Crucified, reddened, cleansed and fortified by the holy streams flowing from that Blessed Side and drinking in the great lessons He preached so forcibly from His throne of suffering.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to Diana, his sister by virtue of a common spiritual Father, and most dear daughter bequeathed to him by that same Father:-greeting and the consolation of the Spirit Paraclete.

"The kingdom of the world and all the trappings of time hast thou held in contempt because of love for Jesus Christ, thy beloved Spouse" ; His poverty hast thou chosen and put on, and therefore "wilt thou dwell in His courts" and shalt be filled with the good things of His House.

But what is it I said? Thou hast chosen poverty? Nay, rather hast thou cast it aside and chosen riches. The poverty of Christ is voluntary poverty; it is that poverty of the spirit because of which, since thou hast it, the kingdom of heaven, I do not say, will be but is thine. For thy Spouse said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit because theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He therefore who possesses the poverty of Christ thinks nothing of all riches in the world. Is it not then the greatest treasure, since for it and in comparison with

it all other treasures are priced at nothing and considered worthless? Thou art not destitute because thou dost abound in the glory and "the riches of His House." Thou art not a poor little beggar-woman but a queen over a kingdom for thou hast the kingdom of heaven.¹

Stand therefore at the right hand of thy Spouse, "clothed in a garment of gold," "adorned with a charity that is not feigned," but "ruddy and pure" from the ardor and fervor of Christ. But where wilt thou get this gold to gild thy garments? From the "land of Hevilath" which means the land of sorrow. There is Christ Who says: "Attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." There wilt thou find gold and "the gold of that land is very good." For there Christ gave evidence of the greatest possible love because "greater charity no man hath than that by which a man lays down his life for his friends,"-as if He would say: this is the greatest love, this is the best gold. There the mines are open. "They pierced," He says "My Hands and My Feet." Others have labored in these mines but thou canst enter in their labors and like a friend and "a dove live in the clefts of the rock," and "that rock is Christ." There wilt thou find an abundance of gold, the plenitude of charity. But if thou findest gold, wilt thou collect it and conserve what thou hast collected? It is the rivers that flow from the fountains and wounds of the Savior that give evidence

¹ 8th Response-Office of a Virgin ; Psalm LXIV, 5 ; Mt. V, 3 ; Psalm III, 3.

of an abundance of this ruddy gold; in fact the very rivers are golden. ²

If therefore thou shalt stand at the Right Hand (of Christ) thou wilt be gilded from the stream flowing out of His Right Side. Approach therefore and stand nearer that thou mayest be more thoroughly saturated, that "thy garments may be reddened by Him Who treads the winepress." There indeed at the Right Hand did the Saints stand "with the Queen" their mother, the Church, and "they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb." ³

Let this be thy meditation, this thy solicitude!

Here also is the gold of the Arabs, which is the gold of the humble. Here will be given thee the gold of Arabia, or of humility. Since it takes the humble to enter into its deep and narrow mines, it is indeed the gold of the Arabs, the gold of the humble, because only the humble find, dig out, and collect it. Be thou little therefore and humble in thine eyes, because "He gives understanding to the little" and "grace to the humble." May He therefore give thee understanding and instruct thee "as to the way by which thou shalt go" and fix His eyes upon thee for "His eyes look upon the poor."

I have recommended briefly to thee poverty, charity and humility in order that by these three means thou mayest attain to true riches, delights, and honors, with the help of Him "Who is the strong helper," Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is blessed forever, Amen.

² Psalm XLIV, 10-16; 2 Cor. VI, 6; Cant. V, 10; Gen. II, 11; Lam. I, 12; Gen. II, 12; John XV, 13; Ps. XXI, 17; Cant. II, 14; I Cor. X, 4.

³ Isaias LXIII, 2; Psalm XLIV, 10; Apoc. XXII, 14.

Soon capable and beloved Sisters will come from Prouille. The Prior of Montpellier wrote me, assuring me of this fact. Greet them, and all the other Sisters most affectionately and with them share thy letter as if it were written to each in particular.

Fare thee well in Christ Jesus, and pray with devotion for me.⁴

⁴ Ps. CXVIII, 130; James IV, 6; Ps. XXXI, 8; Ps. X, 5; Ps. LXX, 7; 2 Cor. XI, 31; Cfr. Chapter VII about the Sisters of Prouille.

8. (*ms. no. XXXIV.*)

Paris, Nov.-Dec., 1223.

The purpose of this letter was to ask for prayers for the increase of vocations, and to allay the fears of Diana as to his health, which was delicate and easily shattered. Jordan on the other hand worried over Diana. He knew how easy it was for an ardent nature like hers to be indiscreet in the practice of corporal penances, and he strove to turn her energies to the exercise of the interior virtues. He bade her think often of Heaven and its joys to counteract the sadness caused by the miseries of this life, and he urged her to live continually in the Presence of God, one of the surest stimulants to the work of self-sanctification.

St. Agnes had already become a center of piety for the ladies of Bologna. This is evident from the close of the letter in which he sends greetings to a group of women whom we would now call Lay-Auxiliaries, that is, ladies who help support the Sisters and in turn receive a share in their prayers and good works.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to Sister Diana, in Christ most dear:-may she delight perpetually in the joy and raptures of Paradise.

Notice, dearest, that preceded by the grace of God, accompanied and even pursued *by thy* prayers and those of my daughters, happily I have come to Paris, quite safe and sound. And now I am hurrying to send thee this letter in order that at least a greeting by letter may give thee some consolation in place of that thou mightest obtain from my presence and a heart to heart talk, both of which thou art deprived of for a time.

And thou, daughter, along with thy daughters in the Lord and mine, strive valiantly to exercise thyself not so much in corporal penances in which the measure of reason and discretion is very easily exceeded, but

apply thyself rather to virtue which according to the Apostle is "profitable to all things," and do works of piety.

Keep constantly in thy heart and ardently in thy desire that blessed land of the citizens of Heaven, that glorious storehouse of joy and universal exultation, that place truly filled with the light of supreme beauty surpassing all human understanding, that country truly divine and worthy to be the dwelling place of Him who was "created according to the image of God." Let the thoughts of the Spouse be frequent and devout in the hearts of His spouses; in His sight may every stain be washed away and every deformity rectified in a zealous culture of spiritual beauty, lest, may God forbid, the sacred eye of the Spouse be even but slightly offended.

Let purity of heart, innocence of life, unity of religious practice, peace and concord reign among you. May unshaken charity dwell in you and sweet humility preserve you in all good. Then will the Son of God, Who is blessed forever, take His delight in your souls, while they are radiant with the delights of virtue. Fare you well!

Pray for me. Greet the Sisters, beloved daughters in the Lord, and remind them to pray for the students of Paris in order that the Lord may open their hearts and make them easy to convert, that those who have formed resolutions denoting a good will may be found ready to put them into effect, and move forward with perseverance to eternal life. Fare you well!

Brother Archangelus and John greet thee. Greet also the Lay Sisters of St. Agnes, and the Auxiliaries, I mean the ladies and friends of the convent. Fare thee well! ¹

¹ 1 Tim. IV, 8; Gen. 1, 27.

9. (*ms. no. XL.*)

After Easter-1224.

Jordan is still in Paris. The tertian fever spoken of is an intermittent fever returning every other day. Jordan again holds up the joys of heaven as a motive for an incessant striving after virtue.

It is very probable that Bl. Humbert de Romanis, fifth Master General of the Order, and Hugh of St. Cher, the great Biblical scholar and later Cardinal, were among the forty novices who entered the Order at this time. The story of their vocation is given in the "Lives of the Brethren" (Eng. translation pp. 154-157).

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his beloved daughter in Christ, Sister Diana, at St. Agnes:-eternal salvation.

Because I now have a messenger and think you would like a letter from me, I shall not delay writing to you today even though it be but little. Know that after I came to Paris I was almost always in good health, except that at mid-lent I had an ordinary tertian fever.

In regard to the students, by the grace of God I have been quite successful, for between Advent and Easter about forty Novices entered the Order. Many of them are Masters, and the others are sufficiently well-educated; moreover we have good hopes concerning many more. Give thanks to God for those received and pray to Him for those who are to be received that He may "work in them both to will and to accomplish."

Watch over thyself and also over my daughters and thine, as I hope thou dost, in order that you may be made steadfast in patience, rooted in humility, enlarged in charity; that you may ever strive to grow in virtue

"going from virtue to virtue until the God of Gods will manifest Himself in Sion" that is, in the sempiternal and eternal Jerusalem where "we shall see Him as He is" and seeing Him, rejoice with ineffable joy; and "that joy of ours no one will take from us."

Fare you well in Christ. Greet all my daughters. Brother John greets thee. ¹

¹ Phillipians II, 13; Psalm LXXXIII, 8; John III, 2; 1 Cor. XIII, 12; John XVI, 22.

10. (*ms. no. XXVII.*)

January-February, 1225.

Blessed Jordan knew the human heart well. To be told that their spiritual father depended on and had great confidence in their prayers must have been for the Sisters a spur to present themselves before God with greater courage and insistence. To dispel the discouragement and fears that temptation does produce in us, Bl. Jordan arouses their sense of chivalry: they are fighting for the sake of and in the sight of the Lord, on Whom they can absolutely rely. (In those days if anything disgraced a knight, it would be a refusal to come to the aid of a woman under attack and calling for help). Beginners in the spiritual life generally expect to become saints in a month or a year, and may become discouraged or may even give up the fight because of repeated faults or continued inclinations to evil. Bl. Jordan warns them that the ladder of perfection is really a ladder and not an elevator. He concludes by bidding them exercise themselves in love for God and love for neighbor; these are the two greatest virtues and the hardest to practice, for they demand of us continual self-denial.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his dearest daughter in Christ, Sister Diana, and to the whole chapter of Sisters at St. Agnes of Bologna:—may they be joined to the choir of holy virgins "who follow the Lamb, the Virgin's Son, whithersoever He goeth."

I will write but little now because I hope, God willing, soon to speak with you in person.

Meanwhile do you, dearest daughters, all together and each in particular, entreat God in your prayers for me, a miserable sinner, that He may accomplish in me His good grace, that by its guidance and support I may be able to fulfill His entire Will in the ministry im-

posed upon me. For I have great confidence in your prayers, especially when you call upon Him with one heart and one mind because it is very difficult when many pray together for some at least not to be heard.

If uncommon temptations occur to you be not terrified. These are indeed the battles and seditions in the face of which the Lord wishes His servants and handmaidens to be strong and magnanimous; for the Lord, in Whose service the war is waged, is your helper. What prince, indeed, and especially "one powerful in battles" would not rise at once in defense of His little handmaidens, or His Sisters, fighting because of Him and for Him too despite their weakness against His most cruel enemies, provided that at the first assault they did not fly but turned to call on Him? Fight therefore not only manfully but wisely also, because as Solomon says "a battle should be waged with skillful prudence." You will then fight prudently when you put the flesh under subjection, not precipitately but little by little. It is by progressing from one to another of the spiritual virtues that, not in a single flight, but step by step, you climb the ladder of perfection until you finally attain to the "end of all perfection."

To conclude in a few words: keep a measure in all things so that you may act with moderation; divine love alone knows neither measure nor limit. That love however is fostered, not by corporal penances but by holy desires and pious meditations, and by the leaven of that sisterly love by which each one of you loves your neighbor as yourself. Fare you well.

In regard to the Sisters of Prouille, it does not seem expedient at present to send any to you, as I shall explain to you by word of mouth. Brother Bertrand, Prior Provincial, sends greetings to you. ¹

¹ Apoc. XIV, 4; Psalm XXIII, 8; Proverbs XXIV, 6; Psalm CXVIII, 96; Cfr. Chapter VII, in regard to the Sisters of Prouille.

11. (*ms. no. XXIV.*)

1223-1236.

This letter is a mosaic of texts from the Bible as found in the Breviary Office for the Blessed Mother. It may have been written as a sermon to be read at a Profession or Reception of the habit. Certainly it is a beautiful description of the dignity of a Sister as a spouse of Christ and of the very special reward which she will obtain, if she proves faithful, from the hands of that Divine Spouse.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his beloved daughters, the spouses of the Lamb, the Sisters of St. Agnes:- may you follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

"My daughters are truly decked out and adorned" but "not after the similitude of a temple as *theirs*," that is, as *men's* daughters are, for although in them appears a similitude (to the temple) yet in them there is no sanctity. "The Temple of God is holy, and that is what you are." And there is no doubt but "that the Lord is in His Holy Temple," that is, in you. "Do not weep, therefore, daughters of Jerusalem over yourselves" because I have gone from you in body, but rejoice over your Spouse who is in your midst. "I too am present with you in spirit" rejoicing and recollecting that still a little while and my daughters "will be led to the Lord King and presented to Him in joy and exultation." They will be led in after her, the Virgin Mary, His Mother, chosen from among all virgins. She is unique, "His dove, His beautiful one," "all fair and there is no spot in her." She is one "that bath not known sin"; she is full of charity and love, "full of grace, blessed among all women and the Lord is with her." After her will the spouses of Christ be led into

that "temple of the King" "that is not made with hands" "where the Spouse rejoices over the bride" according to Isaias: "And your God will rejoice over you." ¹

You will come into Sion with songs of praise and everlasting joy, that is, with "the crown of immortality upon your hands" which is called joy. You will then receive the kingdom of glory and "the diadem of beauty from the hand of the Lord," for then is it that He says to His faithful servant "Enter into the joy of the Lord," of Thy Lord, the Lord of the Order of Preachers. "Then will all your sorrow be turned into joy and your joy no one will take from you," for we shall rejoice eternally with Jesus Christ, Who is blessed forever and ever. Amen.

Farewell and rejoice in the Lord always. Pray for me and the whole Order. ²

¹ Apoc. XIV, 4; CXLIII, 12; 1 Cor. III, 16 f; Ps. X, 5; Luke XXIII, 28; 1 Cor. V, 3; Ps. XLIV, 14-16; Cant. II, 13; IV, 7; Wisdom III, 13; Luke I, 28; Ps. XLIV, 15; Acts XVII, 24; Isaias LXII, 5.

² Is. XXXV, 10; Wisdom V, 17; Math. XXV, 21; John XVI, 20.

12. (*ms. no. XXX.*) June, 1225.

This is a letter of condolence written after Brancaleone's death (Cfr. Chapter VIII) to Diana, her widowed sister-in-law Jacobina (Cfr. Letter 14), her mother and sister, both of whom were named Otha. (Cfr. Letter 13). It was brought to them by Friar Bernard, a friend of the family.

To the bereaved Blessed Jordan offers what is after all the only true consolation: that suffering makes us like to Christ here and offers to us means of meriting greater glory in heaven, that God takes men out of the world for their own good, and that we shall see them again in heaven. To this letter was attached a note from Brother Henry concerning two Novices, both undoubtedly his countrywomen and spiritual daughters and to one of whom he sends goods for a habit.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to Diana his beloved daughter in Christ: Greetings; may she "exult in the grace of the Holy Spirit" and "always rejoice in His consolation."

I suspect that thou art indeed in very deep grief but "thy sorrow will be changed into joy" because "according to the multitudes of the sorrows" that fill thy heart so will the consolations of the Lord be to rejoice thy soul; and the Paraclete Himself, whom the Father will send thee, will console thee.

For thy consolation and that also of Lady Jacobina, I am sending Brother Bernard to you; meanwhile I pray and beseech Him to soften the agony of your hearts, "Who consoles His own in all their tribulations."¹

It behooves us to have "some sorrow in this life" (but not much) as Saint Peter says, so that we may

¹ Luke X, 21; Prayer to the Holy Spirit ; John XVI, 20; Ps. XCIII, 19; John XIV, 2; 2 Cor. 1, 4.

become somewhat like to Him who said: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." After death however we shall feast and rejoice because "the just feast and exult in the sight of the Lord," since for them wailing and sorrow and groanings are no more. If however you feel yourselves given way overmuch to sorrow, say to yourselves, "Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God."

Thy brother has been taken away "that malice might not change his understanding" nor the sham of this world deceive his soul. Do not therefore be too much grieved, my dearest ones, "as those who have no hope." Let your hope be full of immortality and ask God to give joy to your hearts.

Greet both the Ladies Otha and Lady Jacobina and all the convent of St. Agnes beloved in the Lord. Fare you well.

Brother Henry greets you very affectionately: he is full of sympathy for you in your affliction. But the Lord who made the calm after the tempest will bring back serenity to your minds; "He will turn the storm into a breeze and bring you to the haven of perfect tranquillity of the will." Fare you well.

Greet our Jordana and Marie. With permission of Master Jordan I am sending to Jordana some cloth for a tunic and capuce, and I beg you to have it used for that purpose. Farewell. ²

² I Peter I, 6; Mt. XXVI, 38; Ps. LXVII, 4; Ps. XXXXII, 5 ; Wisdom IV, 11; I Thess. IV, 12; Ps. CVI, 29-30.

13. (*ms. no. XXXI.*)

June-July, 1225.

Bl. Jordan did not have to wait long for an answer to his message of sympathy; perhaps it came through Friar Bernard whom he had sent to Bologna as his messenger. Bl. Diana, perhaps to his surprise, did not give way too much to grief over the heads of her brother; evidently she is advancing in the way of abandonment to the will of God. Bl. Jordan urges her on this way by showing that Christ trod it first Himself and treads it now with us. Then he repeals his warning against the dangers of imprudent bodily mortifications.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter most beloved in Christ, Diana: – eternal salvation and the joy of the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

Know dearest, that according to the Scriptures "through many tribulations must we enter into the kingdom of God" and that, when we arrive there, we shall be free from all tribulation. In the meantime never does thy Spouse, Jesus Christ, abandon thee, for He saith: "I will not leave nor forsake thee."

At times He may seem to have gone so far away from thee that thou wouldst say: "Why, O Lord, hast Thou retired afar off?" "Why dost Thou despise me in my wants?" Just at the time I want Thy help. But when is that? "In tribulation," thou dost answer. But He certainly does not then desert thee, rather He comes closer, "for the Lord is nigh to those who are troubled of heart."¹

If at any time thou art sorrowful and "goest sorrowful while the enemy afflicteth thee," consider in thy heart what thy Spouse saith who is the joy of the

¹ Acts XIV, 21 ; Hebrews XIII, 5 ; Ps. IX, 22; Ps. XXXIII, 19.

angels. "Sorrowful," He saith, "is my heart even unto death." If thou art in anguish, again He saith, "Attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." "He also alone considereth labor and sorrow." After labor we have rest, after anguish eternal consolation. "According to the multitude of our sorrows," will be the consolations that will rejoice our souls, the gift of thy own Spouse who with the Father is blessed for ever. Amen.

Do not fast too much from food, drink, and sleep, but be moderate and patient in all things. Greet all thy Sisters, Lady Otha, thy mother, thy sister Otha and Lady Jacobina. I rejoice that thou dost not grieve too much over the death of thy brother.

Take care lest the Sisters mortify themselves to excess and let them proceed gradually in all things. This letter I have written to you with my own hand. Farewell in Christ and pray for me.

I, Brother Henry, greet thee, Diana, from my whole heart.²

² Ps. XXXXII, 2; Mt. XXVI, 38; Lament I, 12; Ps. IX, 25; Ps. LXXXIII, 19.

14. (*ms. no. XLV.*)

June-July, 1225.

This letter was perhaps written at the same time as the one just preceding. It is principally a request that the greatest consideration be given to Lady Jacobina, the widow of Brancaleone. Blessed Jordan is about to begin his work in Germany and as usual relies upon the help of the Sisters.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter most dear in Christ, Diana, and all the convent of St. Agnes:-greetings and the consolation of the Paraclete!

Since it is a great work of piety to "give spiritual solace to the desolate" I beg of you in your charity to take care to bestow upon the widowed Lady Jacobina as much consolation as you can. Doing that you will please God and may gain her soul.

Do you also while giving yourself zealously up to prayer, pray for me and for Brother Henry, Prior of Cologne, as well as for Brother Bernard and my other companions, that the Lord may according to His good pleasure direct our journeyings and grant us by His grace the power to procure the salvation of souls-the purpose of our labors. Praying thus you will share in our labors.

Farewell and may "the only-begotten of God" descend "from the bosom of the Father into your hearts," and may He ever place His habitation within you. Amen.

Greet the elder and the younger Lady Otha, Jacobina and Agnes. ¹

¹ James I, 27; John I, 18.

15. (*ms. no. XXXIII.*)

August 16th, 1225.

Blessed Jordan wrote this letter to calm the fears aroused by news of his illness (a fever in Italy can easily prove mortal).

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to Sister Diana, his daughter most beloved in Christ:--eternal salvation.

I do not return to you like for like (of that I am only too sure) for thou lovest more than thou art loved by me. However I am unwilling that by this love, pleasing indeed to me, thou be too much afflicted in body or wearied in soul. I have heard in fact that, because of my infirmity, thou hast been unduly troubled and grieved,-and the other Sisters too.

"Your prayer, however, has come into the sight of the Lord" and of His mercy He has lengthened my course of life, or rather the time to do penance. On the feast of Blessed Lawrence, although still very weak, I left Verona with the permission of the doctor and on the way to Trent I regained so much of my vigor that I preached to the people on the Feast of the Assumption, and to the clergy on the day after.

I am anxious about thee and thy Sisters, and I wish to know about all "that may be against you." And thou, dearest daughter, "be constant, trusting in the Lord." No matter what may disturb thee, no matter what may weigh thee down, "God is in your midst" and therefore be not troubled. . . Fare you well in Christ. I have written this in Trent the day after . the Assumption." ¹

¹ Ps LXXXVII, 3; Romans VIII, 31; Daniel XIII, 35; Matthew XVIII, 20.

16. (*ms. no. XXII.*) Magdeburg. End of Sept., 1225.

Instead of going directly to Paris Bl. Jordan passed through Germany in order to make his first visitation of that Province which had been founded in 1221. From an old Chronicle we know that the Convent at Magdeburg was established on August 10, 1224, and that the first Provincial Chapter of Germany was celebrated there on September 24, 1225. It is very likely that Bl. Jordan presided at it and made known what he had observed during the visitation.

In those days the journey between Trent and Magdeburg was long and arduous ; nevertheless Bl. Jordan's health kept improving and he hastens to inform Diana of that fact. Then he goes on to warn her again about the dangers of over-indulgence in corporal mortifications, and urges her to amass the gold of the interior virtues, especially that of charity.

To his beloved daughter, Diana, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant: - "May she be brought into the winecellar" by her Spouse Jesus Christ.

Because I doubt not that thy love has made thee anxious about my health, I wish to let thee know that after I left Verona (the God of our salvation making my journey safe and giving more strength to my weakened body), I went to Magdeburg and arrived there on the third day after the feast of St. Matthew. On arriving safe and sound, I was given a joyful reception by the brethren at the Convent, and by many others, who had long been uneasy about me. It also consoled my spirit to find the convent well arranged and some Novices recently received into the Order; they indeed gave me no little consolation. For all this give thanks to God Who pours forth so tenderly His mercy over us at all times, granting us much greater gifts than we are worthy to receive from Him.

For the rest, dearest, place a limit on thy labors and apply the rein of discretion to thy mode of life in order that while thou runnest after thy Spouse to the odor of His ointments, wishing to offer Him myrrh, which is mortification of the body, thou mayest also leave place for gold, -according to the example of those three Blessed Magi who offered to Jesus Christ" out of their treasures gold, incense, and myrrh." For our treasurechest must not be so filled up with myrrh as to leave no room for the gold of wisdom and discretion. Thou shouldst be able to say to the Bridegroom: "A small bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me." He did not say, "a great load of myrrh is my beloved to me," but "a small bundle of myrrh," pointing out thereby that a measure must be observed in all things.

When present I have often told thee this, and now when absent I give thee the same counsel in order that thou mayest be able to walk "along the way" with so well measured a step as to reach without stumbling the gates of the heavenly Fatherland, under the leadership of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Recommend me to the prayers of thy Sisters and greet them for me. May "the Spirit of Truth" be with thee in all things. ¹

¹ Canticles II, 4; Canticles I, 3; Mt. II, 11; Canticles I, 12; John XV, 26.

17. (*ms. no. XXXII. Aron 18.*)

March-April, 1226.

This letter is written to comfort Diana about the impending war with Frederick II (Cfr. Chapter VIII). In the negotiations that took place between the Pope and the Emperor, the Dominicans had a part in the person of Blessed Guala who was often deputed by the Pope to act as peace-maker in European politics.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his beloved daughter Diana: -- a greeting in Him "Who is the Savior of all men."

I have just heard of the tribulations and distress of the city of Bologna and consequently thee and thy Sisters. I am all the more deeply grieved over it because I know of no counsel or alleviation I can give you in this affair except the benefit of my prayers, sinner that I am, and of those of our brethren. I am confident these will be efficacious in the sight of God, for He is not accustomed to repel in time of need the prayers of His servants or to turn His ear from their supplications.

Therefore, do not be afraid, dearest, neither let any tribulation make thee sorrowful because thou hast a Spouse who has been tried in every way and hence knows how to be moved by tribulation, especially by those of His spouse and spouses. He is indeed "a jealous God," and "will send thee His angel" who with great zeal will guard thy body and even more certainly thy soul. Thou ought not therefore be at all anxious, daughter, but be firm and strong, for thy Spouse is Emmanuel (God with us) Who does not desert those hoping in Him but is with them "unto the consummation of the world," as He Himself promised.

Tranquilly, therefore, "cast all thy care upon Him" Whose power is invincible, whose wisdom is infallible, and whose goodness is untiring. Such is thy Beloved Who can, knows how, and wishes to deliver thee from all thy straits and tribulations. Meanwhile recall to mind Him Who bore from sinners such great contradictions, leveled not against His servants or handmaids, but against Himself, and thus thou wilt not be faint in soul. ¹

The Emperor is a man who knows not how to respect or listen to Religious, but rather, as he says, it is painful for him to see them. And because of this, God knows . . . as thou hast written me in thy letters. Just at present I am not going (to Italy) because I am certain my presence there in existing circumstances would be altogether useless. I will come within the year, however, if it please God, and we shall see each other again and our hearts will rejoice. In this world joy and sorrow follow quickly upon each other; yet a little while and the "hour will come when" our joy will be full, and it will never be taken from us." ²

I do not wish thee to be ignorant, dearest, of the grace that the Lord has given to the Order, how our brothers are growing in number and merit. Within less than four weeks after my arrival in Paris, twenty-one brothers have entered of whom six are Masters of Arts while the others are students, competent and suitable to the Order. Even the Lord Bishop of Paris is so much in

¹ Mt. XXVI, 38; Ex. XX, 5; Mal. III, 1; Mt. XXVIII, 20; Peter V, 7.

² The words of the manuscript are not legible-unfortunately. From March 25th, 1226 to March 25th, 1227, according to the way of reckoning at that time ; John XVI, 22-24.

love with the brethren that he assisted in person at our sermon and ate with the brethren in the refectory. Likewise did the Lord Legate of France dine with the brethren in the refectory on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin. Even the Queen most tenderly loves the brethren; she spoke in person with me quite familiarly concerning their affairs.³

I write these things to thee, daughter, that thou mayest praise and glorify Our Lord for these and His other benefits. Likewise have the Sisters, as is but just, give thanks incessantly.

Fare you well. Have prayers said for me and the brethren. Brother Conrad of Germany who was with me at Bologna, greets thee and asks prayers for himself. Farewell.

³ Blanche of Castile, then Regent. Her son, St. Louis, was consecrated at Rheims, on the 29th of the following November.

18. (*ms, no. XVIII. Aron 19.*)

Undatable.

The perils of war between Frederick II and Bologna may have prompted this letter with its contrast between the miseries of this "city on earth" and the secure joy of the "city on high."

*To this beloved daughters in Christ, the Sisters of St. Agnes at Bologna,
Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:
-- eternal salvation, and may they embrace the Lamb they follow.*

Beloved daughhters, although "you run in the odor of the Ointments of your Spouse," yet "take care that you walk prudently." "So run that you may obtain"; in such a way, that is, that none of you run too slowly and slothfully, or "too hastily so as to stumble," and thus fail to reach the destination of your life's journey. "Straight and narrow is the way that leads to life" and it behooves one to walk along it cautiously lest one turn on to the right by negligence or to the left by excess of zeal. Of these two the one I most fear for you is that you chastise your bodies imprudently and then, falling into the opposite fault, be hampered on the way of the Lord that leads to the city of eternal mansions, "to the city of the Lord of Hosts, founded by the Lord for all eternity."¹

"The foundations of this city are upon the holy hills" or rather on the holy mountain of the Lord, the mountain He acquired by His right Hand, that is, by His Son who is "at the right hand of God the Father";

¹ Canticle I, 4; Eph. V, 15; 1 Cor. IX, 24; Prov. XIX, 2; Matt. VII, 14; Ps. XLVII, 9.

upon Him the foundations of this city rest, and He who founded it is the Most High. ²

O Celestial city, mansion secure, ofatherland of all delights, where the people do not murmur, where the inhabitants are not in need, and where the citizens live in peace. "Glorious things are said to thee, O city of God." The way to the city of eternal rest is dangerous, but, when it shall be granted to us to come to the blessed "Jerusalem which is built as a city," no more is danger to be feared; there no more occasion for ruin is found, but eternal tranquillity, eternal stability, eternal security; of the inhabitants of that city, its holy citizens, the Spirit says "they may from now on rest from their labors." Meanwhile, as long as we must walk painfully on the way, we must proceed modestly and without haste, until we come to that blessed city under the leadership of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, "Who above all is blessed for ever and ever. Amen."

Dearest daughters, if any adversity or tribulation happen to you, bear all with patient equanimity, for you may expect in return for little trials greater glory -- for sorrow, joy -- for mourning, eternal consolation.

Farewell and pray for me as I pray for you daily, beseeching in my prayers "the Father of Mercy and the God of all consolation" to give all of you the heart to worship Him and do His will.

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Amen. ³

² Ps. LXXXVI, 1; Ps. LXXVII, 54; Col. III, 1 ; Ps. LXXXVI, 5.

³ Ps. LXXXVI, 3; Ps. CXXI, 3; Apoc. XIV, 13; 2 Cor. XI, 31; II Cor. I, 3; Gal. VI, 18.

19. (*ms. no. XXVIII Aron 20.*)

Perhaps from Paris
-- Summer, 1226.

This is a letter of consolation to Sisters weighed down not only by temporal dangers but also by spiritual trials. Certainly it could not be more forcefully or beautifully expressed. Would indeed that Sisters had these words often in their minds!

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his beloved daughters, spouses of Jesus Christ, Diana and the Sisters of St. Agnes:--joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit.

"Be strengthened, dearest daughters, in the Lord Jesus," your Spouse, whom you have prudently chosen for yourselves in preference to all the desirable things of this world, and whom, as I hope, you hold tightly with the arms of prayer and tears, and press close lest He flee from you. Do not fear therefore because "there is now nothing to condemn in you," since you possess the Author of salvation, the Lord Who wills, knows how, and can deliver you from all distress, tribulation and even anguish of heart.

Who therefore among you, even though for a time assailed by weariness, afflicted with hardness of heart, with the torrent of devotion dried up, would dare to say: "My Lord hath abandoned me" and He bath no care for me because I do not feel the usual outpourings of love"? May such words never come from a spouse of the benign Jesus Christ. They may say this who are ignorant of His accustomed ways, namely of the way He is wont to inflame the desire of His spouses. As I have often told you when I was with you, to this purpose does your Spouse withdraw Himself for a time

that you may seek Him ardently, and having sought Him you may find Him with greater joy, and having found Him you may hold Him more tightly, and holding Him you may not let Him go, as the Spouse who in the Canticles after much searchings and many questionings whether anyone had seen her Beloved exclaimed, *when* she had at last found Him "I hold Him nor will I let Him go."¹

You, His spouses, should be consoled by that most sweet answer He gave to another of His spouses whom Isaias presents to us as complaining of her abandonment. Isaias says: "Sion said: the Lord hath forsaken me and the Lord hath forgotten me." Sion means a mirror and signifies the holy soul who frequently contemplates the mirror of Christ, "Who is an untarnished mirror." This soul seeing and feeling at times the hardness of her heart says: "The Lord hath forsaken me and the Lord hath forgotten me." But hear what the Lord will answer her: "Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee, for in My Hands have I graven thee."

Would that you had these words often in your minds ! I believe that then no matter what tribulation and distress, or even whatever lasting hardness of heart came upon you, you would not easily believe the devil's suggestion that the Lord had abandoned you. St. Bernard says: "Even when a tribulation afflicts thee cruelly, believe not that thou art abandoned, but re-

¹ Eph. VI, 10; Rom. VIII, 1; Ps. XXI, 2; Cant. III, 4; Is. XLIX, 14.

member it is written: "I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him."²

As for the rest I commit myself to your prayers. I hope, God helping, that I may find occasion to see and console you in the Lord. Farewell.

Brother Conrad who was with us at Bologna greets you and commits himself to your prayers.

² Wis. VII, 26; Is. XLIX, 15; Ps. XC, 15.

20. (*ms. no. VIII--Aron 21.*) Upper Italy, January, 1227.

This letter accompanied the decree of Honorius III, signed December 17, 1226, commanding Blessed Jordan to keep the convent of St. Agnes under his jurisdiction. (Cfr. Chapter VIII).

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his dearest daughter in Christ, Diana:--greetings and that consolation of the Holy Spirit by which He consoles the hearts of the sons of God.

I do not doubt that it was handed down of old by the Holy Prophets and lastly by St. Paul in whom Christ spoke, "that we ought to rejoice" with the servants of Jesus Christ, especially in their joys and consolations. So, hearing new rumors of the consolation that you and the Sisters have received because of the favor granted to thee, I congratulate all the Sisters, whose joy is mine.

As for thee, beloved daughter, although thou art not ignorant of how I was with thee (as friend and assistant) up to the present, desiring and seeking wellbeing for thee and thy Sisters, no matter where I was, yet (let me assure thee) I will be even more solicitous in the future, if God permit me. The letter which the Sovereign Pontiff addressed to me in regard to you I confide to your care, and of it be a faithful custodian.

In order not to appear ungrateful I wish to let thee know of the wonderful mercies which "Our Lord bath shown forth wonderfully in my behalf" since I left thee. To Him give manifold thanks for those gifts of His which I possess. Christ drew to the Order eighteen

excellent men whom I recommend to thee as well as the rest who have good intentions.

Greet the Prioress, Jordana, and the whole convent for me.¹

¹ Acts IX, 31; Philipp. IV, 4; Ps. XVI, 7.

21. (*ms. no. XXIII -- Aron 22.*) February or June, 1227.

Now that the Pope had officially placed her convent under the direction of the Friars Preachers, Blessed Diana felt she could say her "Nunc dimittis." Blessed Jordan does not condemn her longing for death as the gateway to heaven but warns her against letting that desire lead her into indiscretion. The reason for Blessed Jordan's hesitation in asking Blessed Diana to take charge of the little girl is that she had no dowry and the convent of St. Agnes was very poor.

Blessed Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his dearest daughter in Christ, Diana: eternal salvation.

Thou hast written to me that before this thou didst not wish to die and go to the "House of thy Father where there are many mansions," because the Convent of St. Agnes was not established and confirmed under the jurisdiction of the Order. Now however with greater security thou "desirest to be dissolved and to be with Christ."

I am willing, indeed, to have thee desire this from the bottom of my heart, but I am unwilling to have thee hasten this end by excessive compunction and unmeasured bodily mortification. As Solomon says: "He that is hasty with his feet shall stumble"; I warn thee therefore not to run so hastily as to fall on the way. The Apostle says "Run in so well ordered a way that you may obtain." May the blessed God deign to draw us in such way that we can run more agreeably and joyfully in the odor of His ointments. And He indeed shall "according to His will, lead us, and receive us with glory and we shall appear "with Him in glory" by the help of His glorious praiseworthy Son, Jesus

Christ, thy Spouse, Who is blessed above all things forever.
Amen.

I am sending the little girl for whom I made an appeal to thy charity; treat her as well as I confidently expect thee to do. I fear, indeed, that I am burdening thee, but no one will care for her, and I have compassion on her because of love for Him who suffered for our salvation. I would also have a German Brother speak to her twice or at least once a week lest she forget the German which she knows as well as the Lombard tongue. Tell the Prior of the Convent to have some German brother sent and do thou oblige her to speak with him. It is but unwillingly that she speaks German, because, from this Easter on, she was with the household of Sir Gerard, where she heard only Lombard. He says she is a good girl, and unwillingly dismissed her. Fare thee well in Christ. ¹

¹ John XIV, 2; Phil. I, 23; Prov. XIX, 2; 1 Cor. IX, 24; Cant. I, 3; Ps. LXXII, 24; Col. III, 4.

22. (*ms. no XXIX--Aron 23.*)

1224-1232.

This letter is for the most part a beautiful homily on the necessity of union with Our Lord. To bring about and further that union is the one great purpose of the religious

life, and the religious, the center of whose life is not Jesus and Jesus alone, is truly chaff, unsettled, and unhappy, tossed about by every wind of circumstance. On the other hand,

nothing can disturb the soul of the religious truly united to Jesus for after all what matters anything as long as one possesses Him.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his beloved Diana, handmaid of St. Agnes: eternal salvation.

The Lord "Who made me" and often "blessed me" has now again and again "multiplied His mercies for me" through Jesus Christ His Son, unto His honor and glory and the salvation of souls. He has drawn to our Order by the power of the Holy Spirit almost thirty persons, capable and well lettered. For all of these give thanks with all your Sisters.

Do you also be strengthened in the Lord Jesus Christ, and may "He always dwell in your hearts." The heart that lacks Christ is as straw threshed of its grain; for it is as if it were blown here and there by the wind, because tossed about by temptation. But the straw possessed of the grain is not blown away by the wind even when exposed to its gusts, for it is held down by the grain from being carried farther away. So also is the heart in which Christ dwells, made firm by Him in order that it may not be torn out and carried hither and thither by the temptations that blow against it and whip it. Say, therefore, and say it from your heart.

"Others may cling to those they will, but for me, it is good to cling to my God," and again: "My soul clings close to Thee." The straw threshed by the wind did not cling firmly to its grain. In order that we may cling firmly to God, He has bound us to Himself by the tenacity of His Love. He speaks by the Prophet: "I have girdled close to me all the house of Israel," that is, the hearts of those who see God, of those "who keep the Lord always in their sight." Therefore, just as He has willed to join us to Himself, so may He deign to draw us after Him and to lead us to eternal life, He Who is blessed forever and ever. Amen. ¹

I am going to Rome. Pray for me. You may read this letter to all the Sisters. ²

¹ Ps. LXXXIV, 6; The, English cannot bring out the play on the words *fecit* (made) and *benefecit* (blessed); Ps. XXXV, 8.

² Eph. VI, 10; III, 17; Eph. III, 17; Ps. LXXII, 28; Ps. LXII, 9; Jeremias XIII, 11; Ps. XV, 8. Bl. Jordan is not always consistent in the use of *thee* and *thou*; he often inserts the plural of polite conversation, or addresses now Diana, now all the Sisters.

23. (*ms. no. LIII--Aron, Annex C*) Advent, 1227.

At the university of Paris, Jordan had a very dear friend, Henry of Cologne, whom, by dint of earnest prayer, he succeeded in winning over to the Order; in fact both received the habit on the same *day*, thus making stronger the ties of friendship that had bound them in the world. On October 23, 1225 or 1227, Friar Henry died a very holy death. Blessed Jordan, who was present, was torn with conflicting emotions: great sorrow over the loss of his friend, and exultation over the glory and happiness that was certainly his in heaven. To these emotions Blessed Jordan tried to give expression in three letters: one to Blessed Diana and two to another spiritual daughter of his, a Benedictine nun of Trier in Germany. This nun belonged to a famous convent founded by St. Modoald, Archbishop of Trier. Its first Abbesses were Irmine and Modesta, daughters of Dagobert, a Frankish king. It was named later after St. Irmine, but in Jordan's time it went by the name Horreum or Oeren, meaning a storehouse or granary, a name that gives Jordan an occasion for a play upon words. When Blessed Jordan first visited this Convent is not certain; hardly before 1225 the year of his first visitation of Germany as a Dominican, and the year usually given as the date of Henry's death. Whenever it was, the nun was profoundly influenced by Jordan's direction as a third letter to her proves.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to the beloved Spouse of Jesus Christ of the Convent of Oeren:--eternal salvation.

Because "God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of the saints," He will also wipe away those shed so abundantly by thee, weeping at my departure. I had hoped however, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the benign Consoler, to give to thee by letter in return for thy love, some consolation, even though it were not according to the multitude of the sorrows of thy heart.

But Oh! Oh! vanished is this hope! Hidden from my eyes is all consolation, because He "Who divides to every one according as He will," will, indeed, no longer divide brothers beloved of each other, for, as it pleased Him, He has already divided them.

Whence I also bewail a most sweet friend, I bewail a most loving brother, I bewail my dearest son, Henry, Prior of Cologne. He, dearest, departed from this world at Cologne before Advent. And happy indeed, he happily departed and left me miserable, miserably "to this wicked world."

Who will replace him to call (men) to the citadel of Sion! For the Angel of peace who carried peace about and illuminated the fatherland has returned to his Fatherland. Nor do I call him an angel without reason, because on earth he led an angelic life. He was a true angel of the Lord of Hosts; he spoke with the tongue of angels rather than with that of men; he was not "a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," but a cymbal of jubilation who "praised and preached the Lord with all his soul." He was beloved by all the brethren, because he was loved by the Father more than all the brethren, because, also, he himself was "a lover of the brethren and the people of Israel," that is, of all the faithful who always keep God before their eyes.

O My brother Jonathan exceedingly lovable, ¹ thou wert for me a gift from the dove, the glorious Virgin Mary! ² For when I had determined in my heart to

¹ Apocalypse XXI, 4 ; Ps. XCIII, 19; I Cor. XII, 11; Osee XIII, 15; Galatians I, 4 ; I Cor. XIII, 1 ; Ps. CL, 5 ; 2 Macchabees XV, 14; 2 Kings I, 26.

² Canticles II, 10--office of the Blessed Virgin. The dove is the symbol of perfection and innocent simplicity.

enter the Order, I asked my Lady to give him to me as a brother; and this she did, not indeed by virtue of my prayers but in her merciful charity. He, most valiant, with tears begged my Lady to give him the will to enter the Order with me. He asked and obtained; that unique Dove gave him to the Order. The gift of the Dove was certainly dove-like, marching onward in simplicity and therefore with confidence. He was a good laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, he whom the Lord called, not at the close of the day, but already at the sixth hour in order to give him his reward.³ Running not tardily as in old age, but more ardently and swiftly in the bloom of his youth and thus arriving more quickly, he received the heavenly prize and the incorruptible crown.. "O good and faithful servant," thou hast multiplied the talent intrusted to thee by the Lord, and therefore, having faithfully performed thy duty, hast entered secure into the joy of thy beloved Lord! I praise thee after death, I glorify thee after thy consum-mation.

See, dearest, how suddenly and unexpectedly God did this to me! What consolation therefore canst thou now expect from me, so desolate? But the blessed God, Jesus Christ, Whose Name I send thee as a message from my happy son, He, Who consoles the humble will console thee and me. And as He on the cross committed His Mother to a disciple so may He commit thee to His grace in all thy tribulations.⁴

³ Mt. XX-The Hebrews counted twelve hours to the day and seventy years to a man's life. Ps. XXXIX, 10-Henry then died at thirty-five years of age.

⁴ John XX, 4; I Cor. IX, 24 & 25; Mt. XXV, 21; 2 Cor. VII, 6; John XIX, 27.

24. (*ms. no. XLIV--Aron 17.*)

Advent, 1227.

The fact that this letter begins in exactly the same way as the former is strong proof that it was written on the same day. It is, however, strikingly different, less vehement and oratorical, but deeper and more poignant. It is a lamentation not only over the death of Friar Henry but that of Otha, the sister of Blessed Diana, who also seems to have had a strong hold on the affections of Blessed Jordan. It may have been the sense of mutual loss that made his expression of sorrow and sympathy deeper and more simple. The letter seems to give alternately messages to the sisters in general and to Diana in particular.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to the Spouse beloved in Jesus Christ, his daughter, Diana, and to the holy congregation of St. Agnes:--the eternal salvation that appeared to the human race and the grace to follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth.

When God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of the saints, He will also wipe away those bitter tears shed so abundantly by thee, weeping over my departure. I had hoped, however, by the inspiration of the Benign Consoler to give thee by letter some consolation even though it were not according to the multitude of the sorrows in thy heart. But vanished is this, my hope, because consolation has hidden itself from my heart, for He, Who apportions to each one and makes a separation between all as He wills, will no more make a separation between brothers. For, as it pleased Him, He has already divided them: "and so it is done."

Wherefore I have been sad and even yet at times I sorrow. I bewail a most faithful associate, I lament a most delightful friend, I grieve over a most loving brother, I mourn a most dear son, Henry, Prior of

Cologne. He happily departed from this exile to the Father and to the Fatherland, but he left me miserable in this wicked world. ¹

But not alone have I bewailed! How great was the grief of all Cologne! None such was ever seen for any man. How great were the lamentations of the brethren especially, of the widows, and the consecrated virgins! ²

He was indeed a lover of the Brotherhood and a zealous seeker after chastity even from his infancy. Pious was he, prudent, humble, pure, sober, chaste and peaceful, leading an angelic life on earth. ³ Now, according to my firm belief, he reigns with God, and the Lamb of God with him: he, the gem of the Preachers, reigns with Christ. "Proven in a short space, he has fulfilled a long time." He has heard that sweet "well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." ⁴ We have not sent him away, ⁵ but we have sent him on ahead. Behold he has already passed from darkness to the light of perpetual clarity, from danger to security, from indigence to riches, from the battlefield to victory, from sorrow to joy, from time to eternity, from foetid smells to the most sweet odors.

Let us also follow, let us hasten to enter into that eternal rest; but let us not hurry too much, for long is the way that remains. If you are wearied, your

¹ Titus II, 11; Apoc. XIV, 4; Ps. XCIII, 19; Job I, 21; Gal. I, 4.

² These widows and virgins, called Beguines, wore a religious habit and led a penitential life like that of St. Catherine of Sienna and companions.

³ Hymn "Iste Confessor." Office of a confessor in the Breviary. ⁴
 Wisdom IV, 13; Mt. XXV, 21.

⁵ Jordan plays on the words *amisit*, send away or better *lost*, and *praemisit* send on ahead.

Jesus was also wearied from the journey, and being wearied sat on the well. If you are weighed down, slothful, weak, say to Him "Who rejoices as a giant to run the way": "Draw me after thee, let us run in the odor of Thy ointments." He expects however that you be humble and patient in all things. Behold the husbandman patiently awaits the precious fruit of the earth and do you, by cultivating your hearts and not by breaking down your bodies, patiently await the precious fruit, the blessed fruit of the womb of the glorious Virgin Mary.

And thou, my dearest daughter Diana, do not grieve too much over thy brother or over thy sister Otha, thy beloved, sweet, and faithful friend, whom I would so gladly have seen again had it pleased thy Jesus. But be consoled in the Spouse, the only-begotten Son of God, in whose Presence we shall see our friends and rejoice in Him and before Him as they "who rejoice in the harvest." Now it behooves us to be made for a little time sorrowful, to go "sowing our seed while weeping," because to that harvest we shall come, "carrying our sheaves with exultation." Then in Him we shall "exult with joy unspeakable" and all "our sorrow shall be turned into joy, and our joy no man shall take from us." To this end may Jesus Christ, your Spouse, lead us, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns for ages and ages. Amen.'

Fare you well in Christ Jesus.

Diana, greet my lady Otha, and tell her that I would

⁶ John IV, 6; Ps. XVIII, 6; Canticles I, 3; James V, 7; Isaias IX, 3; 1 Peter I, 6; Ps. CXXV, 7; 1 Peter I, 8; John XVI, 20-22.

like to be with beloved Otha and beloved Henry. O Diana, both of them are better off than thou and I. They are in glory, we in misery; to them the victory, to us the battle; they are in the Fatherland, we in exile. However, in case perchance they brought with them some venial sins, let us pray that they may be more quickly freed and crowned.

I am quite strong in body, and I trust that Christ will sustain my spirit and conserve us in His Spirit. Amen.

Brother Conrad who was with us at Bologna greets you and begs thee to pray for him.

25. (*ms. no. LII--Aron, Annex C.*)

Early in 1228.

Fortunately for us the inquiries of the Nun at Trier called forth a second letter with full details of the last moments of Friar Henry. Jordan's emotion has now subsided ; the imagery in this letter is more beautiful and less artificial. Much of it is taken from the Canticle of Canticles with the proper interpretation of which religious, and even lay people of that time, were quite familiar and hence untroubled by quotations which moderns would shy at making.

To the Virgin much beloved in Christ, to the "bundle of myrrh that abides between the breasts of my heart," although it dwells in the "storehouse of the Glorious Virgin,"¹² I mean Mary--to the bundle of myrrh not only because it has already been placed in the storehouse, but even more because it is being ground in the mill by temptations, cooked in the oven by fervent meditations on Christ, placed on the table as the hot food of the proposition, and renewed on the Sabbath by delightful contemplation of Christ--(I wish that she may obtain Him Whom she desires, and that she may fully possess Him so desired.

Long is this greeting from me to thee, dearest Sister (or if you will not disdain it, I shall call you daughter, or more truly still, sister and daughter), but however long it is, it is not able to express an affection that is not little. What therefore shall I say about the very great love which I often feel for you in Jesus, our Mediator, Who is "the mediator not only of men lov-

¹ Canticle I, 12. When referred to man, the "breasts" signify love of God and love of man. By this expression Blessed Jordan intimates that he has for his spiritual daughters a special love, but still a love with God in view.

² A play on the name of her convent--Horreum, storehouse, which was dedicated to our Lady.

ing each other in Christ" but between God and men, "Who made both one." He made them one so that God would be man and man God, that man would love God in man and man in God. Lovable and always to be loved is this love in which He embraces not the angels but the sons of Abraham. "Let us love each other"; let us love in Him and through Him and for Him. Let us run in love for each other through this same Jesus, Who is the Way since He is the Leader, Who is the Truth that we may come to Him, Who is the Life since He gives it, Who lives and reigns in this life and in the kingdom of glory.³

Love itself would teach, nay, force me to write many more things to you concerning love, were it not that "our beloved has passed and gone away" and his flower withered, were it not that our vine no longer gives forth its sweet perfume but the smell of corruption. Indeed the voice of the turtle dove is no longer heard in our land. Arise and make haste with me, mourn the flower that withered and the "turtle dove that no longer sings." Of whom am I speaking if not of Henry, thy Henry, nay mine; thine will I call him and mine; truly both mine and thine I say, but yet more rightly (the Henry) of all (men) because "he made himself all things to all that he might gain all to Christ."

To the lily and the rose among the flowers will he be compared, and not unfittingly for he shone with the lily of innocence. To this I testify and I know that "my testimony is true," for when I, although unworthy,

³ Levit. XXIV, 8; I Tim. II, 5; Ephes. II, 14; I John IV, 7; Canon of the Mass-Before the Pater Noster; John XIV, 6.

culled the last flowers in the garden of his heart; I found immaculate that chastity of soul and body of which he was most careful in early youth and which he preserved incorrupt to his dying day. Nor less flourishing did I find the rose of his charity. What a beautiful aroma this twofold virtue gave forth is known not only to me, but to the whole Province which, in the wake of the perfume of his virtue, ran on tightly girded to win the prize (of heaven).

Weep therefore with me, that I may fittingly mourn him for whom all Cologne, yea even all Germany lamented; but weep not "as those who have no hope." I confess to thee that never before, I think, did I shed such abundant tears over the death of anyone. Before his death, at his death, and after his death I wept, and it would have pleased me to weep more because they were not tears, I say, of desolation that I shed but of consolation; tears, not of one bewailing and lamenting a dead person, but of one praying and glowing with devotion for the living God, as often happens to the devout when the Church commemorates the birthday (i.e. day of death) of her saintly Patrons.⁴

It was on the feast of St. Severin, Archbishop of Cologne, his true birthday, when (Henry), departing from this life, died indeed to the world, but was born to God, to Christ. During the very night of the tenth day before the Kalends of November (23-24 Oct.), just after the bell had sounded for Matins, just before going to Choir, I went to see him. Seeing him in great pain and about to enter into his agony, I asked him

⁴ Canticle II, 11-reference to Friar Henry; Canticle II, 10-12; I Cor. IX, 22; John XIX, 35; I Thess. IV, 12.

if he wanted to be anointed. Since he answered that he desired it ardently, we granted his desire before we began Matins. He seemed to give himself the anointings rather than to receive them, so devoutly did he himself say the prayers.

After the anointing we entered Choir for Matins and said the nine lessons in honor of St. Severin, Patron of Cologne. When I noticed how they all applied to one already on the way to heaven, in my heart I applied them and the chant also to Henry. Then the roaring of a flood of tears overwhelmed me; more and more they flowed, warm and sweet. Afterwards on going back to him, I found him ardently talking with God and of God, singing and inciting himself and others to a desire for heaven, vehemently detesting this place of exile, with these words consoling the brothers who stood by: "Brothers, enlarged is my heart for you." At these words "he rejoiced in spirit" singing and often repeating with exultation this invocation: "Pray, O Virgin, that we may be made worthy of the Bread of Heaven." Then to them already shining as lights in the world and stars in' the firmament he said: "You, has God chosen to be His own possession."

These words and many others like to them did he speak, desiring only death for himself and exhorting us to lead good lives. When at last that blessed soul, prepared for death, was being called by God and preserved from the enemy who lies in wait for the heel of all men, he uttered that saying of Jacob: "If the Lord shall be with me in this way by which I walk, and will securely lead me and give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, He will be my Lord God and the Cross of

Christ will be for a title." Then, after a few words, he said: "The prince of the world cometh, and in me he hath not anything."

After saying these and many other things worthy of memory, he began to enter into his agony, and we to commend his soul to God, to groan and weep. Sobs broke into our prayers; at times silence interrupted them. What lamentations, what tears, where a father than whom none was better was leaving such beloved sons, and sons were losing a father. And I, his father (in a way), was losing a son so necessary to me, a son whom without sorrow I bore, but was losing not without agony. It is not away, however, that I have sent him, but on ahead; for he, though still young yet full of days, did not die but "slept in the Lord."

This consoles me more than his absence makes me desolate. Do thou also console thyself in this way. Thou has near Christ a faithful messenger and powerful intercessor. Do thou pray to the Lord for him so that, if perchance in need, he may be purified the more quickly, and purified, pray for thee before God.

Recommend him to the others. Pray also for me as I am wont frequently to pray for thee.

Farewell in Jesus Christ. ⁵

⁵ 2 Cor. VI, 11; Luke I, 47; Ps. CXXXIV, 4; Gen. III, 15; Gen XXVIII, 20; John XIV, 30; Acts VII, 59.

26. (*ms. no. LV.*)

1228-1236.

We place this letter here because the Nun addressed is very probably the Nun of Trier to whom Blessed Jordan wrote concerning the death of Henry of Cologne.

It begins with a very humble expression of his inability to return love for love whether that of his friends or that of God. Blessed Jordan even refuses to take credit for the wonderful growth in the spiritual life which his friend ascribes to his influence. He closes with words of encouragement, similar to those already written to Diana, which should give comfort to all who must pass their lives in spiritual aridity and desolation.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to the chosen spouse of Jesus Christ:--the salvation of our God and may. He say to thy soul: "Thy salvation am I."

The love by which thou dost strongly and truly embrace me according to God in Christ suggests nothing to thee about me except that I too love thee. And this indeed I do; otherwise I would not be an imitator of Him who said: "I love them that love me." Even "the heathen and the publican do this." I would be worse than they if I did not love thee. But I know that I am more loved by thee than thou art by me, I am sorry thus to cheat thy love. I do thee injury. Thou hast long ago thrown the seed of thy love in my heart, a sterile ground, and thou dost not reap fruit from what thou hast sown. Thou hast sown much and reaped little. Less is the love thou reapest than that which thou hast scattered in great heaps upon me. But bear it patiently. I inflict this injury not on thee alone but on thy Spouse, Christ whose Father, "the husbandman," has long awaited from me the "precious fruit of His precious seed." "Thus has God loved me that He gave

His Only begotten Son for me." O what true love, what good seed I have received! But where, I ask, is the fruit? Where is even a little return for such love? Ah, O Lord, thou who art also the Father, where is my love for Thee? O cursed land of mine that "brings forth thorns and thistles." That, I think, if thou dost attend, suffices for the handmaiden; She is made "like unto her Lord."¹

I rejoice to be loved by thee, but it takes away the joy to know that thou art less loved by me. Thou lovest me just because thou thinkest thou hast received from me the word of salvation and the gift of thy conversion. But I think that before we met, thou hadst already "conceived in the womb (of thy heart the word of salvation) through the Holy Ghost." And therefore, the more gratuitously thou lovest me, the more abundant is the confidence thou dost place in me by wishing to depend upon my counsel. May the "angel of great counsel" place in us His gift of counsel and good maxims.

I know thou desirest "to go forth out of this land and from thy kindred." I do not dare to give thee this counsel at present; nor needest thou count thyself among those living on the earth, those to whom the devil came down, to whom the cry, "woe," must be given. He did not come down to thee, but rather thou didst "ascend on high" to Christ, "to adhere to whom is good for thee," for "thy conversation is in heaven." But if it does not seem so to thee, consider thyself "a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth" for the love of God, and all the more a pilgrim when thy

¹ Ps. XXXIV, 3; Prov. VIII, 17; Mt. V, 46; John XV, 1; James V, 7; John III, 16; Gen. III, 18; Mt. X, 25.

friends and acquaintances are in thy sight. The day will come when thou wilt no longer be a pilgrim on the earth, but wilt rejoice with the angels in the heavens, joyful and exulting in the choir of virgins who sing the "new hymn that no other can sing," where thou wilt stand without blemish before the throne of God, "following the Immaculate Lamb withersoever He goeth."² Then wilt thou see in all His glory Him "upon whom the angels desire to look," whose beauty the sun and the moon admire; then will He adorn thee with verdant and shining gems. Then thou with Job wilt also forget thy misery, and no longer will the former things that passed away be remembered because "God will wipe away every tear from thine eyes. Why therefore be eaten up with bitterness? "Hast thou not a counsellor"? What doth thy counsellor say? Listen to Him, "And the daughter of Sion said: the Lord hath forsaken me, He hath forgotten me. But can a mother forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee." "Behold I have engraven thee in my hands." This, through Isaias, said He who does not lie. If therefore, at times, He leaves thee for a little while, "again a little while and thou wilt see Him." But this little while seems long to thee? Well, "if He tarry" await Him, for "coming He will come and will not delay." He Himself will console thee, He who consoles the humble, Jesus Christ who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen. ³

² Mt. I, 18; Is. IX, 6; Gen. XII, 1; Apoc. XII, 12; Ps. LXXII, 28; Phil. III, 20; Ps. XXXVIII, 13; Apoc. XIV, 3-5.

³ I Pet. I, 12; Job. XI, 16; Apoc. XXI, 4; Micheas IV, 9; (Isaias XLIX, 14-15) John XVI, 17; Mt. XXV, 5; Heb. X, 37.

27. (*ms. no. LIV.*)

1225-1236.

This letter was written to the Nun at Trier; it is in Blessed Jordan's best style.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter in the Convent of Oeren, beloved in Christ:--may she follow the Lamb without blemish whithersoever He goeth..

From the day on which thou didst set thy heart on seeking to give up perfectly not only thy relatives and thy goods but also thyself, thou hast been very lovable to God. Stand therefore, dearest, as a column immovable in the fear of God and the observance of thy Order. Exercise thyself unto piety which is worship of God. "Piety is useful to all things," saith the Apostle. Keep as far away as thou canst from useless conversations and visits. Unite thyself to God by the assiduous familiarity of prayer. May thy beloved Spouse Jesus, the Countenance of the beloved, "the chosen among thousands," be lovable to thee. "Thy beloved is white and ruddy" Whom "rose-blossoms and the lilies of the valley surround," that is the choirs of martyrs and virgins. He Himself is a virgin and martyr. Mayest thou be pleasing to Him. To Him also assiduously commend me a sinner, as I trust thou dost. Farewell.¹

¹ Apoc. XIV, 4; I Tim. IV, 8; Cant. V, 10; Cant. V, 10; Cant. II, 1.

28. (*ms. no. XXXIX-- Aron 24.*) Paris-Just before
or after Christmas-1227.

As new avenues for apostolic work opened up for the Order there was an ever increasing need for holy and learned vocations. Since all the prayers, acts of virtue and mortification that could be obtained were needed to win these vocations, Blessed Jordan wrote to Diana asking that she and her Sisters help. He advises her as to the best, most practical and persevering method of giving that assistance, warning her *again* that a limit must be set to corporal mortification but not to the growth of the interior virtues. He might have added that "saying prayers" was inferior to praying, that is, the constant, earnest striving of the mind and *will* after union with God.

To his dearest daughter in Christ, Sister Diana, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greeting and an abundance of the embraces of Jesus Christ.

Because I am not permitted, my beloved, as often as thou dost wish and I would like, to see thee with the eyes of the body and to be consoled together with thee, yet the desire of my heart is relieved a little and soothed whenever I can visit thee by letter and write thee concerning my health and work. And I would also like to know more frequently how thou art, because thy progress in the Lord and that of thy Sisters is a joy for me.

I might have written thee some time ago were it not for the fact that the letter could not have been sent for lack of a messenger. Know now, however, that I arrived safely at our Convent in Paris fifteen days before Christmas after a journey that the "God of our salvation" made prosperous. There I am still dwelling, preaching, and extolling the wonted mercy of God. In behalf of this work I wish thee and the Sisters who are with thee to be assiduous and solicitous in prayer, in

order that God may hear the prayers of His poor, and benignly increase our numbers by kindly and efficaciously touching the hearts of the Parisian scholars.

My messenger is certainly in haste to leave. God willing, I may be able to write you at greater length some other time.

For the present I want only to admonish thee, as I have often exhorted thee at other times, to take first of all prudent care of thyself, lest from fatigue of mind or weakness of body thou takest away from thy body the power of doing good, from thy mind affection, from thy neighbor good example, from God honor, and thou fall a prey to all the other evils that are accustomed to follow upon indiscretion. Thou too wilt experience this sometime. I wish thee also to be most cautious and provident with regard to the other Sisters. As I have often advised thee, corporal penances are good for little, and in the use of vigils, abstinences and tears, moderation is easily overrun. Virtues on the other hand, such as "humility and patience, benignity and obedience, charity and modesty" can never grow beyond bounds.

It is in these virtues, therefore, that I exhort thee "to abound more and more" ; and I trust in the Lord that in all of them thou dost abound. Nothing, however, in this life is so perfect but that it can be made more and more perfect until we happily come thither where deficiency has no place, where each one is so filled with perfection that he has need of nothing more, where every sufficiency will be from God, yea, where in all fullness is God, Who will be all in all, glorious and praiseworthy forever. Amen. ¹

¹ Ps. LXXVII, 20; Col. III, 12; I Thess. IV, 1; I Cor. XV, 28; Dan. III, 56.

29. (*ms. no. XII Aron 25.*)

1223-1236.

This letter with its humble confession of neglect of prayer was probably written during the days of strenuous activity demanded by the celebration of the Most General Chapter in May, 1228. Among other affairs settled at that time were points of liturgy and the creation of four new Provinces: Dacia, Poland, Greece, and the Holy Land.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his beloved or rather most dear daughter in Christ, Sister Diana at Bologna:--eternal salvation in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Dearest, although I must hasten in writing to thee, yet I will try to write thee at least a little something that may be able to give thee some joy. For thou art so imprinted on the marrow of my heart that not only am I not able to forget thee, but rather I bring thee to mind the more often, the more I think how sincerely thou lovest me from the very depths of thy heart. Thy love, indeed, which thou hast for me, arouses very ardently my charity for thee and moves my heart very vehemently. It is necessary to make this letter short, but may that Supreme Consoler and Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, take possession of and console thy heart; may He make us companions in that celestial Jerusalem without end, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who above all is blessed forever, Amen.

Farewell dearest and pray for me frequently and faithfully to the Lord, because my many defects put me in need of it. I pray but rarely and therefore beg thy Sisters also to supply for my defect in this point.

30. (*ms. no. XXV. Aron 26.*)

Milan, 1229?

In comparison with the letters written at the death of Diana's brother and sister, this letter seems cold and unsympathetic. Did Jordan think Diana should have progressed far enough to be above such trials, or was his coldness due to memories of a certain tyrannical and unfriendly disposition on the part of the father?

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his most dear daughter in Christ, Diana: eternal salvation.

Those who survive and remain alive grieve and are saddened over the death of their friends who die before them. But those who die before the others, just because they are dead, do not grieve over the death of those who die after them. Therefore, dearest, since thou hast long preceded thy father in death (for thou hast long been dead, if "thy life has been hidden with Christ in glory" while he, as I heard at Milan, has just died), it is fitting for thee not to grieve over his death. But if thou dost grieve thou must consider thyself not completely dead.¹

This I do not say as if his death did not affect me; it does affect me, but especially on thy account. Thou mayest however admire the clemency of God who takes from thee parents by nature, who are mortal, in order to give Himself to thee as a spiritual and undying friend. See how He takes away what thou canst not hold in order to give thee the Sempiternal Whom thou wilt not lose in eternity. Amen.

This I write from Milan; it is short for the messenger cannot wait. Farewell and greet all thy Sisters. I will see you soon, if it please God.

¹ Col. III, 3.

31. (*ms. no. I. Aron 27.*)

June or July, 1229.

Blessed Jordan is much pleased over the spiritual progress of the Sisters at Bologna, especially over their endurance of extreme poverty. Later the Pope came to their aid by assigning to them the revenue of an ancient Benedictine Monastery of St. Adalbert that stood near Padua. Cfr. Chapter VIII.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughters in Christ, most dear, the Sisters of St. Agnes:--- may they seek and find Christ Jesus.

It is a consolation for my heart to keep you in mind, dearest daughters, since I see you so united in soul and so joyful of heart, walking with the Lord and seeking nothing but Him Who alone can satisfy your desires, and without Whom, whatever you might possess would certainly be not abundance but bitter want. And, behold, you will possess Him more and more completely in proportion as you give yourselves more wholeheartedly to Him, as you turn both your bodies and your souls more carefully from this wicked world, as you are the more determined that He alone, your Spouse, Who alone wholly redeemed you, will wholly possess you, and that you may be, as the Apostle says, holy both in body and in spirit. And indeed it is most certain that the more generously we give ourselves to God, the more liberally will He communicate Himself to us.

That is why-seeing you are in spirit ready for any sacrifice, that you have not only given up out of love for Jesus Christ, the Spouse of your souls, everything that you could give up for Him, but that you strive faithfully, day by day, (to learn) how you can more and more annihilate yourselves and "cast your care

upon the Lord," clinging solely to the love of your Redeemer, "to adhere to Whom is good"--that is why, seeing this in you not without joy of heart, I give thanks to Him Who called you unto the grace in which you stand, and Who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish according to His good will.¹

Do see to it, most dear (Sisters), that you "receive not this grace in vain." This good, so singular, the perfect good, which you have received from Him, did not take its rise from you but "came from above, coming down from the Father of lights," "Who bath shone in your hearts" by grace, calling you into His most marvellous light. Therefore "while you have the light, walk in the light in order that darkness overtake you not." Walk, I say, in the light of your God.

He who walks proceeds with moderation; he neither lags out of negligence nor runs headlong in excitement and indiscreet haste. This lack of discretion of which I now speak, is indeed the one evil I have most reason to fear finding among you, for there are apt to be in your community some who are indiscreet, who run immoderately on the way of perfection by shedding an overabundance of tears, by attempting too many vigils, unusual abstinences, or any sort of penance too severe for your feeble bodies. You can not stand as much as you think, and it is so easy for any one of you to think herself still robust of body even when her strength is almost exhausted. As you know, I have often warned you of this danger because I always fear it may exist among you, and I am not backward about writing the same admonition to you because it is nec-

¹ I Cor. VII, 34; Ps. LIV, 23; Ps. LXXII, 28; Phil. II, 13.

essary for your good. Do you therefore be cautious in this matter.

Finally, your prayers for the students at Padua have been heard for a good twenty of them, all upright and virtuous, have since entered the Order. Therefore, just as you besought the Lord, be not solicitous in giving Him many thanks, without however discontinuing your petitions.

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Brother Gerard, the companion of our journey, greets you in Jesus Christ.²

² 2 Cor. VI, 1; James I, 17; 2 Cor. IV, 6; I Pet. II, 9; John XII, 35; Rom. XVI, 20.

32. (*ms. no. XIV. Aron 28.*)

Modena-July, 1229.

In this letter Blessed Jordan gives expression to his joy over the Novices he has won to the Order and sorrow over his continual separation from his friends.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter most dear in Jesus Christ, Sister Diana at Bologna:-- greetings and may she delight in the embraces of Jesus Christ!

I know that thou art anxious about me just as I am anxious in Christ about thee. That is why I want to tell thee briefly about my affairs.

While I was at Vercelli the Lord gave us many men, very upright and eminent in the sciences: three distinguished Germans who were in the city, four from Provence who are of the highest quality, and three or four virtuous Lombards, all of whom entered the Order within a short time. Give thanks to God with thy Sisters for He has never, even for an instant, forgotten to show us mercy.

For the rest, by the grace of God I am in good health. As for you, grieve not that thou canst not have me always present in body, for my spirit is always united to thee in the bonds of a most sincere love. Not that I wonder however at thy grieving over my absence, for I also can not keep myself from grieving over thy absence. I console myself by the fact that this separation will not last forever. Soon it will end; soon we will see each other without end before the Son of God, Jesus Christ, "Who is blessed forever." Amen.¹

Greet the Prioress and all the Sisters, my most dear daughters, especially the Novice, Galiana.² Pray for me.

¹ 2 Cor. XI, 31.

² Galiana is mentioned later but no longer spoken of as a novice. There is nothing to tell us who she was.

33. (*ms. no. XLVIII Aron 29.*) Genoa-Aug. or Sept., 1229.

The preaching of the Friars effected a real reformation of morals among the people. The women especially responded to the call: "do penance and be converted." Some led a semi-religious life in the world ; others grouped themselves in associations like that to which St. Catherine of Sienna belonged, and were called Beguines. In June, 1227, an Order of Penitents of St. Mary Magdalen was founded in Germany. Although closely attached to the Order, they did not receive the Dominican Rule until 1232.

Partly because the care of these growing communities of women taxed the forces of the Friars and partly because some of the Brethren, carried away by zeal, imprudently granted admission into these communities to young girls and fallen women before their vocation had been sufficiently tried, the Most General Chapter held at Paris in 1228 made a decree forbidding the Brethren on their own initiative to give the religious habit to women or to admit them to profession. As Blessed Jordan notes in the following two letters, the decree had nothing to do with established convents of Dominican Sisters, but was restricted absolutely to the cases brought before the chapter.

According to Miss Aron the General Chapter held at Bologna gave some directions regarding the extension of the feminine branch of the Third Order. It is evident however from Blessed Jordan's letters that there was nothing in either decree to trouble the minds of Sisters such as Diana and her companions who belonged to communities already established. Conflict arose when it came time to profess some novices at St. Agnes. To profess them was the duty of Stephen, Prior Provincial of Lombardy; he refused, giving as his reason the decrees of 1228-1229. In her consternation Diana wrote to Blessed Jordan who in answer explained the decree and showed that her fears were groundless. He added that the profession of the Sisters may be made in the hands of the Prioress, in case the Provincial or Conventual Prior should prove stubborn.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his most loving daughter in Christ, Sister Diana:--greetings and the grace of her Spouse.

The trouble which, as I understand from your letter, you feel over a certain statute in our constitutions seems to me to be a vain fear due to an indiscreet interpretation. Neither I nor the Definitors ever considered that the Sisters of our Order were included under that statute; no word was ever said to that effect, nor was that our intention. This I know for certain because I was always present at all the Chapters and the meetings of the Definitors, and I know the reasons for any statute whatsoever that we have made up to the present. The reason we made that statute had nothing to do with our Sisters but concerned women outside the Order whom, whenever they wished to enter upon a new life, our Brothers in the different provinces were accustomed to admit too easily to the ceremony of the tonsure, the reception of the habit, or to profession of the vow of chastity. Never then speak of this article with anyone, but rest secure that nothing in this statute can cause you injury. Indiscreetly did he act who troubled thee with this doubt for he brought fear upon thee in matters where there was nothing to fear.

Finally, my dearest, be confident and joyous at all times. Whatever thou mayest lack of my presence which thou canst not have, gain from the presence of a better friend, thy Spouse Jesus Christ; Him canst thou have present in spirit and in truth more frequently than me, and He will speak to thee more sweetly and to greater profit than Jordan. If He seems at times to turn His countenance from thee and to be a stranger

to thee, regard this as a grace and not as a sign of wrath. He is our bond by which my spirit is linked to thine; in Him no matter where I go I have thee "present to me always without intermission" ; in Him thy Spouse, the Son of God Jesus Christ, to Whom is honor and power for ever Amen. Fare well in the Lord and greet my daughters. On this very day on which I am writing to thee, I am going to leave Genoa, in good health. ¹

Those Sisters who are to make their profession may make it with all security in my name either to the Prioress, to the Conventual Prior, or the Provincial Prior. It will be as pleasing to me as if they made their profession in my hands, nor need they ever have any doubt as to its validity.

¹ John IV, 23; 2 Timothy I, 3 ; Apoc. VII, 12.

34. (*ms. no. XLIX. Aron, Annex E.*) Genoa, Aug. -Sept., 1229.

This letter was written on the same day as the previous one, and was addressed to Stephen, Provincial of Lombardy, who had caused so much anxiety to Blessed Diana by his interpretation of the statute of 1229. Blessed Jordan gives him in full detail the occasion and purpose of the statute. He also vindicates his right to dispense from certain points of the Rule. The tone of the first part of the letter is rather severe, but Blessed Jordan was not a man to harbor resentful feelings. He therefore cordially adds to his letter the happy news of his success at Vercelli.

Brother Jordan the unprofitable servant of the Order of Preachers to his beloved son in Christ, Brother Stephen, Provincial Prior of Lombardy:--eternal salvation.

(I am writing to you) because I see that your conscience is at present alarmed over a mere rustling of leaves. You believe that the article of the Constitution forbidding the Brethren to admit women to the tonsure, the reception of the habit, or to profession, concerns the Sisters of St. Agnes. In this you gave credit to the spirit of those who in this case are not of God, and you have created for yourself a useless difficulty.

Never did such a thought enter into the minds of the Definitors. They had in mind only those cases in which certain brothers of the Province of Germany, and other Provinces too, were accustomed, while they went about preaching, to admit too easily to the tonsure, the reception of the habit, or to profession, either harlots wishing to turn to a life of penance, or young girls asking to make a vow of continence. Since I know

fully the acts, decrees, and intentions of the Definitors at all the chapters, I know that when the aforesaid decree was made there was no word or thought of the Sisters of our Order. Such a law would cut them off almost completely from us. Supposing that we had wished to make such a law, could we have done so? Not at all, for we would have been acting against the

will of the Pope who has charged us to have the same care for them as for the other Brethren of the Order. Therefore let no doubt on this point any longer rise among you, nor is it expedient to make mention of it to others and thereby make uncertain what may be held as clearly and certainly defined.

On the other points of the Rule, moreover, any doubt as to my power of dispensation in laws pertaining to the Order seems to me to entail the belief that I have not been given charge of the Order. There is nothing in the Constitutions, no matter how grave, from which I may not dispense according as the circumstances of time, place, and person make it seem necessary to me. I make exception only for three articles which in the last chapter at Paris were so firmly laid down as to admit neither of revocation nor of dispensation, articles which even then we wished to have confirmed by the Roman Curia. In all the other things I do not doubt but that I am able to dispense, for instance: to permit travelling on horseback, the carrying of money on a journey, or to grant other permissions, similar or not, whether they be great or small. Otherwise how could I with a good conscience have dared to presume a right that I had not at all received? By the grace of God, I am not yet conscious of anything in this respect but that

I could in perfect security dispense in all matters for which I have thus far given dispensations. Do you therefore, dear Brother, put away all scruples of conscience in this affair; it will teach you on the other hand, more convincingly than ever, that it is not prudent to change your mind every time you hear a new opinion put forward. Reassure fully also the Sisters at St. Agnes. They may indeed continue to live in peace in the Name of the Lord, for nothing in this article can be hurtful to them.

In good health I am writing to you from Genoa, but I am about to go to Montpellier by boat. I think I have already written to the Prior at Bologna of the harvest the Lord gave us at Vercelli. However, at your request I shall retell it to you.

At first I found the scholars at Vercelli very hard of heart. In fact I felt as one dismissed and was about to leave when suddenly the Hand of God, Who is always good to us, brought us first of all Master Walter of Germany, a Regent in logic and most skilled in his art, ranking among the best teachers at Paris. There followed him two of the best Bachelors he had, the one from Provence, the other a Lombard, both prepared, if I wished it, to teach. Then a good student of canon law followed, a German, a Canon of Spire who was rector of the German students at Vercelli. Then came a very good and upright German Master, Godescalcus by name, a Canon of Utrecht. He was followed by two talented men of Provence, one of whom taught as Master in canon law, the other in civil law. One would think we had taken these as our choice out of all the scholars. Many others of great merit fol-

lowed so that in a very short time twelve or thirteen entered the Order. Most of these I brought with me to Genoa, whence two of them went at once to Montpellier. The others, five of whom are Lombards, will stay for a time at Genoa. For all of these favors we must give thanks to God who has "blessed us and our sons so continuously. " ¹

Farewell in the Lord and pray for me. Greet the Brothers and all our friends, asking them to pray for me. Among the novices who will remain at Genoa there is one from Cremona of good reputation, well versed in logic, of noble birth it is said, and of good promise; his name is Peregrinus. After he has remained here for a time you may transfer him to whatever convent of the Province that you know has the best course of studies.

¹ I John IV, 1; Ps. CXIII, 14.

35. (*ms. no. X-Aron 30.*) Convent of St. James, Paris.
After Oct. 9, 1229.

In this letter Blessed Jordan speaks of the journey he was on the point of making as he wrote the preceding letters. It was a long journey, made joyful by the establishment of new convents but also saddened at the sight of ruins left by recent wars. Moreover, Frederick II celebrated his return from the Crusade by renewing his war against the Pope. It was a time to give thanks, and to pile up petitions and penances before God.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughters in Jesus Christ most dear, the Sisters of St. Agnes:-- greetings and may they embrace Jesus Whom they follow.

Because I realize that your hearts are frequently anxious about me, know that aided by your prayers I made a prosperous journey with the help of the Lord. After leaving Lombardy, I crossed Provence, Auvergne, Burgundy, and France, and reached Paris in good health, where I am writing this letter to you after the feast of St. Denis. Everywhere I found the brethren, by the grace of God, growing in numbers and advancing in knowledge and virtue, for which I thank God the Dispenser of all good gifts.

But I beseech you, my most dear daughters, by your devout prayers to urge God, the Author of Peace, to unite His holy Church by that peace of His, for everywhere arises wars and seditions that place many souls in danger of eternal damnation. Moreover, now that you know this, beloved, burn more and more with love for your Spouse Who has rescued you from the dissipation of this world and made you live in His peace,

and this to such a degree that, even though something of the anguish and tribulation outside may effect you, your peace should rather be increased thereby than diminished, since you are ready to bear all things. Indeed no matter what happens to you, whether of good or of bad fortune, you should strive to bear it with equanimity and to fix your mind on the Lord by whose perpetual help you can look on prosperity with disdain and on adversity without fear. I hope that you "abound in all good things in the Lord," and may He from Whose bounty you received these things deign to conserve His gifts in you and make them grow more and more-He, your Spouse, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and power forever. Amen.¹

Farewell, my beloved in the Lord, and pray for me.

I, Brother Gerard, greet you devotedly, and recommend myself to your prayers.

¹ 2 Cor. VIII, 7; Apoc. I, 6.

36. (*ms. no XLI, Aron 31.*) Christmas, 1223-1236.

This is a Christmas message. The theme of the letter was evidently suggested by St. Bernard's *First Sermon on the Vigil of the Nativity* beginning thus: "Jesus Christus Filius Dei nascetur in Bethlehem Judae. O breve verbum de verbo abbreviato ; sed celesti suavitate refertum."

Miss Aron calls this letter a "short and precious note, a little poem, a sort of Petrarchan sonnet in Latin prose."

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter in Christ most dear, Sister Diana, in the convent of St. Agnes at Bologna:--may she be filled with the gifts of celestial charity.

I have not now the leisure to write, as I would prefer, a letter long enough for thy love. Yet I write and send thee the Word Abbreviated, made little in the Crib, the Word made flesh for us, the Word of salvation and grace, the Word of sweetness and glory, the good and gentle Word, Jesus Christ and "Him crucified," exalted on the Cross, lifted up to the right hand of the Father. To Him and by Him lift up thy soul, and may He be thy rest without end. This Word read in thy heart, revolve in thy mind, and let It become sweet as honey in thy mouth. Think over and meditate upon this Word; may It remain and dwell always with thee.¹

There is another word, short and brief, that namely which thy heart and affection will speak unto themselves and give satisfaction to thy love for me. May this word also be with thee and likewise remain with thee always.

Farewell and pray for me.

¹ John I, 14; 1 Cor. II, 2.

37. (*ms. no. XVI. Aron 32.*) Oxford, January, 1230.

In February 1229 a great conflict occurred in Paris between the *city* and the students of the University. Most of the students and professors left for other cities, many going to Oxford at the request of the King of England. Blessed Jordan knew of this and seized upon it as a favorable time for finding recruits among the students at Oxford and of making a visitation of the English Province founded in 1221. Nicholis Trivet, O.P., says that the first Provincial Chapter of England was held in 1230.

At this time, so full of hope for the English Province, Blessed Jordan turns to his spiritual daughters for prayers and gives at the same time a fuller exposition of his theory of the spiritual life.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his most dear daughters in Christ, the Sister of St. Agnes at Bologna:-- greetings, and may they holdfast to the Spouse they follow.

Short the way, little the labor, but long the rest into which, my daughters of all the most dear, we hasten to enter. Therefore we ought to rejoice and exult while running along the way that we have to go; we ought to make the justifications of the Lord the theme of our song, even though "being in the body, we are absent from the Lord."

I am writing thus to you in order that if anyone of you perchance feels rising in her spirit the fire of tribulation, she may know how to bear it with patience and even with joy. It is by tribulations that "we store' up treasures in heaven," for when the day will come that "will turn sorrow into joy," it is according to the multitude of our griefs here below that consolations will be measured out to the soul up above. Moreover by drink

ing of the bitter chalice of tribulation the soul becomes more pure, it grows more cautious in face of the daily and manifold tricks of Satan, and above all it is rewarded more amply with divine consolations. Good therefore and desirable is the bitterness of tribulation "which works patience," searches the soul, gives understanding (of the things of God) to the afflicted, causes an increase of spiritual solace, and stores up abundant rewards of heavenly joy for the future life. The words of the Lord to the afflicted are these: "Rejoice in that day and exult, for behold your reward is great in heaven."¹

By these ways therefore, my beloved daughters, while out of love for your Spouse you are trampling under foot the sweet things of this world and overcoming the hard and rough things in life by a free and patient endurance of them, be careful to keep to the center of your path and beware above all not to try too much; let not the word of the Wise Man be forgotten by you, "he that is hasty with his feet shall stumble." Many times have I admonished you about this, both by word when present and by letter when absent, that you should carefully avoid excessive and indiscreet mortifications. Hence if anyone, after so often receiving this admonition, shall still act imprudently in this point, she is guilty of all the greater negligence.

However, I hope that by the grace of Jesus Christ you walk holily in all things, persistent in prayer, devoted to meditation, prompt in obedience, careful in work, slow to speak, continually silent, "putting on

¹ Ps. XVIII, 6; Ps. CXVIII, 54; 2 Cor. V, 6; Mt. VI, 20; 2 Cor. IV, 17; John XVI, 20; Rom. V, 3; Mt. V, 12.

the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, patience, modesty and charity." And I have confidence enough in you to think that I need not delay long in urging you to those virtues, but rather that I ought to give thanks to my God always for you because of the divine graces that have been given to you in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, your Spouse "to whom is honor and glory, virtue and power forever. Amen.

Fare you well always in Christ Jesus. In good health I am writing to you from England before the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. Pray for me without ceasing to the Lord both that He may always open out His Hand generously to us, and that He may send forth His Words from our lips unto His honor, the profit of the Church, and the increase of the Order. The Lord has given us great hopes of making a good catch at the University of Oxford where I now am. Ask the Lord frequently that He may fulfill His will in those especially whom we hope to win over, but in the others also.²

Brother Gerard greets you and earnestly commends himself to your prayers.

² Prov. XIX, 2; Col. III, 12; I Cor. I, 4; Apoc. VII, 12; Acts XII, 5.

38. (*ms. no. XI.-Aron 33.*)

Beginning of
1231 or 1233.

Blessed Jordan is about to leave Paris for Bologna, but whether it is in the year of 1231 or 1233 (Blessed Jordan's last visit to Bologna) is uncertain. The tone of this letter is mystical rather than ascetical ; it deals with the ways and means of preparing for and fostering that intimate union between the soul and Christ which is the center of the mystical life as such. Naturally the letter is filled with citations from the Canticle of Canticles, Sts. Paul and John, most of which are found in the Breviary Office of Virgins.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughters in the Son of God most dear, the Sisters of St. Agnes at Bologna:--greetings and an abundance of the delights which are in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Very dissimilar are the words spoken by the friend of the Bridegroom and those coming forth from the mouth of the Bridegroom Himself. You, dearest daughters, have heard the sweet whisperings of that Bridegroom of yours, and with joy you rejoice because of His voice; it is therefore of little account that I write to you, I who, even though I am not quite that, yet seem to be "the friend of the Bridegroom." I urge you, I who have the office of friend of the Bridegroom, I who am commissioned by Him to be your guide, I who am jealous of you with the jealousy of God, I who "have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ," I urge you, I say, to present yourselves worthy of His embraces, by adorning the nuptial chamber of your hearts in order to receive there Christ, the King, "who hath desired your beauty,"

and by spreading for Him a bed of flowers in a pure heart, "a good conscience and a faith not feigned." The flowers are the virtues. A good flower is humility, likewise patience, obedience, benignity, modesty or any other virtue; but "the best of all is charity." Freely and willingly will the Bridegroom make His abode in that heart which He finds strewn with these flowers, bearing such ornaments. Therefore, daughters most loving to me in Christ, be zealous to acquire the virtues, because this is "the godliness that is profitable to all things" while mere bodily mortification is not.¹

For, as I have often warned you and will warn you, it is very easy to go beyond proper bounds in the practice of vigils, abstinences, and tears, but virtue can never grow beyond measure. I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that "you abound in all of them," but I exhort you to abound the more. Nothing in this world is made so perfect but that it may still be perfected until we come to that place where there will be nothing imperfect, where each one of us will be so filled with perfection as to have no need of more (for no need enters there), where the most abundant sufficiency of all things will be "God Who will be glorious and praiseworthy forever and ever. Amen."²

Farewell, dearest daughters, and pray for me that God may lead me quickly and happily to you. Give generous thanks to God for the many great men and good clerics that He has given to the Order during the past year. Brother Gerard greets you and commends himself to your prayers.

¹ John III, 29; 2 Cor. XI, 2; Ps. XLIV, 12; 2 Tim. I, 5; I Cor. XIII, 13; I Tim. IV, 8.

² 2 Cor. VIII, 7; 1 Thess. IV, 1; Dan. III, 56.

39. (*ms. no. XLVI-Aron 35.*)

May-June, 1231.

The General Chapter of 1231 was held at Bologna on May eleventh. Political troubles probably caused Blessed Jordan to leave almost immediately afterwards, which meant that Blessed Diana had had but little opportunity to see and speak to him. What effect that had on her can be seen from this letter.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his dearest daughter, Diana: greetings and consolation in Christ Jesus.

Whenever I must leave thee, I do so not without a heavy heart, and moreover thou dost add to my pain, for I see thee then so inconsolable that I must grieve not only over our separation from each other but also over thy own particular desolation. But why cause thyself such agony? Am I not thine, am I not with thee? Am I not thine in labors, thine in repose, thine when present, thine when absent, thine when praying, thine when gaining merit, and thine, I hope, when enjoying the reward? What wouldst thou do if I should die? Certainly, not even in bewailing my death shouldst thou be so inconsolable. For at death thou wouldst not send me away, but on ahead to those most brilliant mansions in order that there I might pray to the Father for thee and be much more useful to thee while living with the Lord than when kept dying all the day long in this world.

Be consoled therefore-be more valiant and breathe more freely in the mercy and grace of Christ thy Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Farewell and greet the Sisters, especially the Prioress, Galiana, Juliette, Cardiana, and any others thou knowest to be our friends. Christ Jesus be with thy spirit. Amen.

40. (*ms. no. L. Aron 44.*) Padua-Christmas, 1232.

The letter gives evidence of being written from Padua around Christmas; later letters, dated around Easter 1233, continue the story of the success at Padua.

The Latin edition of *the Lives of the Brethren* contains two accounts, pp. 110 and 187-88, one of which may refer to the young man of whom Blessed Jordan speaks as being in great spiritual danger.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his most dear daughter, Diana:--greetings and joy in the Holy Spirit.

"Rejoice and exult, daughter of Sion" and one very dear to me; rejoice, thou and thy sisters, and give thanks to our Lord Jesus, for "behold your prayer has come in before His sight" ; it has ascended unto His ears. Already has He given us out of the students of Padua several that are upright and useful to the Order; He has also touched the hearts of many who still remain in the world, who must receive the powerful help of your prayers in order to break the mighty bond that holds them away from their God. One of them is in great danger, to such an extent in fact that he fears being in mortal sin. Him I commend most earnestly to you that you zealously pour forth before the Lord such prayers for him that he be not abandoned but aided and freed from all that is hurtful and adverse.

And thou, daughter, "be comforted and consoled in the Lord," and "in the Babe Who has just been born to thee" ; caress Him and make known thy needs to Him. Although He is small in body, yet He is great and su-

pereminent in liberality and in mercy, He who is blessed forever. Amen.¹

Farewell in Christ. Greet for me all thy sisters, my daughters, more especially the Prioress, Galiana, Juliette and Cardiana.

¹ Soph. III, 14; Ps. LXXXVII, 3; Eph. VI, 10; Is. IX, 6.

41. (*ms. no. V-Aron 43.*)

March-April, 1233.

Nothing is known of the daughter of Lambertina except such information as we can glean from Blessed Jordan's Letters. Her reception gave Diana considerable trouble, as will be seen later on. The postscripts to the following letters prove that Blessed Jordan had become the spiritual father to a considerable number of the pious folk of Bologna.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to Diana, his daughter most dear in Christ Jesus: greetings and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The good health I desire for myself I wish also for thee, my dearest daughter, because my heart is one with thine in the Lord. But thou art by so much the better part of me that I would rather support in myself any hardship than to suffer it to happen to thee.

And, dearest, strive always to advance, to love God, and to cling fast to Him with all thy power, for "it is good to cling fast to Him, to place in Him thy hope." Say therefore to Him: "My soul clings fast to thee." Be consoled then, for, by the grace of God, I shall soon see in body thee whom I do not cease to see in spirit.¹

Farewell, and greet the Sisters, my most dear daughters. Thy son, Gerard, lovingly greets thee and them; ask them to pray for us in the meantime. The Spirit of Jesus be with thy spirit. Amen. If thou dost judge it well to receive the daughter of Lambertina, thou hast my permission, and whatever thou wilt do about it will please me.

I greet thee, most loving Mother, I, Brother Gerard, thy unworthy son, and all my sisters most dear in Christ Jesus.

¹ Ps. LXXII, 28; Ps. LXII, 9.

Greet for me all whom I love and who love me, more especially those whom thou knowest to be more particularly my friends. Among all the cities of Lombardy, Tuscany, France, England, Provence and even almost of Germany, Bologna is, as it were, the unique and most sweet patrimony of my heart. May the grace of Jesus Christ dwell in the depths of thy heart. Amen.

42. (*ms. no. XV-Aron 45.*)

Holy Week, 1233.

This is a meditation evidently inspired by the services of Holy Week. The books of that time were written on skins of sheep or calves. The Fathers of the Middle Ages often spoke of Christ on the Cross as a skin stretched out or a book opened to be read. St. Thomas Aquinas said that the Crucifix was the book from which he gathered all his knowledge.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter in Jesus Christ most dear, Sister Diana, of St. Agnes at Bologna:--greetings and the sweet blessings of the Spirit of Wisdom.

Why should I, beloved daughter, write to thee little letters for the solace of thy heart, when thou mayest be better and more sweetly consoled by taking up and reading that book which daily thou hast before thine eyes, the Book of Life, the "Volume of the Immaculate Law converting souls."

This law, immaculate because it takes away sin, is charity; thou mayest find it written with most wonderful beauty by looking upon Jesus, thy Savior, extended on the Cross as a parchment, written upon by His bruises, painted by His Holy Blood.

Where, I ask thee, my dearest, can the lesson of charity be so well learned? Thou knowest better than anyone that no book is so love-urging. Upon it then fix all the force of thy mind, hide thyself in the "caverns of this rock"; there hide thyself from the noise of those who speak evil things. Open and turn over the pages of this book; read and thou wilt find in it what the Prophet found: "lamentations, songs, and a malediction"; a lamentation for the tribulations He Himself bore, a song over the joys He prepared for thee

by His tribulations, and a malediction for the death eternal from which He redeemed thee by His death. ¹

From His lamentations teach thyself patience and from His songs charity, for certainly He above all Who willed thee to be a sharer of such joys should be loved by thee. Furthermore, when thou findest thyself preserved from that malediction, what must follow if not a song of praise and thanksgiving?

Behold, few are my words, yet many and profound enough for a pious heart. On them I wish thee to meditate repeatedly, and to learn the science of the Saints, being taught and lead and governed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to Whom is honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.

Farewell in Christ Jesus. Greet for me those whom thou knowest I would like to greet. Brother Gerard, thy son, greets thee. Pray for us meanwhile, until we come.

¹ Ps. XVIII, 8; Cant. II, 14; Ps. LXII, 12; Ezech. II, 9.

43. (*ms. no. XXVI-Aron 34.*) Padua, April 3-10, 1233.

The bearer of this letter to Bologna was Brother Henry of Marsburg who had lately come from Palestine to be present at the approaching General Chapter (Bologna). In the Middle Ages, Palestine was called the country "Beyond the seas" or the Ultramarine, because it lay at the other end of the Mediterranean.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his most dear daughter in the Son of God, Diana:--eternal salvation.

Thy prayers and those of thy sisters have been heard by God with great profit to us for He has given us nearly thirty Novices that are approved, lettered, and noble; several of them have the degree of Master. Master James, Archdeacon of Ravenna and Provost of Bobbio, who before his entrance into the Order was offered and refused the Episcopate, the best Professor of Law in Lombardy, took the habit and likewise made his profession on Wednesday in Holy Week; with him entered a fine young Archdeacon, a scion of one of the noblest and richest families of Hungary. Likewise throughout the whole world, as is often told me, the Brethren multiply and grow both in numbers and in virtue. Behold, how true it is that the Lord restores to us a hundredfold in this life, since for one brother that perchance we left in the world, we now receive more than a hundred, and better ones at that.

But notice that when in the Gospel the Lord said that he would give hundredfold, He added, "with persecutions." Therefore we ought not altogether forget, when we desire the hundredfold, that it is also neces-

sary to suffer tribulation. In time, however, not the hundredfold but the unmeasured and even more will be given and tribulation will no longer occur, but we shall "drink of the chalice of eternal joy, pure and unmixed." In the meantime, it behooves us to wait patiently, accepting now consolation with humility, now tribulation with fortitude, consoling and comforting ourselves in the Son of God, Jesus Christ Who above all is blessed forever. Amen.'

Would that I could write to thee often, but I lack either time or a messenger. Farewell and greet for me our daughters. God granting, we can soon console each other. In the meantime, Brother Henry, Prior Provincial of the Ultramarine, will console thee and take my place.

I, Brother Gerard, thy son, greet thee.

¹ Matt. XIX, 29; Mark X, 30; Mt. XX, 22.

44. (*ms. no. LVI; Aron, Annex G.*) April 3-10,1233.

One need only read this letter to regret that we have not more of the letters of blessed Jordan to his sons in the Dominican Order. It is a beautiful letter of direction and encouragement, vibrating with the joy of the Paschal season and of the great success granted by God to his preaching and that of the brethren.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to my very dearly beloved sons in the Son of God, the Prior and the Convent at Paris: greetings and the grace to mind the things that are above and not those that are upon the earth.

I have heard, my very dearly beloved, and the hearing of it gives me joy and gladness, that you are living together in the most. perfect accord, persevering in prayer, zealous in study, growing in mutual charity and peace. Why should not my soul be filled with joy? Why should not my soul "praise the Lord for these things; why should not all that is in me bless His holy Name?"

I consider in these days of joy and solemnity how "Christ, our life and resurrection," having risen from the dead, will "die no more," and I seem to see you among "those bodies risen with Christ in witness of His Resurrection." I do not wish to flatter you; I hope that no one of you flatters himself. But surely it is permissible for all those to "rejoice and glory in the Lord," who, after having trampled under foot the ancient death of sin, realize they are "walking in newness of life"; who moreover refusing to have anything to do with that death are not like Lazarus who rose only to die again; who on the contrary strive, possessing

within themselves the source of immortal life, "to renew *day by day* and ever more and more in their souls the spirit of fervor." I trust in the Lord "Who has called us from the darkness of death unto His marvellous light" which was obtained through this resurrection in which you stand, that you keep nothing else in mind. Behold you have risen with Christ, and henceforward "judge not as children do." ¹ "Mind the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right Hand of God." ² Pray, labor, and until you shall be permitted to see Jesus in the heavenly Galilee, act in such a way that He will come to visit us now, wherever we are, by His apparitions, just as long ago He benignly consoled His Disciples at sundry times and in divers manners by appearing to them, "by many proofs, for forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God."

If there should be a Mary Magdalen among you who has already holily watered the feet of Jesus with tears in proportion to his faults, not even he will be deprived of the solace of an apparition, provided that he goes early in the morning to weep over His tomb. Nor will a Peter be kept from ever seeing Him, if now converted he bitterly weeps over his denial of Jesus. And if there are any who have learned by experience that, as long as we are in this body, we are absent from the Lord and who, in self-pity over the prolongation of their pilgrimage mourn as exiles from Jerusalem and walk sadly to the town of Emmaus: not even they will fail soon to see Jesus in some way; when the oil of piety shall be-

¹ Col. III, 2; Ps. L, 10; Rom. XII, 12; I Peter IV, 8; Ps. CII, 1; John XI, 25; Rom. VI, 9; Acts IV, 23.

² 2 Cor. X, 17; Rom. VI, 4; 2 Cor. IV, 16; Eph. IV, 23; I Pet. II, 9; I Cor. XIII, 11; Col. III, 1-2.

gin to boil up they shall cry out in great wonder: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke to us in the way?"

After all this, only one recommendation remains, my dear sons, that you always have charity one for another, for it is impossible for Jesus to appear to those who separate themselves from the community. St. Thomas was not favored with a vision of Jesus outside the group of Disciples, and art thou holier than Thomas? Therefore I declare to the man who remains sensual and does not become spiritual, who prefers his own to the common good, who walks in ways that are singular -to him I declare that he will not enjoy the presence of Jesus unless he more zealously practices the charity which does not seek the things that are its own but rather subordinates its own interests to the common good, the charity that does not tolerate being separated from the community but finds its joy in the goods common to all and loves unity. True, such a one might from time to time taste a consolation as slight as it is rare, but certainly he will not be favored with a full apparition of Jesus unless he be at home "where the disciples are gathered together."

These things, dear sons, I wish to recall to your mind because of the Paschal season, hoping that what I have prescribed you will carefully observe even more faith fully by the help of Him Who consoles and guides us in all things, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to Whom be honor and power for ever. Amen.

I am writing to you from Padua, in good health, within the octave of Easter. God has already given us here many Novices, about thirty capable and lettered

men. Several of them are of noble birth and have the Master's degree. On Wednesday of Holy Week Master James entered. Archdeacon of Ravenna and Provost of Bobbio, he was one of the best teachers of Law in Lombardy, a man of good counsel and of great renown, of excellent morals and great amiability, who refused an offer of the Episcopate before his entrance. With him entered a young man of great genius, very well instructed in the arts, a scion of one of the most noble and richest families in Hungary, who also possessed an important Archdiaconate.

Moreover, I often hear by letter and from messengers that by the grace of God my Brothers and yours reap widespread and abundant harvests in the Church of God, and that the word of God, living and efficacious, penetrates into the hearts of the enemies of the King. For all these things give thanks to God, the Dispenser of all good gifts.

³ Acts I, 3; Luc. VII, 44; Luc. XXIV, 1; 2 Cor. V, 6; Ps. CXIX, 5; Luke XXIV, 17; Luc. XXIV, 17.

⁴ I Pet. IV, 8; John XX, 24; Jude XIX, I Cor. II, 14; I Cor. XIII, 5; John XX, 19; Ps. XLIV, 6.

45. (*ms. no. XXXVI, Aron 36.*)Upper Italy, June or July, 1233.

This is a letter of excuse for leaving Bologna hurriedly after the General Chapter. That half-said farewell was the last Jordan was to bid his friends. He is sad ; perhaps that affected his preaching; perhaps the students at Modena failed to take fire at his preaching because the fires of his own enthusiasm were burning low at that time.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his dear daughter Diana and his other daughters at St. Agnes:--eternal salvation.

I remained eight days at Modena and sowed much but because of my sins reaped little. Leaving there I came to Reggio and decided to go gradually from there, from convent to convent, until I cross the mountains. Considering that I shall have to be across the mountains before winter, it would be too tiring to go back to Bologna. In your charity then, I pray you, suffer patiently my going onward and pardon me for not bidding a formal adieu as was my custom. I acted thus in order to spare you and me, for I could not have stood without pain the abundance and rushing forth of your tears. Besides, not yet being certain of my plans, I feared to speak of them to you lest I should make you sorrowful.

And now I ask you by your love for me not to be sorrowful so that I may be of good courage. Rejoice in your Spouse, Jesus Christ, Who is within you and Who will console you with His Holy Spirit, called the Paraclete, that is, the Consoler. "According to the multitude of the griefs of your hearts" (which we must sometimes in this life sustain because of divers tempta-

tions and tribulations) will His consolations rejoice your hearts. Thus comforted, and, as it were, drawn by the "odor of His ointments" you will finally come unto our Savior Himself, from Whom we shall obtain "joy and gladness." Then all sorrow and weeping will flee away; we shall rejoice in the good things of His House, and living therein with His blessed and elect we shall praise Him forever. Amen. ¹

¹ Ps. XCIII, 19; Cant. 1, 3 ; Is. XXXV, 10; LI, II; Is. XXXV, 10; Ps. LXIV, 5.

46. (*ms. no. IV.-Anon 37.*) Vercelli, Summer, 1233.

Blessed Jordan has regained his former enthusiasm and joy of heart. This letter emphasizes the great truth that it does not make much difference *what we do* as long as we work solely for the love of God.

To Diana, his most dear daughter in Jesus, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the grace of spiritual joys.

Since I left thee not long ago, God has always been happily with us. I believe thou hast already heard quite enough of those who entered the Order at Reggio: however give thanks to God for them. It is from Vercelli that I am now writing to thee. We have received here only one Novice, one well approved however, but I hope that we shall soon have many others, God willing.

Brother Henry of Ultramarine is very dangerously ill; I commend him earnestly to thee and the Sisters; faithfully beseech the Lord for him because we fear to lose him altogether.

As for the rest, dearest, "cast thy thoughts upon the Lord"; in Him always find thy consolation, and in Him learn to conquer whatever adversities this changeable world may bring thee. Do not be anxious about me, for He Who protects thee remaining at Bologna will also, I hope, protect me journeying hither and thither: for all that we do, whether it be remaining in the quiet of the cloister as you do or traveling in divers directions as I do, we do only for the love of Him. He is our only end; it is He Who leads us together in this

present exile, and it is He Who will be our reward in heaven, He Who is blessed forever. Amen. ¹

Farewell in Christ Jesus and greet for me all my most dear daughters, especially the Prioress, Galiana, Jordana and Juliette. Thy son, Gerard, greets thee and them lovingly. Commend us to their prayers.

¹ Ps. LIV, 23.

47. (*ms. no. VII.-Anon 38.*) Milan-Summer, 1233.

With the help of this letter we can get some idea of those plans Bl. Jordan feared to communicate to Bl. Diana (letter 44) and of his actual itinerary.

Bl. Jordan meant to travel slowly through the North of Italy visiting with Henry of Marsberg (Ultramarine) the various convents and Universities and then to cross the Alps into Germany on his way to the General Chapter at Paris. He went first to Modena which had reopened its University in 1232. There he failed to arouse enthusiasm. Then he went to Milan and to Vercelli where he obtained eight good Novices, and returned again to Milan. At Vercelli he was detained by the sickness of Henry of Marsberg, and at Milan Bl. Jordan himself fell ill. Henry of Marsberg was sent on to Germany whither Bl. Jordan hoped soon to follow him. Later letters show that Blessed Jordan was far more ill than he admitted in this letter.

To Sister Diana, his daughter in Jesus Christ most dear, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the consolation of the Spirit Paraclete.

Thou knowest what happened to me, dearest, how a tertian fever detained me after I had returned with eight good and capable Novices from Vercelli to Milan and was about to go from there to Germany. At the present writing I have already had three attacks of it and expect a fourth very soon. But by the grace of God this infirmity is not dangerous; it passes quickly as the doctors tell me. That is why I am writing to thee lest perchance thou be deeply disturbed if thou shouldst hear of my infirmity from another and believe me to be very dangerously sick.

Commend me however to the prayers of the Sisters. Brother Henry of Ultramarine has recovered with, I

hope, the help of your prayers, and has preceded me into Germany. Take care not to be terrified by my infirmity, because as I hope I shall be the better for it both in body and in spirit. The Lord had given His gifts to us both at Reggio and at Vercelli; very likely it pleased Him, as was but just, not to let me receive them altogether gratis. May His Name be blessed forever. Amen.¹

Farewell. Greet for me my most dear daughters and especially the Prioress, Galiana, Cardiana, and Juliette. Them and thee also does Brother Gerard, thy brother and son, lovingly greet. Notify the Brethren of my condition that they may pray for me, for there is little time left for me to write to them. The Spirit of Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Amen.

¹ Ps. LXXI, 17.

48. (*ms. no. III.-Aron 40.*)

Milan-Fall, 1233.

In this letter Blessed Jordan scolds severely; perhaps he thought it necessary to give pain in order to impress more deeply the lesson he wished Blessed Diana to grasp thoroughly. The last paragraph reminds one of a saying of St. Louis Bertrand: "Here burn, here cut, here spare not that thou mayest spare in eternity."

To his daughter most dear in Christ Jesus, Sister Diana, at Bologna, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:-- greetings and the consolation of the Spirit Paraclete.

It does not at all please me that thou, as I hear, art so deep in anguish over my sickness. One would think that thou wishest me to be cut off from the number of the sons of God and not to be a participator at all in the Passion of Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer. Dost thou not know that "God scourgeth every son that He receiveth?" Dost thou not wish Him to receive me among His sons? This anxiety of thine, is it good? If thou wishest me to enter into the Kingdom, suffer me also to proceed along the way that leads to the Kingdom, for "it is by many tribulations that we must enter therein."

If this infirmity would turn to my disadvantage, it would certainly please me to have thee bear it painfully, but if it works in me some good fruit I am unwilling that thou, dearest, be troubled over what is for my good. Wherefore, if thou wilt console me and relieve me of a source of anxiety, put sadness out of thy mind and be more consolable. Only commend me to the Lord and ask Him that whatever punishment I may have to undergo in the future may be turned into a

help and a correction. The good and pious potter knows what sort of cleansing the vessel he makes doth need. Wherefore it behooves us to subject ourselves in all things to His will and to give over into His hands the direction of our ways.

Yet thou shouldst know that, although lately I was placed in great danger not only because of the quatern fever but also on account of other infirmities, I am freed of them by the help of God. Indeed one of the three quatern fevers I had seems to be almost nullified. Be consoled therefore and keep before thine eyes that life into which no infirmity shall enter, as the Prophet says: "No evil shall come to thee, no plague shall draw nigh to thy tent." Here certainly in the misery of this present exile we suffer evils because of sins, and since many are the scourges of the sinner it is not surprising that we are scourged here for our excesses. Therefore I stand ready for scourges provided that I can attain to that tent, God, to which no scourge approaches because no stain of sin enters there, the most pure and brilliant mansions of heaven; there may He deign to place me with thee, He, the good Son of God, Jesus Christ who is blessed forever. Amen.¹

Farewell and greet my most dear daughters and console them in the Lord. Brother Gerard greets thee and them affectionately.

¹ Heb. XII, 6 ; Acts XIV, 21; Rom. IX, 21; 2 Tim. II, 21; Ps. XC, 10; Ps. XXXI, 10; Ps. XXXVII, 18.

49. (*ms. no. VI. Aron 39.*)

Milan-Fall, 1233.

Blessed Jordan has good news to send on to Bologna, but his recovery was far from being permanent.

To his most dear daughter in Christ Jesus, Diana, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the consolations of the Holy Spirit.

Because I know that thou art anxious about my welfare, I wish to let thee know that, because the Lord hearkened to thee and the Sisters, I have begun to improve much during the last few days, so much in fact that I am now hardly at all tormented of the fever I had. I am well on the road to health, even though I am very weak and still broken down from my late sickness. Therefore give thanks to the Lord Who has begun to hearken to you, and ask Him, if it please Him, to perfect what He has begun and most quickly to grant me greater strength and better health.¹

Greet and console the Sisters, my most dear daughters, and all those thou knowest I should like to greet. Brother Gerard greets thee and them affectionately. Farewell in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 2 Cor. VIII, 6.

50. (*ms. no. 11. Aron 41.*)

Milan-Spring, 1234.

Sickness or business detained Blessed Jordan in Italy throughout the winter. He could have found *many* reasons to go back to Bologna, but duty called, and that had greater power over him than considerations of health or friendship alone.

The Prior Nicholas mentioned here is unknown. He came to see Blessed Jordan, according to the next letter, concerning the troublesome daughter of Lambertina.

To his daughter most dear in Jesus, Diana, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the consolation of the Spirit Paraclete.

I know thou desirest me to come to Bologna, and that indeed would be for me a great consolation if it could conveniently be done. But it would be too much for me in my state of weakness to go to Bologna and return. The time is already at hand to take the road to Paris for the General Chapter, if the Lord because of your prayers will deign to permit it. Although I come not now in body to visit thee, yet I am not the less with thee in spirit, for wherever I go I remain with thee and I carry thee with me in spirit although thou remainest at home in body. As to my state of health and the daily improvement granted to me by the Lord on account of thy prayers, our Brethren, namely Prior Nicholas and others, will make it fully known to thee if thou askest it of them.

I forewarn thee, in case something should happen against thy will, concerning that poor little daughter of Lambertina, not to let it disturb thee seriously, but to bear it with patience and to commend thy cause to the Lord that He may deign to dispose and arrange this

and all other affairs of thine according to His pleasure. It is only over the loss of the grace of God that holy souls should weep and be troubled. But even if the Lord should permit that, I hope in His mercy and trust He would restore to thee more abundantly in other ways the recompense of His consolation. We believe indeed that no desolation happens to pious souls in this life except for their profit, in order that what the Apostles said may come true: "to them that love God all things work together unto good, to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints."¹

Greet for me all my daughters most dear in Christ Jesus and any other people outside the convent, to whom thou knowest I would like to send a spiritual greeting. Grace and the bonds of Jesus Christ be with thy spirit, always most dear to me. Amen.

¹ Rom. VIII, 28.

51. (*ms. no. XLVII.--Aron 42.*)

Zurich-July, 1234.

Sickness prevented Blessed Jordan from attending the General Chapters in 1234 and 1235. This furnished an opportunity favorable to those who wished to relieve the Order of the duty of directing the Sisters.

To the daughter most dear to him in Christ, Sister Diana, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the grace of spiritual joys.

After I left Lombardy and came to Turegum on my way to the Chapter I became grievously ill, and I remained ill up to the meeting of the General Chapter. Because I was not present there the Definitors who knew little of the status of the Convent of St. Agnes made an ordinance that was not good for you. When afterwards I learned of it and saw that it was not lawfully done, I had it cancelled.

Do not thou, beloved, be disturbed by such things, for thou hast already often borne with such annoyances, and their frequency alone should have formed thee in patience. Is this not true? Although God has permitted thee to be afflicted for a time, yet in His clemency, He has always rescued thee and He will rescue thee and help thee unto the end. "Only cast thy care upon the Lord"; commit thy affairs and those of thy Sisters to Him for "He hath care of you." And indeed He tries you at times in this way in order to know how far you have already grown in virtue, how much you can still bear for Him.¹

In regard to my health at present, know that I have again much improved, both in body and as to my head.

¹ Ps. LIV, 23; 1 Peter V, 7.

Even though I have not yet regained my former strength, I preach to the clergy and to the people.

Let it not give thee pain that I lately wrote to the Prior Provincial saying that it would please me to have him grant the request of Brother Nicholas, Prior, in favor of that girl. Brother Nicholas was much concerned over it all and implored me insistently. It would be very hard for me not to hearken to such a man whom we love so much and who is so necessary for our Order. That is why I again advise thee to give way in this affair with a good will.

52. (*ms. no. IX.-- Aron 46.*)

The tone of this letter alone makes one feel that it belongs to the last group of Jordan's letters to Diana. There is an air of detachment and promise about it that bespeaks a well determined and habitual gaze of the soul on God and the joys of heaven.

To his daughter most dear in Christ, Sister Diana of St. Agnes, at Bologna, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--eternal salvation.

Dearest, thy discretion knows well enough that as long as we are detained in the exile of this world we, all of us, labor under innumerable defects, and that we cannot attain to that stability given in the future life. That is why we do not bear ourselves with equanimity in all things that happen to us, but at times are too much lifted up by prosperity and at other times are too much depressed by adversity. However, it behooves us, who wish to come to future immortality even now to fashion ourselves somewhat for that future life by placing our hearts in the power of God and, as far as we can, by laboring to put all our hope, all our trust, and all our strength in the Lord in order that, as God Himself always remains quiet and unmoved in Himself, so we also may imitate Him in this as closely as possible. He is the secure refuge, never failing, always remaining; the more often we seek refuge in Him, the more constant we keep. That is why the Saints, who placed such hope in the Lord, very easily despised whatever adversity happened to them in this life.

Now therefore, dearest, seek thy refuge ever more and more in the Lord, and no matter what affliction or

what pain happens to thee the foundation of thy heart, being solid, will never be moved. Imprint this well and frequently on thy heart and urge thy Sisters to it. For thy consolation I am going to tell thee what lately I saw concerning thee in my dream. It seemed to me that thou wert speaking to me in a way so true and full of understanding that I still rejoice when I think of it; thou wert saying: "The Lord spoke to me these words: 'I, Diana, I, Diana, I, Diana,' and each time He also added: 'I am good, I am good, I am good!'" Know that this seemed very consoling to me.

53. (*ms. no. XLIII.-- Aron 47.*) Strassburg Aug., 1234.

St. Dominic was canonized on July 3, 1234. Blessed Jordan was at Strassburg, Germany when he received this news. Since the Feast of Saint Sixtus is on the sixth of August, the news came just in time to permit giving public honor to Dominic as a Saint on the thirteenth Anniversary of his death.

M. Aron calls Jordan's "pedi tuo patior" (in thy foot I suffer) a daring and tender message comparable to Madame de Sevigne's words to her daughter "J'ai mal a votre poitrine."

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant, to his daughter beloved in Christ, Sister Diana: -may she be overwhelmed with the joy of joys and the sweetness of sweetnesses in the Lord.

From thy letter, dearest, I learned of the good and agreeable news, the "news worthy of all acceptance," about the canonization of our most blessed Father, and of thy joy in the Lord over it; I rejoice and give thanks to God. I was not able to reach the place where my arrival was expected, for the messenger of the Provincial Prior found me at Strassburg on the vigil of Saint Sixtus. But as we had already learned of the canonization of our holy Father (I by letter from Brother Raymond who is attached to the Roman Curia, and the Brothers at Strassburg by letter from Brother Godefroy who is also at the Curia), we celebrated the solemnity with joy on the aforesaid vigil of St. Sixtus to the honor of God and of our own most blessed Father, giving thanks to the Son of God "who is wonderful in His Saints" and glorious in all and through all. Now how-

ever I am ready to go to Lombardy, and I hope, God accompanying me, soon to see thee.¹

In thy foot, which I understand thou hast injured, I suffer. I warn thee to take more care not only of thy foot but of thy whole body. Greet the Sisters. I hope that they, according to the exhortations of our holy Father Augustine, study indefatigably, love, and efficaciously fulfill the precepts of God; that with His Grace they correct whatever they find wrong in themselves; that they hold to what is right, put off what is deformed, cultivate what is beautiful, conserve what is strong, strengthen what is weak, and perseveringly guard all that pleases the Son of God, thy Spouse who is blessed forever. Amen.

¹ Tim. IV, 9; Ps. LXVII, 36.

54. (*ms. no. XXXVII. Aron 49.*) May-June, 1235.

Sickness prevented Blessed Jordan from attending the General Chapter held at Bologna on May 27, 1235. It was a trial for him as well as for his spiritual daughters, but renunciation had become a law of his life. God alone!

To his daughters most dear in Jesus Christ, the Sisters of St. Agnes at Bologna, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

You see that, as God ordained it, I have once more been prevented from going to the General Chapter. If I had no other reasons for regretting it, I would still be sorry on your account alone, above all because I cannot see you and be consoled by your company. But it behooves us to fulfill with patience the will of our God. By every means possible He is showing you in this life that we should not place our hopes in man nor seek our consolation from mortal beings. He is the one who "should be loved with our whole heart and with our whole soul and with all our strength," because He alone can and ought to suffice for our souls, in this present life by His grace and in the future by His glory.

Be constant, my beloved daughters, joyous in all things, and discreet in order that you may "be numbered not among the foolish but among the wise virgins." I have not now time to write many things to you, but I commend your souls and your bodies to the mercy of Him in "Whose hands are the ends of the earth," Who is blessed forever. Amen.¹

Farewell and pray for us. Gerard greets you very devotedly, and commends himself to your prayers.

¹ Mt. XXII, 37; Mt. XXV, 2ff; Ps, XCIV, 4.

55. (*ms. no. XLVI. Aron 48.*) Paris-before Pentecost, 1236.

It was a long time since Blessed Jordan left Bologna. God willed that his hopes of going there again should not be fulfilled. Blessed Jordan did lose the eye he speaks of as troubling him and later he addressed the Brethren in Chapter thus: "Give thanks to God, my sons, for I am now quit of one of my enemies; but at the same time beseech the divine pity that if it so please the Lord and be for my own good, He may preserve my remaining eye for His honor and the good of the Order. (*Lives of the Brethren, p. 102.*)

To the spouse of Jesus Christ and the daughter most dear to him in Jesus Christ, Sister Diana, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--eternal salvation and the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

The longer we are absent from each other, the greater is our desire to see each other. However, it is I am sure, the will of God that has hindered me from going to Bologna. And if it was -the Will of God, it is only fitting that we should also bend our will to His decree. Throughout the winter from Advent on, I was at Paris, and by the grace of God many good and well-lettered students, and, later, Masters entered the Order. On the very day I am writing thee, the Brothers said that seventy-two had already been received; for these I wish thee and the Sisters to give thanks to God.

As to my health know until I come, that the fevers have completely left me a long time since, but I suffer much and am in danger of losing one of my eyes.

Greet all my daughters in Christ and commend me to them. Brother Gerard greets thee and them lovingly. Farewell in Christ. Amen. Greet all those, men and women, who are dear to me in Christ.

56. (*ms. no. XIII.-Aron 50.*) Paris-after May 18, 1236.

Blessed Jordan perished in a shipwreck off the coast of Palestine near Acre on February 13, 1237. When he left Europe is not known, nor whence he wrote this letter, but evidently he is either beginning or actually on a journey that will make correspondence impossible.

This is Blessed Jordan's last letter; it sounds the note of a final farewell; perhaps he felt he would never see his friends again on this earth. Their only hope is in God and the joys of seeing each other in heaven. It is quite likely that Diana never received the letter, for she died on June 11, 1236.

To his most dear daughter, Diana of Bologna, Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, the unprofitable servant:--greetings and the constant friendship of Jesus Christ.

Because I cannot see thee with the eyes of my body and be consoled with thee as often as thou wishest and I would like, I refresh a little and soothe the desire of my heart by visiting thee with a letter and writing to thee about myself. I would also like to know how thou art, for thy progress and thy joyfulness are a sweet nourishment to my heart. But thou are not sure to what ends of the earth I may be called upon to go, and even if thou didst know thou wouldst not have messengers ready to take thy questions to me.

What we could write to each other, beloved, is after all but little; in the depths of our hearts burns our love for each other in the Lord, and by it we speak to each other continually in acts of love that neither tongue can speak nor word convey.

O Diana, miserable is this present state that we endure because we cannot love each other here without pain of heart or think of each other without anxiety!

Thou art vexed; thou dost suffer because it is not permitted to see me always, and I, I also am distressed because thy presence is so rarely granted me. Who will lead us to that "fortress-city," to that "city of the Lord of Hosts" that the "Most High Himself has founded" where we will no longer pant either for Him or for each other? Here, each day we are lacerated, and the depths of our hearts are torn asunder; our very miseries force us daily to cry out: "Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?"¹

Yet it behooves us to bear this patiently and as far as our daily duties permit to recollect our minds in Him alone Who can "deliver us from our necessities," in Whom alone rest is found, outside of Whom, no matter where we look, we find tribulation and an abundance of sorrow. Meanwhile let us accept with joy whatever may happen to make us sad, for "according to the same measure by which our tribulations are meted out to us will also be the joy that will be given us," and poured into our hearts by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to Whom is "honor and glory, virtue and power forever and ever, Amen."²

Pray for me as I know thou dost. Greet for me the Prioress and Galiana. Greet each one of my friends who are not in the cloister, above all and especially those who are of thy spiritual family if they by chance should come to thee, and commend me to their prayers. Fare thee well, beloved daughter, in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

¹ Ps. LIX, 11; Ps. XLVII, 9; Ps. LXXXVI, 5; Rom. VII, 24.

² Ps. XXIV, 17; Mt. VII, 2; Apoc. VII, 12.