

ing a victory over his passions, must ever be an object of interest to his fellow-men. In doubt as to his future prospects, De Rance consulted with his friends. Some recommended him to go to the foreign missions ; to repair to the Indies or the frowning rocks of the Himalaya, and such a mission would have suited the stern and gloomy grandeur of his mind ; but the vocation of De Rance did not lead him there."

The example of De Rance soon began to exercise no small influence. Among the earliest whom it called was the Duke of Orleans whom the penitent De Rance attended in his last illness when all save the faithful and devoted priest deserted him.

De Rance " was for a long time undecided as to the course he should adopt. At one period he thought of burying himself amid the solitudes of the Pyrenees, and in some dark dell which the noon-day sun would seldom penetrate, or in some rocky mountain cell where no one should ever reach his lonely hermitage but the reckless chamois hunter inured from his childhood to the storm, to weep over his sins alone, and die to all other interests, save those of God and of eternity. At another he was counselled to embrace the monastic life, and benefit the Church by edifying and instructing his brethren. This advice he finally adopted, though he long cherished a repugnance to this mode of life, and sometimes gave expression to sentiments which were far from complimentary to the cowl and the cassock. But his mind was no sooner decided upon the course to be adopted, than he pursued it without hesitation. He was not a man to turn back when once he had put his hand to the plough. He resigned all his benefices, save one, and sold out his property. Veretz brought him 100,000 crowns. He gave it all to the poor ; of the monasteries which he held " in commendam " he kept only the poorest, the most unhealthy, and the least known of all—the abbey of La Trappe in the ancient province of Perche.

De Rance having completed his noviciate, made his religious profession in 1664 ; and was soon after installed abbot of La Trappe a reformed Cistercian Monastery. The example of his extremely austere life, and the fervour, which he infused into the souls of his brethren soon led him to return to the former rigour of their rule. After his return from a journey to Rome whither he had been sent on the business of his order, De Rance began to introduce that strict discipline, of short sleep, rigorous abstinence and unbroken silence, which distinguish the Trappist institute from the other branches of the Cistercian order.

" From the commencement of his labours in this department, to his death, there are inscribed in the registers of the convent no less than ninety-seven professed religious and forty-nine lay brothers.

They presented themselves for admission slowly in the commencement ; but when the virtues and example of the members and the abbot became better known, the postulants that presented themselves were more than they could well accommodate. The penitent who felt his heart pressed down by the consciousness of guilt, and the Christian who aspired to more than ordinary perfection, sought refuge within its walls ; and many a contrite and humble soul, on which the recollections of early days pressed dark and heavily, came to tread in the footsteps of the abbot, and prepare for its dread accounting. Something, too, we should perhaps set down to the impulse of that enthusiasm which novelty ever excites, and which is one of the auxiliaries which religion borrows from the earth, and, by employing, consecrates and hallows for its own high purposes. Various as are the ways of God with man, and manifold as are the means by which souls are conducted to sanctity, are the names of those who first presented themselves, and whose characters are described in its early archives."

" The wonders of asceticism and rigorous self-denial which are recorded of the early members of La Trappe, would have been worthy of the solitaries of the Thebaid ; and had Pachomius been admitted to contemplate that community, he would have been proud to acknowledge them as brothers. The monks, though living in the same house, were strangers to one another. Each one followed to the choir, the garden, or the refectory, the feet that were moving before him, but he never raised his eyes to discover to whom the feet belonged.

There were some who passed the entire year of their noviciate without lifting up their eyes, and who, after that long period, could not tell how the ceiling of their cells was constructed, or whether they had any ceilings at all. There is mention made of one, whose only anxiety was for an only brother, whom he had left leading a scandalous and disorderly life, in the world. Since he entered the convent, he never passed a day without shedding a tear over his miserable condition, and begging for him from God the grace of repentance and amendment. On his dying bed he asked one request of the abbot—it was, for continuance of his prayers for the same purpose. De Rance retired for a moment, and returned with one of the most useful and valued members of the brotherhood, when the cowl which concealed his features was removed, the dying monk recognized the brother for whom he had so often wept and prayed. An aged monk was once selected to attend a youth of great promise, who had entered the monastery and was dying of a slow decline. Day and night he watched by his bed, with the most anxious care, and the most untiring solicitude—but in vain. The young man pined away like a crushed and broken