

THE MAKERS OF CHRISTENDOM

General Editor: CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

**THE LIVES OF
ANGE DE JOYEUSE
AND
BENET CANFIELD**

By Jacques Brousse

EDITED FROM ROBERT ROOKWOOD'S TRANSLATION OF 1623

BY

ANTHONY BIRRELL

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Baroque hagiography can be rather a rich dish to swallow—ornate rhetoric, pious ejaculations, ponderous periods. Fortunately, the contemporary English translation of these two seventeenth-century lives, here reproduced in a mildly modernized version, flavours the richness with a certain lively tang. Add to this two stories extremely interesting in themselves, and you have an historical document which is more than that alone.

Ange de Joyeuse in particular, "Duke, Peer and Marshal of France and Governor deputed by the king in Languedoc," is really fascinating, not simply because of the illustrious lay prelude to his life as a Capuchin, but also because of the even more remarkable interlude in it when he shouldered, with no little regret, the task of returning for a time to his vocation of soldier and statesman, for the sake of the public good.

Benet Canfield, also a Capuchin, is less startling in his career but no less interesting; the account of the interior struggles of the young law student and his passionate conversion to a life of intense asceticism is in the great stream of spiritual autobiography which runs through Bunyan.

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