

Twilight Talks.

Written for the CARMELITE REVIEW by
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THE vacation days are upon us.

The busy year has come to a standstill, and those who yearned for a respite 'mid the burden and heat of the day are at last suffered to fold their hands and rest. Rest! what is it? A change of occupation. Not the simple frittering away of time, and the wishing the hours away. The days of a sweet doing nothing are likely to be times of wreck and ruin for the spiritual life. The summer, with its languid heats and enervating air plays sad havoc with many who acquired a healthy vigor of mind and body in the press of work, minus worry. Now that June, the queen month of the year, has passed, and July, with its vast opportunities for rest and relaxation has come, with what shall we fill the long twilights of mid-summer? What is the crowd of tourists that surge in and out of village and town seeking? Rest! Yes, happy they to whom Nature, kindly mother, applies the soothing balm for tired head and aching limbs. Pleasure! The gay crowd rushes in pursuit of it, and 'tis found by sea shore and mountain, but 'tis a summer's growth, often lasting only as long as the foam on an ocean wave. Danger often lurks in the shade that is not of the spirit, which is "pleasant coolness in the heat." How many are seeking happiness in their vacation days? Happiness, this will-o'-the-wisp, this ignis fatuus! What is it that one and all we are chasing? After a long and bitter experience it has been borne in upon us that in its genuine purity it is only found in the unselfing of ourselves. We all yearn for sympathy, for tenderness, for counsel, for love. All lawful desires of the heart, which cries out so piteously for them. But often times in giving, that luxury which is not confined to him whose coffers are full, but alas! whose purse strings are often tightened, in giving, we but

follow the promptings of a nature which is all the time but gratifying self. This may seem a distorted view to take of generosity, the pouring out of our affections, our very selves on the object which most appeals to our sympathies. But all at once it comes to us that what seemed so high and holy, so worthy of our devotion, was in very truth, but another form of self worshipping self. When face to face with that inner consciousness before whom as the very face of God we may not blush and cast down our eyes, we are forced to say as we sift the fine sand of our motives: I am full of self. 'Tis a humiliating admission to make, but out of it comes strength. And is it not this which the best of us need most sorely? Not virtue in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but the coat of mail, the *far simit* of the divine armor which will envelope our souls—nay, our hearts, those vulnerable points—with a panoply which is proof against all darts. The twilights of July must be filled with the thoughts of the Precious Blood, the fountain whence will come the strength which our souls so sorely need—our stronghold of comfort when all other comforts flee. In its ruby light, reflected from the sky, which burst forth in crimson glow over Calvary's height, when the dead eclipse was over, we may read the lesson of life. From its saving stream we may drink our fill, still say I am insatiable, and fear not that the cup be withdrawn from our lips. The summer hours are very prone to the dread disease *ennui*! More deadly in its effects than the direct miasma, and more fatal to the peace of the soul than the mad rush of the work-a-day year. Let us pray against it in the twilights of July. Summer days, when hands and heads are idle, are very likely to bring hours of brooding. Against them, too, with their train of bitter thoughts, let us strive and pray. Oh! how full is life of weary days, and what a living, walking providence of God is labor. Blessed be His mercy which sends it to so many of us as a very salvation—a saving of us from ourselves. For after all we are our own enemies, and the vacation days give us time to think how much we need to befriend ourselves. Days of thoughtful reflection! Would that the summer would bring even a stray one to us. Days when God draws very nigh to us, because we answer His gentle invita-