

LIFE OF ST. JOANNA OF TOULOUSE, CARMELITE NUN.

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CHAPTER V.

S. SIMON STOCK AT TOULOUSE. HE ADMITS S. JOANNA INTO THE ORDER OF MOUNT CARMEL. S. ANGELA OF PALESTINE HAD BEEN ADMITTED ONE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE.



AS soon as the Carmelites had abandoned Mount Carmel, it fell into the hands of the Infidels.

But they flourished and multiplied in Europe. A vener-

able old man, an Englishman by birth, already more than eighty years of age, a worthy rival of the Anchorites of Thebais, favored with heavenly apparitions, whose devotion also to the Blessed Virgin was very great, was chosen General of the Order of Mount Carmel, in the year 1245. He was called S. Simon Stock.

The beloved Order of Mary had reached the highest eminence of its glory. In spite of the trials excited against it by the satellites of satan, Heaven had taken it visibly under its protection.

The holy Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, given to men by the hands of the Elias of the New Testament, became at once the most popular devotion of the Catholic universe.

There is no doubt that this happy event closely tied the bonds of mind and heart which already united S. Joanna, to this admirable Institute.

She was at that time thirty-five years old—the age of fortitude and of heroic determination. This virgin, with a

manlike soul, desired to enter this Order, so edifying to her native town, and had long before earnestly begged the holy livery of the Mother of God. She wished to become a Carmelite.

The Constitutions of the Order seemed not to have provided for this case. Could women be admitted, and the austere and severe Rule of St. Albert be imposed upon them?

The piety of Joanna, her virtues, her birth, her zeal, her love for Mount Carmel, and the services which she had rendered in the foundation of the convent at Toulouse all militated in her favor. She received, apparently, a positive refusal. St. Simon Stock, passing through the city, visited the new house of his Order, which was already near completion. The Saint, in pursuance of her idea of becoming a Carmelite, profited by the passage of the great wonder-worker, and prostrated at his feet repeated the petition which she had so frequently made to the Prior of Toulouse. Saint Simon Stock, inspired by God, at the sight of this seraphic soul, did not hesitate to grant her the favor which she solicited. He besides knew that she was not the first one to whom such a grace had been granted. A century before his time Saint Angela of Palestine, the virgin daughter of the King of Bohemia, who died in the year 1166, had been admitted in the East to the holy habit of Mount Carmel, and had fol-