

The Order of Mount Carmel.

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THE Christian religion arose in an enlightened and sceptic age; but among a despised and narrow-minded people. It earned hatred and persecution at home by its liberal genius and opposition to the national prejudices; it earned contempt abroad by its connection with the country where it was born, and which sought to strangle it in its birth. Emerging from Judea it made its outward march through the most polished regions of the world—Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and in all it attracted notice and provoked hostility, successive massacres and attempts at extermination. Persecuted for ages by the whole force of the Roman Empire, it bore without resistance and seemed to draw fresh vigor from the axe; but assaults in the way of argument, from whatever quarter, it was never ashamed or unable to repel, and whether attacked or not, it was resolutely aggressive. In four centuries it had pervaded the civilized world; it had mounted the thrones of the Cæsars; it had spread beyond the limits of their sway, and had made inroads upon barbarian nations whom their eagles had never visited; it had gathered all genius and all learning into itself, and made the literature of the world its own; it survived the inundation of the barbarian tribes, and conquered the world once more by converting its conquerors to the faith; it survived an age of barbarism; it survived the restoration of letters; it survived an age of free inquiry and scepticism, and has long stood its ground in the field of argument, and commanded the intelligent assent of the greatest minds that ever were; it has been the parent of civilization, and the nurse of learning; and, if light, and humanity, and freedom be the boast of modern Europe, it is to Christianity she owes them. Exhibiting in the life of Jesus Christ a picture,

varied and minute, of the perfect human united with the Divine, in which the mind of man has not and cannot be able to find a deficiency or detect a blemish—a picture copied from no model and rivalled by no copy—it has accommodated itself to every period and every clime; it has retained through every vicissitude of change a salient spring of life, which enables it to throw off corruption and repair decay, and renew its youth amid outward hostility and attacks.

As this picture is true of the Catholic Church, so may be painted a similar one of the Order of Mount Carmel, for it, too, had its origin among this people, and long before the time of Christianity itself. This Order, which was established on Mount Carmel, whose form rising out of the blue waters of an historic sea and peering gracefully above craggy rocks, woody heights, and undulating plains, gemmed with flowers of every hue, yields, even to this day, a kind of strange fascination over all who, having a reverential faith, behold it either from the side of ocean or land. Although the mountain itself may "languish," and its "top be withered," it has a fragrance and immortality which shall never pass away. How can the name of Carmel die? Carmel, the august scene of one, and probably two of the most awe inspiring deeds of Elias, and the chosen retreat of himself and Eliseus—Carmel, set imperishably as a mystical jewel in the inspired poetry of Hebrew Prophets—Carmel, far eclipsing, at a later epoch, by the erection of its Christian altars, the sanctity of the old, and casting upon the entire Catholic Church a new splendour by the saintly brilliance of its "monastic glory,"—a glory which, tracing back its natal rays to a no less august source than Elias the Prophet, still lives; Carmel, the spiritual heirloom of a religious Order, illustrious by the excellence of its deeds as well as by the continuity of its name. Ages before the Christian era it commenced and was famous among the Jewish people. The virtue of