

LIFE AND CATHOLIC JOURNALISM

—OF THE LATE—

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CHAPTER X—CONCLUDED.



DURING the great Catholic Congress held in Baltimore in 1889, the Boston delegates learned of the esteem felt for the Carmelites of Baltimore by both clergy and laity, and that blessings enjoyed by that community were attributed to their prayers and holy lives. A wish was felt that the city of Boston might have its house of Mt. Carmel, and, the wish being approved by the venerated Archbishop of Boston, on August 28, 1890 (the Centennial year of the Carmelites in America), five nuns, appointed by Cardinal Gibbons, from the Baltimore Carmel, established a foundation in Boston, and were warmly welcomed by the people of that city. They have since then been living in a rented dwelling-house (corner of Cedar and Centre Streets, Roxbury), awaiting the time when, in the good providence of God, they may be enabled to have a proper monastery built for them after their own model, and adapted to the peculiar needs of a cloistered community; together with a suitable chapel adequate to the wants of the faithful, who bring their petitions and alms, and love to gather near this cloister for Mass, Benediction, Novenas and the numerous devotions springing from the heart of Carmel, and which will be enumerated further on.

The questions are often asked: "What is a Carmelite Nun? and what does she do?" The following answers may be given: She is an elect soul who has heeded the counsel of Our Lord and accepted His invitation to turn from the world, take up the Cross and follow him; undertaking an

expiatory life of penance and atonement for her own sins and for those of others; an apostolic life of prayer for the salvation of souls, and especially for the needs of the Church and clergy; a life of praise and adoration, performing in the Church on earth the office of the beatified in heaven, who praise God without ceasing; a life of intercession for the temporal and spiritual needs of all who seek the aid of her prayers, for health and relief of soul and body, for conversion of heart and perseverance in well-doing. Dwelling in her strict cloister as in the ante-chamber of heaven, the Carmelite daily presents to the King of Heaven petitions from souls dwelling more remote from Him and hindered or delayed from approaching His throne. To make her prayers more efficacious she prepares her soul by penances, by perpetual abstinence, by almost continual fasting, by sleeping on straw, wearing coarse woolen, and by many other exercises of constant mortification.

The Carmelite has always time to pray for the Church and for souls. She is set apart to pray and do penance. These are her duty, her calling, the end and aim (as they are the happiness) of her life, and it is thus she deals a direct blow at the infidelity and indulgence of the world. Any spare time, after her recitation of the Divine Office and devotions, is given to manual labor and needle work—making of scapulars, habits for the dead, articles for the Church, the chaining of Rosaries, etc., to aid in supporting the community; but, owing to the length of time given to prayer (fully eight hours of the day being devoted to spiritual exercises), it would be impossible by these means alone to earn subsistence; so the Carmelite is obliged to depend chiefly on the charity of the faithful for food and support. And the loving God, who feedeth the birds of the air, and who centuries ago fed Elias, the prophet of