

acquiring this perfection. It may also be added that they afford the most favourable conditions for the effective organization and uninterrupted continuance of the work undertaken.

There is another thing about these religious communities which cannot fail to impress the observer. They are wonderfully tenacious of life, and withal most conservative of their respective types. The explanation is that they have been designed to meet actual and, for the most part, unchanging needs of the christian spirit. This spirit is full of aggressive vitality. The most adverse environment often fails to stay its growth. What happened in the beginning and became manifest to the public eye in the surrender of the Roman Empire to the Church, is of daily occurrence still. The divine plant is not content to shield itself from evil influences, it transforms the most noxious constituents of the atmosphere in which it lives, and makes them contributors to its own increase. It resembles fire in its power of conquest, and it is as irrepressible in its upward aspirations. As long as there are Christians in the world, there will be some, many, who will not be content to do only what Christ has imposed as an obligation upon all; many who, catching His spirit, will seek to regulate their whole lives in more perfect accordance with His, and with the principles embodied in it. And what more sure than that most of these will see in the vows and the common life and useful work of the religious communities the easy highway to their goal. Our Lord will call "whom He wills," as He did in the case of the Apostles. Some will find their vocation, perfection as well as salvation, in other walks of life, accordingly as God shall appoint for them. But the wish to live the most perfect life will naturally feel most at home in a house expressly built and furnished to suit its requirements, that is, in religion.

All Christians, without exception, are called upon to be "poor in spirit," that is, to be ready to part with any pos-