

ing prospect that henceforth she was to belong unreservedly to the Most High.

The following morning she appeared, richly dressed in a dress of damask, her head covered with a fine wreath, and a veil of exquisite texture, into which the emblematic myrtle had been wrought. The heavy curtains of the choir were drawn back; one could take in, at a glance, the large room with its high stalls, which were now filled with silent forms clad in white Carmelite mantles, holding in their hands burning tapers, whose flames, like the prayers of the nuns, were leaping upwards, fitting emblems of the motto that was theirs in truth, "Sursum Corda."

The venerable old priest, having asked Hilda what her desire was, reminded her to consider well the step she was about to take, and he put before her vividly all that she would forego, and the strict religious life she was to embrace. Hilda, as firm as ever, repeated her request to be allowed to join the Virginal ranks of the "chosen ones," whereupon the mistress of Novices led her away, to be clad in the religious habit. Her mother knew that now those beautiful tresses were to fall a victim to the cruel shears, and that her daughter would return, in the humble garb of a Carmelite nun.

The mother was still wrapped up in the consideration of the touching spectacle she had just witnessed,—her daughter, her only dear child, whose merry laughter had so often dispelled the clouds of anxiety and care, dressed like a bride and kneeling like one in ecstasy, whilst the bright sheen of the numerous tapers on the altar surrounded her form with a flood of light like the glorious halo of sanctity—when she was recalled to the reality. No longer her child, no longer her own Hilda, but now a lowly daughter of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, in the brown habit, stood in the sanctuary. Before her a large black funeral cloth was spread, and in the course of the ceremonies Hilda, now "Sister Gabriel Theresa of the Annunciation," prostrated herself in the shape of a cross, and was covered with the pall. The funeral bell was tolled; it was the parting knell to the world to which she now was dead. The poor mother wept as if her heart would break; to her, too, her daughter was now dead, albeit she could visit her every year, as a daughter she was,

indeed, dead—dead as much as if death's icy hand had touched her. Sister Gabriel arose, a pale and calm seriousness spread over her countenance, and was led from one nun to the other, to receive from each the sisterly embrace and kiss of peace.

After a year she made her vows. Even then the steps she had taken still caused her mother some pain. It was opposed to her somewhat worldly mind that her own child should be forever separated from her by Convent walls and cloister grates, and that she could not even touch Sister Gabriel's hands in a motherly clasp. Not less painful was to her the knowledge that she never slept in a soft bed, never tasted meat, kept a severe fast and strict silence, that she continually practised the most austere self-mortification. Seven hours of prayer, seven of labor, seven hours only for rest, and the remainder for meals and the most necessary recreation. The mother thought this hard, very hard, indeed; notwithstanding that her daughter assured her that she "slept soundly on a layer of straw," that she "never even had a desire for flesh-meats," and that she had "easily become accustomed to woollen garments." "The only thing that had, at first, seemed hard, was frequent interruption of sleep, but one would become soon accustomed to that, too, and if people only knew how happy and contented Convent life is, they all would run to the Convents."

Sister Gabriel looks well now, is cheerful and bright, and every visit her mother pays her, strengthens conviction in her that her child is happy, that truly she hath chosen the better part.

Not because she had entered the Convent was her mother so much pained, but that she had selected such a strict order. But now this lady understands that in proportion as the cloister rules are stricter and the breach with the world more decided and clearly marked, so much the better it is, too, for the one that goes to the Convent. As long as the world comes pouring into Convent life through ties and relations, be they ever so innocent, they, to say the least, tend to distract, to impede and render more difficult that complete unreserved abandonment of the nun to her Divine Spouse. Fortunately for her peace of mind, the mother understands this now,