

## THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR.

Possibly in no Catholic charity, says the *Catholic Universe*, is the hand of God more visibly manifest—directing its foundation and guiding its efforts—than in that which is recognized as the religious community of the Little Sisters of the Poor. It is a romance of the love of God—the history of their birth and life; but we cannot here enter upon the circumstances. Suffice it, they live for the aged poor; basket in hand, daily they encounter the mortifications of mendicancy—begging from door to door for their helpless charge.

Founded in 1840 by Father Le Pailleur, in St. Servan, on the sea-coast of Brittany, where two young girls, Marie de la Compassion and Marie Therese, some twenty and eighteen years of age, respectively, and an elderly spinster, Marie de la Croix, made their first essay that year in the simple lodging of Fanchon Aubert, their first charge, an old blind woman of eighty. The Little Sisters of the Poor now number over twenty-five hundred Sisters, with more than one hundred and fifty houses in France, Alsace, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Algeria, England, Scotland, Ireland and the United States, where there are fed and sheltered over 20,000 of God's poor. The House of Novices in the Tour St. Joseph, near Becherel, France, at present contains over 500 novices, from every part of the world, learning to serve as humblest mediators the poor whom God shall send them. From 1840 to 1879—the hand of God is surely visible in such a Christian increase.

In our city we enjoy the prayers and living charity of a house of this congregation. Ten Sisters and the Mother Superior ("Good Mother") have charge of a "Home for the Aged Poor," and every day, Winter or Summer, rain or shine, some of the good Sisters, basket in hand, are seen on our streets, seeking from all a mite for their poor, and gladly accepting the slightest contribution—even and particularly discarded apparel or remnant of the table—which they gratefully receive, and which their deft, kind hands soon turn to account as comfortable clothing or plain, yet wholesome, nourishment for the destitute whom they serve.

For themselves they ask nothing, these Sisters. They own and can own nothing but the habit they wear, and not even that. Their food is what is left when their charge has been served. If there is enough for their poor, and yet not enough for themselves, they go to bed hungry. This is no extraordinary happening with the Sisters of this congregation, and, when it happens, the rule is as we state it—the poor first themselves last or not at all.