

The Scapular Festival.

PANEGYRIC PREACHED ON JULY 16TH, TO THE PILGRIMS GATHERED AT THE
HOSPICE, BY VERY REV. P. S. McHALE, C. M., PRESIDENT
OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY.

"And I brought you into the land of Carmel, to eat the fruit thereof, and the best things thereof."—Jer. II, 7.

THE name Carmel links the present with the far-distant past. This Carmelite Hospice on the verge of the rushing river, looking down upon the mighty cataract of the New World; can trace its origin back in direct line to a grotto on the lovely hill-side of Mt. Carmel, whose head is crowned with luxuriant verdure, mirrored by the blue Mediterranean at its foot.

The greatest of the ancient prophets, Elias, who stood alone for the Lord on Carmel about 3000 years ago, has transmitted his spirit to faithful disciples, who follow in his footsteps and revere his name. And, the cause for which Elias stood is essentially the same as that which these brown-robed friars represent in the world of to-day. For, they stand forth as champions of God's truth in an age encrusted with a new form of paganism. The weapons of their warfare are more silent even, and therefore more powerful, than those with which their fathers smote the prophets of Baal long centuries ago. The warning of the Prophet to the apostate Israelites: "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him," resounds to-day from their lips with as great point and efficacy, as it did at first on Carmel in the dim historic past.

The Sons of Elias go forth to combat, armed with the penury of volun-

tary poverty, with the crucifixion of the flesh, and with the glad sacrifice of that which is most precious to man, his own will. But, thus destitute, they are best equipped; for, having nothing, they possess all things. They are thus clad in the panoply of Christian warfare; for the weak things of this world God chooses to confound the strong.

In that divine organism, the Church of God, there is a marvellous diversity of operation, but the same Spirit inspiring and breathing over all. The Spirit of God is ever active, a divine artist moulding and chiselling men into the likeness of Christ. From time to time He raises up men divinely endowed to combat some shape of error, to propagate some pregnant truth. All preach Christ crucified; all bear Him in their hearts; but their expression of Him varies according to their gifts and graces.

Of the mysteries which the Incarnation reveals, none perhaps more strongly appeals to men, than the place in it of the Virgin Mother of God. Through her the chasm between God and man was bridged over. She, absolutely stainless, gave to the Incarnate Word His Humanity. He in His Infancy nestled close to His human Mother, and took the law from her lips. The Virgin Mother is therefore an instrument of man's redemption, a factor in his sanctification. We cannot eliminate this factor without destroying the entire scheme. And, no more subtle device could be planned for alienating man from God, than the minimizing