

On Saint Teresa's Footsteps.

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For the Carmelite Review.

CONTINUED.



WRITING of the Monastery of the Incarnation, Saint Teresa says: "Though in that house in which I then lived there were many servants of God, and God was served therein, yet because it was very poor,

the nuns left it very often, and went to other places where, however, we could serve God in all honor and observances of religion. The Rule also was kept, not in its original exactness, but according to the custom of the whole Order, authorized by the Bull of Mitigation. There were other inconveniences also. We had too many comforts as it seemed to me; for the house was large and pleasant. But this inconvenience of going out, though it was, and that took most advantage of it, was a very grievous one for me; for many persons, to whom my superiors could not say no, were glad to have me with them."

Gradually the idea gained upon her of bringing her order back to its primitive austerity. Difficulties innumerable arose before her, but she triumphed over them all, and the result was the foundation of the Monastery of St. Joseph in Avila, the oldest convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in the world.

Among the friends who supported her at this gravest period of her life, the name of the Dominican, Father Pedro Hanez, stands prominent. Some years ago I wrote of Father Hanez: "His services were of the highest order, and they ought never to be forgotten by the daughters of St. Teresa, among whom the name of Father Pedro Hanez deserves to be held in veneration as long as the Order of Carmel exists."*

It may be interesting to you, reader, to pay a visit to the venerable Monastery of the Dominicans near Avila. To reach it, return to the town from the Convent of the Incarnation, cross it outside the walls, and take the straight road leading south, it will

bring you to the Monastery of St. Thomas. This religious house was founded in 1482, during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, and here lies buried their only son, Prince Juan, who died in Salamanca in 1497, at the age of 19. Within the transept railing, beneath an exquisitely sculptured monument of white marble, repose the mortal remains of the last male descendant of the ancient royal houses of Castile and Arragon, and, consequently of the early Visigothic kings of the Peninsular. With the death of Prince John, the house of Austria succeeded to the throne of Spain. On her visits to this Church, the Saint of Avila must have frequently breathed a prayer for the soul of the youthful scion of the two illustrious houses of her country.

It was, no doubt, in this church, that the vision took place of which she speaks in the thirty-third chapter of her life, in which she beheld the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph clothing her with a garment of dazzling whiteness.

The convent of St. Joseph was established in 1561, with the aid of a virtuous lady of the family name of Guyonan, and with that of Juana de Ahumada, a sister of the Saint, whose tomb we shall, hereafter see, at Alba de Tormes. Although I have followed an order more in accordance with the life of St. Teresa, the convent of St. Joseph was the first place I visited in Avila connected with her memory. It was still early when I reached the city among the hills, and the keen morning air sent a chill through my frame as I stepped out of the train. After a brief visit to the Cathedral, I went in quest of an American lady from Boston, who is now a resident of Avila, and for whom I had a letter of introduction. The lady is well acquainted with the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, and she kindly sent her servant to accompany me to the convent. I had wished to have an interview with the prioress, but an established custom prevented the fulfillment of this desire, for Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Spain do not go to the parlor on their communion days, and this happening to be one, I was deprived of the pleasure of speaking to the successor of St. Teresa. However, I saw all of the convent and church that an outsider is permitted to see.

Returning from the Monastery of Santa Tomas, on reaching the city, bear slightly to

* *The Review*, August 1892, p. 29.