



The Lesson of the Dying Lamp.

(Sister Therese Martin, Carmelite of France, died in her Convent in 1898, at the age of twenty-five, after ten saintly years of religious life. The incident embodied in the following verses is narrated by this gifted young nun (in prose) in her exquisite autobiography—an English translation of which, "A Little Flower of Jesus," has recently been published.)

I WATCHED a little lamp whose flick'ring flame
Told of a light that shortly must expire ;
When, lo! an aged nun approaching came,
And touched her taper to its dying fire.

Then, up and down the choir, our Sister went,
And with her candle kindled all the rest,
Till ev'ry nun with burning taper bent,
Before the Sacrament adored and blest.

Deep in my soul, I said : "Where is the one
Who dares to glory in his own poor deeds?"
The whole world might be fired by this nun
With the small spark that from yon lamp proceeds.

"Oft do we fancy that rare grace and light
Have reached us from some new and brilliant source,
But, whence have these derived their lustre bright,
Whence, their converting grace -- their fiery force ?

"Perhaps, ah ! me, 'twas from the fervent prayer
Of some poor little soul—abased, unknown,
Who claimed no shining virtues for its share,
But died, as it had lived, in God alone.

"What mysteries are these, one day to be
Revealed unto our spirit-eyes above !
Perchance I owe all graces granted me,
All the sweet favors of a God of love,

"To secret pleadings of some humble soul,
Some little faithful spirit hidden here,
Whom I shall only know beyond Death's goal,
Shall only meet in God's celestial sphere !"

—ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.