

THE CARMELITE REVIEW.

4
work of rough times, and he succeeded in doing it, where polished caution would have failed. If his zeal in the cause of faith seemed at times excessive, who shall honestly say that it was a fault? In all ages, the Fathers of the Church have passionately asserted those dogmas which the world most denied. And, in an age of perfunctory religion and positive unbelief, he met unfaith with all the strength of a mighty nature. Above all things, he abhorred a Laodicean, "neither hot nor cold." His whole nature was hot with the love of God and the desire for His service. He had no enemies but those whom he conceived to be the enemies of some great and essential principle. He respected all men who were in earnest, but he did not spare them when they were wrong. But, the battle over—the blows given and taken—he was ready to hold out the hand of friendship.

If, in his writings, even some of his friends found some strong expressions which seemed to them better omitted, it must be remembered that they were *obiter dicta*—flies in the amber of principle. "To know all," as Montaigne said, "is to pardon all." And the men who were hurt by them were, after a time, ready to acknowledge the nobility of soul that Mr. McMaster possessed, the greatness of his genius, the extent of his sacrifices, and the loftiness of his aims. He who understands the physical obstacles which Mr. McMaster had to overcome during the last ten years, in order to work at all, and the intense irritability induced by a physical state in which he could eat almost nothing, and scarcely sleep, can forgive these *obiter dicta*.

Even the saints had to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses."

In a letter which McMaster wrote to Mother Louise, Prioress of the Carmelite convent in Baltimore, he plainly states why he uses sharp language, when in his opinion it seemed necessary. We here reproduce his letter:

"NEW YORK, May 7th, 1884.

"REV. MOTHER LOUISE, Prioress.

"My very dear friend:—I sent off to you this afternoon two copies of my first article on the new Scapular discussion. It is rough. Maturely thinking it over, I concluded that was the right way to deal with

the enemy. To have been more gentle, would have been to treat the Dictionary matter as a question of opinion. Next week I propose to give an article,—not of controversy,—but setting forth what the Church teaches for the *practical good of the faithful* in the Scapular. God has given me a facility for writing clearly, and sharply. As in this case, of impudent assailants of the Holy Scapular, it is right to confound them, that the simple faithful be not misled. But an intellectual triumph over error is a barren thing, if it be not promotive of the *living exercise of the truth* indicated. For this higher aim, I need *help and grace*. I am a miserable, indeavouring *worldling*. I can handle all the *words* necessary, but the *unction* that can make them tell, must come from on high. So 'I lift my eyes to the mountain, whence help can come to me.' I turn to your 'Carmel,' to propitiate Our Lady of Carmel for me. That my zeal may not be bitter, and the wisdom that will guide me may be as my Patron St. James prescribes,—first modest, then peaceable, and finally, full of good fruits. I do assure you, and with no mock humility, which I detest, I stand greatly in need of these sweet graces. And, for the love of our dear Lady of Carmel, ask for me these graces, and do not make the mistake of thinking I am a pious man. I wish to be,—but I am not,—and do not work to become such, though I so well know I ought to do so. 'He that knows to do good, and does it not, makes himself guilty.' I ask, then, the help of your Carmel. For I hope, out of this dirty controversy about the Dictionary, to awaken, for the glory of Our Lady of Carmel, and for the good of souls, to arouse a fresh devotion among many of the faithful, to the *perpetual miracle* of the most sacred Scapular. I intend writing several, perhaps a good many articles, with this purpose. Now, very dear Mother, having finished with the above, I ask to enclose to you eight dollars, to cover the cost of binding the new Breviary. I will, also, send you the *odd* copy of the *Hore Divine* I spoke about. As I am the one Father of the community, give my love to all the dear Daughters. As to the *little one*, that I miss every day, from my poor, New York domicile, tell her, once more, that I *rejoice* that she is where she is. What is this life, but a moment. How