

INTRODUCTION

ON the fifth of November, 1686, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, an English gentleman, purchased a house and garden at a place called Micklegate-Bar, in Yorkshire, and deeded it to a select religious community of English ladies established in the City of Munich, Bavaria.

Some of the members were voluntary exiles who had left England during the turbulent reign of James I and entered the Community that they might in peace and security, answer the call of their Divine Master to a life of prayer and contemplation.

The foundress of this Community was the illustrious Mary Ward, an English lady, intimately associated by birth with many of the great Catholic families of Yorkshire, England. She was born on the twenty-fifth of January, 1583, in Yorkshire, and, during the dark days following the apostasy of Henry VIII, lived with her parents in Paris, France. Here, in the twenty-fourth year of her age, she founded her Community and opened at St. Omer, 1609, a select school for young ladies. The Community increased in numbers, and in time was able to answer appeals to open schools in Bavaria, Flanders, Austria and Italy. In 1642, the saintly Mary Ward visited Heworth, England, where she died on the twenty-third of January, 1645.