

MEANING OF THE SCAPULAR.

CARDINAL VAUGHAN thus beautifully explains the meaning of the brown Scapular :

"Some ignorant people are said to regard the wearing of the Scapular as a foolish, or at best a childish thing," says His Eminence. They ask what possible advantage can there be in wearing two bits of brown cloth? What is the use, they say, of these externals, when virtue and religion have their place in the heart?

They forget that external acts of worship, by striking man's senses, force upon his soul thoughts and feelings of devotion and piety;—that inward acts of worship naturally manifest themselves by outward signs, which re-act upon the soul;—that religious rites are always external, and that there is no religion without them.

They forget too the value which the most educated and civilized nations attach to their flag, the sign of national honor. How men reverence it! How willing they are to bleed and to die for it! And yet what is their flag, if considered in itself, but a piece of hunting?

How many civil and military Orders have been founded in different countries! How highly their emblems are prized! The greatest personages consider it an honor to wear the clasps, ribbons, medals, and cloaks which have been chosen as the insignia of these Orders. These are outward signs of honor and pledges of loyalty; and civilized nations universally recognize and value them.

The Holy Scriptures themselves show us that from the earliest times the bestowal of a garment has been used as an indication of love and favor. The Patriarch Jacob gave his favorite son Joseph a many colored tunic as a sign of special love. Jonathan stripped himself of the coat with which he was clothed and gave it to David, because he loved him as his own soul (1 *Kings* 18). Elias, ascending to heaven, bestowed his cloak upon Eliseus as a sign of the descent

upon him of his own prophetic spirit. And the Church hastens after baptism to clothe the adopted child of God with a white garment, as indicative of the purity bestowed, and of the innocence of life to which it has been pledged.

Now, the Scapular of Mount Carmel is the badge of an Order of devotion. It is an external mark or sign that the person wearing it has been enlisted under the banner of the Queen of heaven, as a knight bound to her honor and service.

Great houses have their liveries; and those who wear them are known by their livery to be in the service of a particular family. In like manner, the Scapular is a livery; and those who wear it are considered to be in the service of the Blessed Virgin. If they are faithful, and place confidence in her, she will protect them; she will show them special favor, as it is natural to her character to do. Even in this world, lords show a preference for the servants who wear the livery which they recognize as their own.

The Scapular then is the badge of an Order of chivalry, which is purely devotional; it is a livery of the Blessed Mother of God, which all are free, and none are forced, to wear. It is an external sign of love, fidelity, and service. It is a great honor to be enrolled in the Confraternity and to wear the Scapular, both on account of its origin, its meaning, and the numerous and extraordinary privileges which have been attached to it.

"Our Lady of Mount Carmel, thus
Sometimes thy name is known;
It tells of the badge we wear,
To live or die thy own."

—A. A. Proctor.

COLUMBUS daily recited the Hours of our Lady. The pious navigator received a beautifully bound copy of the little Office of the Blessed Virgin as a gift from Pope Alexander VI.