

every action, and a reason above our animal natures. The power and necessity of religious belief is therefore a proof of our own higher destiny.

After Charlotte's baptism, I spent a few days with her ; and one evening as we sat embroidering in the drawing-room, her grandfather quietly dozing, she broke the silence by questioning me concerning the nuns.

"Tell me, Jeanne, why do they desire to be different from other people by choosing that particular life?"

"I will try to explain," I replied. The founders of monasteries and convents have usually been men and women who having weighed society in the balance have found it wanting. They have found the "Master" and become the glad receivers of the words which He addressed to the young patrician who was desirous of perfection. The precept to "keep the Commandments," they know to be meant for all men, and His advice, "If you would be perfect sell all, give to the poor, and follow Me," for the few whose religious temperaments and the lofty aspirations, show them to be called to the higher life—life of the Counsels. With St. Paul, "they die to the world" to follow Christ more closely and bind themselves by vow to observe the laws of poverty, chastity and obedience. They leave all, put their wealth into a common fund, and wear a religious habit, as a mark of their equality, to do away with personal vanity, and as a profession of their faith and calling. They put on the yoke of Christ and strive to alleviate some of the suffering they see about them, and strive themselves to practice higher perfection, to lift their souls above the level of natural selfishness—truly a sublime existence!"

"Ah yes, Jeanne, but how fearfully hard! It would not do for us all!"

"It would be impossible and even wrong for all to seek it," I answered. "It must be our vocation. The call must come from God, and we must be adapted for it by nature and temperament. We must each follow Christ in the path His will indicates."

"Are they happy, these religious men and women, Jeanne?" she continued.

"Infinitely, Christ has promised to such lives 'a hundred-fold' of joy, and they alone understand the joy of spiritual and intellectual peace, though they desire blessedness more than happiness."