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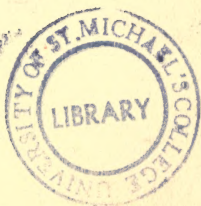
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THE SOCIETY OF
SACRED HEART



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NET ERSKINE STUART



THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART



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THE SOCIETY OF
THE SACRED HEART

BY

JANET ERSKINE STUART

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART,
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REVEREND MOTHER STUART wrote this little book during her voyage to Australia in 1913. The letter which she sent with the manuscript to the Convent, Roehampton, contained these words:—

“It is quite a little book of the sea—for it was planned on the Adriatic, begun on the Red Sea on the First Friday of November, mostly written on the Indian Ocean, and finished on the South Pacific on the feast that is one of my great days—St. Thomas of Canterbury—full of associations and memories.”

The first copies of the book were printed the day after Reverend Mother Stuart's death, which took place on October 21st, 1914.—R.I.P.



INTRODUCTION.

IT is not easy to write of things that are actually in being, between a past that is only beginning to lengthen into distances and a future that is still unknown. Events move quickly, and living things modify themselves even while they move.

But at any time in the life of a corporate body that owes a debt of gratitude to God, to the Church, and to its first authors, a true picture, though a fleeting one, may be given of it as it stands to-day; thankful for the past and hopeful for the future, striving in the present to realize the purpose for which it has come into being.

This is what is aimed at in the following sketch of the Society of the Sacred Heart. It is not the story of its life, it is merely an attempt at a character-sketch, and an expression of its gratitude to God, to the Church, and to all those who honour it with their friendship.

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CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY.

“ Ein Tropfen Regenwasser fiel auf ein glühend Eisen,
Und war nicht mehr;
Er fiel in eine Blume and glänzt, als eine Perle,
Und blieb ein Tröpflein Tau;
Er sank in eine Muschel zur segenreichen Stunde,
Und ward zur Perle selbst.”—*Herder*.¹

THE Society of the Sacred Heart has been singularly blessed by God: in the littleness of its origin, in the providential assistances and trials through which it came into being, in its first rapid extension. It has been blessed in the persecution which has followed it through many countries, driving the native members from their homeland until all the world has become their country. It has been blessed in the faithful and devoted friendships which have never failed it, and even in the bitter and tenacious prejudices which have not been wanting from the beginning until our own day to keep it vigilant and awake. It has been blessed in the strokes of adversity which have come upon it, and in the almost visible interference of God; warding them off or carrying it through each trouble as it arose. It is blessed, most of all, in

¹ There fell a drop of rain where molten iron glowed,
Forthwith it ceased to be.
Within a flower's cup it fell, and, like a pearl
Gleamed, but dissolved in dew.
A shell received that drop, and in a fateful hour
Transformed it to a pearl.

the special bond of unity which joins all the members together; so strongly that those who see it have declared that no human power could have welded so many diverse spirits and nationalities in one whole, and that, without doubt, the finger of God is here.

“This little Society,” as the Foundress loved to call it—youngest born as it was in time, and smallest in growth when she first began to write about it—did not originate in her mind. It had been “in the air” of the spiritual world for some time before she knew of it. Two attempts had been made under conditions which, humanly speaking, might have commanded success; there were names and antecedents that would have impressed the world, and were not without consideration in the Church. But God—as He has often chosen to do—set aside the eldest-born, disregarding “their stature and the beauty of their countenance,” and chose for the great work one that was young and poor, without experience, without ambition, country-bred and quite unknown, that it might not be of man, but the work of His own hand.

The young priest who had first understood the need, and received in prayer the idea of the new association, died before it could be carried out. Father Léonor de Tournély never saw the Society that he had dreamed of. But he died affirming that, in spite of two failures, his confidence was unshaken: *It will be*, he said, *it will be*; and he left this hope as a legacy to his friend, Father Joseph Varin, laying on him the obligation of discovering how it could be realized. The story of a little

“Madeleine Sophie” has been often told, and must not, here, be told again, except to say that she was a first member providentially *found* for the new undertaking; and that, still scarcely more than a child, and frightened at the thought of anything so new and untried, she almost found in her arms, without knowing it, the Society of the Sacred Heart. The child was God’s child, and the hour was God’s hour; He had brought them together, and from the first moment the work was His own. He commanded it to live and grow and increase; and the Foundress, never taking a step of her own accord, but waiting for the guiding hand of His Providence at each parting of the ways, *saw* it rather than made it grow. She saw it with wonder, never without fear; she was indignant as at a blasphemy when she was called a foundress; she recognized not even a founder’s hand, save that of God, in its origin, though she loved and leaned with a child’s trust on Father Varin in the early years, and venerated him with a daughter’s grateful devotion when his active help was, before long, withdrawn. She said it would be “horrible” to suppose that she had had any personal share in the creation of the Society which she governed. In every word and act of her administration she made it clear that she regarded it as a trust, and in no way a “life’s work,” or an effort of human invention to satisfy the “need of the time.”

Yet, when seen from the other side, the need of the time for such an institution is now very evident. Socially speaking, France was in one of those still

lucid moments, that come in convalescence after acute illness. Calmness was returning, and after delirium, clear thoughts were dawning, and hope was beginning to revive. Amongst those clear thoughts there stood out the urgent need of a new education for girls. The general intensifying of thought, the wide spreading of new ideas, the emancipation of forces that had passed beyond control at the contact of those ideas, made a new time on the ruins of what had gone before, and its needs pressed hard on the minds of those who cared for the kingdom of God. Then it was realized more clearly than had been seen before how much of the future, for good or for evil, hung on the influence of women, and that a systematic education preparing them for their responsible charges in life, was one of the most powerful means of directing the course of the coming time. This was God's hour; He had prepared His instrument by a long and rare fashioning. Little Madeleine Sophie had received an education which was found afterwards to have specially fitted her for a work so new; one that necessitated the making of a complete plan for the training of girls of the upper classes, to fit them to meet the altered state of the world. She had been trained by her brother, a young priest of high ideals, severely exacting as to her application to study, and still more as to the self-renunciation in which, as her godfather and spiritual guide, he felt it his duty to exercise her. He kept his sister at classical studies until they won their fascinating power over her mind; then abruptly withdrew them, and set his unwilling but obedient pupil to

the study of the Fathers of the Church, of Sacred Scripture and philosophy. He grounded her in mathematics, and allowed modern languages as a recreation. This was the foundation that he laid, without knowing what was to be raised upon it. The woman's side of training came to her from her mother; her own instinct, observation and experience did the rest.

This child of the Burgundian country-side had something in her blood that fitted her for carrying out a great enterprise. Simplicity, hardihood, and high spirit were nurtured in its vineyards and farmlands; something that lifted the soul easily to magnanimous thoughts and deeds seemed to be an added gift in the province that owned so many great names in the Church and in secular life. It was not a little thing to be sprung from the same soil as St. Bernard and St. Jane de Chantal, as Ven. Claude de la Colombière and many saintly monks of Cluny, besides the great Dukes of brave memory who had been lords of Burgundy. The influence of climate and country cannot fail to impress itself strongly on the whole being of a child, especially when families are bound by their way of living to the land, and remain for generations in the same place, giving it time to tell. Our homeless manner of modern life is effacing types and characteristics and tending to a level of uniformity in language and thought, even in expression of countenance, that involves the loss of many precious features of character. But, in the time when Blessed Madeleine Sophie was growing up in the sun of her father's vineyard and the shadow of

her garret study, Burgundy gave an accent to the whole being which was unmistakable. Sensitive, receptive, happy, generous, never at a loss for a reply, turning her phrases neatly, quick in observation, helpful and ready of hand, persevering in work but full of playful brightness, prompt to rebound after constraint, and easily exhilarated, she grew up noble and simple of soul, loving in disposition, clinging as her own vines, and hardy as they to bear the sharp pruning of trials and losses that the events of the times brought upon her life. She was fourteen years old in the terrible year 1793; the sight and hearing of all that took place, accentuated by the imprisonment of her own brother, gave what might otherwise have been wanting in her soul: the power of endurance, firmness to hold emotion in control and check the growth of sensitiveness, courage to keep up hope in bad days, and to win others to hope against overwhelming trouble. In this time, too, there came into her life a significant gift from the brother whose imprisonment had been so great a trial. After his release, he sent home two pictures, representing the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Most Pure Heart of Mary. The Sacred Heart, even the very name, was at this time a sign of salvation to some, and a sign of contradiction to others in France—passionately loved or passionately hated. The double sign floated like a seed down the wind into Madeleine Sophie's life, and planted deeply there the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

In many quarters a work of preparation had been going on for some years, and the line of several

lives had been converging to a meeting-place, after which the course of Madeleine Sophie's existence changed. Father Louis Barat's mission with regard to his sister came to an end; Father de Tournély's dream began to be realized; Father Joseph Varin fulfilled his promise to his dying friend; and, in the greatest obscurity and poverty, as yet without a name or a mission, except to consecrate its members to the service of God, the Society of the Sacred Heart was born.

It was born in a little upper room in Paris, and in the joy of its first consecration, nearly burned down the house in which the consecration had been made at Father Varin's Mass. Its birthday was the Feast of Our Lady's Presentation, the twenty-first of November, 1800.

It had never been the dream of the Blessed Foundress in her girlhood to give herself to the work of education. Her first idea of consecration to God had been in the contemplative life, and the goal of her desires was to be a Carmelite. It was with a very great effort of submission that, at the command, which she understood to be from God, this first dream was laid aside, and she accepted a life less remote from the world and more troubled by outside claims. The old longing died hard, if it ever died at all; but in later life she found consolation in seeing how many vocations, whose first bent had been towards the Carmelite life, came to the Sacred Heart, when, through want of dowry or some other impediment, they could not obtain admission into a Carmelite Convent. She was happy that they found their aspirations after a life of

union with God satisfied, when they had understood what the spirit of their new vocation asked of them and allowed. It was far from Blessed Madeleine Sophie's mind to establish what the Society of the Sacred Heart has been so often called: "an educational Order." The primary idea was that of a life consecrated to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; the first months were spent in solitude, study, manual work, an informal community life, and such hidden works of spiritual mercy as this very obscurity allowed. The work of education was the first means adapted to the end which the Providence of God indicated by circumstances; but all concerned moved slowly in the matter, and to the first members of the new Society, prayer and the exercises of the spiritual life were its chief interest and occupation, with the necessary work for a livelihood; for the whole resources of the Institute in its beginnings were limited to Madeleine Sophie's five franc piece.

These were her happiest days, the honeymoon of her religious life; but they did not last long. When the work of education began—the work which was to grow so fast in her hands—the first children of the Sacred Heart gathered round her; and the blessed children brought the ever blessed cares and troubles with them; and the worst trouble of all was that Madeleine Sophie, the little one, the shy and silent one, was chosen Superior, and, wanting to obey, was called to rule, and was never allowed to lay down the burden of governing the new Institute until her death more than sixty years later. First member, first Superior, and first Superior-

General—she who could not manage the children, she who always wanted to run away and hide and be alone with God! It is no wonder that He hid from her what was to come, and revealed it only step by step, leading her blindfold, and at times forcing her on by the kind but imperious voice of Father Varin, until she knew without possibility of doubt what God willed of her. She was not one that seemed born to rule; and it was perhaps a special gift that this was so, for the personal impress which she left behind after sixty years of government was that of her sanctity, not of her character. No member of her Order tries to model herself on the Foundress; no personal example is held up before the whole Institute except the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Most Pure Heart of Mary. In this she had her way; she disappeared, to leave all the light and interest of the picture to focus on the Sacred Heart, which was the sun of her own life. So her words are treasured, and her thoughts are in great honour; but those who loved her best in life, and now venerate her most intensely, never try to imitate her.

Against her will Blessed Madeleine Sophie was Superior-General; against her first inclination she undertook the work of education; but in both of these functions she rose high in excellence. As Superior-General she governed with vigilant eye and firm hand. She whose too-ready smile and gentle ways could not obtain discipline in school-room or playground, could make herself heard with vehement earnestness and insistence when it was needful to uphold the honour of religious life,

the observance of rule, and especially that complete consecration to God which she held as the first essential of the new Institute.

But, if the hand was firm, it was also light. The watchword was to be "generosity"; she counted on spontaneous readiness for everything; she was not given to *minutiae* in discipline; "the first rule of the house was not to worry anyone," so she said, but she knew and counted on the faithfulness that could take gaily, without being worried by them, the countless details which perfect community observance and the work of education, impose upon natural inclination and the outcropping of any form of selfishness.

In the work of education Blessed Madeleine Sophie had pioneer's work to do. The new order of things after the Revolution made demands that the old order had not imposed. It was not a matter of building again a house that had fallen into ruin, but of using what foundations remained to prepare a building better fitted for the needs of the time. The first plans of school rule and studies, as far as they can be known, are very simple, and have a certain youthful touch and a pretty classical turn that are quite characteristic of what we know of the Foundress's youth. There is a hint from Fénelon's *Education des Filles* here, and a suggestion of Madame de Maintenon's practical ways there, but there is no *ancien régime* about it. There is a free, unpretentious, simple way of looking at education, from its mainspring in religious teaching to a demure little paragraph on the necessity of dancing which has all the fresh-

ness and charm of a new beginning, and the impress of a mind transparently good, free from all pedantry and full of faith in the future. Disappointments came later; but the more Mother Barat gained in experience, the more she learned to value this lovable, troublesome work of education, the more she loved the children; until, in the last years, she said that they were, with the Sacred Heart, the one interest of life for her; a twofold interest, but one and the same, since the value of the children lay in that they were children of God, and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

When Blessed Madeleine Sophie died in 1865 she left the immediate management of affairs in the hands of her young "Vicar-General," Mother Josephine Goetz, who was elected second Superior-General a few months later. Her character contrasted markedly with that of the Blessed Foundress, but the most complete understanding existed between them. Young as she was, she had held with faithful devotion the position of "eldest daughter"; for the first companions of the Foundress were almost all dead, and the "second generation," over which the Mother mourned as having been "too quickly made perfect," also seemed to have been swept away. She felt a great solitude round her. Mother Goetz had been the attentive disciple of her last years, gathering up the ideas for the future which the Blessed Foundress could not carry out, and making it the duty of her life as Superior-General to put them in execution. Mother Josephine Goetz was Alsatian by birth; grave, thoughtful and studious by charac-

ter; a great reader, a deep thinker, a singularly thoughtful observer of human nature. She had been for several years Mistress of the General Novitiate, and this had helped to fit her for taking up the work of government when the Foundress laid it down. Her plan was principally one of consolidation, and the completion of the system of training of the young religious for the work of education by the organization of a course of studies. Mother Goetz only governed eight years, and at her death was succeeded by a Belgian Superior-General, Mother Adèle Lehon. The Society of the Sacred Heart entered, with her, on a new period of expansion. During the life-time of the Blessed Foundress it had already tried its wings beyond the homeland. It was only eighteen years old when the first members left for America under Mother Philippine Duchesne, one of the first and best-loved companions of the Foundress; now "Venerable" since the Cause of her Beatification is well advanced. It was a bold and rare flight in those days, and a laborious work, long unsuccessful, to establish the new Institute in America; but such high confidence and true devotion could not fail; America is now realizing the long-tried hopes of the Venerable Mother Duchesne. There were houses of the Sacred Heart in Rome, in Piedmont, in Belgium and Holland, in Austria and Germany, in England and Ireland, in Spain, Poland and the West Indies, before the Blessed Foundress died. There were vocations from all these countries; and the young Society was affirming more and more that its mission and message was Catholic

and not national. Mother Lehon's most active years had been passed in Rome and other cities of Italy, where she had seen the events of 1859, and of other troubled years. She brought to the government of the Institute a precious inheritance of devotion to Rome as the centre of Catholic life, and also a courage with much experience of revolutionary troubles, that helped her through years of disturbance and menace which never altered her peace of mind, and allowed her to go on founding, building and extending, though she knew that many things which she founded might be swept away in the next storm; so they were, but most of them after her time. There was again a pause after her death; for nine months Mother Augusta von Sartorius ruled the Society, and died, as she had foreseen, under the weight of a burden that was too heavy for her sensitive nature. The storm that was gathering in France against the Religious Orders broke during the government of her successor, Reverend Mother Mabel Digby. It fell to her to provide for 2,500 religious, turned out by the French Government, and to find or found for them houses and work elsewhere, keeping for them their full religious life and observance, and losing "none of those who had been given to her" in this great out-going from forty-four houses. She had the privilege of opening a new tabernacle elsewhere for each one that she was obliged to close, and she has left on record two remarks which will remain as a traditional standard of values if similar circumstances should occur again: "We must not hold to our houses more than our Lord holds to them Him-

self"; and: "What would be the loss of *all* our houses in comparison with one deliberate infidelity on the part of one of us?"

The gust of wind that swept over France was not the first dispersion that had befallen the Society of the Sacred Heart since its beginning. It had been driven from Piedmont in 1848, from other places in Italy in later troubles; from Switzerland, very early in its history, with a decree of banishment, "the barring of the door," which has never since been unbarred; from Germany in the *Kulturkampf*; and there, also, after thirty years, the door is still locked and barred. But these losses have been compensated by gains; the last blast has carried, not dead leaves, but living seed far and wide, and often it has fallen on good soil in places of promise. Vocations shaken out of the home soil have struck root again in distant lands. Other members, jealous of the honour, have been allowed to volunteer with them, or have been sent with the strong support of obedience, more happy than if they had volunteered. They have planted houses of the Sacred Heart in Japan, on the Highlands of Colombia, on the uncertain ground of Uruguay, where local troubles are constantly threatening to blow the seed away again. They are more firmly rooted in more stable soil in various parts of America and Europe; they have been carried out to many islands, and from all far centres they affirm that it is good to be there, and cry to Europe that the harvest is great and labourers few, and beg for more help to gather it in.

From Heaven the Blessed Foundress must re-

joyce to see so many of her dearest wishes accomplished, glad to see her children counted worthy to suffer some hard blows in the cause of God's kingdom, glad to see them thrive on persecution, and think themselves happy to be sent to the ends of the earth, glad to see vocations come up year after year, if somewhat diminished in number from the countries from which her children have been driven, at least more true and tried by the additional sacrifice of country without any assurance of return, or even of seeing the Society return in their lifetime. She must be glad above all of the wonderful protection of God, confirming the confidence which she always felt, which we must always feel, that He specially loves and protects what must ever be to her and to us, "this little Society."

CHAPTER II.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

"Great things are done by devotion to one idea."—*Cardinal Newman.*

"The work of the morrow will largely consist of the impossible of to-day."—*H. Plunkett.*

IT belongs to living things to be in motion and to undergo modifications. Immutability belongs to inanimate matter; to "still life," or to death. A high degree of vitality is generally accompanied by more marked changes, and at the same time by a stronger hold upon the unchanging identity that underlies all modification. So, among human beings, strong personalities are most entirely and permanently themselves; and, without fear of losing themselves, can challenge the currents of circumstance to play upon them, adapt themselves to new conditions, and come back to their own to face the more searching scrutiny of father and mother and kindred, and prove that they are still "of the blood." Change has not passed upon what was deepest down in their souls, but the discipline of change has called out its deepest response. They have changed; but that change was growth. They are unchanged; and that unchangeableness is their truth. Weaker characters, similarly exposed to influences from without, are in more danger of losing themselves, and, as it is said, "drop out of their family," and are absorbed into another class of life and manner of thinking. They come home

changed in themselves, and scarcely recognizable. Life is the school in which personalities are tried. As the individual so the religious Order is tried in the school of life; but its school is in the contemporary events through which the whole Church passes, and in which her saints are formed, her champions tried, and her religious Orders tested and proved and drawn on in the way of perfection.

These religious Orders, in their rise and growth, must go through vicissitudes similar to those through which individuals are tried and trained up to their full power. Without such experience and conflict they would remain incomplete, and incapable of carrying on their members to the perfection of their calling. Their life is not allowed to remain primitive and uncomplex, as it was for most of them in the earliest years. Then they lived as children do: almost forgetful of yesterday, and hardly conscious of to-morrow beyond a hopeful determination to live and do something with it when it comes. But there comes a moment in the life of a child when this way of living must change. It becomes more conscious of itself, less simple, less careless, at first sight, less beautiful. It is between two stages, like a fruit tree in May; the blossom is away, the fruit not yet come. The stage is critical, unbeautiful to those who look on without a stake in the results; they call it the "awkward age," the "difficult years," and other disapproving names. But to those who really care, the gardener for the fruit tree, father or mother or educator for the child, and for the young creature itself, who

is being carried on by the current of years, this stage has all the thrill, the terror, and the rush of a crisis. The child outgrowing childhood, is divided between a longing to be true to what is best, and an imperious command from within to be itself. To see that these two are the same thing is a solution that comes later on, and harmonizes the perplexing dissonance.

This is not the only critical stage of life, though it is the one most watched and studied. In a sense it is through this period that the Society of the Sacred Heart must make its way at present. Owing to the great age of the Blessed Foundress it has been postponed longer than for other religious Orders. But now the very last members who have known her are passing away; and it is said to be a critical moment in the life of any religious Order when those members, the last link with the Founder, have disappeared. There is a certain wistful uncertainty about it, as when parents die, and the children, just coming of age, are seeking a new centre of gravity in the family. And that new centre of gravity, eldest boy or eldest girl, must have great self-questioning within, a solitary self-examination on personal disinterestedness and a heightened sense of responsibility in looking to the future. Then there are stages of further growth and periods of quiescence to be gone through, each with their own alarms; is the growth true to its kind? Is the quiescence normal rest or inertness? Never, at the moment of going through an experience, can we fully understand it; part of its discipline is that very uncertainty. Yet, neither in the

individual life, nor in the growth of a religious Order, need the fundamental peace be disturbed if its trust is in God; it is on Him alone that both must count "through the changes and chances of this mortal life," to bring them to the end of their being.

Probably, every religious Order when studied from within, and as its perspective begins to lengthen, can recognize such distinct periods of advance and rest in its history. It may be that in them is found something of its distinctive rhythm; and to catch the rhythm is a great advance towards understanding the whole of a mind or of a life. Some advance by imperceptible progress; steadily, with imperceptible intervals of rest. Others mark their progress with more accentuated beats, appearing less consistent, but in reality perhaps only giving forth a more marked rhythmical stroke. It goes or comes like deep or quick breathing; it pulsates like the stroke of oars; or it rises and falls like the incoming and outgoing tide irresistibly drawn on, and then allowed to lapse back into the heart of the deep, only to be called forth again, and to gather itself back and collect its waters once more to their centre. Orders in which the mixed life is followed, blending contemplation and action, have necessarily a more marked rhythm in their history. At one time they will make great advances, extend their activities more widely, found new houses, make experiences of new forms of work; at other times the strength of the Order will be drawn inward, to the perfecting of the inner life, and what goes hand-in-hand with it: the full

perfection of community observance. This is the common fund of strength and life from which all must draw according to their needs, to which each one must bring back the success or failure of their outer work, and where all must renew the waste and refresh the weariness of spirit which comes over them in the stress of external activity. Not only daily for each member, but period by period for the whole, these advances and retreats are needed; from the centre to the circumference, from the circumference back to the centre.

Again, in each religious Order there are, besides the regular rhythmical movements of outgoing and intaken breath, other and less measurable currents of thought and feeling that are traceable in retrospect, but hard to discern at the time, affecting widely the whole Institute. Sometimes they coincide with the growth and decline of certain influential personalities, especially if their influence is exercised in centres where the younger members of the Order are congregated. At other times comes the echo of a more general movement which is felt in other religious Orders, or in certain countries, or in the whole Church. Sometimes it is a trace of conflict, or controversy; not harmful, for it keeps the outlook vigilant on the side of danger; sometimes it is the first breath of a new spring in the spiritual world, and brings the joy and thrill of higher hope and aspiration into a whole region or throughout a whole Institute. So the Decrees that came from Rome in 1905, concerning frequent and daily Communion, were indeed a new spring, and carried a resistless impulse of fresh

vigour to the very soul and centre of religious life for communities of women; and, from the first months, their influence could be almost measured "in quietness and in confidence"; in the disappearing of unrest and questionings; in a more perfect unity of spirit. So again, in England, within the last few years, who has not felt that a new current has been infused into the very springs of spiritual life; that the old shadows are passing away, and things undreamt of coming true; that God has again more visibly pitched His tabernacle among us; that His word is more clearly heard, His spirit more intimately in our midst, and this especially in what concerns the inner life of souls? Who can say whence it comes? It is not an external movement, but a whispered word; heard by ears that are ready to catch it, and inspiring the spiritual writings and teachings of these years in a way that gives them eager welcome, not only at home, but far beyond. In religious life souls are sensitive and quick to be reached by such life-giving winds, as they are by instinct on the alert to catch any news of the unseen world in which their interests are at home.

These influences of tides and currents of thought and action, and these spiritual vibrations, are very strongly felt in the Society of the Sacred Heart. It is by its very nature quickly responsive to spiritual influences, and a certain intensesness about its responsiveness is an indication of its distinctive feminine mentality, which will be considered later on.

External movements of thought, and the require-

ments of legislation as to the works in which it has a share, also affect it on the side of its professional development; but they do not, as the spiritual influences, reach down to the quick. They are accepted, but considered with a cooler survey. They evoke a response, but no deep vibration; they will have their time, and be succeeded by others, perhaps moving in a contrary direction; but they do not affect the high springs of life. This question, too, must be reserved for consideration in a later chapter. It remains, in this, to give some account of that under-structure of the Institute which does not change.

“Your Society is strongly timbered,” said a Roman Cardinal, after reading its Constitutions. Nevertheless, it is not, strictly speaking, on the Constitutions that the Society of the Sacred Heart bases its strength, but on the living tradition by which it acts. The Constitutions are there, at the back, everything can be verified by them; they give a measure and an authentication of all that is done in the Society; the experienced eye of Roman Cardinals, experts in this examination of religious rules, may read from them the main features of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and religious priests, who have made a study of them, have often been deeply impressed by the spirit of the Constitutions as a whole.

And yet the Constitutions are to us only as Scripture is to Doctrine; we have beside them the living tradition which makes the rule of life.

In the life of the Blessed Foundress it happened

more than once that the Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart were asked for to furnish a basis for some other religious rule. And yet nothing came of it. She gave them; but they could not be taken. She foresaw it by some secret knowledge of her own which perhaps God had given. Some vital spirit, quickening the Rule, had been infused from the beginning, and had been in its first flower even before the Rule was written. There is a letter and a spirit, and the spirit takes precedence. The letter cannot serve without the spirit; but the spirit can flourish, at least for a time, without the letter.

It has been proved by experience, and it even commends itself in principle that this must be so. Give to a little group of fervent souls a ready-made book of Constitutions, say the Rule of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and let them, from the book alone, work out the way and spirit of their community life. It may be safely said that, however perfect the manner of life that they work out from the written Rule, it will not be the way of life of the Society of the Sacred Heart, either as to spirit or ideals, or means to its end. It will have some other countenance and wear a different expression. Only from living soul to living soul can the original spirit be handed down. From the text of the Rule alone, different interpretations would inevitably arise, adjusting the principles of training, where they are only indicated, marking otherwise the attitude towards the world and the frontier of its claims, balancing the contemplative

and active elements in the whole, and allotting the proportion of the part that is common and that which is solitary and private.

By the living tradition and the written law the Institute has come to its full growth, with a marked personality of its own which belongs chiefly to the tradition, and some essential principles of construction which are found in the written Rule.

The Society of the Sacred Heart is governed by a Superior-General, who is elected for life; and by an assembly composed of the Assistants-General who form her private council, and of the Superiors-Vicar corresponding to the Provincials in other Orders. The name of Vicar was preferred by the Consultors of the Sacred Roman Congregation who examined the matter, as rendering better their position of close dependence on the central authority of which they are representatives. The Superiors-Vicar are also local Superiors, governing one house themselves, and entrusted with the supervision over groups of houses. According to the first idea there was to be only one house of novitiate, that all the members of the new Institute might be trained in the same school, know each other personally, and, especially, be known by the Superior-General. The increase of members, and other causes, before long made this impossible; there are at present eight houses of novitiate, six in Europe, one in the United States, and one in South America. The novitiate lasts two years, at the end of which the religious vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience are taken. These are simple perpetual vows. The renovation of vows, which is made twice a year

by the young religious, and once a year by the professed, is a renovation of devotion, and does not imply that the vows were taken for a time and have expired. The five years following the vows are spent either in study, or teaching, or in the many other functions belonging to community life; they are looked on as a time of training, but also of active participation in the duties and responsibilities of the whole community. There is no continuation of life in the novitiate under the care of the Novice-Mistress; the young religious is thrown at once into the life of the community, possibly to impress upon her from the beginning that she must put away the things of a child. At the end of five years, normally, there is a break, and six months of a second novitiate are given as a last probation to prepare for Profession. The final preparation for this act is to go through the Exercises of the long retreat of St. Ignatius, generally lasting for a period of twenty-six days. At the end of this time the Aspirants solemnly take again the vows of Religion, the choir-religious adding to them a vow to consecrate themselves to the education of youth. This is not understood as an obligation of teaching, but of concurring in the work of education by the other many means of direct action in the training and education of children, or even by directing the intention of other kinds of service to the same end. Both choir-religious and lay-Sisters add to the vows of Religion a vow of Stability or perseverance in the Order, from which the Holy See alone can grant dispensation.

The mention of lay-Sisters brings up a point that

has called forth criticism. "Why," it is asked, "make two grades in the Order?" This difference is better understood in Orders of men, where the priesthood marks an unmistakable line of division. But, in an Order where duties and obligations are so much in common, why make a distinction, why not all be alike? Seen from the outside, why not? Yet, seen from within, there are reasons which give great value to the distinction. If none could be received except in the grade of choir-religious, many would have to be refused admission who are now in great honour, and render untold service to the Society. It is true the choir obligation is light: only the short Office of the Blessed Virgin, except on certain Feasts and Octaves, when the Divine Office is said or sung in choir. But even this light obligation would be a burden to many, who willingly give their beautiful service and co-operation in other kinds of helpfulness. It may be said that these could be dispensed from the recitation of Office; but experience shows that such general dispensations take from the perfection of community fervour. Again, it would close the door against some precious vocations, rich with graces, and bringing a great dowry of virtues, whose *mark* replaces their signature in the Register of Vows. These marks are looked on with veneration, and those who use them have almost a distinction of their own, a flavour of originality in their words, an insight into spiritual things, a shrewd sense of many practical aspects of duty and rule which gives them a value apart. They have not been filed down into uniformity by school-books and exer-

cises. They will become more and more rare; yet, to be able to admit them to the common life and happy privileges of religious observance is a grace on both sides. Why should they be refused? They are our sisters and friends, greatly in honour, often patterns of religious perfection, and happier in their circumstances, perhaps, than many choir-religious, for whom, as "the poor Mothers," they often express genuine sympathy and feeling. Undistracted as they are from spiritual interests by occupations that do not absorb their whole attention, they often attain a high degree of interior recollection, and their unburdened memory is singularly tenacious of all good and beautiful things that they hear. The union of spirit and sisterliness between them and the choir-religious can only be known from within; but it is unnecessary to go further into the reasons for their being amongst us. We know that we could not do without each other.

Another matter that has often called forth unfavourable comment is the maintenance of enclosure in an Order whose principal work is that of education. It seems to many to be incompatible with excellence in the giving of instruction, that those who teach children should be cut off from the advantages so accessible now to all who seek them outside. There is a great appearance of truth in the allegation; and yet, for the education which is given by the Society of the Sacred Heart, even professionally, the drawback is more apparent than real. The Institute is not cut off from a great deal that is choice and excellent, which finds its

way through privilege, through friendship and kindness, or through authentic echoes into the convents. It is not cut off from the necessary means when University degrees have to be acquired; and fair judgment proves that the children are no sufferers from the renunciation made of much that is attractive and delightful by those who educate them. On the other hand, the keeping of enclosure in its modified form, as it is kept in the Sacred Heart, enriches the first offering of those who enter with a sacrifice greatly felt in an age of almost over-much travelling and running here and there in search of something new. Later on, it is seen to give distinctness to the religious life; it keeps a certain freedom by its assertion of aloofness from the world, it gives concentration and strong community life, parallel to the family life, whose disappearance from the world is loudly regretted on all sides. It gives a reposeful atmosphere for children; just as that perfect home life, which is so happy for their growth of mind and body, and so steadying for their nerves. Above all, the Catholic instinct understands and likes it; and what the Catholic instinct understands and likes is certain to contain things precious for the whole of Catholic life.

Speaking from the point of view of education alone, His Majesty's Inspectors, often hyper-critical by profession, but often also singularly open-minded in their appreciations, at first are inclined to find great fault with this remoteness from the world which we call *enclosure*; but, on more detailed consideration they have, not seldom, with-

drawn their criticism, and recognized that by the side of some apparent difficulties, there are, even from the point of view of education, some very real benefits.

It remains to speak of the government of each house in particular, and of Superiors in the Society of the Sacred Heart. Superiors are appointed by the Superior-General, and not elected by the community. There is no fixed term of office; they may be changed at irregular intervals, or maintained in their functions for a long time; but the rule and principle exist that there should be changes. The removal of a Superior does not imply that things were not going well, but simply that the normal circulation required by the Rule is following its course. And as Superiors, so too all others in any office, may and even must be changed from time to time. The carrying out of this principle is vital to the best interests of all concerned. It keeps up religious freedom and detachment; it keeps human nature, so prone to settle down when things are happy, from forgetting that, if all are pilgrims and strangers on earth, religious are doubly so, having renounced home and the making of a home to follow One who had not where to lay His head. On the human side it gives experience; it mingles nationalities, it widens sympathies, it keeps the current of life from growing stagnant; it carries fruitful ideas from one house and country to another. Again, there are times of spiritual tension and weariness, and of physical depression, when a change of scene and surroundings is like new life. Without effort, it restores balance to

soul and body, and sets their best energies free again. Lastly, the children whose minds are most perplexed at this "hard saying" that separates them from those to whom they owe love and gratitude, can understand in the end that it works out to their advantage, since after a few years they find friends in all parts of the world.

The idea of governing a house of the Sacred Heart is not that of a formal administration, but more like that of ruling a family. And as in the family, practically, all depends on the mother, so in a religious community the whole house takes its tone from the Superior. St. Francis of Sales knew this, and found in it the chief reason which must delay the extension of the whole Order of the Visitation; it was too rare to find mothers in whom all the necessary qualities were combined. The same consideration holds good elsewhere than at the Visitation; and those who have studied the obligations of Superiors as laid down in their particular rules, may well ask themselves where such complete qualities and virtues can be found. But, as God gives to mothers of families day by day the knowledge and the growing experience to accomplish their duties, as He fills them with devotedness and gives light to their eyes to see beyond the surface of things, as, above all, He seems to give an almost irresistible power to their prayers, so does He give these needful gifts to those whom He sets over religious families.

Superiors represent the authority to whom the vow of obedience is made, and so they have the

power of requiring and enforcing religious obedience in all things allowed by the Rule. The Rule is the measure of their authority to command; and the measure of the obedience that may be required of the subjects by their vow.

Superiors are set, with the sanction of the Church, at the head of a religious family; and thus all the regulation that belongs to religious discipline comes under their authority and supervision. In these two spheres they are the guardians of the Rule, responsible to see that it is kept, and that the vows are observed in their integrity "according to the spirit and Rules of the Society." They must take the necessary means to enforce these obligations, and above all, they themselves are bound to give the example of perfect observance, the most persuasive and powerful of exhortations. So far, it might not be so difficult to be a perfect Superior. Good religious of sufficient capacity and firmness of character might be able to exercise these functions, and keep the discipline of a religious house in good working order. That might be good administration.

But there is a whole realm beyond, in which they must rule by an unwritten law; they must be the mothers of the family, and this is more than administration. They must be sensitively alive to the needs, and joys, and sorrows of each member of the community. These are not their "children," but their grown-up daughters; sensitive themselves, suffering the rise and fall of effort and reaction in the spiritual life; ardent, and needing a restraining hand—or easy, and wanting a stimulus

to bring out their best. Often 'disappointed with themselves, they need to be upheld by hope and the strong support of someone who believes in them. Often, tired by spiritual effort, as by hard work they need to be rested; not by inaction, but by a change in the point of view or a re-adjustment of details in their life. More than all, they want understanding and sympathy in order to call out their best powers; and this needs the eye of a mother to study them, and to study all that will help her to understand them better. It calls also for that confident and insistent prayer which must rise with great power to God wherever a mother sets herself to pray.

CHAPTER III.

TRAINING.

“Freiheit sei der Zweck des Zwanges,
Wie man eine Rebe bindet,
Dass sie, statt im Staub zu kriechen
Froh sich in die Luft windet.”

*Weber, Dreizehnlinden.*¹

THE most precious possessions of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the only possessions, in fact, which it admits to be really precious, are the members called to it by God. Houses may be swept away or confiscated by unfriendly powers; accidents or other untoward events may destroy valuable property, and even property rich with hallowed associations; decrees of expulsion or banishment may drive the religious here and there, flourishing works may be stopped, new beginnings cut down—but it does not matter; the “cities of Israel” are many, there is room elsewhere; and so long as the members are true, and the spirit intact, the heart of the Society will not be afraid. But it stakes its honour and its happiness on the quality of the members; on their understanding and faithfulness and love of their vocation. For their safeguarding no sacrifice is counted great; long training, long patience, changes at great cost to the success of work, indefinite postponement of

¹ Let freedom be the end of all restraint—
As vines are bound, to raise them from the dust,
And lift them, free and glad, to light and air.

what is called usefulness to wait a riper perfection : these are some of the outward signs of the value set on the members as individuals ; these give the key to measures that have sometimes seemed to fly in the face of human prudence.

The first important question is therefore the choice and admission of new members. It is distinctly forbidden to invite or suggest to anyone that they should join the Society of the Sacred Heart. It is held that the first advance should come from those who wish to offer themselves, or from their spiritual advisers. The first reception is sometimes even chilling. Thus the late Superior-General as a girl was refused admission in terms which would have daunted a less magnanimous humility, and prohibited any further advances. Thus, again, it is told of another, who was afterwards admitted, that being uncertain as to the Order to which she was called, she wrote a letter asking admission, and sent a copy to twelve different religious institutes. Eleven acceptances came back and one letter that was almost a refusal, from the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Perhaps the spirit of contradiction added a little human piquancy to the hope of overcoming the opposition ; at all events she said : " That is the place for me " ; and won her entrance.

It often happens that when newcomers first read in the Rules the sum of the qualities required in those who are to be admitted, they are taken aback, and exclaim : " If I had known this before I could never have ventured to offer myself ! " They have not noticed the saving clause : that this finished

portrait is not meant to represent them at their entrance, but that indications and possibilities are looked for, germs of promise; especially goodwill and aptitude to receive training, and, what is most vital, a whole-hearted determination to give themselves to God in the religious life, without reserve or condition. Even conditions that seem to make a more generous offering are not admitted, such as a stipulation that they should be employed in missionary houses, or in the service of the poor, or that they should never return to their own country. Still less are any limitations to the gift of self allowed: such as a condition to be employed or not to be employed in teaching, or a promise asked to remain in one's own country. The offering must be one such as is worthy of God, unconditional and complete, for any country, for any work, for any training that the Society accepting the subject judges to be best for the service of God.

It is not asked that the candidate should bring a dowry. Many of the best vocations come penniless, and are just as welcome with their generous oblation and their good gifts as those who come from time to time, bringing means enough for two or three as well as for themselves. Good health is a matter of importance; but even those without much physical strength can, if they have some spirit and courage, adapt themselves to the obligations of the common life. Melancholy temperaments are very closely scrutinized before they are admitted, and also those disposed to take the troubles of life too much to heart. A great deal of unpreparedness is overlooked if there is enough

strength of mind to bear the necessary chiselling in training, and a blending quality in the character which will make it adaptable to community life, and capable of bearing transplantation.

Brilliance of talent is not looked for; if it comes with a well-balanced mind it is a good gift for which to be thankful; but good intelligence and willing application, or plain good sense ready to give of its best, are considered sufficient promise of serviceableness later on. All who offer themselves must realize that they are not accepted as ready-made, but that they come, as it were, raw material, of more or less known quality, from which religious are to be progressively formed through various means of training, which will work upon them day by day, gradually correcting faults and setting free the higher gifts and qualities from imperfections that might hinder their full development.

Candidates arriving in the novitiate are generally much surprised to find how simple the life is on the surface; how few extraordinary things are asked, or even allowed; how gentle and considerate are the orders given; how easily everything seems to move, without friction, in an atmosphere of mutual confidence. They have braced themselves to bear what seemed to be the obvious and necessary manner of training souls in self-denial: to receive sharp imperatives for orders, constant rebukes and reprehensions; to accept the studied contradiction of all their views and inclinations, with austerities and penitential exercises filling up the background of the picture.

Spiritual books often suggest or hint that this must be the case, and the idea commends itself to the soul set upon giving and doing and bearing all possible hardships for God's sake. So, the very gentle language, and the considerate commands, and the patience of those who instruct, is at first almost a scandal, or is taken as a humiliation, a proof that one is considered unfit to bear any more. Then, little by little, it seems to be the right tone, and is taken for granted. Only much later on in life does the explanation dawn upon the mind. Not only is every line of this surprising charity laid down in the Rule, but in reality it does its work as nothing else could do. The process of training by severity would have a result contrary to that which is wished for. It would harden the fibre of the soul, which would become inured to this hardness, and would not wince or suffer; but it might become insensitive, almost callous, if the treatment were prolonged. Though hardy and brave souls might come out of the training, souls that could be put to any use, whose feelings need never be taken into account, yet this is not the ideal to be aimed at, either for those who command or for those who obey. Superiors would lose that costly discipline of enduring patience which forbids them any too spontaneous or unconsidered word of reproof. Those who obey would never attain that exquisite readiness of spirit which can be managed and regulated by a look, a word, a silence, and controlled by the almost imperceptible disapproval that, like a parent's momentary coldness, reaches further into

the sensitive soul of a child than the loudest expostulation of lesser authorities. At one time, not under the rule of the Blessed Foundress, but under some of her companions, who had themselves been trained in hard discipline, the opposite method was in honour; but those who lived under it, and are now able to look back over long years of religious life, without condemning what was so sincerely meant for the best, are quite clear in their judgment that this was not the true spirit of the Sacred Heart.

The second stage of astonishment is reached by the novice, when she discovers that this method of training, so simple in appearance, exercised with such a light hand, makes demands which leave no spring untouched and no resources unexplored in her whole being. There is no one like St. Francis of Sales for the lightness of touch and incomparable gentleness of his requirements; yet, when he has passed by and laid his hand upon this or that, little things in appearance, that must be given up or overcome, it becomes evident that, asking in appearance for next to nothing, he has taken everything; self-love has nothing left, not even the last satisfaction of feeling that it has done much and handsomely.

What is it that makes the training so hard? It has been said by directors of souls: "If you can go through the training of the Sacred Heart, you can go through anything." Perhaps it is the constancy of the effort required in the process—not only of overcoming the faults which are recognized and evident, but of going up to the source and origin of these faults; learning to know and cut

off their hidden springs, the defects, whether belonging only to temperament or to some fundamental flaw of mind or character, which must be known and frankly faced if they are to be overcome. The beginning of the search has a keen interest for the novice; saints and dragons furnish inspiring comparisons; but to come upon the redoubtable creature in its lair, often the very defect which seems most undesirable and least like the ideal self, to draw it forth and challenge it to single combat, and to carry that challenge through without ever faltering; to accept many failures and face many fresh manifestations of its vitality; this requires endurance and courage more than to bear up against a trial of sharp words or exercise of penance.

With this comes the daily discipline of common life. There is a well-known saying of St. John Berchmans that "common life was his greatest mortification"; and yet he loved the common life and valued every minute observance that regulated it. An understanding of how much the common life is loved may generally be gained when sickness or other circumstances interfere for a time with its exercises. Then it becomes evident how good it is to be in the choir for Office, and present at all the community duties; how much savour there is in all things that religious life gives in common to those who follow it. At the same time community life cannot and may not lose the disciplinary character which makes it the best and dearest of mortifications; especially such community life as entails a large proportion of living to-

gether; where no one has, of right, a cell for solitude and quiet, but each must adapt her arrangements and work and movements to the well-being of all; must be quiet for their sakes, must respect the frontiers of their convenience, and keep an open eye and ready will for all services that may be asked or offered by the wayside; services, from which the closed door of a cell cuts off an inhabitant. St. John Berchmans knew it; he of whom it is left on record that he was the unfailing resource of those who wanted a companion, a Mass-server, a willing "supply"; that he was perfect in all that was considerate and serviceable in sharing rooms; that he forestalled everyone in courteous offer, and was the first and most cordial in welcoming new arrivals; that in all the rubrics of respect and community ceremonial he was the pattern on whom all eyes turned; that this composure and external bearing were so perfectly conformed to the religious community standard that strangers came to public sessions even to catch sight of him.

All these things belong to common life; they make demands at all hours, with an insistence of their own which is a great test of attention, self-denial and self-repression; they are not all written in the Rule, but they impose themselves by an inward law that leaves the written prescriptions far behind; and if anyone can be blameless and perfect in these, it may be taken that they have reached already a fairly high standard of inward mortification. At the same time, it is so little! No one could find matter for vanity in the accomplishment of these mere ~~things~~, although the sum of them



mounts up to a service that neither God nor man could hold cheap.

Self-love and self-will are treacherous and subtle; they seem to give way on one side only to take us at a disadvantage on another. When we are all ardour for the correction of defects and acquisition of virtue, comes another unwelcome and incomprehensible doctrine which seems to clip the wings of aspiration: this is moderation. It has nothing to recommend it to our first fervour. It seems almost a renunciation of ideals, a dowdy, spiritless kind of virtue that keeps on saying *no* when we long to carry things through with a high hand. Yet it has a wonderful power of purification, testing motives and clarifying ideals, and pushing self-renunciation to very trying lengths. It is far more stimulating to self-love to throw itself headlong into mortification and to "do something which the saints have done," not to be left behind, to break one's own record, than it is to listen obediently to the *Nothing too much* that is for ever inculcated, and to accept some leading principles regarding the golden mean in which virtue lies. Superiors are glad to feel the pull of willing and generous spirits striving to do something more and better. At the same time they know that more and better will be given to God by the submission of [w]ill that accepts to be checked, than in the first burst of impulse carrying a soul, perhaps beyond its degree of grace, into regions where there may be danger of vanity, love of display, self-rivalry, the wish to register one's own progress, and where even some preference for the

singular above the common may take hold of the spiritual life. Besides all this, there is a law of reaction which experience shows very plainly at work when the first strength of aspiration has run itself out of breath. What is violent has no staying power; for this reason it is that in Orders of religious women a training in moderation is of great importance. Girls and girl-novices nearly always have some tendency to exaggeration; in those of high spirit and aspiring temperament it will show as ambition in the race for virtue; in those that are timid and easily disheartened, it turns to exaggerated self-depreciation, and a tendency to punish themselves unduly for the failure of their efforts; in others of nervous temperament it may throw them into scruples and fantastic fears. Nearly all have some disposition to go to extremes; and if they are to grow in true spiritual proportion, they need a steady, restraining hand that will not let them go beyond what is suited to their present strength, but at the same time will not kill off the higher aspirations which give promise of future excellence.

This moderation of the eagerness which rushes to extremes keeps a hold on every department of life. The training of novices and young religious does not let them go to the length of their desires in either prayer or work, in studies, in active devotedness, even in the hidden life or the love of solitude and silence. But, as a matter of fact, it is only what is showy and singular that is cut off; the common standard is allowed to be high, but it is not allowed to flash. There is an almost assumed

external plainness, a not-unlikeness to people in general, that is insisted upon, in all the external surface which comes in contact with others; beyond that frontier contact, a common standard is not imposed. Each soul has its rights and its own secrets, and star differs from star in glory. Only there is an instinct which gradually grows among members of a community, when the first admiration for flashing virtues has gained more insight: that their choicest possessions lie among those whose holiness is silent and hidden, and does not let itself shine forth in visible coruscations.

Special stress is laid upon one form of self-renunciation, which is often commented upon unfavourably from outside, and that is self-denial as to the affections. It is gathered, and indeed it may easily be gathered, from some spiritual writers, that a general deadening of the affections is insisted upon, and that the perfect religious is one in whom even the power of affection has been put to death. Parents, brothers and sisters have been persuaded, and sometimes a novice has taken pains to assure them, that they were now no more to her, nor she to them, than if no tie of blood existed. So she has understood; but so she has not been taught; and later on she will understand better. Happily, too, parents find out later that their nundaughters are still their children; that God has indeed taken them for His service, but that He has given them again in another way with increased power of sympathy, if they have the true spirit of their Order, and with an added wisdom and freedom of heart that comes of their converse with heavenly things.

But what about friendship? Surely friendships within the Order and with the children are forbidden? Yes and no. Private and exclusive friendships are forbidden. It may be well to explain the reason for this. In the first place, all that is very tender and exuberant in expression is discouraged, for it may unnerve the soul, and preoccupy it with emotions that cloud the serenity of its intercourse even with God. It tends also to root it in one place, whereas by freedom from local ties and possessions it must be prepared for any destination, and must "dwell as about to depart," with perfect readiness.

Secondly, exclusiveness in friendship may very easily do wrong to sacred common rights in an assembly where all are mothers and sisters, where each has a right to the cordiality of all, and must give as well as receive from all a real affection. It happens too easily that what is lavished on one is taken from others. Limited as is our power of attention and self-devotion and service, the more it is poured out on one side the less can be given on another, and the balance of the whole is lost.

Thirdly, exclusiveness in friendship easily induces familiarity: "giving oneself away." This has drawbacks which are almost evident. There must be, especially in religious life, a reserve of strength out of sight. Familiarity breaks it down. There must be one inner chamber of the soul, its Holy of Holies, into which God alone enters. It is one of the requirements of high friendships that the line of this inner sanctuary should not be crossed. There are points of understanding where

affection would willingly pause and make tabernacles; finding there solace, support, comprehension, to make up for some of the aridities of duty and the weariness of our life's probation. It is just that pausing and seeking rest that is forbidden. This is one of the good things of life which has been given up; for it must never be forgotten that it is the good things and not the bad things of the world, which religious bring as their offering to God when they enter the religious life. Again, all that weakens the soul and leaves it unguarded, is a danger to perfect religious spirit. There must be a loyal reticence about personal troubles, about the trying experiences of life, about the demands made, about the place where the harness galls a little, about all those things in fact which a little courage is enough to bear in silence and treat as nothing. But if these are poured out, the fortitude of the soul is poured out along with them, the best of life goes to waste, and it becomes anæmic for want of tonic restraint.

Some rare and perfect friendships are sanctioned; but they require the approval of Superiors, that the rights of the community may be safeguarded; that all may be according to obedience, and that there may be nothing to conceal. They are allowed between two equals and friendly rivals in fervour; or between two, of whom one is advanced in perfection and the other aspiring. In these noblest friendships, used as a spur to sanctity, held in check by habitual renunciation, guarded by rule, by silence, by loyalty, the growth in sanctity will be rapid enough to keep the religious friends

from sitting down to rest in the shade, and to prevent satiety.

Even for friendship's own sake satiety is a danger. So long as we are in this world the most perfect friendship requires a frontier. Some undiscovered land must lie beyond it. It is a disappointment to touch the limit and learn that the bounds of sympathy and understanding have been reached. In landscape gardening, skill is shown in putting off as long as possible the exploration of the whole domain. Distances are simulated, surprises contrived, paths planned out that appear to lead somewhere, to suggest that there is still something to discover. It is an admission that the unknown has a power of attraction. So friendship must have its frontier, but by growth on the one hand and restraint on the other, this frontier is always moving, and keeps up hope of still undiscovered excellences. This is especially true of the rare and beautiful friendships in religion, which, without infringement upon the claims of any, work for the common good by their high ideal, as well as by the personal service and affection which suffer no diminution in what is given to all.

In the years of active life that follow the novitiate, the most searching discipline is the acquirement of evenness, and the necessity of being every day at one's best. Changes of mood and feeling, of expansiveness or depression, must not be allowed to appear for the sake of the community. No one has a right to impose the burden of her personal troubles on others; but in cloistered communities the general sensitiveness is the more keen in pro-

portion to the standard of charity, and all are so responsive to the joys and sorrows of each one, that a mood uncontrolled might be felt throughout the whole atmosphere.

Another right of the community is that no feeling of nationality should be allowed to take hold, to divide it into groups or to leave anyone outside the family circle. National spirit is very explicitly and emphatically forbidden by the Rule. Its cramping, narrowing and chilling influence would be particularly out of place in an Institute in which the end and object are one, the nationalities many, changes frequent under any conditions, and where special circumstances not unfrequently arise, as has been said, which carry off the whole body of the religious from their country and give them the rest of the world in which to make a home. It certainly gives a finish to religious training to be able to blend freely with those of any other nation; and this power, however it may be acquired, is called for and is taken as a sign of a good mind, a good early education, and a good vocation. The mingling of nationalities—there have been as many as twelve or more in one novitiate—tends to bring out the best in each, to make for mutual understanding, for seeing the good in all, for tact, for a right reticence; and it imposes an obligation of knowing enough of each nation to be aware of what should not be said.

The multitude of details in the perfection of common life, with the addition of those wide conciliatory ways of thought which the blending of nationalities calls for, is a very powerful instrument

of training. The smaller the details the greater attention is necessary not to fail in the sum of them. They may seem to one who has not yet acquired them too small to fix the attention of those aiming at such high things. To all who have grown perfect in them they are a constant means of advancing further in perfection, since they can never be laid aside as finished; and their importance, like that of a perfect ceremonial, is only fully understood by experts. A soul favoured by God, afterwards a lay-Sister in the Society of the Sacred Heart, Sister Marie Lataste, received from our Lord, when she was a poor, ignorant girl, wonderful instruction in the mysteries of faith and perfection; more than this, He "condescended to train her in the proper control of her exterior movements, and in all that may be included under the head of propriety or decorum of behaviour. For, indeed, no outward movements, no expression of countenance, no attitude, no gesture, especially if habitual, is matter of indifference."¹ Sister Marie Lataste died while yet a novice, but the fruit of this training was aptly summed up by one of the Sisters who worked with her: "She does what we all do, but no one can do it as she does."¹

Lastly, to give one more glance over the manner in which the members of the Society of the Sacred Heart are brought up for the end of their vocation, the heart of it all is the training of appreciation, and the understanding of relative values. What belongs to the inner life and the devotion to the

¹ Healy Thompson. *Life of Marie Lataste*. (Burns and Oates.)

Sacred Heart, as practised in this Society, will be considered further on, but, in the training as a whole, the strongest springs are in what is appreciated as a standard, and in what is expected as a stimulus. The expectation of the whole Society, fixed on its individual members, is the most powerful stimulus that can be felt. The personal loyalty and love—a really personal love—for the Society, grows through the training; and, especially after profession, when the stages of formation are completed, becomes, for those who have the spirit of the Order, most perfectly developed, like a vocation within a vocation: a determination not only to be *this*, but to be *thus*. It carries into new circumstances and to every country as a precious inheritance the things that make us one; and goes out to gain the experience and to give the personal effort that make us many; many to think and to labour, one to love and to hold together wherever we may be. The standard of what we value makes us one; for, amongst so many different elements of race and country, there are certain appreciations which are uniform among all those who have the fullest understanding of their vocation. They believe that the only lasting influence on earth is that of personal holiness; that the fortunes of the Society are so bound up in one that the good of one is the gain of all, and the loss of one is felt throughout the whole; and, therefore, they are convinced that the best service anyone can render to their Order is to become a saint, but that this sanctity lies in common things, and is within the reach of all in the sphere of their own duties. They

hold that it is the appreciation of good rather than the dread of evil which makes souls advance towards perfection; so that it is a spirit of doing without things which makes the most perfect poverty; a spirit of willingness which is the most accomplished obedience; that a love of silence, and not a literal fewness of syllables, is the best observance of the Rule for silence and speaking; that charity is only attained when we love hospitality, see the best in every one, and believe easily in unseen goodness and holiness. They are agreed in thinking that joy and contentment give a finish to religious perfection; and, as St. Teresa said of her own Order, so it is true elsewhere, that "ten thousand devils are less to be dreaded than one discontented nun."

These things, amongst others, of common belief, are a theme upon which many variations are worked, as one expression or another comes up, and renders in harmony the thoughts of many minds, widely different among themselves. There is a deep-down unity, but there is no forced uniformity. The spirit is one, but its manifestations are many; and one of the recognized charms of community life is the preservation of the individuality of each member so that no one is "made to order," of this or that shape, but that each gives what she can for the common good—the common good demanding for its own sake, as well as for hers, that she should remain *herself*.

CHAPTER IV.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

“As we behold, so do we love.”—*Blessed Angela of Foligno.*

THE title of the Society of the Sacred Heart was much disputed in the beginning, and it is owing to the patience and firmness of the Blessed Foundress that it was maintained. She was so ready to consider all possible points of view, so prepared to yield in anything that was not of primary importance, so markedly slow to act unless she had some assurance that God's will was known, that the instances in which she would not give way stand out as historic in her life.

The first, and perhaps the most vital in these, was the name of the new Institute. There were reasons urged against it, particularly at the time at which it was assumed. To some, the name still seemed a party badge, for it actually had represented a party in the Vendean rising, and so dangerous a title would appear to commit the little Association to a side in political feeling. There was also opposition from those who wished to mark it strongly with a name that would indicate its external activity in working for the propagation of the faith, or instruction in Christian Doctrine. The Mother-General, returning after an absence, was distressed and surprised to find some of her daughters disposed to call themselves by the high-sounding name of “Apostolines.” This was not only

displeasing to her on account of its pretentious appearance, but also as a departure from the original idea of the Society as she had understood it, and as Father Varin, and Father de Tournély before him, had foreseen the form of the Institute.

The initial plan had been to gather together associates who would consecrate their lives to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Evidently *consecration* meant something more than *devotion* or *devotions*. The lives consecrated must be set apart for service, but the forms which that service should take were yet undefined.

As has been already observed, the Institute of the Sacred Heart did not, at first, appear in complete development, showing the lines of a general plan and fully conscious of itself. Rather it came into being after the manner of a living thing, like a little child, very little aware of itself, depending much on care and love and understanding; and only little by little did it come to the knowledge of its powers, and the duties for which it would become responsible as it grew up. The Mother's instinct was true from the beginning, and she loved and guarded the frail child which had been given to her, saving it from its enemies, and from its too eager and ambitious friends. She understood it when scarcely anyone else seemed to understand, and she forgot her own timidity, her unwillingness to insist, her readiness to give way to the views of others, when it was necessary to defend the essential claims of her trust, and its rights to follow its destiny. She carried the point by prayer, patience and firmness. She would have been willing to

yield many things, but never the title of "Society of the Sacred Heart"; to do this would have been to her mind to keep the body and lose the spirit of the Institute that was to be.

For the spirit went with the title; it was the *estate*. The whole held together in her mind; and, with the insight which God gives to Founders of Religious Orders, she seemed to hold something that was not her own: an intelligence of the Institute that was not hers, that did not bear a personal impress, but was received as a gift from Heaven. The ideal, such as Blessed Madeleine Sophie must have seen it, was very happily expressed by a Father of the Society of Jesus. Preaching on the Society of the Sacred Heart, he said that for all the sorrows and sufferings of our Lord's life on earth and in His Passion, some special reparation and compensation was owed to Him and was made; and that the sufferings of His Sacred Heart, the little response that His love had met with, were made up to Him by a living guard of honour, a company that would devote itself to that Sacred Heart, and bear Its name, and be Its very own, entirely consecrated to It, and serve It for love; each member for all the days of her life. The preacher added that in Rome he had taken pains to examine Decrees of Congregations and other documents bearing on its origin, to see what form was given to the title in Latin, and had found two: one indicating the origin claimed for the Society—*Dominae a Sacratissimo Corde Jesu*—and the other the ownership of our Lord, His claim on the members, when they are spoken of as *Dominae*

Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu. Nothing surely could have given the Blessed Foundress greater consolation than this presentation of what she had understood. This is the theme of all her teaching; the personal gift of the whole being for personal service; the gift of love for love, with the added depth and devotedness which comes of understanding that a soul may make reparation and give real consolation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the coldness and ingratitude and misunderstanding which met the advances of His love when on earth, and continue through all ages since to treat it with the same careless contempt. Such is, as Blessed Madeleine Sophie set it forth from the beginning, the happy lot and the true vocation of religious of the Sacred Heart.

But the devotion to the Sacred Heart has more than one aspect. In one sense it has as many aspects as there are souls to understand and practise it; for not all the millions of worshippers in the Church or the thousands of consecrated members could absorb those "unsearchable riches" of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nor could they exhaust the points of view from which this central object of their devotion may be studied. It has been said that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is all devotions under one aspect; but whether it be one under many, or many under one, it is true to say that there is no end to it, except the capacity of each one's understanding and power of love.

Two lines of devotion, however, seem to be specially marked and set forth in the two Offices and

Masses, one for general and the other for particular use. For general use there is the Mass *Miserebitur* said in red vestments, in which all attention is directed to the suffering love of our Lord, and its manifestation especially during the hours of His Passion. This form of the devotion is by far the most widely spread; it is that of which Blessed Margaret Mary was so faithful a disciple, into which she entered with such a gift of intimacy, enhanced by the continuous sufferings of her own life, which seemed to give her right of entrance into that sanctuary of pain, and to carry her deeper into its mysteries than most would dare or be able to follow. The devotion to the Sacred Heart in the Passion, rich with its hidden gifts to souls such as hers, has also its gracious side of appeal to the many. "Behold this Heart which has so loved men!" Anyone can stop and listen to that great cry and make some sort of response in the language of their own heart and mind. It can give new hope to the despairing, and awaken the indifferent; it can win a return from the simple hearts of children, and carry comfort to souls in every trouble. It is to the whole human race that it strives to make itself heard, and year by year its appeal spreads more widely in the great confraternities and associations through which its knowledge is carried here and there, and in whose track wonderful fruits of Christian life spring up; while united prayer obtains the conversion of sinners, graces of comfort and help in all necessities, peace in families, power for priests to win souls to God, and fulfilment of all the other "Promises of the

Sacred Heart" made known to Blessed Margaret Mary.

But, by the side of this great and world-wide devotion, another line is visible, and perhaps tending to make progress, as the knowledge of it extends. This is represented in the Church's Liturgy by the Mass *Egredimini*, said in white vestments, and the corresponding Office: granted at first to Venice and Portugal, and later on to Ireland, which naturally extended the knowledge of it to other parts of the world. In 1853, the existence of this Mass and Office came to the knowledge of Blessed Madeleine Sophie; and, finding in it the perfect expression of devotion to the Sacred Heart as she had understood it, and as she was trying to teach and plant it in the Society, she made application to Rome for leave to substitute it for the other Office which had been recited on the Feast up to that time, and asked that the Mass *Egredimini* might be said in the houses of the Sacred Heart. The privilege was granted; and, by a later decree, leave was given for this same Mass to be celebrated on the First Friday of the month, when the rubrics allow. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and throughout the Octave, as well as on the First Friday of the month, the religious say the corresponding Office in place of the Office of Our Lady.

This Office and Mass have a less specialized aspect of the devotion than those which have reference in particular to the sufferings of the Sacred Heart in the Passion. They honour and celebrate the love of Christ as manifested in His whole life on earth: the inward life of the Sacred Heart, with

all its expressions of itself, with its tenderness, its splendours, and the glow of its sanctuary fire. It is a form of the devotion that lends itself to endless meditation and study, and in its joys and sorrows, makes appeal to every attentive worshipper who is consecrated to the service of the Sacred Heart. No season of the year and no disposition of soul lie outside it, since the Mysteries of the Holy Infancy and Hidden Life, of the Public Life and the Passion, of the Resurrection and Ascension, and those of the Sacramental Life of our Lord, all come within its scope, and all may be studied in the light of His Sacred Heart. The expression of His love in every mystery is what this devotion feeds upon, giving in return love and worship. It is not to be wondered at that the Blessed Foundress hailed with delight the discovery of this Office and Mass of the Sacred Heart, and set it before the members of the Society as a form of the devotion which was to be specially theirs, as already set forth in every page of the Rule. This meditative, imitative, penetrating, inward manner of devotion, which imposes no set form, and admits of endless diversity of assimilation, was exactly what she sought; and it is rooted in the Society which she founded.

This is the form which is most completely at home in it; but no form is neglected; and just as it is aimed at that through individual devotion, the whole series of mysteries in the Life of the Incarnate Word should receive due honour in the Sacred Heart, so too, in one or other of the houses a special form of the devotion seems to naturalize

itself and find a permanent home. Thus in some houses the aspect of zeal for the conquest of souls is specially in honour, and the external popular means of spreading devotion are actively carried on. The children are caught by it; they carry the sacred fire with them wherever they go, and their apostleship sometimes reaches most unexpected and astonishing results. In other houses the prominent feature is reparation, and this gives a special character of self-sacrifice to the life of the community, a true and unfeigned form of devotion that proves its love in deeds, not words. In others, again, the devotion to the Sacred Heart is scarcely mentioned by name, but pervades the whole house like some Presence too much felt to need words; too real, in fact, to be much talked about. There, perhaps, it is most closely interwoven with devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and grows almost undistinguishable therefrom. It is like the "familiar friendship with Jesus" of *à Kempis*. It becomes so much the spirit of the house, the soul of all its devotions, that it is almost taken for granted, and seems to need little explicit affirmation. Twice a day, however, in all the houses, a Commemoration of the Sacred Heart is made during Office, with a Collect that perfectly expresses all that could be said of this aspect of the central devotion. "Clothe us, O Lord Jesus, with the virtues, and inflame us with the affections of Thy most Sacred Heart, that we may be conformed to the image of Thy goodness and may become partakers of Thy redemption."

Knowledge and imitation, zeal and devotedness

for the glory of the Sacred Heart—these are the practical manifestations and the essential points of teaching which give a tone to the devotion; and it will be easily seen what variety and scope is given for their working out according to the gifts and dispositions of each one. The mind of Christ, His teaching, and even, so far as they can be gathered, His tastes and inclinations, are given as the pattern, according to which any virtues should be practised, and even the common actions of daily life accomplished. “Learn of Me” is the expression of the invitation that draws the soul inwards to study and contemplation. “I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled,” this is the call to spend and to be spent for the same end, and having freely received, to give freely. The two drawings are always at work; the drawing inwards, without which outward activity is empty, because it has nothing to give; and the urging outwards to give to others what has been received from God, whether by prayer or work. So the Venerable Mother Duchesne, in her night-long vigil of Holy Thursday, carried in prayer the Precious Blood from the Chalice of the Passion through every country of the world, and spent the last years of her life in labours incredibly hard and disappointing with unabated zeal for the same end.

One day in the month shines with particular brightness in all the houses of the Sacred Heart, and stands out as a most dear landmark in the memory of the children who have left. This is the First Friday. It is not that much ceremonial is added, but that the day glows. In all the con-

vents the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, in many, the tall candle for the children burns all day before It; everywhere there is an atmosphere of stillness and light that is unlike anything else; work is not stopped, but it seems transfigured, and Heaven very near indeed.

Another feast, with another monthly commemoration, adds completeness to the Feast of the Sacred Heart. The second patronal feast of the Society is that of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, and the first Saturday of each month has something of an after-glow of the First Friday. The reason is too obvious for comment. The Heart of the Son and of the Mother will not be separated wherever there are Catholic hearts to understand what they are to each other. But there is another title and another expression of devotion towards the Blessed Mother of God, which has come like a gift to the Society and to the children of the Sacred Heart; that to our Lady in the Temple, in the years of her girlhood. The title of *Mater Admirabilis* is said to have been given by Pius IX. when he prayed before the picture; its first name was "The Madonna of the Lily." It might also bear the title of the Madonna of the Dawn, for the light of sunrise over the distant landscape, as well as our Lady's apparent age, seem to speak of the approach of the Incarnation. From every point of view it is a picture happily expressive of many thoughts which are bound up with the last quiet years of a girl's education, before it is put to the test of life outside.

It remains to speak of the training and direction which are given to prayer and the interior life.

The circumstances of the foundation, as well as the fact that the Rule is based on that of St. Ignatius, have given to the whole manner of spiritual training a strong likeness to that of the Society of Jesus, with the differences necessary for an Order of women. Consequently, books by Jesuit writers are taken as the basis of the study of interior life, and, whenever it is possible, Jesuit Fathers give the annual retreats. With this as a foundation, spiritual life takes shape almost of itself, and here again the most telling influence comes from what is appreciated. The "methods" of which so much is said, are not found to be a heavy harness when they are rightly understood. As in so many other matters, the difficulties lie rather in the words than in the things themselves. When they are explained by masters with experimental knowledge, they do not constrain, as is sometimes supposed, but they set at liberty, with the liberty that comes of looking beyond the letter to reach the spirit and the real intention—*what must have been meant*—and with the liberty that comes of not being afraid to be oneself, most of all in prayer.

It happened through an unfortunate exaction of a promise which was literally accomplished, that Blessed Madeleine Sophie's most intimate revelations of herself were burnt by Mother de Limminghe. The knowledge that we can gather of her own interior life is very scanty indeed, gleaned from chance allusions in her letters and from the escape of a word here and there, recorded by those who heard it. She seemed to be possessed of a very vivid realization of the love and sufferings of

the Sacred Heart, and to have been drawn with a special devotion to the season of Advent, and to the humiliations of the Incarnate Word. She was very easily and very profoundly absorbed in prayer; most assiduous in her visits to the Blessed Sacrament; for this often interrupting her work for short intervals, and securing times of long leisure. So we can gather from what has come down to us. We know that comparing her with the general standard she might be said to lead a life of very intense prayer. It may also be gathered that she spent a great part of this prayer on the Society which she loved so deeply. Her letters bear witness as well as the extraordinary way in which "the little Society" was saved whilst she endured long in patience and prayer through two storms that almost overwhelmed it. May it be supposed that, having sacrificed her strong drawing to a life of solitude and silence, she sacrificed with it the special favours to which her soul seemed so well attuned? They might have carried her into regions where the sounds of this world would hardly have reached her, and so she might have been less fit for the demands made upon her in directing the complex organization which grew up in her hands. She might have found herself out of touch with all that she had to follow up so carefully for the work of education entrusted to her. It may be that the higher paths of prayer had to be renounced for the sake of these other needs; or it may be that she was led in them far higher than we know; but in either case, surely her conformity with God's will, and her burning desires for His glory, the whole

attraction which drew her to Him, may have made up for what would have been to her a life of lesser renunciation and greater delight. And those among her children who have the same drawing to a life of solitude, silence and prayer, while they are harnessed to a burden of duties that will take no denial, may find comfort from the thought that she has felt the stress of the same two forces, drawing in different ways, and has followed the difficult line in which they resolve themselves into one. At all events the little that we know of her inner life harmonizes well with her whole plan of self-effacement and personal disappearance.

CHAPTER V.

WORK.

“As a man loveth, so doth he work.”—*Blessed Angela of Foligno.*

IT is held that in the mixed life external activity must be fed from the superabundance of the springs of prayer, and it is only on this condition that the mixed life may bear comparison with that which is entirely contemplative. This, by the dignity of its object, ranks first, consecrating the whole being to the direct service of God. The great work of the Divine Office, the spirit of uninterrupted prayer which is cultivated in various ways, and the regular austerities prescribed by rule, take possession of every faculty, and make it, by action or by endurance, give its part in the complete sacrifice of praise. But there is no external outlet. At present, in more than one country of Europe, the tide of vocations is setting towards the contemplative Orders. The Spirit breathes where He will, and we cannot tell the reasons of His ways. Perhaps the feverish activity, the hurry and pressure of life outside, give to souls the longing for a more complete break with the world, and a wish to plunge into a greater solitude and silence. Perhaps the same characteristics of unrestful modern life make it very necessary that the world should be more leavened by the consecration of souls given entirely to prayer. Perhaps, as in early centuries,

it is a "flight from the world" preceding the great catastrophes which were the heralds of new ages of grace. In some cases an impulse seems to be given to emulate certain saintly lives which have become widely known. In any case, we may give thanks to God if many true vocations are added to the number of those who help the Church and the world by prayer, living in the green pastures and beside the still waters of the contemplative life.

But yet, according to the common teaching, the mixed life is blessed with a specially intimate likeness to the manner of living of our Lord during His life on earth. No gift of self, however active, could equal the entire devotion with which He was at the service of every class of persons or individual need. No contemplative rule could measure itself against His nights of prayer after such days of work. It was a life such as had never been seen, and it would appear necessary that, as the Church has her contemplative Orders and her Congregations given to active service, so there should arise within her a new kind of service, attempting the most difficult task of moulding itself upon the example of His twofold life; venturing to aim at a life of inward recollection, and even at the spirit of contemplation; and, at the same time, according to its measure, pursuing some of the forms of active devotedness which minister to the needs of souls.

Here the great difficulty of the mixed life is felt. It must consist, not of two separate parts, but of an inward spirit of consecration which has two movements, like the vital act of breathing,

and the outward and inward movement are each incomplete without the other. The deep intaken breath of prayer is given back again as the sound of a voice, carrying its gift from God. To those who have a call to the mixed life, it would appear impossible not to go out with that message to children or sinners or penitents or the tried and tempted, the suffering and dying, and, according to its power, "compel them to come in," that the house may be filled for the marriage-feast. No one can be in touch with even one great want of the human race without being, in heart, carried away by its magnitude, and being almost willing to undo himself for the sake of the great venture. Then must he stay his activity, set bounds to his ambitions, and call to mind, that without the spirit of prayer, and the necessary leisure for prayer, the effort will be in vain, giving forth only words that bear no message from God. There is a popular saying that the measure of a soul is that of its prayer, and those who have watched religious at work have no difficulty in verifying this. For real value of work, it is not talent that makes the difference, but prayer and all that prayer stands for. As prayer is "the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts," so it carries and gives a quiet mind and untroubled thoughts to others, and even for these gifts its worth is felt in an atmosphere of peace and joy that lifts work above its troubles to a level of quiet if not of rest; "in the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection . . . the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest."

This aspect of the mixed life is the one most easily overlooked or not understood, in a time when Catholic work is bound to enter into competition with organized efforts whose material and numerical resources are beyond its own. The Church before the world always stands as David before Goliath—simple and unarmed against overwhelming advantages. And the Religious Orders have at all times seemed the simplest and least well-armed of the Church's host, in the eyes of the world, and often their friends have feared for them in the issue of the conflict. No one can know, who is not in direct touch with it, how God's upholding grace can make itself felt, and give victory when the Kingdom of Heaven has been first sought, and the religious life and spirit of prayer safeguarded before all things. No one can deny that the mixed life is most difficult; that its difficulty is accentuated by the pressure outside, and that, especially in the work of education, every resource of legislation is taxed to drive religious off the field altogether. These difficulties do not diminish the attraction to those who are called; they rather enhance it. As in other ages the expectation of shedding their blood for His sake was a hope and not a discouragement to the Virgins of Christ, so now it may be a prize worth striving for, to bear the harassing opposition, and not give way before the ever-increasing demands on this hotly-contested battlefield. It is a prize offered to those who consecrate themselves to God in the mixed life.

The corporal works of mercy have each their devoted company among the active Orders in the

Church, who serve the sick and suffering not only in body but in soul. So the spiritual works of mercy seem to be portioned out in different ways among the Orders following the mixed life; they are called to serve those in spiritual need, often not only in soul but in body; for corporal needs are sometimes the shortest avenue to spiritual well-being; and in both of these services they have before them the example of their Master, "to whom nothing human is strange."

The share that has fallen to the nuns of the Sacred Heart in this apportioning lies chiefly under four headings: the education of children of the upper classes, in boarding or day-schools, the teaching of elementary and free schools, the work of retreats, and lastly, intercourse with persons living in the world. Each of these works branches out at times into some special forms, according to circumstances and local needs.

The education of children in boarding or day-schools is the most widely-spread and best-known of the external works of the Society of the Sacred Heart; it will require to be treated apart. But some account may be given here of a kindred branch of education of great importance, in which the nuns of the Sacred Heart have a share both in England and Peru, and some beginnings of good promise in Spain. This is the teaching and management of training colleges in which Catholic teachers for elementary schools are prepared for their profession. It is not difficult to recognize the extreme value of this work at a period when the rising tide of democracy gives an importance

that it never had before to elementary education, and when religious teaching must make claims for itself that were not needed in an earlier time. Catholic teaching is doubly necessary now; it has to hold its own, not so much against the attacks of the old Protestantism which have lost their sting, but against the newer and more insidious forms of unbelief. It has also to be prepared for the great opportunities which are offered to it in the present days of unrest and vague seeking after God. Even a child, well-grounded in its faith, may be an apostle, and therefore to reach the children is the goal for which everyone contends who looks to the future. To reach the children through the teacher is the object of Catholic training colleges. It is a work that appeals strongly by its extended action. The teaching of elementary schools is one that religious appreciate very highly, but in training colleges the unit is not the child but the school, or at least, the classes which will be reached through each teacher in training; it is, with due proportion of meaning, not the teaching of disciples, but the preparation of apostles. Catholic teachers have to make a double preparation before they enter upon the exercise of their profession. They have to attain the standard of instruction and general education as well as the experience of teaching which allows them to practise in schools under Government regulation and inspection, and the required standard is high. This admits them to the honourable position of fully-qualified teachers. But that is not enough for their aspirations or for their service in Catholic schools. A further double pre-

paration is necessary, one part of which is professional and the other personal. The professional qualifications of Catholic teachers require that they should possess their grounds of faith, their knowledge of positive doctrine and of scripture history, and their practical understanding of Catholic life with sufficient grasp to be able to bring up wisely the Catholic children who will be under their charge. They must also be capable of holding their own among non-Catholic teachers and others with whom they may mix, ready to answer their questions and objections, and, in whatever company they may find themselves, ready to give a good account of their faith in word and example. This part of a Catholic teacher's training is closely watched over and tested by the Bishops and their representatives, and on a parallel line with the many tests which are undergone for professional efficiency, are examinations set for the same in Doctrine, Scripture and religious teaching. The same and yet not the same, for the whole tone of the examinations is changed. They are less formal, because all are of the same household of faith, and meet on a common ground of the belief and practice which are the great certainties of life. They are even more earnest, because what is involved is the eternal interests of the children, and what is most closely examined is the teacher's aptitude to teach the faith, not with display of ability, but simply, persuasively, impressively, convincingly. Even the methods of examination are not the same, but exact a more habitual and familiar knowledge of the matter and a greater readi-

ness to have it at command. The examiners are themselves in close touch with children, and can verify from personal knowledge whether instruction is given so as to make its way to their minds.

So far, the professional preparation can be tested. But, the actual teaching of Catholic Doctrine and practice, however efficient, is not enough. There is an element surrounding it which sustains Catholic life, that almost indefinable element which we call a Catholic atmosphere in the schools, something which is there at all times, outside the hours of religious teaching. The presence of God pervades the school, and invests all common things with a sense of something great and good beyond them. A Catholic atmosphere is an atmosphere of assurance and confidence and joy and reliance upon a power and love that are unseen, but not unfelt. It gives a mutual understanding and affection between Catholic teachers and children, a language in which they understand one another, in which certainty and hope and patience and comfort in trouble find without any difficulty a natural expression. To give this Catholic atmosphere requires another preparation which is not professional but personal.

The personal preparation of Catholic teachers is without doubt best accomplished in Catholic residential training colleges in which that very atmosphere is constantly breathed. They can only give what they have, and they can only have it if they have lived in it: at school, at home, in college. Without that they can hardly even realize what it is. It is in great measure for this that so many

sacrifices have been made, and are made, for training colleges; for this that sacrifices are asked of Catholic students. If sacrifices are made they are never grudged afterwards; for they have given entrance into a body that ranks next in spiritual influence to the priests of God and His religious; a body that has almost a vocation of its own. The future for which they are preparing themselves will call for further sacrifices. Whenever Catholic teachers wish to be worthy of their calling they have to face sacrifice; for this reason alone their profession is more like a vocation than a career. The prize before them is not really in this world; it will be attained when they learn hereafter what has been the fruit of their self-denying labours, when the souls of the children they have served so faithfully shall be gathered in and counted to them as their reward and crown in the Kingdom of God.

From their early years to the close of life their way will be marked by self-sacrifice; it is that, therefore, which must be grounded in them during their training. Others will go before them and take the prizes that the world can offer. They have to learn not to be drawn away, not even to regret. Others can legitimately take their ease and fence themselves round with strict limitation to professional duties; *they* know that in doing the same they would be untrue to themselves. Others may give to the children of their schools, kindness, good example, instruction and all excellent service—Catholic teachers know that they must give more, that God asks of them a real love for children, His children, heirs of the Kingdom, their

own brothers and sisters in Christ. This spirit of faith and love and sacrifice is what has to be learned and fostered in the education given in Catholic training colleges. It is known and recognized and aimed at by those who are privileged to have their hand in this great work. And, it is significant of its importance, that the point most insisted on, by the highest spiritual authority, in speaking to students in training or to Catholic teachers, is so frequently the need of prayer, not morning and night prayers and other practices of universal devotion, but of the prayerful spirit, the finding of leisure for prayer in busy lives, and the acquiring of a habit of familiar intercourse with God.

From these considerations on the work of training colleges, it will be evident that a share in it is greatly valued in the Society of the Sacred Heart. As a means of spreading widely the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, probably no other can rival it in extent, because the number that can be reached by every trained teacher makes a total that mounts up rapidly; so every character that is trained in self-sacrifice, and every soul that is turned to prayer represents a corresponding number of children trained in self-control, and lifted up to believe in, and, as they can, to practise prayer.

Two colleges, in years gone by, were entrusted to the religious of the Sacred Heart by a Catholic Government in Chilè. A later Government, unfriendly to the Church, and anxious to cut down its influence, took them away again, to put them under secular teachers of their own way of thinking.

Even now, after almost thirty years, the Catholic teachers who are still in active service come back to the house where they were trained, keeping the old affection and following out the principles which they learned as students. The work of training colleges makes long roots.

It is unnecessary to speak at length on the work of elementary schools, their importance is so strongly felt in every country; it is so well understood, and these schools are so much loved by those who have to do with them, that nothing needs to be added to what has been already many times better said. In this work the Society of the Sacred Heart does not hold to any methods of its own, but takes up the ways and follows the requirements proper to each country in which it works. Only in countries where elementary education is not yet under Government management, it applies itself rather to the preparation of children for their after-life, than to a uniform standard of literary attainments. But this freedom grows more and more rare.

The work of Retreats is one which seems particularly well-fitted for the needs of the time. Silence and quiet of mind, time for thought, and a right direction of thought, a fresh preparation for and better reception of the Sacraments, instruction in the elements of the spiritual life, and an introduction to prayer, these are needed by all the world, and are more and more urged upon Catholics as an efficacious means of keeping up tone of soul and repairing loss. From the longer retreats for people of leisure down to the Bank Holiday recollection

days, and Carnival-tide *triduo* for working-girls and women, with retreats for special classes of workers—teachers, hospital nurses, and others—all the notes of the scale are touched, and all respond. The part of the religious is to supplement, by private instruction, the work of the priests who give the retreat, to counsel the doubtful in practical things of life, to comfort the sorrowful, to take care for the well-being of the body, no small matter when sometimes 1,000 or 1,200 working-girls are gathered together, under a staff of sixteen priests, who give the Exercises and hear confessions. In any case, and for all, the sympathy and understanding of their troubles, which the nuns can give to exercitants, are not without their share in the fruit of so great a work.

The fourth means of helping souls calls for the same sympathy and understanding, and consists in necessary intercourse with persons in the world, whether they merely come to the convent as visitors, or, whether, through their relations, or through the Congregation of Children of Mary and other Sodalities, they are in permanent touch with it. These Sodalities extend the work of the boarding and free schools after the children have left, or gather the Christian mothers together to talk over the troubles of life and see how to bear them better, and do the best for the children.

The Sodality of Children of Mary dates from the time of the Blessed Foundress, and is now very widely extended; it has a centre in almost every convent of the Sacred Heart, and its beginning among the elder girls in the school, who take their

precious medal with them when they leave, and form a nucleus of the Sodality, which may afterwards receive outside members. This Sodality, one of the great openings of Blessed Mother Barat's later life, has its own statutes and rules, and is enriched with almost as many spiritual favours as the great Congregation of the *Prima Primaria* in Rome, to which some Congregations in houses of the Sacred Heart have been affiliated. Besides this, the medal of Child of Mary, received at the Sacred Heart gives the members entrance and welcome in every convent of the Society throughout the world. The rules for Children of Mary of the Sacred Heart do not oblige them to any particular form of self-devotedness; they are expected to be ready for every good work according to the opportunities of the centres in which they live. But it is especially asked of them that they should be faithful to the practice of mental prayer, in the measure that their circumstances allow, and to the annual retreat; and that they should give in society the example of a blameless Catholic life, characterized, above all, by the cultivation of the spiritual life which was the soul and end of the Sodality in the eyes of the Blessed Foundress, and by devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Most Pure Heart of Mary.

General intercourse with those outside is work by the wayside—which comes in unexpected forms, and although it can give no ascertainable results at the time, yet it may be thought that no effort which goes out as good seed, sown in faith and hope, and followed by prayer, can fail to make its way.

Examples have proved it in particular cases; but the impossibility of applying any regular system makes this, perhaps more than any other work, dependent upon the spiritual power of those engaged in it, and especially on their habitual union with God. It hardly admits of any special preparation except that of prayer and experience; but it happens sometimes that God seems to direct to the novitiates of the Sacred Heart, even late in life, vocations which He appears to have prepared Himself for this particular work; souls that have passed through the fire of trial and been made perfect in Christian life before they are called to the school of religious perfection. Their experience of the world and its troubles sometimes makes them find the religious training more easy than it is to those who have known only the sunny side of life, and bring their uncrossed wills under the yoke. And what they have known and endured serves for advising and comforting others under the same crosses. Thus the morning and the evening offerings have each their own beauty and excellence, and thus also the labourers in this acre of the vineyard, called at different hours and prepared in different ways, find the allotted labour which is proportioned to their strength. Every gift has its use, and sometimes those who honestly believe they have no gifts at all, turn out to be the comfort of every religious community which possesses them. It has been happily and truly said that "in the Society of the Sacred Heart every one can be useful but no one is necessary."

CHAPTER VI.

“CHILDREN OF THE SACRED HEART.”

“Nous comptons sur vous . . . Pas de défaillances, pas de défections! Nous avons besoin de vous.”—*Cardinal Mercier to some Children of the Sacred Heart, June, 1911.*

SOMEONE, who was a close observer of many Children of the Sacred Heart, said of a child: “She is typical of what the training does, others have something when they come, but she has been entirely *made* in the Convent.” And when the question was asked, “What is typical in them?” the beautiful answer, given after thought, was this: “Very strong, very innocent, and determined to do something for God in their life.” It could not have been more clearly said, as expressing the object aimed at in the training of character. Blessed Madeleine Sophie would have delighted to hear it, for it summed up in three expressions all that she has laid down in the Rule as to the training of the children.

Again, one who had been brought up in schools of the Sacred Heart, looking back on her education, wrote, in terse American phrase: “You give values, and you give anchorage.” With this, too, the Blessed Foundress would have been pleased, as an indication of practical results seen from a standing point in the world: “values” to measure what it gives, and appraise it, not as *nothing*, for the writer was holding herself well and worthily in it, but as *little*; “anchorage,” for she had experienced some-

thing of its stress and strain, and she knew of an anchor that would hold.

So, judged from without and by results, may be expressed the aim and scope of character-training in the schools of the Sacred Heart. It is expressly stated in the Rule that children are to be educated for life in the world, and that most of them will be called upon to exercise their influence and do their duties at the head of Catholic homes. It will always be the very few, in proportion, who are honoured by God with a call to the perfect life; the whole set of the training must be, so the Rule says, to fit them for the world. It was for this that Mother Goetz insisted so strongly—“ Train them to put their duty before everything else, train them to bear adversity.” She saw the two currents of pleasure and of trouble which would call out their power of resistance, and by either of which they might be swept away: she asked that they should be made ready for both. And some shining examples of late development have confirmed her hopes, when an education, that seemed a failure in its preparatory stages, has flowered, at the touch of adversity, almost into heroism.

From this it may be seen how much value is set on the individual, and on individual training. All the system converges to this, to give personal worth to each child, worth of character, strength of principles, anchorage in faith. For this reason very large schools are not much in favour, there is a number beyond which it is hardly possible to give to each one the personal study and attention which are required for a careful formation of individual

character. Among larger numbers this must be compensated by another system of management. When we see the spirited competition of large classes, put to their speed to pass creditable examinations, when we read of fifty infants of seven years old going gravely by themselves to take the elevator, and appear in the class-room where they are expected, we cannot feel anything but admiration for such early self-dependence, and such steady application. They are fine results, but they are of another kind. The difficulties of each individual character have not been discovered, and, in a way, the battle with self has been postponed to a later period. The discipline of examination programmes is very strong, and replaces a whole world of care and management under circumstances which exert less artificial pressure. The idea in the schools of the Sacred Heart is to allow each child to be itself, and to surround it with an atmosphere of so much attentive affection that it may be unconstrained, and let out the real self with its good as well as its weak points, thus becoming known, so that it may be taken in hand to correct its defects, and taught to know and control itself. This must be done by means which cannot be applied in very numerous classes. They have their own advantages, but again it is something else that is produced: a corporate spirit, a readiness for emergencies; among a few, the spirit of leadership; but the slow evolution of a well-proportioned character is not so easily attained, and there are regions in a child's mind and life which receive no attention at all.

To reach these it is needful that minds should come into close contact. Generalities regarding “ the child,” and even very useful observations may be gathered in the survey of large classes. Probably many observant teachers could give results for which professors of child-psychology would be grateful. But there is quite another kind of knowledge which does not seem to come in their way. It is uncritical, direct, untabulated knowledge, it might be called amateur’s knowledge, and it is the knowledge of amateurs in the sense that it is the result of a study that is enthusiastic and non-professional. It is also a study of children, more than of “ the child.” There is an expression in favour with teachers of chemistry which is rather curious—“ mix such and such constituents—how will they *behave?*” Children are sometimes studied in the same way, but they do not respond as chemical constituents, even when “ mixed.” They behave—unexpectedly. It is the understanding of these unexpected movements of their individual minds and wills which is of value for the training of each character, and this understanding is only acquired by those who have a real esteem and affection for children. To no others will they yield up their secrets, and the strength of their silent reserve is incredible.

There are two ways of preparing children for the government of themselves in after-life, one direct and the other indirect. The first has its merits, it is quick in results, often very successful. It fosters piety, inculcates some clear principles, dictates the main lines of action, and by rule and

maxim, fits the being into its place in the world, and gives it means to do its duty creditably. The indirect method is longer and less clearly defined. It aims at giving a guiding light within, and power to climb a difficult path, and pick a way through unknown country by that light. This must be waited for, and slowly developed, but in the end it is of greater worth. The training of the Sacred Heart aims at this. But it is recognized that it does not suit all children. There are, in fact, many, full of good resources and gifts, but with something in their character which makes it impossible for them to bear this workmanship. They do not want it, and it seems to make too great demands upon them; whereas in surroundings that offer a more general and less individual training, they give their best. Curious things happen not unfrequently. Those who could not stand the training at the time, sometimes find that they cannot live without it afterwards, and come back to make the offering of their lives to God in that very service.

It is obvious that so marked a system of training calls for types of educators equally distinct. Some educate by personal gift and influence. The influence of a great personality is always felt, whether educating directly or indirectly. But this will necessarily be rare, and cannot be counted on in the ordinary run. For such educators, their system, their education, is *themselves*. But there are lesser lights in the same calling who may and must be trained, and in religious Orders it is necessary that they should subordinate their personal

methods and views to the common good. In the Society of the Sacred Heart a complete acquiescence in what is best for the general good is required, just because the system is so strong. It asks of the individual to stand back and merge in the whole; not to want to make disciples, or to have a way of its own, but cordially to co-operate with all; neither to stand, nor to stand out, alone. In proportion to the grasp of this principle, real influence for good grows. Many in one are irresistible. To the nuns of the Sacred Heart, it is the Society that educates, they stand for it at the appointed hours, to teach, or keep supervision, knowing that they have behind them its confidence and its authority. The inexperience of beginners is supported by this knowledge, the personal force of others is moderated. All are lifted to a plane in which the standard of measurement is not that of personal success. “Which of the nuns is it that has made such a great change in you?” asked a mother of her daughter, after a year at school. “Mother, it’s not one nun, it’s all the nuns,” was the answer, showing how the idea had been taken in.

Three sides of the training call for particular consideration: the studies, the discipline, and the training in conduct.

The Society of the Sacred Heart has its own programme of studies, of which the foundations and principles are the same in all schools of the same grade, and the superstructure is adapted to the wants of each country in which this Society has founded houses. The programme of studies aims

at giving as complete an introduction as girls can master in their school years, to the various departments of study which may interest them in after life. The object, when it was drawn up, was to enable those who had gone through it to judge wisely of persons and things, to distinguish between "the precious and the vile" in questions of literature, art, taste, conduct and manners; and the studies which conduced most effectually to this end were considered relatively the most important. Next in order came those that were useful, and afterwards those that were considered at the time merely ornamental.

The Blessed Foundress herself, with the help of her advisers and of some experienced Fathers who gave lectures to the communities, drew up the first programme of studies. But she never looked upon what was drawn up as a finished work. Several times during her life she put the programme again into the hands of competent committees and revised their revisions. The first framework has always been preserved, because with its corner-stone of religious knowledge and its well-proportioned foundations in the elements of philosophy, it is adaptable to whatever may be built upon these foundations. She never rested on what had been done already, and it would have sorely disappointed her to think that anyone could suppose her to have said the last word on the subject. She said the first word very clearly, to the Society which she governed; she explained and commented it, and brought it up progressively to the requirements of her own day. She left a word of guidance that

is of very wide application—“That the older methods should not be despised nor the newer neglected”; and again and again, in the course of her long correspondence she writes earnestly of the importance of strengthening and perfecting the studies. From her own careful and thorough instruction she could measure the extent to which mind and soul are influenced by study, and of the power of true principles of thought to set in order the whole direction of life.

Her foundations remain, and our day builds on them according to the needs of time and place. The greatest value, as has been said, is set upon the knowledge of religion and the elements of philosophy; history, especially the history of the Church, has a place of great honour, literature and the history of art are its auxiliaries; modern languages are claiming more and more attention, and she to whom they were a recreation has left the door open for this necessary development. It is said, and not without truth, that the literary side predominates in the programme of the Sacred Heart, and this side is, in fact, considered to be of more intrinsic worth, and even of greater power in the guidance of life, since the qualities of mind which it develops have a closer relation to real experience, in most lives, than those produced by science in so far as it is accessible to girls.

The question of preparing girls for a series of public examinations, or at all events, for a leaving examination, has been so much discussed that it is almost worn out. When all other considerations can be set aside except the permanent good of chil-

dren there is a great deal more agreement than would appear on the surface, and many among the most experienced teachers, who obtain splendid results in public tests, have a very poor opinion of their real educational value. As a re-awakening when studies had fallen asleep or had never yet been organized; as a convenient standard of very rough measurement, in conditions where all was still to create, and where heads of houses wanted some guiding lines that would give a basis of comparison with others; as a pass into centres for professional training, they may have had great practical utility. But, as the teaching profession is raised by training, and as more attention is turned upon the psychology of child-life, the confidence felt in the system of public tests for children is undoubtedly on the wane. A scheme of studies resting on a permanent basis, with a harmonious programme, and a possibility of being revised both in length and breadth, and of finding its own balance in any country without losing its individuality, this is one of the great gifts that Blessed Mother Barat left behind her. Its strength lies in that it is a vertebrate organism; it keeps the same shape but it can grow as a living thing, and as a living thing, also adapt itself to new environment. At the same time it does not prohibit external tests, and the habit of personal independence in work, which is fostered, is a good preparation for any concentrated or specialized effort which may have to be made.

The discipline in schools of the Sacred Heart has met with a great deal of criticism. Why these

moments of strict silence? Why this supervision? Why this insistence on play? This opposition to sets and cliques and private friendships? Why these exercises in behaviour, like formal parade? Why such exacting persistence as to manners? All, in the main, for the same reason: because they conduce to the training of character; they exact self-control, and attention, and consideration for others, and remembrance, not in one way, but in a hundred ways. Self-control is so vital to the conduct of life that no price is too great to pay for the acquiring of the habit; it is so indispensable that no kind of duty can be well done without it, and no action is too small in which to practise it. It is a vain expectation to hope that self-control and unselfishness will come forth at command in a crisis, when they have not been practised in the small occurrences of daily life. The rare crises of life reveal us to ourselves, but we are made in the small victories or defeats of every day. Again, the moments of silence have their value, and also the promptitude of execution, the general order of movements, the power of waiting attentively; all give strength and alertness to the will, facility for concerted action, a finished sense of how things ought to be, which is even of practical utility. For in the future girls may constantly need the knowledge of how to organize and marshal general arrangements, and how, at proper times, to keep silence and to wait. Why this persistent pursuit of manners? Because they, of all beautiful forms, can least be acquired ready-made, but are of slow growth. Because they give the two things which

are the panoply and best ornament of girls and women, simplicity and security—simplicity, which is conduct without pose, without even the carelessness that is a minor pose of its own; simplicity, which is the expression of inward truth and of contentedness to be what one really is; security in the practised assurance that comes of knowing what to do. These need long exercise to grow perfect, to outgrow inattention and forgetfulness, and they need perpetual self-control to keep in hand all selfish tendencies or too engrossing interests.

The question of supervision is the point that has met with the most criticism; but this does not usually come from those who have seen it at work. Ill-sounding names have been used, such as “espionage” and “suspicion,” which are quite unlike the reality as we know it. It sounds like a formidable system of ever-vigilant pursuit to find out something wrong. It is, on the contrary, like the vigilance of mothers whose watchfulness nothing escapes, but who are not on the look-out for what is bad. It is a matter of observation, and pretty well-known, that suspicion, and anxious watchfulness and expectation are more likely to provoke wrong-doing than to check it. Every right-minded child resents them, and others can easily find means to evade what is hateful. But when supervision is surrounded with an atmosphere of trust, when it goes by the principle: “Don’t have anything to hide and then you will never be afraid of being seen,” it acts in open daylight, and neither provokes resentment nor invites manœuvring to outwit its precautions. The bright, untroubled, straight-

forward eyes that we know, do not harbour resentment or mistrust; they are frank, and their word is believed; they quite understand.

Besides this personal supervision there is another kind of watchfulness, which in any important organization can never be relaxed, and that is the supervision of general order and of the efficient accomplishment of all details of duty. Personal attendance on the children is diminished by the passing away of a code of manners which in former times rigidly imposed it; but, as in public service or private enterprise of any importance, inspection is the force that keeps everything up to a high standard of efficiency, so in a school, unless inspection is constant, thorough and persevering, human nature is apt to slacken, especially among children, who have to take on the word of others the importance of many things which they are obliged to do, for which they can see no reason. In all these departments of external order and well-being, supervision is necessary, and is constantly exercised.

As to sets and cliques and private friendships among girls, they are destructive of many things that make for the happiness of school and of after-life; they pull down public spirit, they confuse right interests with cross-currents of selfishness and exclusiveness, they tend to combine elements that are less desirable, or to draw away minds from study by other pre-occupations. Sometimes they take hold of children and carry them into intimacies out of harmony with their own homes, so family claims as well as school-life may be the losers, and have a right to be protected.

But the question of friendship belongs more to the conduct of life than to the discipline of school, since the making of real friends is a life-long good, and mistakes in the making of them leave their mark for a lifetime.

Principles for the conduct of life are everything to a girl. They may, as has been pointed out, be inculcated by precept; but they may also, in a well-guided school, be learned in the practice of every-day life. When children are allowed to complete their course of studies, and are not cut short in the best bloom of their awakening minds, the last years are rich with experience, proportioned to their development, in matters for which after-life will demand a full exercise. The elder girls in a school have a position which gives them as much influence as they are able to exert. If they have deserved the confidence of those over them, a measure of authority comes into their hands which teaches them a great deal about the management of character. In school committees or sodalities, of which they may be members, they can learn something of the administration of funds and of the giving of accounts and reports. They may acquire a little insight into social problems and the right service of the poor; their minds will be besieged by such questions as soon as they take up their life in the world, and no education is now complete without some preparation for these rapidly-growing requirements. Every form of helpfulness which comes before them in school foreshadows claims which will be made upon them afterwards. The Church, the poor, the foreign

missions, their own families, all have rights in their lives; and how to give their share of intelligent help, especially how to co-operate and subordinate personal views, and gain an understanding of the ideas of others, is a part of school-training which may not be neglected.

An American Bishop once said, and it was a word of praise very much valued: “When I want to start a good work in my diocese, I look round to find a child of the Sacred Heart.” Those who can merit such commendation give proof that their school-training in ready self-devotedness has not failed of its end. If they can satisfy the expectations that are founded on them as to religion, honour, sense of duty and helpfulness they will give comfort and support in whatever surroundings they may be placed, and this may be attained by all. Diversities of gifts will account for themselves in the particular form of usefulness to which they may be applied.

For more than a century now the Society of the Sacred Heart has been educating girls; and, as years go on, and the third and fourth generation come to its schools, a general view may be gained of the family likeness and features resulting from the training.

It may be said that the family likeness is quite remarkable, apparent among all nationalities, with the variety of expression which is proper to each. Their affection for their own school is a life-long tie, but they have a wider family spirit; they feel at home in any of the convents, and every nun of the Sacred Heart, known or unknown, is their

friend. They will put themselves to great inconvenience and travel long distances even to meet one, or to render service; and, in new countries or the make-shift condition of foundations, their glad welcome, their tactful help and the air of home, which they bring with them, as much as they find it, gives assurance that the mark set upon them is for life. It is difficult to put into words what gives the family likeness; it is certainly a family affection, a central devotion, a likeness in point of view, a kind of language in common. Certain ideas and words have an inward meaning, beyond what they say to others, certain standards are taken as a matter of course. And these features in common affirm themselves more expressively and more emphatically than the diversity of race and language which they underlie. Beyond that it is not possible to give a key to it; but in a crowd we can pick them out, and they can recognize each other. They are the family of the Sacred Heart, friends, almost a second family of sisters amongst themselves, and to the nuns, in a sense, they are "the children" all their lives.

It is clear that such an organization cannot be worked by individuals, however gifted. It is a complex whole, calling for co-ordination and subordination of parts. And, as the religious training, so too this manner of education is not a system to which a key can be given, it is a living spirit with a way of life of its own. It is one of the most precious inheritances of the Society of the Sacred Heart. At the same time we know well that it is not the only excellent system of edu-

cation, and moreover, that it is not suited to all places nor to all natures. Pope Leo XIII. wrote to the Bishops of Canada during their controversies and contests with the secular authorities about Catholic education: “As the object does not impose a line of conduct determinate and exclusive, but on the contrary, admits of several, as is usual in such matters, it follows that there may be on the line to be followed, a certain number of opinions equally good and acceptable.”¹ So, and even more evidently, within the Catholic Church, there may be various lines and different systems of education, each adapted and proportioned to its own end, “equally good and acceptable.”

¹ Board of Education, *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, Vol. IV. *Educational Systems of the Chief Colonies of the British Empire*, p. 362. (1901.)

CHAPTER VII.

CHARACTERISTICS.

“Let Truth be their Queen, as Poverty was the Lady of St. Francis.”—*Rev. Mother Mabel Digby.*

No one denies that the Society of the Sacred Heart has a strong personality of its own, and, like all characters with marked features, it may be disliked as well as very much loved. It has not the artless grace which makes some Orders universally beloved, nor that general appeal by its object which conquers every sympathy. This is inevitable and is accepted. In a way, and for the work that it has to do, constant criticism is an advantage. Where there is a strong fortress of community-life and tradition, where enclosure is kept, criticism and even opposition render service in keeping each house alive to the trend of ideas in its own surroundings, to new needs, to the possibility of more serious attacks. After all, any institution that values its own efficiency ought to invite and appreciate rather than resent criticism; and, while it does not follow every suggestion, yet, it should consider and weigh all, to sift out the elements of truth which may be precious. “Someone who will make us do what we can,” is said to be “our chief want in life.” Kind friends, full of appreciation and commendation of things as they find them will not do this. Critics, judging impartially or even severely from outside, go further in putting

on the desirable pressure. The best criticism of all comes from the truest friends; and, as in private life, the one who exacts most is the most rare and precious friend, one who is inexorable in demanding the best efforts, whether in work, or ideals, or in the conduct of life. It is troublesome to be exacting in these matters, and such service can never be repaid. So the most valued criticism comes to us from our best friends within and without. The adaptation of measures and remedies comes chiefly from within; but, as in the exercise of any art, the criticism of a true artist is priceless, so in this spiritual region, in the knowledge and practice of religious life, and in the management of work, the criticism of those who are masters in both is of greatest value.

A point much criticized by very "progressive" minds is that the Society of the Sacred Heart is not keen to be first in the forward movement. It is content to let the first wave pass, and any advance that allies a movement, even remotely, to political views, is outside its spirit altogether. Children and students, while under its charge, are also kept outside of any organization that might commit them to particular views. They must deal with those questions according to their discretion later on, and the opinion of their families as well as their own liberty may not be interfered with during the years of education.

The "Feminist" movement occupies so much attention now that it is impossible to pass it by in silence. It is one of those for or against which the Society does not influence the children under its

care, and, as to the religious themselves, they are by their profession outside its current. Even where, long established, it commands full respect and sympathy, as in Germany, where the Catholic *Frauenbund* has reached a certain mature stability, with well-directed determination of aims and methods, it is not thought well to engage the adhesion of girls at school to its support in after years, and religious are not counted upon to join its ranks. The girls are left quite free, even as to joining the *Jugendbund*, which forms such a judiciously-planned preparatory section for those who have left school, and are still too young to take part in the absorbing work and questions which occupy the *Frauenbund*.

At the same time all questions that touch the welfare of women appeal strongly to the Society, whose whole activity is its mission to them. It has a duty at least of watching and praying and labouring, that those with whom it has to do may not, in striving for something more, lose the best of their inheritance, and let go of their real power in the effort to wield one which in their hands may at least be less efficient.

While it is no apostle of "feminism," the Society of the Sacred Heart is essentially a feminine Order, a woman's Order, seeking in its whole tone and spirit and training and manner of life a woman's excellence, the perfection of womanhood, and, so far as can be learned, God's ideals, and Mary's, of what a woman can be.

The second historic contest of the Blessed Foundress's life turned on this very point. Some mem-

bers of the Society were very anxious to revise its Rule, and bring it into more close accordance with that of the Society of Jesus. Blessed Madeleine Sophie always maintained that it could not be done; that an Order of women could not be governed like an Order of men. She valued intensely the spirit of the Society of Jesus which pervades the whole Rule and Constitutions, or rather underlies them. She valued the likeness which her Institute had to theirs; but she knew that it was, and ought to be, the likeness of sister to brother, and that the assumption of ways and manners and mode of government by the sister, to approach more closely to the brother, would have as little grace and fitness as the assumption of masculine ways by a girl. She knew that in thus hardening the outline she would lose the expression of countenance, and spoil the type that she was seeking to perfect.

She had confidence in the feminine gifts for the guidance of women; in affection, insight, tact, sympathy, and quick intuition; in the will-power rightly directed; in the spirit of following, which, as St. Francis of Sales says, is God's ordinance for women, "not because they have not as good capacities, but because God has willed it so." She had confidence in humility, submission, reserve, and holding back, and she knew the strength that lay in them. She knew that for her Society, beyond the Commandments and the evangelical Counsels, lay the borderland of the congruities and fitnesses, which, without being written, were law; and that these unwritten laws, which are a defence

for women, may not be transgressed without giving her into bondage. And she would have her daughters free to be themselves, to lead their own characteristic life, without the artificiality and constraint of trying to be something which was not their very self.

In that great crisis of her life, Blessed Madeleine Sophie was true to her own principles; she never relaxed her hold upon the main issue, but she allowed long experiments to be tried. She said little and prayed much; she kept her own views in abeyance, but never gave them up. Most of those in whom she trusted opposed her; but she waited on God, and in the end everyone was convinced of what she had known all along: that the Society of the Sacred Heart must be itself, and could not be a copy of the Society of Jesus. It was a woman's victory, won by a woman's means, for a woman's principle, and the fruit of that peaceful triumph remains to us; the question has never been raised again.

The spirit and life of this Society then, are essentially fitted for women. The enclosure seals this with the Church's sanction, and, within the enclosure, is a life in which there is not much written prescription, but a great deal of tradition; the consciousness of a family circle and the mutual confidence which is absolutely necessary if enclosed Orders are to be happy; common interests, and resources for ministering to them, and at the same time, enough contact with all movements and needs outside to keep the Institute from growing self-centred. Another point particularly womanly in

the manner of life of the Society of the Sacred Heart is a disinclination to develop specialists among its teaching members. When necessary, the members prepare themselves for University degrees; but the importance attached to them is secondary; they do not call out much enthusiasm, they are taken for outside use, to give confidence to educational authorities, to have the right to exercise the duties of teachers. But they are not valued for their intrinsic worth, at all events, following the curricula of such Universities as give their degrees to women. Here again, as in the training of character, it is felt that what women especially need is balance and proportion; and all that tends to throw them mentally very much to one side or the other is not without damage to their mental life. A free field is not, at present, given for woman's intellectual culture; her education is hampered by prescriptions and entangled by the anxiety, which vexes so many minds, to prove that she is the equal of man in intellectual capacity. If it could be persuasively carried to the public conviction and communicated to the schools that the problem should be given up; that man and woman are incommensurable; that they differ not so much in degree as in kind, then, a great sense of peace would ensue; and in that peace something excellent for the education of women might be elaborated, better adapted than what we have at present to fit her for that place in the world which none but woman can fill. In a few years, perhaps, some more elastic scheme may be accepted, which will give scope for the best gifted, and room for those who have fewer

talents, in which each might make choice according to her aptitudes and the outlook of her future.

Our times have so many points of likeness with those of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries, that the ideas of education for women, then in favour, are not without interest. The plan of studies was not so narrow as might be imagined. "It was based on the knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, not a superficial knowledge, but one that gave intimate familiarity with the genius of each tongue, with its construction and its classical styles. Grammar, rhetoric, poetry, mathematics, philosophy, music, the arts of embroidery and weaving, were matter of careful study for ladies of rank."¹ The religious and devotional instruction in Christian families was equally well portioned; it began by committing the Psalter to memory; the study of Proverbs followed, as instruction in the art of living wisely; Ecclesiastes, to arm them against the vanity of vanities; Job, as a preparation for adversity to come; finally the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, which were the treasure for their whole life-time. This was the end of the elementary course in Scripture. The Prophets and the Historical Books came later, and lastly the Canticle, for those whose minds were ripe and who had some mystical gifts. The latter part, of course, shows the influence of St. Jerome. Evidently it is not a scheme for to-day; and yet how strong is its anchorage, and how adaptable to every change of circumstance, prosperous or adverse, that may search and test the foundation

¹ Cardinal Rampolla, *Life of St. Melania*. Translated by E. Leahy (Burns and Oates, 1908).

of a human life! It is a richer and more inviting scheme for the formation of a woman's mind and the guidance of her life than the course offered by many modern Universities. There is a curious likeness to the main lines of Blessed Madeleine Sophie's own education; which, although she did not take it as a model, must have influenced to a large extent the scheme of studies which she drew up.

In the end, as scientific discovery advances, and communication becomes more and more rapid, it will be surely necessary to slacken the breathless efforts to keep pace with it. It will not be possible to compress within the poor compass of elementary text-books, even in outline, the added science and sciences which are coming into view. We may hope not to fall back upon the *Compendium*, a thousand times condemned already. The alternative would seem to be, to give, as the Roman ladies had in the fourth and fifth centuries, and as Blessed Madeleine Sophie had in the end of the eighteenth, some bases that are for all time; some of the science of first principles, so that the whole plan may have true shape, and leave room for liberal choice and liberal exclusion, aiming at knowledge which is good for woman's life, leaving time and space for the gifts and arts and sciences that go to the making of home and to the happiness of life, to the graces of living;

. . . "in self-control
And comeliness and quiet mirth."

What stands by us in life is, after all, discipline of mind, habits acquired, the power of steady ap-

plication, and such knowledge of first principles, as will enable new knowledge and experience of any kind to find its right place and true proportion in what has been already acquired. Thus, in fact, by this adaptability of mind and habits, by readiness for what has never yet been experienced, and by the power of judging and acting rightly in new circumstances, the educated mind is distinguished from one that has been merely instructed how to move in a well-known and expected order of things. We need not, therefore, regret too keenly the loss of much that has been laboriously learnt and is easily forgotten; easily, in proportion to the hot haste in which it has been "got up" to pass one critical moment; but we must regret anything that has deadened the taste for learning, dimmed the sight and fatigued the brain, even before the true life-work has begun. We must regret that the aim in early years of education should be to reach something accomplished, instead of something well-prepared, to which the analogies of all living organisms should have directed us, as well as experience of children and their needs.

Blessed Mother Barat left what was characteristically a scheme of preparation, and a scheme for the education of girls. A common curriculum for boys and girls was not one of the educational fancies of her day, it was a time of too great urgency for any fancies in education. Her close contact of mind with the problems of living well in difficult times, and preparing for duties of which she knew the scope, would probably not have inclined her towards it; the education of girls was her pro-

vince; she had a gift of insight into what was good for them. In the same way, as has been said, in the government of the Society, she held to it steadily, that many things which were rightly laid down for the government of a religious Order of men were not adaptable to the government of religious communities of women. The more masculine spirits in her day resented it, and strove long to persuade her, and even to force the government of the Society of the Sacred Heart into a more Ignatian groove; but in the end her right instinct prevailed, and the common consent warmly welcomed a return in peace to the earlier principles.

In the same way, every letter that came from her pen, every page of her teaching, bears the same stamp; strong in its courage, earnestly pressing home the necessity of rising above natural weaknesses, and conquering faults of pettiness and impulsiveness; but, with the "man's heart" and courage, comes ever the insight of "woman's thought."

In reading the wise and luminous pages of her correspondence, there is brought home to the mind a persuasion, that without a parallel commentary or exposition, it is possible that harm may be done to the receptive minds of young novices, by taking to heart the spiritual teaching given by men to men. The fundamental distinction affirms itself so early, that it seems to deserve more practical recognition than it receives. Merely listening to the quality of voice in a boy and in a girl of five years old, may awaken wonder that anyone should try to drive such different beings along the same road of studies, or professions, or spiritual training. The

affirmation, the promise, the character, the expression of each, point a different way, and so do the corresponding movements of face and step and gesture; the more closely they are observed the more they are seen to diverge. Now, in books for spiritual training, unless this distinction is kept in view, it is quite possible to break down a nature of less resistance, by guiding it along lines destined for one of stronger make, and leaving it without knowledge of principles necessary for its own guidance. It may remain ignorant of its own faults and defects, because they have not come within the scheme that was drawn up for others. In general, books for spiritual training direct their treatment against strongly-marked and outspoken faults, and take for granted that severe treatment and explicit methods will deal with them. But a whole class of subtle faults, that grow up in the shade, are not taken into account. If "feminine vanity" is attacked either earnestly, or playfully, or with a touch of satire, it is only that naïve love of display which may be seen in birds of bright plumage. Occasionally, too, there is a spirited *sortie* against jealousy; but it is so obviously directed against obvious forms that, again, all that is more subtle escapes the darts, and lives on, hardly conscious of itself. Very little, in the authors most read, touches on certain characteristic defects with deep and branching roots; on tendencies to seek sympathy and attention; on the emotional current which is satisfied with feeling acutely, and stops short of translating generous emotion into act. Very little is said of exaggeration and want of frankness; of

self-pity, and unreal troubles which come with it; very little of the instinct of secretiveness, which is so fraught with peril; of the danger of half-confidences, partly entrusted to one, partly to another, which makes any guidance impossible; of the self-will that flits from confessor to confessor until one is found to give the desired advice; very little of the love of excitement and sensation and their strange manifestations. The negative faults of women remain almost untouched; the wide-spread shrinking from responsibility and mental effort; the tendency to drift; the unpractical selfishness; the want of perseverance. Things are not explained which may set wrong, "by want of thought," the direction of a whole life; that it is our own fault if we are not taken seriously; that it is unworthy to hide the best and put forward the worst that is in us; that we must learn not to be startled out of countenance into being untruthful; that it is not *things* which are wrong in themselves, but the caring too much for these things. These and other elementary principles are not often explained; and for want of them many lives of good promise turn to futility, or deviate into scrupulous habits of mind, and so let good gifts go to spiritual waste. A few great directors and students of human nature have thrown light here; but English spiritual writers have not worked this vein till now, and yet there is so much to be said that would come home to many in our spiritual Renaissance in England, for want of which much vital force in spiritual lives is, perhaps, wandering from its right channel. It would require time and special study,

and the urgency of other things presses; but, as Dr. Clouston says, "one of the tasks of the practical sociology of the future will be to find out the true spheres and work of each sex, and to regulate our social system in accordance with that knowledge."¹ So in the spiritual life. Some spiritual writers abroad have prepared the way, at least indirectly, and especially in their correspondence, as St. Francis of Sales, Fénelon, Monseigneur d'Hulst. From them may be learned the good as well as the bad tendencies that escape general observation; they throw light on the gifts and capacities, which, if rightly trained, may grow into such perfect devotion, such self-effacement, such long, silent patience and tenacity of purpose, such heroic hopefulness, such noble transparency of character. From these, and from the lives of women Saints, a great deal may be gathered; and in Blessed Mother Barat's teaching, such principles are set in relief with her own wise experience, to bring them to a focus.

The expression of it all, of her foresight and wisdom, has resulted in a manner of life and a code that is astonishingly simple. The religious habit is of the plainest, it has no monastic air; the ceremonial for Clothing, Vows, Profession could not be briefer or more simple, yet so expressive that this very simplicity intensifies the meaning. The absence of adopted names in religion, the exterior matter-of-factness about the way of living, the repression of all that is eccentric or imposing, induces a habit of mind which indi-

¹ Clouston, *The Hygiene of Mind*. (Methuen.) Ch. XIV., p. 210.

rectly combats love of the singular and sensational, and other faults that tend to unreality, even in the pursuit of perfection. There is very little allowed for show. Virtues have to be acquired, as the finer essences are distilled from thousands of flowers and single petals—imperceptibly; each effort alone a mere nothing; in the total result very little by material measurement,—but that little, priceless.

By this simplicity, and by a constant vigilance over safety in doctrine, the fostering in every way of a Catholic and Roman spirit, by refraining from controversy and political partisanship, Blessed Mother Barat built from the beginning her little foundation of religious life, as a city of peace, of which the inhabitants are at one within their Jerusalem on earth.

As in the whole, so in the parts; she would not have anything showy as to external virtues. Poverty was to be hidden behind the most ordinary appearances, but she loved the poorest things for her communities, and the custom has come down from the beginning that all that is best is for the children, while the servants' quarters and stables are adapted for the use of the nuns. Obedience rarely asks for anything startling, but it is to be perfect in detail; and those are to be envied and praised who have the least attractive of positions or duties. Charity is to be perfected without elaborateness, but with the simple-heartedness that loves and serves in details, without ostentation. In charity we reach the very heart of the whole and its ideal; that which would have been a special vow, if it had been possible to define the matter

with sufficient clearness. Without a vow, it remains the special and distinctive obligation which is to be the dominant family feature, and springing from this central charity, the conviction that each member is in a sense responsible for all, strengthens its bulwarks. Each one carries about with her a kind of consciousness of the whole Society depending upon her honour and fidelity to its spirit. None of us lives to herself and none of us dies to herself; the Rule goes so far as to say to each one that the fate of the Society is in her hands; by a figure of speech, perhaps, and yet more than a figure of speech—for the thrill of every holy life is felt through the whole body, and every falling short by one member diminishes the spiritual treasure of the whole.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TYPE.

“The servants and friends of God, the sons and daughters of the Eternal King ought to have great souls.”—*Archbishop Ullathorne.*

“Let them struggle earnestly and sincerely, that is enough. Let the soul be militant and real, even though at times, poor soul, it be defeated.”—*Dalgairns, Holy Communion.*

THE result of a strong system of training is to develop a marked type without weakening individuality. A weak or slackened system has the opposite effect; it would seem to allow individuality to assert itself the more, but in practice it does not appear to be so. The discipline of submission and self-renunciation is needed to bring strong personalities up to their full height; without it, they easily drift into wilfulness, self-sufficiency, and arbitrary ways. To be hall-marked upon a strong personality with an unmistakable stamp gives a certain guarantee of having been put to the test and having given a right response, without losing the precious quality of the metal that has been so stamped. It has not been found wanting, it is capable of bearing that hall-mark without disgrace, and the mutual reliance of the authority which stamps, and the personality which is stamped, form one of the most precious relationships of life. So it is in the services, so it is of the greater Universities, so it is between religious and their Order.

Every religious Order and Congregation has its own hall-mark, stamped upon true members. They

bear it in their speech, in their writings, in their manner, in the very tone of their voice, the very expression of their countenance. They have almost a characteristic feature in their face where it is most clearly stamped. It is their religious personality established and speaking for itself upon the basis of their natural temperament and character; the one does not absorb or obliterate the other; the stamp of the Order gives stability to the natural gifts, the natural basis adds its own expression to the spirit of the Order, so that the strongest systems of religious training produce a living type with many variations, and not a single reproduction of many, run in one mould.

The particular hall-mark of the Order is determined by the object at which it aims, by its manner of training, by the nature of the battle which it wages against self, whether fought out in solitude or in the companies who live a common life, and in the external field of their activities and strivings. None perfectly trained as religious can lay aside the consciousness of being that which they are. Every relation into which they come with others calls upon the resources which, as religious, they have at their command, and upon the inner responsibility which they have to carry before God as well as before the Church. To be a unit in so great a whole is in itself an uplifting consciousness; to maintain the honour of the Order or Service to which the whole of life is dedicated appeals to what is deepest and best in human nature; and this spiritual tie, blessed by the Church, and promised before God and all heavenly witnesses to

the contract, makes a sacred alliance that lasts—not until death, but beyond it.

It does not require any very intimate knowledge to read the external hall-marks of the Orders or Congregations. If they are well stamped they speak for themselves. So is the blend in the Sister of Charity, of the look of fatigue, so habitual, that it seems to be no longer noticed, with the gaiety and courage, the unconsciousness of self, which is at home everywhere, ready for every emergency; this makes one exclaim, "perfect Sister of Charity." She has nothing to say or to maintain, her whole being expresses the aim of the whole body; perfect charity and perfect service. So in the convents of the Benedictine Order, every nun bears about with her the serenity and stateliness that comes of the grave and cloistered life, something of still sunlight in holy precincts, some grace of quietness and prayer that comes of walking habitually in thought in that heavenly city of which the Lamb is the light. It impresses itself on their writings and signs itself on their conversation. It is the stamp of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica.

Religious, leading the mixed life, have to give proof of something which belongs to both worlds, the unseen and the seen, and a certain stress of intensity cannot fail to be the result. Towards God, the contemplative side, and towards others, the fully active, have to be awake, to be affirmed and to be expressed. The countenance and ways have to be sealed with both seals, signed and counter-signed for both, while the inner life holds the key of each, and the two meet together in the quiet

place of community life, which has its frontiers on the one and the other.

When a religious of great promise, Mother Aloysia Jouve, died at the age of twenty-nine, in the very early days of the Society, Blessed Mother Barat was heard to say: "Thus I dreamed that they would all be!"—" *C'est ainsi que je les avais toutes rêvées.*"¹ She had seen a type in this Aloysia, by whose intercession so many graces were obtained after her death that Mother Barat felt obliged to summon her by her obedience on earth to obey once more from Heaven, and cease to work those wonders because of the concourse of visitors that were drawn to the old Monastery of Ste. Marie d'en Haut. She had many others who might have been counted as types. Aloysia Jouve was the niece of Ven. Mother Duchesne—she had brought with her something of the Duchesne character: its indomitable energy and high courage; on both of them had been stamped, by suffering, the habits of patience and prayer and endurance, and a holy tenacity of life, with the will to give to God its last drop, its very last flicker for love's sake. There was Mother Thérèse Maillucheu,² of the most perfect contemplative type that we have had, whose early years in the closest intimacy with Blessed Madeleine Sophie, writes one of our idylls of the spiritual life in the Society of the Sacred Heart. There was Mother Bigeu, whose perfection was so accomplished that the Blessed Foundress

¹ *Life of Mother Duchesne*, translated from the French of Mgr. Baunard by Lady Georgiana Fullerton.

² *Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat*. (Roehampton, 1911.)

called her "the most perfect religious of the Sacred Heart that she had ever seen." There was Mother Goetz, the second Superior-General, whose devotion to duty and spirit of faith and fidelity stamped itself for life upon several generations of Novices whom she trained. There was Mother du Rousier, who caught the last flash of Mother Duchesne's expiring life, and two days before her death received her blessing, and went from the United States with a brand from the same flame to kindle the devotion to the Sacred Heart in South America. There was Mother Aloysia Hardey,¹ whose torch had been lighted at the same hearth and spread the fire with marvellous results in North America. There was Mother Vercruysse who did for Australia the same work that Mother du Rousier had done for South America, founding houses where the true spirit of the Society was laid with imperishable cement in the foundations. There was Mother Lehon, whose spirit, like that of her patron, St. John the Evangelist, softened from the lightning flash of her early years to a late glow of most perfect charity. There was Mother von Sartorius, gentlest of Superiors-General, who gave her life willingly for the Society, crushed in a few months, under the burden of her troubled times. There was Reverend Mother Digby,² to whose valiant courage it was given to pilot the ship in the height of the storm, through perilous channels to calmer waters.

These, and others who might be named, con-

¹ *Mary Aloysia Hardey, Religious of the Sacred Heart.* (New York, The America Press, 1910.)

² Anne Pollen, *Mother Mabel Digby.* (Murray, 1914.)

trusted in character, in race, in natural endowments, might hardly seem at first sight to have a type in common, and yet a likeness is there which set upon each distinct character, and upon their acts that seal, which is the authentic mark of the Institute: an insatiable desire to give themselves to the utmost, for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, according to the spirit and Rule of the Society; a virtue which we call, perhaps in a colloquial sense, "devotedness," an uncalculating spirit of sacrifice, and with it a fixed resolution to give and to suffer for the sake of love alone; as Mother Lehon energetically worded it: "Ne donnez pas un cheveu de votre tête que par amour."

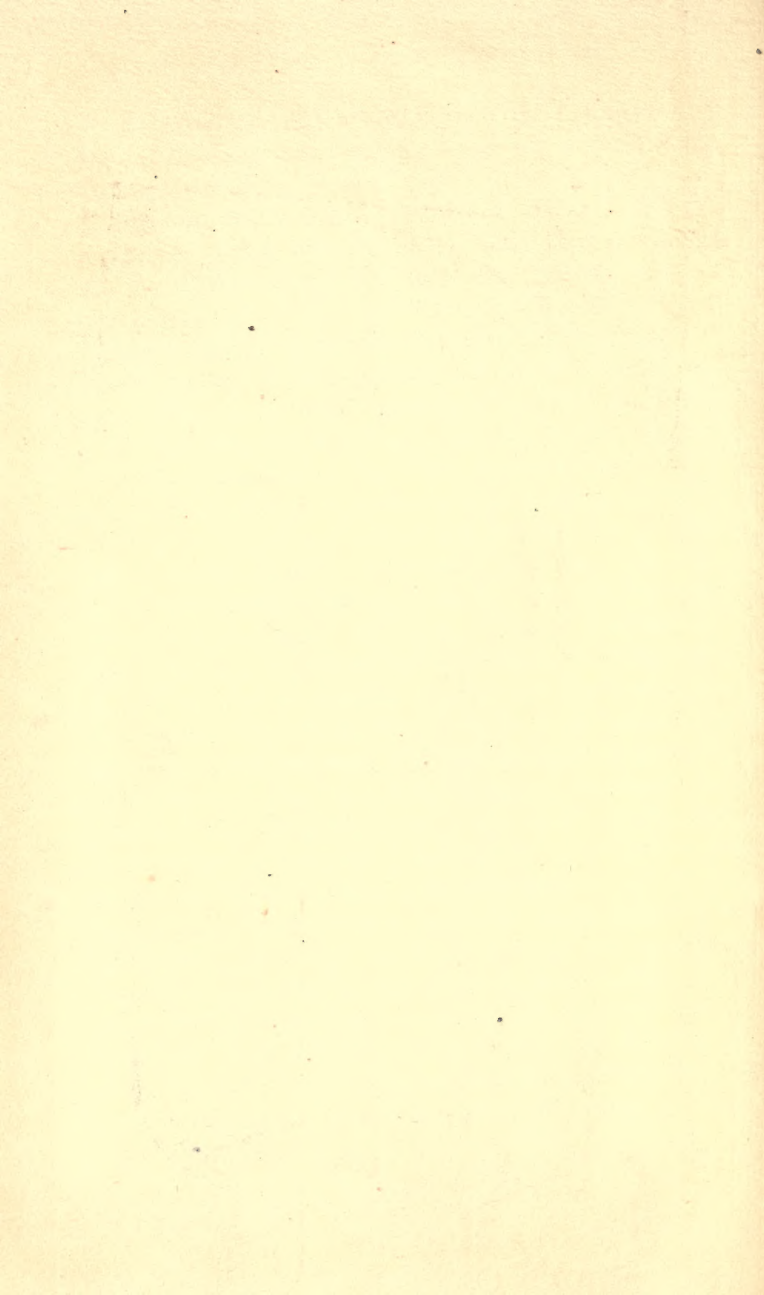
High achievements and great types are in a sense the despair of those who attempt to emulate them; at the same time they prick the tamest courage to exert itself. "What others have done canst not thou also do?" So life goes by in striving without ever attaining. This must, without doubt, be the inward ache of the soul, for every religious who contemplates the great figures that have passed by in the history of their Order and left behind eternal memorials and names in benediction. They have left their ideals and hopes, and the virtues they have brought to maturity, as heirlooms in the religious families; their portraits are the family glory, and their examples the patterns of what may yet be. And yet no one knows better than the striving members, in their own hearts, how poor are their attempts to rise to such heights of magnanimous effort. They can only try to keep hold

of the type, they can only "never despair," and set themselves to begin again every day the same conflict which has been maintained by those who have gone before for the same ends, hoping that the merits and intercession of those already with God may aid them and keep their feet in the same way of perfection.

Of all virtues that religious can least afford to lose hold of in our times, that of hope seems the most needed. Dismal things are often said as to the future of religious life in the modern world. Some think that the existing Orders cannot keep their footing, that they will have to pass away and give place to other forms of good, "better adapted to the ideas of to-day." Those who know religious Orders from within cannot accept these dark prophecies. In many ways indeed it would seem that the world never had such need of religious as in our own times. The world is weary of vain endeavours to deal with its own hunger and emptiness of soul. It resents the assurance that religious have in the way of renunciation, the very thing which it vainly seeks in pursuing its own aims. Yet it is irresistibly attracted towards these centres of an "other-worldly" life. Fiction shows it, though it shows also how little the religious life is known. Poetry shows it, with a wistfulness that seems to long to understand more. Even bitter attacks show it, baffled as they are and striving again and again to blacken that which bears witness against them. Political violence or legal persecution affirm it more clearly than anything else.

If religious are out of tune with their times, why not let them die out quietly as every worn-out institution dies?

But—we know—that there is a heavenly vigour in these germs and in these old, deeply-rooted stocks. We cannot fail to know that we have a message to give, and still more a power to exercise by prayer and sacrifice which is a force that the Church counts upon beyond all earthly help. We know that saints are wanted to leaven the world, that there are saints already leavening it, but that, if religious are true to their vocation and spirit, they are in the very school where saints are made. And if we know nothing of the future it is for that very reason, that we may the more trust God not to let His work be in vain; and, if He allows some doors to be closed, to open others. For we believe that He makes no little account of all faithful devotion, and we cannot doubt that He has a use for every life which has dedicated its powers to His glory and service. Things do not clear up in this world; they are not definite, finished, explained and accounted for. So long as we seek such definite assurance and clear explanation we have not truly learned the religious life. It is tested by the uncertain and the inexplicable, its greatest certainties come of taking for granted things which cannot be verified in this life. It may be counted folly; it is an affirmation which can only be justified when the things of this world have passed away, but this affirmation is one of the most perfect and permanent professions of the Catholic faith.



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