

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

written and dictated by the Servant of God

MOTHER MARY POTTER

in obedience to her Director, Father J. Ryan S.J.

(commenced in 1902)

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

(1847 - 1868)

Dear Rev. Father in Jesus and Mary,

In what you have asked me to do, by reminding me that I shall give pleasure to my children, you have changed what would have been an unpleasant task into a pleasant one. As I feel so bright as a rule until I think of myself I, naturally, have avoided doing so. Now, with blessing of obedience, I look back and gain a good thought at once, for I see revealed a tale of love that reared a child to love everyone, and this is a lesson I trust my children will take to themselves - that I trust my children will take to themselves - that if they wish (who have charge of others) to do them good, it can only be done by love, and what their mother might have been under other circumstances would probably have been very different.

Sitting in the twilight which my Mother loved, I used to hear from her over and over, again tales which told of God's Providence in my regard, and my children from the "land of faith" will like to know how much I owe to them. An old Irish governess told my Mother that her unborn infant would be so much better if she went to Communion frequently, so she did so. Another at my birth putting on before anything the silver medal of Our Lady that my mother had prepared to consecrate me to Her, and she (as she used to tell me) keeping close to Our Lord all the time, with her crucifix in hand, would be reminded (by the nurse), "Now, Mam, your little prayer," and she was saying the Memorare as I was born. I was baptised and called only Mary after Our Lady, to my father's wrath.

I would sit on the floor with my head in my mother's lap and she, playing with my curls would go on, "And you know, 'Trotty' dear, I was confirmed a few months before you were born and it must have been the Holy Ghost gave you your happy disposition." How often I heard that I saved my mother's life, as before my birth, consumption was taking her. Whether her account of her confirmation impressed me I know not, but I often find myself in the brief thanksgiving of the Particular Examen, thanking God for blessing me before I was born.

In my present constant union with God, when not in one of those closer embraces, heart to the Heart of Jesus, I have a constant sense of being with God, as a child might have of being with its mother.

I did not lose my happiness when I ceased to be a child. After the wonderful visit God made me, when He first spoke to me of this, it grew greater and the very air seemed to breathe of joy, like the Garden of Eden. I was too shy to speak to my confessor, so I wrote, and the remarkable thing is certain, that I knew not what was coming, but week after week the whole plan of the Little Company of Mary was gradually unfolded, one feature after the other. It made a complete plan that had nothing to do with my mind. One thing most certainly I understood - that we do not do. Though there would not be lay and choir sisters, there would be two classes - a certain number for indoors, might be called contemplative, and a certain number - active for external works. And this, Father, practically has to be done and where it is not done, the Novices have too much to do, the watching exercises and work depend on the..., and this is not right.

But returning to the manifestation God made to me, it went on for some months, certainly not discouraged by my confessor. The Confraternity of Calvary with its devotion to the Last Words, now so indulged by the Holy Father - all these thoughts were present to my mind without previous advertence. Then suddenly I was told to put it all away, which I did as well as I could. My confessor was a secular (a military chaplain) good holy priest and was some time after ordered to another country. When I asked for my letters to show another confessor he said he would destroy them, but finally wrote to me, that he had sent them to Cardinal Simeoni, where they are now, I suppose, if not destroyed. The Priest was made a Bishop and before his death was very kind; but it was a terrible ordeal he put me through by telling me it was mortal sin to think of what is in that letter to Pope Pius (IX). God permitted it, but hating sin as I did, it seemed to make me commit sin as I could not help thinking of it, and God knows what I went through until another Director was given me.

Then the external contradictions, were nothing. One plan after another was crushed, but I was all through in peace. Bishop Danell gave permission to commence and withdrew. Cardinal Manning the same and then drew back saying, "if this is of the Holy Ghost, and I am not at all saying it is not, it will be, but let her go home to her mother now." So I went home, with a certainty it was alright. God would do His own work; and I can say that up to the present day I have never had as much personal interest, as I had over - say - learning a piece of music as a girl. I have always seemed distinct from it, except as belonging to it as all the sisters do.

My Mother and brothers when I returned home (which was due to their opposition) never alluded to the matter and finally seemed to get some light upon it, and when my confessor told me ...

(1 8 6 7 1 8 6 8)

Regarding, one little episode of my life, my engagement - I have not the slightest regret. It may be difficult for some to understand how a girl in her teens could be as simple as a little child. It was but another brother, and when in order to fulfill what I was advised by my director - to be a Spouse of Jesus either in the convent or the world, in releasing me from my engagement, he said, "Mary is incapable of earthly love" - what my governesses had said of me before. I think my engagement (to Godfrey King) must have been unlike others. We were never alone, either my Mother or brothers accompanied us wherever we went, and I remember, on one only occasion, Godfrey offered me his arm and one of my brothers said, "Mary must be ill to take Godfrey's arm." This was the greatest familiarity which took place between us. He was very holy and I used to think how nice it would be to have a little house to ourselves and spend our lives in good works. We could be like Our Lady and Saint Joseph. One day I told my confessor this, and he at once said that this was not my vocation and that I was to break it off at once, which I did. Dr. Grant, Bishop of Southwark, who freed me from

my engagement, told my mother to take me to some convent and let me see what religious life was like. Being very delicate she thought Brighton would be a good place for me and took me to the Sisters of Mercy there. We arrived on December 7th, 1868 and on the very next day, it being the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, they gave me the Postulants cap. I was exceedingly happy throughout all my novitiate.

I am glad I never had an engagement ring but being anxious that the first present should be Our Lady and having ordered Notre Dame des Victoires from Paris, it was a long time before it arrived, and then my uncertainty hindered the usual formality, so I never had the ring, which was an ornament I was very fond of from a little girl . Perhaps because it was the first given when my Mother wrote some little verses of which I remember only a few lines:

A ring, the emblem of Eternity,
Dear little Mary, I present to thee,
Oft while wearing this my gift of love,
Turn your thoughts heavenwards to God above.

What a grand work is a good Mother! To my mind nothing like a good home, not even being brought up in a convent by good nuns. I beg my children to lay great stress on this with the young girls they can influence, to strive and fit themselves for this office. My Mother was learned as well as holy, and it was beautiful to see my brothers, who were all fairly well read, appeal to my mother for dates, historical facts etc. I never heard a disrespectful word said by them to her, nor even a disrespectful look. I never heard an untruth from their lips. It may seem strange, but I believe that part of my knowledge and love for Our Lord was mingled with my love for my brothers, the youngest of whom was nearly three years older than myself. Our Lord was my Heavenly Brother. Indeed what I saw of other men would bring our Lord to my mind, for my brothers were very careful whom they brought home, and it used to pain me so to know most of them were not in the Church. These thoughts would keep me recollected, as much as a formal meditation. I would look at them, singing and playing, gentle and kind, and think they must be saved, they must be brought into the Church, and I would be singing and playing myself. I know now that to look upon men in this light would not be safe for all souls, but I had no thought of evil. I did not know how, neither do I now.

I loved their souls and prayed for them, and sometimes would talk a little if there was occasion. I remember one brother urging me on, saying "Mary, you talk. I can't argue with them. They make me cross." And I remember even when very young a funny skit poem written by my brother at College - "Does Pops in argument e'en still excel - I ne'er knew woman argue half so well."

One thing I used to feel, perhaps more for my brothers' sake than my own, was the attitude of my mother. When little I must not play with them; when I grew up I must not go out with them. Nothing would move my mother on this point. They would fix on the most innocent entertainment of "Dissolving Views" for some Catholic charity, but no. They would be so pained but ever respectful. My mother had some fixed idea that she could not be too careful of me, that it was a solemn charge given by God. How grateful I am now for this guard of me, which kept me from the knowledge of the world; but to me then it was an unsolvable mystery and I looked upon it as a kind of hobby. Why should I be kept like this? Being delicate I understood why my mother acted thus in what related to my health and was rather glad that it freed me from school earlier than the others and I loved my home so...

(1869 ?)

Father John, you are haunting me. I have left off my prayers, I have left off some other writing I wanted to do. I offer this as an act of obedience. May the Angels remind me.

It seems to me it must be a dreadful thing to be sickened with piety. I am so grateful this did not come in my life so I do not know what it is, but I think it must breed irreverence and what a terrible evil that would be. May God avert it from those who are now being born with vocations to "Calvary." I had always the fear of God and I dreaded receiving the Sacraments carelessly. I have never done so. I left them for a time from respect to them, but I know now the slight faults of worldliness and vanity were scarcely perhaps venial sins, that made me feel not fit to go to them. My mother told me that when I was little I one day saw my brothers, as I thought, very naughty and gravely asked her, "Mama, do you think they were properly baptized?" (At) Isleworth my youngest brother was baptized; St. Michael's, Commercial Road my (other) three brothers. A domestic, with my mother's consent took them there, knowing the priest, to get them baptized. I suppose under the circumstances...

At one time the Blessed Sacrament seemed to have such an unearthly sweet fragrance and the Blessed Sacrament would not dissolve but remain in my throat and I dare not take any breakfast. And though the world would seem Heaven I was so afraid of anything out of the ordinary way, I would almost beg Our Lord not to let me be led differently to the ordinary way. Yet, dear Jesus, do I not know that unless Thou hadst led me on with the sweetness, the unction of Thy love, I should not have responded to Thy Call. Thou hadst ordained from my childhood, Thou hadst ordained ere my birth by my mother's consecration of me before and at the instant of my coming into the world - that God having thus chosen me, as one chooses a piece of marble of which to make a statue, or it might be more correct to say accepts what is offered to him - so God accepted my mother's offering, and then Our dear Lord strove to make it less unworthy of Her (?) acceptance. May He be blessed for ever and may the Angels be praised for their loving care of this child of earth, who is more and more grateful to them.

I have never lost this repugnance to anything out of the ordinary way. I loved home life - oh so dearly. I was never tired of it and ever disliked to go out. I also dreaded the idea of being a nun, with a vague kind of fear that I had got to be one. Our dear Lord had to draw me by His wondrous graces and lead me on by His love. The immensity of the graces shows me how necessary they were, and thus they humble me in two ways, for I also know how badly I have corresponded with them - ah, so sadly - or I should not be what I am. I should have been a grand saint. Indeed the graces would make numbers of Saints if they were divided among souls. I have never had any complacency about them, and I have no fear of that evil, for of all the graces the Holy Ghost bestows, a knowledge of our nothingness and vileness is surely one of the greatest. The sight of our fallen nature as we see it everywhere, in all around, keeps the soul ever contrite, ever loving, since we must look more to the Ocean of Sanctity, of all Holiness, God, and take complacency in Him, since we cannot in ourselves, and have no pleasure, but the utmost contempt, of ourselves.

You see, Father, you told me to write just what came into my mind and I do so without thought or connection at times, of ideas. May the Angels whisper! Ah! How good, I must say it again, they have been to me from my childhood up. It is now, as I look back, I see one thing upon another I have to thank them for. I remember on one occasion positively refusing to go to a rich Aunt (a Protestant) who having no children, was supposed to make me her heiress. Another time, walking on a pier, which I afterwards heard was frequented by bad characters, I burst into tears and asked to go away, but could not tell those who were with me why. I heard afterwards there were such bad characters frequenting the place that the man at the gate was finally forbidden to admit them, which he did without human respect.

My Angel seems whispering to me - Write a history of God's dealings with you, His work in your soul. Yes, this is a more correct way of thinking of it and it sends away the repugnance I have to writing of myself. God's work in me! I will strive to give a little of that history - God's life in me, His little creature, that atom that His Spirit visited and lived in, made use of. It fills me with shame to think how I have resisted that Spirit. How can it be repaired? Happy thought! My Children, often in your daily duties, your decisions, thoughts, prayers and penances, offer some for what your Mother left undone. God working in me! What a different view this is to watching and writing upon what is generally called our own life. How much we learn and how much we see to thank God for, that we scarcely saw was God working in us. No fear of vanity; we have done much harm, and our little good was "God working in us."

I remember on the Feast of S. Catherine of ... Our Lord telling me to take her as a Patron. I knew nothing about her, but in my weekly (?) not always weekly letter to my Confessor mentioned it and said I wish I knew something about her. He referred to it when I went to confession and said she was a widow, at which I was disappointed and did not feel satisfied, but it occurred to me that my brother's "Chambers Encyclopedia" might have even that, as it had so many things. There I found that this St. Catherine was not a widow and a pretty fair account of her life. I do not know what St. Catherine has done especially for me, but I have a thought that we none of us know how the Saints and Angels have helped us. The hurry and scurry of life does not enable us to have time, our thoughts are preoccupied. I love Saint Catherine and thank God for the grace and fortitude He gave her in extreme suffering. I remind her of her grace to be scourged like Our Lord. May she obtain for us all grace to suffer humiliation and pain and to make use supernaturally of our natural abilities.

One thing I am very grateful for is that I was not sickened with piety. It must be a sad devastation of soul. I have never known it, so can but imagine the wreck it must make in the soul, loss of reverence for holy things must accompany it, want of holy fear and adoration, evils upon evils must ensue from this- I remember, when I entered as a postulant and heard a sister giving an account of some portion of our Lord's Life, I thought, what should I have been if I had had anything like this? And the preparation for the First Communion - I had nothing - not even a few hours' Retreat. But I have met convent girls who were positively sickened with piety and I pity them, and one finds it so hard to help them.

In my childhood and in my teens my practices of piety were from a sense of duty, as even entering the convent. Poor Dr. Grant! He chose for me a convent in which to learn religious life. I thought he meant me to join, as I have already said. It was not until leaving I was told that Dr. Grant had written to Reverend Mother of the great interest he took in me and his thought that God had some special designs in my regard, that as I knew nothing of religious life he had sent me to them to learn about religious life and the different orders that formed it. But, as they said to me, they had not told me as they did not know about other orders, and they no doubt thought that as I was so happy with them it was not necessary. But that wonderful saintly soul evidently had a prevision of something in my future. I was quite young when he said to my mother to offer me to Our Lady as a nun, which she did and also went to the convent attached to the Cathedral and told the Rev. Mother what had passed and asked what she should do? But the Rev. Mother said she must have made a mistake, (I was very young) and she thought my mother must have misunderstood the Bishop. My mother never told me that she had offered me thus as a nun until I, years after, told her I wanted or rather, I thought God wanted it and asked her leave. Dr. Grant - what a holy soul, saintly to a degree - what an interest in souls! He spoke so lovingly to my mother of me, and spoke quite poetically one day, "Many will seek to snatch that fair flower from you."

For nearly forty years I have never lost Holy Communion through my own fault. On one occasion I had been to the country, 70 miles from London, to try and obtain from my Uncle, who was a Doctor, a certificate that I could go into a Convent, as my Mother's confessor had told her that she must let me go to be a nun, if a doctor gave a certificate, that I was able to be one. I did my best to coax my Uncle; I played and sang, and indeed saw more life in a few weeks than I would have in years in my own home. Having lost Communion I resolved that on

the return journey I would fast so that on reaching London I might go to the nearest Church to go to Communion. I thought I should arrive about 11 a.m. but the train was delayed on account of the dense fog. It was a distance of 70 miles, but at last we reached the station and I enquired for the nearest Church. It was a part of London I did not know - the East. At the station they directed me, but when I got outside the dense fog hid everything and every sound was muffled. No house, no streets, nothing could be seen. A little cripple boy came up and asked me where I was looking for, so I told him - the nearest Catholic church - and he said he would take me. Away we went (he told me to put my purse in my pocket) and finally left me at a convent when upon ringing a bell a nun answered the door, but her tone and manner were flippant and unlike what I thought a nun should be, that I was perfectly sure it was a Protestant place and was coming sadly away. I had gone some little distance when I accosted a poor woman for the nearest Catholic Church. "You are coming away from it," she said, and led me back to the same place. This little incident made an impression that has made me very particular over who is Portress. I think that charge and the Guest Mistress give to strangers the great impression of the whole house. I know I have heard poor tired travellers say how, when they arrived at the convent...

I can see how the Holy Angels helped me and led me here and there and brought about matters that could not have been without their help; and how much I see too of Satan's craft, striving to blur what he saw he could not prevent, bringing me apparent helps who were hindrances, seeking to lead me on further than God had ordained, taking the form of a seeming friend. God help poor fallen beings, and how He does help! How the snares of Satan bring a grace or a greater good.

It may be noted in these writings that in speaking of myself (which I do because I am told) at one time I say I was kept home and so strictly referred to my mother that my obedience was natural; but in other writings I speak of journeys made alone etc. After my return from the Convent of Mercy, when somewhat recovered, for when I returned for a long time I was ill and when I began to go about had to go out in a chair, but when in better health my mother did not exact from me the same obedience and I did not feel bound to give it, as I had broken with home and all ties and was only remaining from necessity, intending to enter a convent again. I did all I could to get strong, rested, and "Remember, Mary," said my youngest brother to me, "You cannot rest in a hurry, that is one thing you cannot do."

They had been most indulgent to me at the convent. The Novice Mistress was an old schoolfellow and knew how delicate I had always been - not allowed as many hours in school as the others, not allowed to paint on account of my chest, and never allowed out on wet days. But though they were so kind and thoughtful, it was too much for one who had never done anything, even make her own bed. God bless those good nuns, who raised my idea of a nun. By intercourse, by living with them, my idea was not lowered but exalted, and though more than 30 years ago, I look back with the same love and reverence. My Children, be careful not to give disedification. I do not mean to lay yourselves out for edification, but to avoid disedification. We can have no idea of the harm we could do by lowering the stamp of religious. It is lowering God's work. It is the work of the evil one who wishes to put his stamp on the soul that should bear the impress of God. We are either making God known to those around or hiding Him from others. Over and over again, I thank God that I was thrown in the midst of those...

I remember the day I was clothed having a cross. It was such a pain having to wear a dress which left me very uncovered. I was afraid of being disobedient in spirit and all I could do was to unite with Our Lord stripped of His garments, as I had to go before a crowded congregation, band playing etc., but it was Jerusalem below Calvary to me. I was in our Lord's arms on the Cross. I said after I would not like to go into my mother's presence like that, and my Novice Mistress consoled me, saying she would not like it either. They were so good to me and petted me so, that I wondered why the same thing should follow me into religion and went to Rev. Mother and asked her would she not humble me.

Father Lambert S.J. (the only Retreat I have really made) when I spoke of my particular examen, Humility,

and asked how I could perform the acts, gave an instance - I could sweep the stair. "That," I said, "is an honour in God's House, not an humiliation." He tried to help me but could find nothing. At last I thought of a General confession and we agreed upon that, but my Novice Mistress forbade me and though I was a child and knew nothing about the sometimes difficulties between nuns and priests I instinctively felt he would not be pleased with the interference and therefore let him think I had changed my mind, rather than let him be put out with the Convent. It was Father Lambert who, years afterwards, sent my letter to Pope Pius. He said he had a friend of his who lived near the Vatican and would present it. I think that must have been Father Cardella, for one day telling me that Pope Pius (IX) had him once a fortnight to ask his opinion upon letters etc. that were sent to him, and he added so simply, "I must say he had great confidence in my opinion," he said.

(1870 1876?)

As I have told you, Father, God seemed to follow me in such a wonderful way. The first thing I remember of a supernatural character (except when very young, falling from some very high stairs, someone unseen seemed to hold me up and place me at the bottom of the stairs on my feet) but the certainty of something not ordinary was when reading or going to read a little more of Shakespeare than was allowed me (my mother picked out what I was to read, and even my brothers would say - Mary must not read this). I felt a presence and such an awe and fear, quickly I shut up the book.

Another time as I was praying there was a Presence - I saw nothing and yet Our Lord Crucified seemed present for a few instants. But the sad time when I knew not whether I was sinning or not, because of the impossibility of putting away what I know now God had impressed upon my soul, and yet I was told it was mortal sin, I was laid up for some weeks, no Sacraments, expecting an operation and I could echo faintly, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me" (Mt 27:46)? One evening, quickly as a flash of lightning might come and go, there was a brief instant of relief and certain words sunk into my soul, "I will come and comfort you," and not many days after, on Our Lady's Birthday, the Blessed Sacrament was brought to me and my joy restored and a new comfort came.

During this time of sorrow I had only occasionally bodily suffering. At times I would think it would be a relief if my body was in pain, it might distract me from the fearful anguish of soul, which nevertheless I bore without showing and did my few duties, which consisted mostly in going out for walks with my mother and brothers, listening to them, singing and playing, mending their socks and so on, so I had hours to myself in the day and used to come down from my room, as if nothing was going on within me.

I sought comfort from no one, confided in no one. I have never thought in trouble that anyone could comfort me but God. My mother never pressed for my confidence, never alluded if she noticed anything, but once or twice she did drop some words as though she read my state of mind. In some very trying moments, "My darling," she said, "the evil one has nothing to do with you," and this at a time when I would be tormented by the thought - was the evil one appearing as an angel to deceive me? Again, when I was not surprised at some scorn being shown me, my mother who did not however know it, said "We fools esteemed their life madness and their end folly - behold they are numbered with the Saints." Loved Mother! And how I pained her. Did I do right, I have sometimes thought, to leave without her blessing and consent? Should I not have saved much if I had waited until she had given consent and then gone straight as I wished to Pope Pius - rather than to Nottingham?

I do not like to touch on my sorrows, they seem sacred to God, but I have asked our Lord to let the Holy Angels tell me what to write, and I must touch on this point. When my confessor told me it was mortal sin to believe in these - to me - inspirations God permitted this, no doubt, to pierce my soul in the most painful manner possible. I do not think it could be understood how literally I took what was said to me in confession. The words were

so impressed on me, "He that hears you, hears Me" (Lk 10:16; cf. Mt 10:40) and I did my best but I could not succeed. Then, as I trusted my confessor so implicitly, the thought was intolerable - if this is not our Dear Lord within me then I must be possessed. Then I would think, is this how the heretics feel when they believe wrong doctrine - they feel they cannot help it?

I would leave off praying when I could not help these thoughts; they were part of myself. I was under an influence stronger than myself. Jesus and I! That blissful union I had had, I was afraid now to give way to. I ought to have known that I did my best to put the thoughts away and therefore did no wrong. I had not then made my vow to do what was most perfect, which prevents doubts about having sinned. I was trying to do what was most perfect, and did try for 12 years before I made the vow.

God permitted me to have this fear of being a thing displeasing to Him Whom I loved more than myself. Then would come the thought - surely if I were in such a dangerous state I should be lost, but I knew it would be sin to think that and had to put that away. All through I went to Holy Communion daily, though sometimes I would go to confession first, through a scruple of having been disobedient, but I fought against that perhaps more bravely than anything, for I had a wholesome horror of scruples and made up my mind I would go to Holy Communion with this uncomfortable feeling, rather than give way to a scruple. I have passed the priest in the box, close to the Communion rail and gone to Communion, for it seemed to me more pleasing to God to do so than to ease my fears, give way to scruples, in other words, give way to the evil one's suggestions.

As I write all this, such a repugnance comes over me, and I do not like to have repugnances. I like to take the occurrences of life as God's Will, what I am told to do etc., and then to like it; not only do what has to be done but, seeing it to be the right thing, to like it. In this instance I have not yet mastered myself and I do not like to lift the veil and reveal the sanctuary of my soul. But you have told me.

I will not speak of my other great sorrow, the sorrow all Superiors who have mothers' hearts must have. It has drawn me closer to Jesus, to go to His Suffering Sorrowing Heart and echo from my poor little one, "I have brought up children and they have despised me."

Holy Angels, present at the visits made with such loving condescension by the good God to the child, commissioned to manifest the will of the Almighty in the fullness of time, bring to my mind the remembrance of those favours bestowed on one so worthless, make known for the purpose that God Himself made known these secrets - make known to honour Mary, Virgin and Mother, how the mission was made manifest that souls may believe and praise God for His goodness to the children of men.

My room was to me a sanctuary, and I spent hours in prayer when those of the house were out at High Mass or Benediction, which I was considered too delicate to attend and therefore had these quiet hours in what to me was a sanctuary. I remember the feeling being so strong - that it must be kept holy, as though there was a prevision of what would happen in that room, that finding they had put newspapers, according to an old-fashioned custom between the mattress and the iron bed and not being allowed to lift the mattress, I would get under the bed and pull them away for fear there should be anything in them not good, which I imagined there must be as I was not allowed to read them. I had always a lamp burning at one of the altars, for I had two altars, which my Mother kept up for years after I left for the convent. Years afterwards when I visited the house, which was and is still, I believe, empty, my brother drew Mother Philip, who was with me, aside saying, "I think my sister would like to be alone here," which was true, and there again I prayed on the spot which in my girlish days was well marked, for in those days I had the gift of tears. When the altar was there, a great part of the time, I used to offer myself up and pray prostrate, and there was the mark of the tears, for I used to pull the cushion on one side, and was indeed perfectly alone with God and the Holy Angels. My brother was indeed sorry he could not buy the house, for it was always empty, people having the idea that the house was not healthy. Shops have been built in the front garden, but no one will live there. "Truly God was there and

they knew it not" (Gen 28:16).

The facts that show the Divine origin of the Little Company of Mary I find myself reluctant to write upon. I hover near it. I commence to speak of my room, intending to speak of God's Visits and the wonderful favours He there accorded me. One thing (as I am to write freely just as the thoughts come into my mind) [I] treasure [is] that crucifix. That was not in my room, but in the quiet parlour, which for hours would be as silent as a Trappist Monastery. My sofa was opposite that crucifix and with all the world shut out, knowing little that was going on in it, I remember, in obedience, writing that first little book, the "Path of Mary." The first words of which "we live in perilous times," were very true, but I knew nothing then of the perils, but I felt I must write of whatever came into (my mind)...

God's visit to me left such indescribable joy, not momentary, but the whole aspect of the world had changed, it seemed like a partial return to the joy God breathed into this world ere the fall. It was tempered by the responsibility of the mission confided to me (not that I knew I had to do what I have had to do) but the... I cannot rewrite, but perhaps the letters could be regained. They were sent to Cardinal Simeoni, by Mons. Virtue, military Chaplain probably at Portsmouth when they were sent, or at Southsea, Hampshire, about the year '74 or '75, but there are other letters since written to Father Cardella and Father Armellini. These might be more easily obtained, amongst them is a more complete plan of the Calvary Priests.

God hasten Thy hour! Send those conceived from all eternity! Mother, imbue them with the spirit of the Sacred Heart. Let them cultivate a chivalrous spirit. The Sacred Heart (with all reverence let it be said) was chivalrous. What is chivalry? Is it not the greater condescending to and protecting the weaker? How re-write those letters to my confessor? What could show as they do the working of God's Spirit upon a docile soul? I knew not one week what would follow the next and the wondrous plan gradually revealed itself. A new order to glorify God's Church, the model and spirit of which was Calvary. I knew no more - then the various features, one by one, gradually revealed. The Maternal Heart - "Honour the Heart of My Mother." The Precious Blood - "I have given you my Treasure, My Life." God's mercy. The Holy Spirit - "It is my will that you do this work."

I hesitate to write of these favours for one reason. I wrote them at the time to my confessor and I never like to re-write, and the summing-up - as from a retrospect - can never be the same as the simple narrative of facts as they took place.

The Little Company of Mary is a direct impress from the Most High. God visited my room with a series of marvels, and simple as I was, unread in mystical theology or even ordinary writings upon direction, still I knew that God's manifestations to me meant something great, something indeed of moment. How speak of that marvellous Visit, that Presence, the question of the little atom, the answer of the Creator, "The Blessed Trinity who made thee." Then the Way of the Cross made in that rapturous Presence, how go back and relate these things, I know not.

How did I dwell with thee, my Mother, as in a calm sweet sanctuary living by thy very breath. It seemed thy Heart animated mine. I assure you, my Father, that on different feasts I passed into different stages of the spiritual life, as though I was with the Infant Jesus, my arms round Mary's neck, or I nestled in her Bosom and fed upon her substance. From the mystical birth, through the Hidden Life, the Public Life, on to Calvary, step by step the Way of the Cross with Jesus and then that wonderful union, standing before that crucifix, "Thou art My Spouse." "Spouse of Jesus Crucified," was the chant of angels, washed by the Precious Blood, enfolded in the embrace of the Holy Spirit.

What has not God done for me? I did not know, I did not ask why was this, what did it mean? Now, I know it was the way others were to walk. May the Holy Angels lead many into this sweet way of Mary to which God attaches such graces. It could not be explained - the union with God, the joy, the world seemed another

world and to breathe of God. I would wonder if it were not a return to the original joy of the world unfallen. I went about my few duties the same, making home happy, entertaining my mother and brothers but I had many hours to myself.

The union with God has gone on increasing and is not disturbed by the various business I have to attend to or by being very little alone. I cannot describe it. I almost seem to cease being aware of my own existence. God seems to have such entire possession of me. If I were to sit and meditate as some books advise, to think for instance, there was a time when I did not exist, it would be but a distraction. I love to think of Creation and yet I seem to have been with God creating. But my meaning may be misunderstood. Those whom God enfolds in a like manner alone could understand me.

God has revealed to me many secrets. He has given me powers. Would that I had made better use of them. I know not how far they extended. My Director told me not to use any power I possess, except under obedience, and that obedience I have never sought, I have not desired anything extraordinary. On the contrary, if I had had a choice it would have been a simple ordinary life that I would have sought for. I remember my Novice Mistress telling me she thought I should be better in a convent where I could go to Holy Communion oftener. I answered, "If I went to such a convent I might have to have high states: of prayer and I do not want to." God did not lead me the way I should have wished.

Again regarding obedience, I loved obedience. I had been obedient all my life, but a certain time came when a love both of obedience and poverty was given me, without my seeking those virtues - a religious obedience and love of Poverty. I remember asking my confessor to give me something to do for obedience, and he a secular priest, not understanding what I meant, asked me had I nothing to do at home? I, then seeing he did not understand, was too shy to explain. God seemed to give me what many have to acquire or obtain through reading etc., for when as a Postulant they asked me why I did not like to wear a silver thimble etc. etc., I did not like to say the Holy Child did not use silver. On another occasion when told I must use my watch, I put it on with such reluctance and then did not wind it, but would put myself to the trouble of going round the convent to see the time by the clock. It is now nearly forty years ago and I have never worn a watch. One would be put by my side at night when ill, but no one has noticed me.

It may be seen how my Director recognised this work to a certain extent, because hearing that there was already a community devoted to the agonizing, "you must write and enquire," he said, "all about this order, before I take any steps. I cannot see why two orders with the same object are wanted in the Church. He had then had the full plan shown to him of the Little Company an active order to honour Our Lady on Calvary, to assist the dying, and to do for them what she could not do for our dear Lord - console their last moments, alleviate the pains of souls and body etc. Now this is the remarkable part. When writing to this new order, which I had never heard of, I received a long and very courteous letter with a full description of its foundation, and its object. I give the details of what I learned thirty years ago and, I know no more now. There was one convent, strictly contemplative, partly the Carmelite rule and partly another which I do not remember. It was founded by Pere..., a Jesuit, directing of course, a Superior, some lady whose name I do not know. It was founded to honour the mystery of Gethsemane, to honour the Agonizing Heart of Jesus and to pray for the dying. It is the seat of the Confraternity so well known for spreading the well known prayer, "Agonizing Heart of Jesus, have pity on the dying!"

Now this is worthy of notice that it being thought well to found the Confraternity in Jerusalem, the Patriarch was applied to and he, after prayer and consideration said, "we have already a confraternity existing to honour Our Lady on Calvary and as the one devotion does not interfere with the other, we will make one Confraternity of the two mysteries and honour thus Gethsemane and Calvary together." This was consented to and the sorrows of Our Lady inserted in the prayer, but little other notice taken, and it seems to be hardly known. The promoters of the devotion to the Agonizing Heart hardly seem to be aware of it, but we who had known

nothing of the double end of the Confraternity had, without knowing it, taken up the second part, viz. Our Lady on Calvary.

My Director saw how entirely distinct were the two ideas. One could scarcely think of a more beautiful spirit for a contemplative order than Gethsemane - it was Our Lord's Contemplation, or, for an active one that which brought our Lady out of her retirement. She was jostled in the crowd, she was present in person at those three deaths, she gave an example to her children. I may mention here a still more remarkable incident showing that it was not until the full plan had been developed month after month, that he then said to put it all away. His removal from the place so soon after broke off his direction, for he had to leave the country, but he strove, in after years, to be extra kind as though to make up for his opposition, and it was strange that we met at the feet of the Holy Father. He was standing near and came across the room most joyfully. He had in the meantime been made a Bishop. This puts me in mind that the letter I wrote, at his bidding, to the Convent of the Agonizing Heart, in Belgium, either through the imperfect French or for some other reason, caused me to be mistaken for a Bishop, and that was perhaps the reason why I had all the details given so fully. They might not have written so much to a little unknown secular.

The following statement was written by the Servant of God previous to the foundation of the Little Company of Mary, probably in 1875 or 1876.

With regard to what may seem changeable in the fact of my having been engaged to be married, then wishing to join a certain Order, then found one - as a child I dreaded the thought of being a nun. I had a kind of foreboding that I should one day be one, but I did not like the thought. (It may partly have been that a Priest said to some others in my hearing, in the Church "that he seldom prophesied, but he prophesied that that child would be a nun.") My disposition has not changed. From a child I wanted to be loved by others and to devote myself to them. It was selfishness. Now the same disposition has turned to God with still more energy to devote myself to Him.

When I grew to be a girl the love of four elder brothers and others was not sufficient for me. I wanted to have someone entirely devoted to me. No wonder then, having no wish for religious life, I became engaged. As a child from a certain reserve, I had thought I could never be married, but with certainly no appreciation of one state more than the other. I do not in the least regret being engaged. It never put the least wrong thought into my mind. In a vague kind of way I meant to be married some day, but likewise had the thought - Something will happen before that comes to pass. I may die. When I broke it off, it was under the same kind of influence that I am at the present time with regard to this new order etc. I so to speak, could not help myself. I did not value the state of virginity. I did not know there was any difference between one state and the other. I felt likewise the thought pressing upon me it was God's Will I should be a nun, though I still did not wish it. In fact, upon my telling my mother my thought and her then telling me she had solemnly years before offered me to Our Lady as a nun, I felt I wished she had not. Finally, after a hard struggle, I gave up all earthly love and in doing that gave up my very nature, so much so that when I went to the Convent they wondered that I took everything so easily, that nothing was difficult to me (except speaking about myself) but the fact was, I had done everything before I went in, in giving up my engagement etc.

Regarding my going to the Convent of Mercy, it was not my own will. I had even taken a dislike to that particular order and though I was so happy there and loved the inmates so much of that Convent I felt bound to tell them I had no attrait to the Order itself. I was told that if it was not the Order God intended for me I should be told so. When Dr. Grant sent me it was in these terms (my mother has the letter), "I think it would be as well

to take her to Brighton where she would see what Convent life is like, as in all substantial matters it resembles other Orders." The sisters only expected I had come on a visit and had made preparations for my mother to stay likewise. The Rev. Mother told me she had received a letter from the Bishop expressing his wish I should know about different Orders. They tried me in every way, even keeping me from Holy Communion.

That they ever said anything resembling even the words "I had no vocation" as you tell me has been said, I am positively certain they did not. On the day I left, in my presence, the Rev. Mother tried to get my mother to promise that when I got well she would let me go to the Convent Fr. Lambert had chosen for me. Before he had spoken his thought that it would suit me, the Rev. Mother had the intention of writing to obtain admission for me at another Convent. She thought I had better go home and nurse up first, but when I told her if I did I should not get away again, she said I had better not go home but nurse up there. I had full leave to stay. I was not chaptered out. They had told me I had better go on purpose, to make it easier for me to obtain admission in another Convent. The Mistress of Novices said to me she thought I was more suited to an enclosed order, and it would be better for me to be where I could go to Holy Communion oftener, (she had tried to obtain permission for me to communicate oftener than the others.) I remember my answer - that I did not want to go to a Contemplative Order, I might have to have high states of prayer and I did not want to. I have had such a dislike to anything out of the ordinary way, but with me to have ever had a great dislike to do anything or have anything happen to me, is the very thing that has happened.

This will explain my "many vocations." I wanted to go to the Order of the Perpetual Adoration simply because Fr. Lambert told me. It had never entered my mind before. The one Order that used occasionally come into my mind was the Carmelite, since I had read it was devoted to Our Lady and the conversion of sinners. I never tried to enter one of their convents. I left myself in the hands of those who guided me. I have been obedient I may say unto death, when I quenched as well as I could God's Holy Spirit, put God away from me, listened to the devil with all his thoughts of despair and broke my own heart, as however, I had prayed God would, if it would save souls. It seemed to me that I must almost be suffering more than those in hell - they did not love God and yet feel they could never possess Him. When God's Voice would come making me so happy, though I would leave off praying and distract myself, even leave the Church, I could not always be sure that I had done all that I could, and then was afraid I had committed a mortal sin as I was told by my Director I should; though I must say in justice to my Director, he said he had been told by someone else, and another thing - very likely he did not mean me to take his words so literally, but he said, "I was bound to believe."

Regarding my being obstinate, they never found me so at the Convent. The Mistress of Novices at last, as she could not find any signs of it, asked me if I had got any will of my own. They think (my relations) I am very obstinate, because all these years I persisted, though I could not be a nun, in not marrying one so good and so suitable in every way. They will think me, of course, still more so, because as long as God's grace supports me I shall persist in what I firmly believe is His Holy Will. They are right who think I am not fitted for this work, and get wrong too. Naturally I am not at all fitted, but God will and is forming me for whatever I have to do, and I am glad I am so little in every way, as His Glory and Condescension shines more in choosing me than one with great natural abilities.

Mary,
S.J.
M.

What a strange sensation coming back to a place where there has been no Blessed Sacrament. We suppose there was no Mass in Hyson Green since the so-called Reformation. When I first went to Hyson Green the Bishop (or Canon) said to me, Fr. White will direct you. Father White was a most estimable young Irish priest lent to the Bishop for a year or two. The way this young priest directed me was to take me to the door of the Cathedral and pointing up the Derby Road he said, "You go up by the pump." I walked to the top and saw a kind of fountain, which I suppose was the pump. There were several roads and I asked which was Hyson Green. "Oh, Miss, you are more than a mile from Hyson Green. Go on till you come to... road, and then turn to your right." It was rather a long way and when I turned to the right I came to hedges, for Hyson Green was then a country place and not next to Nottingham as now. Then upon again asking, I was directed to Lenton Street and finally finding a family - a poor Irish woman of the name of Tacey, who made me very welcome - I asked them if they knew an empty house in the Green to make a convent and chapel of. They seemed doubtful; she said there was an old factory but that it was no good as it was a tumble-down place, but I pressed to see it, so we went up the street and entered a place such as I have never seen before or since. A straight ladder led to the present chapel and by another a loft was gained above it; everywhere bricks and broken crockery.

As I love obedience and therefore am writing these remembrances, my mind is occupied with what would have been to me - idle thoughts, if I had indulged in them. But I value my thoughts and like to put them all to use, and there are so many things to be planned out and work arranged for others, answers to letters etc., so that there is not time enough for what is necessary or, at least, useful. I am grateful for the command over my thoughts that I early strove for, for in the world even, I could count up the idle thoughts I had had in the day. Why this divergence? Why am I running away from my point like Mrs. Brown? This also is obedience.

I was told to write just as the thoughts came, so now that I have to look back - and it is not an idle thought - I wonder at the grace God gave to one who certainly, over the years of childhood, was still a child - not allowed out alone ever at night, ever thought for and kept, as it was said, in a hot house. Here I was wandering about alone, then sleeping in an old delapidated place, in the midst of mortar and rubbish of all kinds, with doors that would not fasten, for I remember putting a pickaxe against it to secure it. When the Bishop, after some time, came to hear of this he forbade and I had to go to the Tacey's, but when I found I was expected to sleep with one of the girls, I laid on the floor, which by that time I had got quite accustomed to.

Holy Angels, how you watched over me! God be praised in His Angels
and in His Saints!

Certainly a wonderful strength came to me. I, who had been so delicate and being supposed to need meat two or three times a day, often made my dinner on bread and pork dripping. This puts me in mind of a funny adventure with the pigs. Seeing a large bucket prepared for a meal for the pigs, I took it up, despite old Mrs. Tacey's remonstrances and ran down the garden...

I remember so well saying and writing that when we began our Lord would begin with us. When Bishop Danell of Southwark had given permission to commence in Southsea, my then home, he had given permission for Mass. Our house which was well suited for a convent was discussed. A room, with conservatory attached (for a sacristy) was considered suitable for a Chapel. My brother agreed to give up the house and go into a smaller one, but however the opposition which arose hindered this plan, and the time had not come to commence.

I remained quietly collecting pupils together as advised and a promising little school had been organized.

So it happened when, at last, we had taken possession of our first home in Hyson Green, the Bishop himself proposed Exposition for the whole day after the Mass. It was rather strange, for when evening, naturally the Blessed Sacrament was left after Benediction, where there was nothing ready. Even the Chapel was hastily prepared for the opening. The house itself was utterly disordered. They had even, during the repairs, broken into the next house where there were Protestants, so we could not leave Our Lord. Mother Magdalen and myself watched and slept by turns at night for weeks, and worked all day. Then it was I remembered what I had said, "That when we commenced Our Lord would begin with us." This was an unasked for favour, one indeed we could not ask for; it would have been irreverent to do so in such an unprotected unguarded place. We had been sleeping in a cottage up the street, but when we found the priests had gone back to the Cathedral when it grew dark, we carried our beds, which were bags of straw and determined not to leave Our Lord. Indeed, it would have been wrong to do so, with the doors and windows without locks and, as I have said, the wall broken into the next house.

Mother Magdalen and Agnes slept on some uneven benches which had been lent us from the Cathedral. I carried my bag of straw up to Our Lord and prayed and slept in turns, relieved in turn by Mother Magdalen. As Mother Agnes was too delicate we did not let her rest at night be disturbed. I had been inured for some months to this kind of repose at night, for before Mother Magdalen and Agnes arrived I had slept in the house to take care of it, and also I preferred being alone there rather than share the room with another girl (one of the Tacey's). So we remained in the midst of mortar and implements and snow up to the door, against which a pickaxe or something heavy was placed. Someone of this Irish family, who were very kind, would come the last thing and make up a fire.

Beds were not bought until some time afterwards. We ordered the best of everything for Our Lord, and Canon Douglas (now dead) gave Chalice, Ciborium and other things. He called me into his room one day and showed me the things spread out. This in after years was the cause of an occurrence which it would be useful to relate. The Mission, at the beginning, was naturally connected with the convent. Opening on Easter Monday left the young priest who was appointed a very short time to look up strayed Catholics in the place or in the villages near. He mentioned his difficulty and I said, "Well, Father, we will send and look them up and do all we can for you." Upwards of twenty made their Easter duty who had been away for years, varying up to forty years. Likewise the converts were so numerous and the attendance at the services so regular and devotional that it could not be doubted that it was a place of special benediction. No wonder - when it was the first sanctuary, dedicated to the Maternal Heart of Mary, that Our Lord should show how He loved us to honour the Heart of His Mother.

There were about 60 converts, if not more - we put it at the lowest figure - in the first year. I will mention one instance of conversion which however, did not take place in Hyson Green itself. It was a deathbed conversion and thought so remarkable by Canon H... that he related it to his congregation. He was sent for to a dying man wishing to be received into the Church. He instructed him as well as he could, gave him the Sacraments, and finally was so struck by the remarkable graces he discovered the man had received that he asked him could he remember anything he had done which had induced God to bestow such great favours upon him. The man replied, "No, he did not remember anything," but added, "he did remember sometime before passing a Hyson Green sister and something made him turn back and put into her hand a piece of silver. He was a poor man and so the act was generous. The Sisters had constant Exposition for their Benefactors and for the Dying, and the poor man came under this category and was the recipient of their prayers. It used to be remarked amongst them laughingly that they had but 'lo walk the streets to do good - a woman would tap at a window, a child dying unbaptized, or some accident occurring would bring forth some act of charity.

The Bishop, at my wish, consecrated Convents, Schools, Mission etc. to the Maternal Heart of Mary, but

the opposition was so great to such a novel title, refusing to put it in print and so on, that the mission has ever been spoken of as simply, "Our Lady's." Years after, Father Cardella hearing of this, obtained a Rescript granting a Plenary Indulgence to the "Santuario del Cuore Materno di Maria." There are many now, but Hyson Green will ever be the first Sanctuary in God's Church dedicated to the Maternal Heart. Before the opening a lady who had promised a Statue asked me to go and see it. It was late one Saturday when I had the note asking me to do this, but however I went off to a part of London new to me. I was never allowed out at dark alone and I shrank into myself as I went through streets crowded with yelling people, who seemed to be cutting up meat in the middle of the road by the light of flaring torches. At last I arrived at the little shop where an Italian man showed me the statue, which I did not like. Pointing to another I said, "Put a heart on that." "But," objected the man, "how can I put a heart on an Immaculate Conception?" I did not understand art, so settled the difficulty by letting him know that if he wanted to sell the statue, he must put the heart, and according to my directions; my idea being that the Immaculate Heart of Mary has only the lily, but the Maternal Heart must have the sword of sorrow through it. I believe I helped to make that man's fortune for, after sending these statues all over the world, he has retired to his own country, Italy.

This first Statue of the Maternal Heart arrived at its destination in time for the opening, and the sisters can scarcely believe that I carried it some distance up the stairs and all alone, up the steep stairs of the old factory and workshop, which was our first home answering to Nazareth, as Rome, where we may say we were really born in God's Church, was a stable. (Will San Girolamo be Calvary?) Saint Joseph procured us this workshop. Make a novena to Saint Joseph, said an old Canon. I did. We heard of this Hyson Green house and in arranging with the Landlord, "on such and such a day (Wednesday or Thursday or something) we will meet and sign the contract. When we came to look we found it was Saint Joseph's Feast. "Well," said the Canon, "that is extraordinary, and the man is a Protestant, he knew nothing about it."

I remember the day of the opening. I was up all night and amongst other works nailed up the stations and put leaves round as they were unframed. As we have said, the Bishop or Canon Douglas got the good thought to leave the Blessed Sacrament exposed. I remember after Mass I was really hiding away from the people when I heard my name called, "Sister Mary, Sister Mary, the Bishop is calling for you to know what time you will have Exposition (? Benediction) this evening?..."

(1878 - 1879)

(In) the bustle of life you hear yourselves praised for your kindness to the sick, but more, much more, have you to do. Bring all under the standard of the Cross. Do not use the expression, "You are no good, you can do nothing." The latter is true. We can do nothing but let Jesus work in us and we shall do something. Three weak women began this work and I wish I could show you a picture of one of our early days.

We rose early in the morning; Morning Prayers and Meditation, Mass - either preceded or followed by office, according to the time the Priest could allow us - breakfast and reading, and the rooms prepared for the school. The present refectory was the Infant School and the present Novitiate was the adult school. Mother Cecilia took the infants and I the adults. Like everything else she did at that early stage of her career, she set about it boldly and fearlessly under obedience. I can hear her now as she took them to the top of the street, fifty or sixty infants, calling to them to keep to the wall, because they could not keep straight unless they did. As to the school above, I must say that both schools never seemed in better order than when we had them to ourselves. I must say, I had no trouble with those rough and ready children. Perhaps it was Our Lord, being only curtained off from the school, but I had no trouble with those rough children, boys and girls together. The

boys were especially affectionate. I remember the murmur of sympathy when I, one time - and how gladly - came up to call out the names. It was a great satisfaction to me to drop a pin, telling them to be so still that they might hear the pin drop, and thus put them into a state of great satisfaction with themselves and everyone else at the idea of being so good.

I remember a tale being carried to the Bishop that I would not answer a Sister when she came to the school. Upon the poor Bishop enquiring of me, I answered him that it was perfectly true, because if I took my eye off them the school would soon be in disorder, therefore I made it a rule to transact no other business whilst in the school. He said it was a very foolish rule, but perhaps he did not know what a school of rough boys and girls is like, if once upset. I once tried Mother Magdalen at a class. I don't know whether she had ever been to school. Turning round to see how she was getting on, the dear old soul had got them all sitting in front of her and instead of addressing them and teaching them altogether, she was going round to one after another, in a quiet kind of confidential manner, either asking them questions or giving them information. Of course, those who had nothing to do and could not hear what was going on would not keep quiet, and finally, not being able to keep them quiet, without any upbraiding or discomposure, she turned quietly and slipped downstairs, to my great amusement. Mother Philip also had her turn with the infants, but it did not last long. I will skip on a few years, as an episode comes to my mind, at the time when we had a governess and an architect having declared the roof of the school... (Laundry M.P. &c.

The Refectory and community room were all one, for all were Novices. Those who were not in school had [a] lecture at 9.15 and then again at 11, either Catechism or Office, and I used to admire the way the Sisters tried to come up from the kitchen, asserting that it was Obedience and management that seemed to stretch time. At 10 minutes to 12 the cloth which was laid on the ground to catch the pieces, was taken up and the table quickly and quietly laid for dinner. It was more easily done as there was nothing in the room but the table and benches. At 12 the Sisters were in the Chapel for the Angelus and Examen. At 12.15 Dinner, for which the School sisters had to be in time. A quarter to 1 there was recreation till 1.30, when the Horarium varied. At one time there was a quarter of an hour's reading, and then Vespers and Compline. In the afternoon some went on mission work, some collecting. If there was anyone to sew, they sewed in silence in the refectory. A great deal of work would be got through by the sister who had to look to the work, giving out with it whatever was needed for it, such as pieces, cotton, even needles. This was done before the morning's reading most punctually. No one was allowed to pass anything to another during the reading. By the 2nd bell everything had to be in readiness, candles lit etc., and I must say this was most carefully observed. At 4 o'clock there was the Nursing Lecture, at 5.30 Matins and Lauds and a very quiet half hour's Meditation, which to many was a beautiful time.

The Horarium varied with different necessities from 6.30 to a quarter to seven for Supper, and the recreation also varied, but finished at 8.30 or 8.45, the Sisters dispersing to their various charges, since every room, fireplaces, stairs etc. were all done overnight. There were not many rooms. It was easily managed that the convent was in perfect order every night. It was a great comfort and this method of doing the work overnight I strongly advocate. It enabled much more good to be done next day. It gave a sense of tranquility that enabled the meditation overnight and in the morning to be better made. Ten minutes was the time overnight for preparing it. The night prayers were short and it was very nice to see how after they left the Church, which they did in an orderly manner, kissing the ground in honour of the Precious Blood I used to love to see them return, in the dim light, as though loath to leave Our Lord, but hurrying away when the clock struck ten. Certainly there was no half and half, serving, God and not troubling whether they were in bed by a quarter past ten and the lights out or not.

I must say that little sanctuary was a place of grace, greater than which I have not come across. So the whole house in silence, and as I have said, in perfect order, watches were made during the night. I do not remember when the custom was commenced of one sister being specially appointed for the purpose (of

taking the watch for the dying during the night)? Someone else may.

Funds got very low, and the Bishop ordered us to go out and collect, and as Mother Cecilia and I were at that time very ailing and not able to do our full part of the work, we were fixed upon. I well remember when we got into Nottingham, how I felt for Mother Cecilia as I heard her give a suppressed, scarcely to be called moan, for her breast was plunging. I could scarcely walk, having a bad knee. After going to many places she said, "Mother, let us say a Magnificat in thanksgiving while we are waiting," and when we had finished a girl came out and gave us ten shillings. Nothing would do her then but she must go home, for I relied on her as she told me she knew the way, but we found the going home not quite so easy, for as I thought, we were walking away from home rather than to it and not till we came to a mill did we know that we had come to a place called Old Radford. The state in which we arrived home can be imagined, but we were told by the sister who had charge of the money that the Bishop might think that had we stayed out longer we might have got more.

God permits strange things for the good of souls and it was a good thing for me, that for years I had had the habit of seeing everything permitted by God. I sometimes say that "I do not like to do anything against my will" and am misunderstood, for seeing everything as permitted by God, as His Will for us, must urge us to unite our wills with it and then doing the repugnant action as making it our own will.

I remember one night sitting under a gas light striving to wipe off the pasty substance that a belladonna plaster had left on my breast, and M. Francis, the sister in charge, came in and put out the gas as it was past 10 p.m. (This person will be often mentioned in the early annals, and we will speak of her as M.F.) She was never really Superior, but acted as such on account of Mother Magdalen, who was Superior, being out so much. She (M.F.) was a well-meaning person and God permitted her presence in the Little Company of Mary to help to keep it lowly and humble. On one occasion the Bishop told me that he would like one of the sisters to look after me, and who should it be? I answered M.F. at which he fairly laughed, for she was noted for her strange ways. Indeed, one of the first things she did was to go to the little scarcely to be called a room under the stairs that I had and take down my altar. A few weeks before my first operation I do not know what had occurred, but I said to her something in answer to what she had said - we must try to convince some people that we are ill, and the poor thing had no idea how I was, for on the day of the operation she was so concerned that she went out of the house altogether, and tried her best to make up. However, it appears that behind the scenes her contrition did not prevent her making remarks about the linen that was used at the operation. When the second one was announced within a year my first thought was, as I turned to Mother Philip, what shall we do with M.F. and the towels this time? It occurs to me now, how in the early days we always mixed fun in that which was sorrowful. It must be known that the Bishop forbade us give anything away and therefore when I went to him with the question, "Might I dispose of a piece of community property?" he looked doubtful and put on his considering cap, saying "Tell me, my child, what it is?" When I told him that Our Lord wanted the other breast, he was too much distressed to enjoy the joke.

This person (M.F.) was so well known in the neighbourhood that the little boy she used to employ for errands etc. would run to us whether we be in the garden or elsewhere to get to us, saying "The Missis is a comin', the Missis is a comin'." Poor M.F.! On one occasion Mother Philip went to the Bishop and upbraided him with "Leaving Mother Mary at such a case in her state of health," for it was only a few weeks before the first operation, so, though I had only been four or five days there, M-F. was ordered to replace me, who appeared with her bedstead!!

Perhaps it would be as well to give a few incidents as I had done very little nursing. The patient was a big woman suffering from *delirium tremens*, and who could and did use very bad language to the other sisters, but perhaps a plentiful use of holy water kept her from saying anything worse than that I was "a lazy slut." I kept quiet, saying my prayers, for having a bad arm I could not work like the other sisters. Indeed, I had to get

some women from up the street when she needed moving &c. I could not cut up the beef-tea meat and had to manage the best I could with one arm. I remember washing the doorstep, which the other sisters did not. She used to frighten them very much so that they had to call her husband. My only fear was that he would come down without being called, and consequently barred the door with what pieces of furniture the room contained...

Looking back I wonder now at many things. What brought this thought? How did I ever do what I scarcely dare think of? - though I hope, with God's grace, I would do ever what would give Him pleasure. Still I was, as it were, carried here and there, not knowing what would come next. God certainly gave me invisible help, but I was ever expecting a visible Protector - Father - Founder - or what name to say I know not, but I have often thought it would be Father So-and-So or So-and-So. Then I would find out I had made a mistake in this and other matters too. I used to wonder why God permitted this, but Father Cardella said it was good and did no harm to make mistakes. When I found that the Bishop's views did not agree with strict monastic discipline, though I had never thought that he was to be the founder, still I was very pained. It seemed as though there was no one to lean upon, for I did not think God's grace would come, except through the appointed channels - the Confessor appointed by the Bishop who represented the Holy Father and therefore must be obeyed, even though I doubted his wisdom as Superior of a convent.

The conflicting thoughts were very painful, though God ever kept my soul in peace in a wonderful way through it all. I could have had advice from two holy priests who had joined other orders. When they found the divided authority of the Bishop and themselves, and the difference of opinion on religious discipline etc. made them know it was better to part, and they withdrew from the diocese- I did not ask their advice after. Also Father Walker, a learned and holy priest, much interested in the Community and in myself personally, would have given advice if it had been sought, but I had the same feeling that he was not appointed and therefore did not seek his direction, but he helped us materially by arranging the scribbles, that I had written so hastily, into book form.

I know now that the position the Bishop held to me of Superior and director was most unwise. I hope none of my children may ever be so placed, I under a vow of obedience also to the Bishop. Still in the end the obedience was blessed by good - good came out of it. One time when very much tried what to do, I went to see Canon Douglass but could not, but he said afterwards he would have advised obedience. All the Saints advised it. I had gone to him when I first arrived in Nottingham, whilst waiting to pray before choosing my confessor. I also went a considerable distance in a spirit of pilgrimage to a holy Dominican to consult - a stranger to me but I had heard of him. He said without hesitation, "Go to the Bishop," and as I showed a little surprise, repeated it most positively, so I took that as God's Will - notwithstanding the feeling that it was not quite the thing.

The remembrance of that pilgrimage brings others to mind. I made a pilgrimage, fasting all day, before writing the "Spiritual Exercises." A very fatiguing one it was. Another journey I made fasting comes into my mind and that was from Nottingham to Mr. Young, whose letters had brought me into the diocese. He curtly and coldly told me he did not want any branches. If he could not have the root he wanted nothing, and he did not give me a penny.

Regarding the Bishop's government, it seems to me God permitted that we should be under his direction, in the absence of those Priests with whom we should be one family with one end and aim, quite a different idea to any priest, however good and holy, because he would still be an outsider. He would not be within the family circle. God dwells within that sanctuary and governs within it. The interference of priests who are not one with the community is very detrimental in many instances, but with Priests of one's own family working with the Sisters, helping the various houses to keep up to the original spirit, the firmness and decision, above all the grace of the priestly influence cannot be too highly extolled. May God grant it speedily to His Mother's Little Company,

and may the sisters receive His gift with grateful loving hearts from God, those who are Superiors in various houses humbly acknowledging the many faults and imperfections of their government.

There is a great order in the arranging of services etc., which is very difficult for nuns to have. The Priest acts as a man also in many external arrangements and in ways, which would put the nun in a false position, even if she had a talent for organisation. The gentle, humble and retiring nun would be lost and her aspect take something of the "strong-minded woman" which would be totally opposed to Our Lady's spirit. The Angel visited Our Lady, regarding the great mystery of the incarnation. The world was not to know of that for some time - the beautiful mystery shrouded in secrecy as in a beautiful spiritual grace. Our Communion bring us in contact with that wonderful mystery. When the mystery was an external act, like the flight into Egypt, the Angel appeared to St. Joseph. He must make the arrangements for this journey. It is a bad illustration of what we mean, but it is one of the works that we hope in the future Our Lady's own Priests will have their part in, arranging new foundations on a

My reiterated assertions to the Bishop that I was not fit to be a Superior (which was true) had no effect, but a series of statements by the Sisters (I think principally influenced by one or 2) had the effect; and one day Canon Douglass arrived and the Sisters were summoned. One, M. Agnes, told me after that she thought it was a Chapter of Faults and was preparing. But, however, the poor Canon gave a Conference on sins of the tongue, sins against charity and then said the Bishop had put me out of office and Sr. Elizabeth was to take my place. I was certainly surprised that the Bishop had not said a word to myself, but had sent down so suddenly, but I was still more surprised when the Bishop, the next time I saw him, with a kind of apology said, "I stood by you as long as I could."

I suppose not being much used to women's natures was the reason I had not noticed any disaffection. To all appearances the Sisters were very contented - religious, obedient and polite in their manner etc., and I was edified by them. Only one little thing - I remember speaking to Sister Elizabeth (afterwards Mother Magdalene) for some little asperity in her tone, which was then natural to her. That the Bishop must have been bound down not to say what the reports had been, that he "stood up for me as long as he could" I now think must have been the case, as his usual way certainly was to mention what one sister said of another, when he could do so. He also added it would be better for someone to be Superior who would dispense, and it certainly was said that I turned white when asked to dispense the Rules.

How well I see God's Hand in this, and it is a lesson for us all to learn, that speaking, teaching, anything is not like doing. And, though it is egotistical, I must say that being a simple sister for the first nearly two years did more good than all the Chapters and Conferences could have done. Knowing what religious life was like, which the others did not, they took their tone from what I did, particularly for a good part of the time I had no office at all, for what was reported to the Bishop I know not, but a somewhat satirical letter came, asking me, "Did I wish to coach up the Rev. Mother in her duties?" Then later I was forbidden to give any kind of advice to the Sisters at all, but that an hour or so a week was to be given me in which I might write my ideas for the Sisters.

(Bishop's government continued)

The Bishop then held a Chapter, the result of which was Sr. Elizabeth was chosen Superior and I, Assistant, but it was a name only. Dear M. Magdalene did not understand the different offices, and being very capable, governed by herself. And when I was afterwards made Novice Mother and I asked one day about something to do with a Postulant's Retreat for Clothing, as good as told me to mind my own business, or that I need not interfere or words...

... but I was never easy, and pressed the Bishop for a proper election, which he did in a different form. All the Sisters wrote whom they wished for Mother and placed on Our Lady's Altar. The Bishop alone saw them and wrote to me. "You have the votes of the Sisters and I re-elect the Council."

1880

The first branch house was Quorndon, named in honour of the Precious Blood. I was getting uneasy that the obedience of the Sisters was rather personal affection than true obedience of religious, and had told the Sisters that I would seek an opportunity of going away to test their obedience to see whether it was really religious obedience. So the opening of this house gave me the opportunity. The next house was Eastwell, which was named in honour of the Holy Ghost. We afterwards had as many as five at once, and a nice spirit of union between all; no vying with one another, but an equal interest in one another's welfare, as is right, if we are indeed all one, and all without a ruffle turned to the principal house - the Maternal Heart - as indeed their mother. I remember on one occasion Mother Cecilia writing to the Empress Eugenie for help, and when she received two guineas, heard we were badly off and said she could not bear to think we were in want at Hyson Green, even if they went without a meal in Osgodby, the poor place she was then in. It must have been a pleasing sight to Almighty God - those houses all working together in such harmony and charity, without the slightest ambition, except to do as much good as possible, whilst in that particular place.

The Houses were not our own, so though we did our best to keep them clean and orderly, there was no temptation to an over-interest, which sometimes does come when religious communities begin to build and become known. They sometimes lose that beauty of hiddenness which is so pleasing to God - indeed, a God-like virtue on earth. It must ever be striven for, because we all know what is opposed to it, and even in our eyes a boaster is not commended for the things he boasts of. This is a little reflection of how displeasing to God is one who vaunts of what he does. Sometimes religious think that being religious cloaks this ambition and desire of praise, but worldliness which creeps into religious houses infects the air, vitiates the good as mould does and the things that are exposed to the damp are brought into the sunlight. May God preserve His Mother's Little Company from ever taking this epidemic, now spreading more than ever in the world - display, ostentation, show. It seems, in some respects, worse in Christian countries than in some pagan countries of old, why? The pains the ancient Romans took in laying the foundations of their buildings could not have been from such a feeling, but for future ages to benefit by their strong foundations, which though we do not quite credit it, were generally dug as deep as the height to which they were going to raise the edifice - still we do think they were done with a perfection which we find in things done for a good intention.

Returning to the subject of our various houses, I remember on one occasion wishing to bring them all up for a Retreat which I had arranged, and trusted to God for the money, telling the Priest what a small offering we would be able to make him. We had an Exposition for this intention and the next day, which was the Feast of the Holy Souls, a gentleman, Mr. L..., who has ever since been a benefactor, sent 50 pounds. It just covered all expenses and sent the Sisters back to their houses with clothes and food, and we were able to give the priest a more suitable offering. It was dear old Father Sisk, whose Abbot had allowed him to come, with a not too complimentary tone in his voice it would seem, for Father Sisk told me himself the Abbot said, "You may go and see what you can do with them." So it would seem he had not heard very good accounts, but when the old priest was leaving I shall not forget how touched he was, as he said, "Goodbye to a holy place and to holy people." He also said he had known many communities in his 50 years of religious life, but he had never known any to suffer as we had. I suppose he meant both the amount and also the cheerful way it was borne.

It seems to me it is not credited by many that people can suffer and be bright and cheerful at the same time. So many speeches have been made to myself to this effect so I am saved what would be repugnant to me - expressions of sympathy - and I hear instead such sayings as "a charming person, but they could not believe

she suffered," and again I remember a well known ecclesiastic, when I was not expected to live long, saying "The battle of life for you is now over. Our Lord has led you through life very gently," and as he spoke I remember thinking in an amused way, "I wonder would you think it so gentle if you had to go through it?"

And yet, dear Jesus, what have You not saved me from? What pain of body can be like the agony of mind and soul of one who born with strong passions is continually desiring to please God, and yet constantly being drawn from Him and doing what is displeasing? My God! Help those tried and tempted ones! I remember a priest in the confessional saying to me, "You are the happiest person I know."

What graces were in those spots where we lived in the midst of the poor and ignorant. In some places we would find those who were trying to raise themselves and striving also to be good Catholics. There was one mission attached to a new foundation that we opened and we did our best to encourage them. They were a mile or two away, but it never entered those simple people to be jealous (sic) of a new Church opening near them. They would come over and help us and we in turn would do anything for them, and strove to encourage them in their altar and choir duties, by letting them play and sing for us when they came for Benediction and so on, which they did constantly. I remember one evening, probably a Feast of Our Lady, I turned quickly to the player, a fine country lad, and said, "Play a hymn to Mary," and the promptness with which he struck up "I'll sing a hymn to Mary" amused us all, evidently thinking that was the very hymn I asked for, and the hearty way they sang was always very refreshing.

How edifying also it was to see the miles the Sisters would walk rather than miss Mass. I pray that spirit may never decline, but I have seen symptoms of a very false foreign spirit - the Sisters arguing that they would go oftener when they were better, thus showing a dangerous self-confidence and a total misapprehension of things. The proper way to go to Holy Communion is to get strength to be better, and also because there is no act in our lives by which we can give such glory to the Eternal Father.

These two motives ought surely to be enough to urge us to go to Holy Communion as often as we are allowed. There must be a certain amount of dangerous self-confidence in those who neglect Holy Communion for trifles. There is not that feeling of the wise lovers of God, "If left to myself I shall surely betray Thee," but there are signs of the (other?) fatal feeling. From my teens (I cannot quite say what year) I have not missed Holy Communion through my own fault. The seeking all strength from Holy Communion, the holy fear of losing a Communion, is still much stronger in the first sisters than those who came after. Why I cannot say, but I often (think?) it was through a confessor who certainly had no intention of instilling such a spirit, but keeping weak souls from Communion, who certainly ...

Mother Magdalene was Archivist and had charge of the letters etc. of the early foundation, its ups and downs, before the commencement and after. What has become of them in our many changes, I do not know. I wonder it was never suggested before that what we are now doing should be done. The duties of the day, with its multifarious occupations left little time for anything unnecessary. It would perhaps have been better to have watched the log book, which though I have not seen it, I fear is not as methodical as it should be.

I think it was two hours a week the Bishop allowed me when he forbade me speaking to the Sisters. I might spend this time writing down and this is how "Mary's Conferences" were written. Other times mostly I have taken my meditation time, Rosary etc. and so to speak, exchanged it rather than dispensed. There are a great many unfinished manuscripts which I left-off at a time I was told not to write, and I was very glad to show to my children in after years that I preferred an act of obedience to any good work.

We came to Rome in 1881 I think, (1882) and there was a special Providence in our departure. I had always intended to come to Rome before commencing, but was not allowed and afterwards, arriving at Nottingham, I put the same idea before the Bishop, but he said it was better to have something to show, that they would not bless a plan, but only what was in existence. And when he finally said I might go it was rather a surprise to us. I had been praying, standing at the Tabernacle door, when our Lord told me that I should go to Rome, and delighted I came down the altar steps and I think it was Mother Philip whom I met, and said to her, "I am going to Rome, go down and ask the Bishop." To the Sisters' surprise she brought back word that I might go and that she should go with me to take care of me, and another Sister in case I died on the way. So Mother Cecilia was arranged to accompany us, and we finally agreed to set out on a Saturday, which happened to be the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. On the eve, the Bishop came up to hear the Sisters' confessions and to say goodbye. I had been told by my confessor not to go to confession to the Bishop, so that I did not see His Lordship for any instructions before leaving for Rome.

I remember when we arrived at Paris, such a dreadful struggle to hinder my going on, that I kept repeating to myself, "Je ne puis pas, Je ne puis pas," but with God's grace, after a day or two's rest, we proceeded on our way, staying at Macon and Aix-les-Bains. At Turin we had a letter for the Archbishop, but he was away, but a priest gave us a letter to a certain convent, where we found the Superior was away and the Sister in Charge was afraid to receive us. Mother Cecilia however...

I shall not forget a special sign of love in the way in which God came to our assistance. I was uneasy as our tickets were dated Saturday and so we should lose our Mass on the Sunday. Quite unexpectedly one of the Priests from the Oratory, evidently the Bishop had written to him, came up to us, and on my mentioning my uneasiness about losing our Sunday Mass, he kindly went to the ticket office and had the dates of the tickets changed, thus affording us the opportunity of getting our Sunday Mass.

It was on the Feast of All Souls (Nov. 1882) that we first met Dr. Gualdi. When he was announced, we three were living in one room in the Piazza Minerva, so could not ask him to our own apartment, but made our way down to the general room, a dirty, dusty room we had not made the acquaintance of before. After a little preamble he said he had come on the part of Propaganda to tell us it would be no use our waiting in Rome. They had far too much important business to attend to any rules of a new Foundation. I think he said others had been waiting as well as ourselves, for at that time there was no separate Congregation to examine the rules of Religious as now, and we could well understand there were far more important things in the Church to be decided than our little Institute, then but a few years in existence. But However I did not feel I could return without some more definite approval, so I quietly answered this strange priest, that I had got off a bed of sickness to come to Rome for the approval of the Church and the arrangement of the Rules of the Little Company and I should not return until this was done. He looked up and so did I, as I spoke, and saw the quiet holy face of the priest I was speaking to. I believe I thought he would be annoyed at my refusal to comply, but instead of that he very kindly answered, "That makes a difference, and under the circumstances we will see what can be done."

We were friends from that moment and I always attributed it to the Holy Souls, but as has happened so often in my life when I have found a friend they have soon to be parted with. Dr. Gualdi was ordered to England and as we were lamenting it, because we then went to confession to him, but he said, "I will introduce you to a friend of mine," and in simple obedience we took his card, not feeling at all desirous of knowing his friend. We made our way to that out of the way house and found Father Cardella. Here indeed was a still greater friend, one certainly sent by God. He recognised the work immediately, thought it better that we should stay and have a house in Rome and was most kind and encouraging in every way. I remember one day we were sitting with him, when he suddenly said, "I do respect you (speaking of course in the plural) for you not only wear the Cross, but you bear it." We did not think we had any particular cross, I certainly did not, but it may have been

that having been used to crosses in England, made us think lightly of those which seemed to the good old priest a good deal, the poverty, privations, living in one room etc.

Father Cardella was then all in all to us. I gave him what I had regarding the work, and he devoted himself to it, heart and soul, and used to be quite disappointed that he could not press the matter quicker than he did, but as we have said, important matters of the Church would come in, which would make the Congregation put on one side what, in comparison, was unimportant. Now there is a separate Congregation for Religious Orders. We were indeed offered a letter of praise, but advised not to accept it, as they would think then that they had done sufficient for us for some years, this being the usual way.

In giving my confidence to Father Cardella I told him, "This work is nothing to do with me and if it is not inspired by God I do not wish to continue it, but will return to my mother. If you do not find in the writings the mark of God's Spirit I should like to know." So, in a writing like this as we have to be truthful, though in speaking of the Rule we speak of it as having been put together by Father Cardella, he himself said that he had done nothing but try to put in a concise form what he found in the writings and from personal conversation. "I have put nothing but your views," he said, except the government." This the Holy Father himself at a very early date had taken out of the Bishop's hands, and of which we knew nothing until a week or two after it was done, and it was quite the reverse of a subject of joy with us as was sometimes asserted. We felt very much alone and not at all in a comfortable state, the burden seemed very great. We could not say we wished to be under the direction of priests as we had not got them, and we had learned enough then to know that it would be simply impossible to be under the direction of priests who were not one with us. But Father Cardella and Dr. Gualdi gave us most wise direction, and Father Cardella was playfully called by the Cardinal Vicar "Bishop for the Little Company."

Dr. Gualdi returned and became our ordinary confessor in the place of Father Cardella who had been so, and always was in his absence. He was always our Extraordinary until he died - and gave us our Retreats. I remember in one Retreat, he never let me attend them, he brought in the book of St. Ignatius, where the meditation is upon the mothers bringing their children to Our Lord to be blessed. He then went to the Chapel and gave the first meditation to the Sisters, came back and took the book away and gave me no more for the Retreat. But at each meditation there came to me a distinct and orderly succession of meditations upon the duties of a spiritual mother. I only wish I had written them down. Sometime afterwards he told me to do so and they form the groundwork of "Spiritual Maternity" but they are not put there in the orderly manner in which they came to me, no doubt in answer to Father Cardella's prayers, whom it cannot be questioned was a saint.

We were speaking of Dr. Gualdi telling us to go. An instance comes to my mind in which he most firmly told us to remain. Archbishop S... had come and told us most decidedly that it was no use our staying any longer and that we were to fix the day. Whether we should have done it or not I cannot say, for he seemed to come with authority, but in any case, Dr. Gualdi came with direct authority from Cardinal Simeoni, who said, "Remain in Rome and have another house." How good people differ! Father Cardella preferred the Mother House in England and inserted it in the first Rules, but it was altered in the Final Approbation. Whether it is the best thing or not, God only knows. I suppose in the event of a revolution, which seems inevitable if things are ever to be righted in Rome, if the Mother House were in England it would entitle the Community generally to more protection. This is only an idea of my own, and I always preferred that the Mother House should be in Rome. Cardinal Persico seemed to think that it meant Florence equally with Rome as the residence of the Mother General.

The Holy Father, the first time I had seen him to speak to, the week after my coming to Rome, had elicited from me what I had not intended to have asked for, and had given me permission to remain in Rome and have a house. As Monsignor Macchi wisely expressed it, summing it up, that the Holy Father had granted me all I asked for, but the Indulgences were to be put in writing. Just as in after years he spoke of the Feast of the Maternal Heart, we may say granting it, only it must be done in the proper form.

It is remarkable the baits laid out for us, enticing us to become Franciscans. When I first went to Nottingham the Bishop proposed that, saying it would remove so many difficulties and that there were twenty ready to join me, but on my saying that when we began it must be as "Mary's Own" or not at all, he did not persist, but he by no means gave immediate consent, but kept me many weeks waiting, and even went up to London to see my own Bishop, Dr. Danell, and finally gave his consent. I think it was Lent for either on the feast of the Precious Blood or the Seven Dolours he appointed me Superior, there being no one then in Nottingham to be Superior. He did it very formally, giving all the rights and privileges, none of which I knew. I rather took him back by the strenuous opposition I made, telling him what was true that I was not fit to be Superior, and my part was only to make the work known. But when I saw how really concerned he was and so much taken back and surprised at my opposition, so much so as to be almost ready to give it up, saying, "I am doing it for you. Do you wish to withdraw?" I accepted it, but a load came which I have never been able to shake off.

But to return to the question of the Franciscans, when we arrived in Rome in 1882 we made the acquaintance of the Hon. Mrs. Montgomery, who astonished us by her great cordiality and kindness. She invited us to live free in a convent of Franciscan nuns that she was interested in, and in fact was founding, and we accordingly left our place near Saint Peter's for this Convent near Saint John's. I used to think, after we had been told to leave, that we had been brought there through God's good Providence, to spend a holy Christmas, for these nuns (American) had Midnight Mass and then Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament all night, which was all very comforting to wanderers like ourselves, out of our own Convent. But I do not think that I am judging that it was a little plot that we might join the Franciscans. She, Mrs. Montgomery, did not herself openly propose it to us, but it was connived at by others. In fact, one lady, Marchesa S... came, as she said, with a message from Cardinal Simeoni that we should become Franciscans. I remember well meeting Cardinal Howard about this time. He was walking by the side of his carriage in the Via Merulana. We felt shy and tried to get out of his way by turning down a side street, but he followed us, and I spoke to him, addressing him as Father and correcting myself said Cardinal, and he answered in his cheery manner, "I am Father, Cardinal, or anything you like to call me." Hearing that we lived near, he told his coachman to drive on to the address, and he himself came and sat down and chatted with us for some time. I told Cardinal Howard of the advice of various ladies and of the particular message the one mentioned above averred to have received from Cardinal Simeoni. The Cardinal said, "Oh, these ladies!! ...

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The foundation in Australia was a great anxiety and I am glad it was so, as it caused much more prayer than I should otherwise have given. When Archbishop Moran asked for the Little Company of Mary to go with him to Australia, I refused. Then he again asked, sending to the Irish College, to come and call upon us and repeat his offer as he was coming to Rome again and still had the same desire and would like to take the Sisters back with him. Then we finally decided and Mother Michael was chosen as Superior. But I had no rest night or day and this is one of the instances in which I crossed the Council. I thought I would make a pilgrimage to pray and I chose, I know not why, to go to the Church of S. Bartholomew. I rarely or never went out at that time, but whilst at the Church the thought came to me so strongly to replace Mother Michael by mother Raphael that I could not resist it. And Mother Raphael and Mother Rose were the two pioneers of the Little Company in the new world. They were well-matched; Mother Raphael's spirituality and Mother Rose's order and discipline set a stamp on the Little Company in Australia. They were both refined and Mary-like, with a high religious feeling, which the Australian Sisters have certainly inherited from them. It is a most necessary quality and it is as necessary to be imparted to Novices almost as humility. They must understand the great dignity of their position in God's Church and must be taught equally that it is only through the Incarnation that we can have any dignity.

We are fallen creatures, whom Christ has reinstated. The two things must be taught together - the vileness of our nature and the grandeur of our office as Spouses of Jesus.

I remember little (Sr.) Pierre writing to me how she knew I would be glad to hear the respect given to Mother Raphael in Australia, and because of her spirituality she was so unlike many Superiors out there. I must say I never admired her more than when she returned a simple child. The first day she arrived, when they were all saying "Goodnight," she had got to the door when a thought occurred to her and she ran up to me saying, "Oh, Mother! I haven't been to confession since I was at Colombo. Can I go to Communion in the morning?" She did not know how I thought of that act performed so naturally and so simply. It comes to my mind as I write - in the night there was a great earthquake and Mother Raphael, with a strong element of that matter of fact spirit which certainly pervades the Little Company, related next day how she got out of bed to save the crockery by putting it on the floor so that it should not be shaken down. In the Novitiate dormitory the senior Novice showed her matter of fact spirit in another way. It was a very dreadful earthquake. The Novices had all jumped out of bed but Sr. Vincent, with a strong sense of duty as being responsible, said, "Sisters, are you not aware you may not rise until the call is given?" So they all got into bed again very obediently, and were rewarded by Mother Cecilia going up to see how they were getting on and letting them down to the Church to pray.

To return to Australia. The Cardinal was very kind to the Sisters. I think he would have allowed them to come to Rome, but when I asked him if they could come by Rome, hearing that it would be much more expensive and that he would prefer their starting from England by water, I said then we would make an act of poverty. I did not think I would be able to go to Naples and the hope was rendered still fainter by my being attacked by typhus (sic) fever. But Mother Raphael wrote that she was sure that she would see me, and God rewarded her hope, for though so weak, being then only convalescent from typhus, I felt that I must go. Dr. Gualdi, who had said it was out of the question, got some good thought and told them to let me go, saying it would be alright. So we went, and the Angels favoured us, and we arrived very well and everything went right. It was at the time of the cholera and though it was generally supposed that invalids were more likely to be put into quarantine, it had an opposite effect. They seemed to be in a hurry and anxious to get us out of the station.

But we have not noted what was really remarkable, that when -T saw a mountain, which I thought was Vesuvius and told the Sisters so, they treated it with quiet disdain. Then we finally stopped at a large station and they were crying "Napoli" as loud as they could, the Sisters were still incredulous saying, "We are not due in Naples for an hour or more." It being discovered that it really was Naples caused a stir. I was partly undressed, no boots or stockings on, bottles of milk and beef-tea about which were abandoned in the hurry, and when we finally arrived at the Tramontane (hotel), the landlady, looking up bewildered, asked, "Why, what train have you come by?" When we told her she assured us that Mons. Verdon had arrived the day before by the same train, hours later, and had also been put in quarantine.

We did not know the name of the ship the Sisters were coming by, but the landlady assured us (she was an Irish person, a Catholic) that they always made use of her hotel. I well remember in the morning at breakfast, on the day the ship was to arrive, watching them coolly taking their breakfast, and with great anxiety assuring them I had seen the ship, for I had crept to the terrace during the night. It was true enough, for the ship had been cruising about in the bay for hours during the early morning. They were finally induced to hurry off, having found out the name was the "Liguria," and found the sisters chanting the Little Hours with the Sacred Heart nuns, which was put a stop to by Mother Rose singing out "Salve Regina," upsetting the gravity of the young Sacred Heart nun. Well, they came on shore, and I for the first time saw Sister M. Bridget. They were a bright happy party, and I saw them one by one. The time was wisely limited by Mother Rose, ringing a bell when each had been long enough. Little Sister Pius amused me, for it being the custom to give an exact account of what they had done, she gravely tried to go through all, and when summoned away by Mother Rose, turned back to me saying, "Oh, but I forgot to tell you about this case." She was allowed no more, and when the time drew near for them to go, all went leaving me in charge of the good landlady, who tried to wile away the hours

and hinder my being lonely by a series of graphic descriptions of the horrors of the earthquake at Ischia, declaring that the screams could be heard at Naples. She gave a vivid description of the most harrowing scenes, assuring me that the barrels of bits were brought from Ischia to Naples, and the people went down to recognise the arms, head, legs or anything they could of their relatives. Well, poor old soul, she meant it for the best and it did not matter to me, not being a nervous patient. Let us hope she would not have entertained every sick person in the same way.

We intended returning from Naples, stopping at Genazzano, so chose an early train, which we were very sorry we missed, by waiting for the bill. But it was probably one of those providences, which, if we could see, would enhance the beauty of life to us. I have since understood that the direct trains do not stop at Valmontone. The history of our journey - the dark night coming upon us, lit up by the lightning, the driver putting us out in the road, to avoid the steep hill that leads into Genazzano etc. - the one point better to mention here is the report that I had a miracle at Genazzano.

I am not a theologian and do not know what a miracle means in theological terms. I forbade the Sisters saying that I had a miracle, thinking that a miracle meant a perfect cure, which I certainly had not, having the same heart. It seems to me a better phrase to say a 'grace.' In ordinary life a mother prays for a sick child and we say she obtains a grace when it recovers. We do not say she obtained a miracle. But this I can say that perhaps I never before knew, or at any rate had forgotten, what an ordinary state of life was like. To be able to walk and move about like others, without pain or inconvenience, was a new sensation, and a most enjoyable one, and lasted for perhaps upwards of two years, when other ailments brought me to my former state.

(Note written by the Servant of God from Genazzano to the Sisters in Rome.)

"God bless you all and keep you good and happy. Shall be so glad to see you all again. You must all come here and learn to love Our Lady better. I am praying so for you all to be virgin-mothers and have nothing of nasty self left. I must tell you we have the cincture now. Mother Philip and Mother Catherine went to see the Irish Augustinians. They were so kind, sent 2 large baskets of figs and grapes. We wished we could send them to you. Shall have so much to tell you when I return. Did you know (we) saw the blood of St. Januarius liquefied?

All the graces we get are for all the Little Company so prepare your souls that nothing be lost.

Ever united in our Mother's Heart,

Your loving mother, Mary."

1886 - 1893

We remained those four years waiting for the (?first) approbation, but never expected to have the Final Approbation as soon as we did. Father Cardella, before his death, must have paved the way, because he himself suggested having an approved translation, and took the pains to go through every word to see if the translation were correct. So that, when after his death the move was urged for the Final Approbation, we were able to say how he had carefully gone through every word and found only two mistakes. One was that we were to lavare for the poor, when it should have been lavorare. He noted to me the difference it made - a word - saying that of one order, in the Rule, it was put that one sister was never to go out without a companion, which they had translated one sister may never go out without another, which makes an important difference, as

a Sister of Charity going out with a school girl, for example, enable them to do double work than the Sisters of Mercy who go out always two together.

I have to thank the Angels for the care with which they have helped me keep everything that has been needed when the time came, so that at this time his little revisions and notes, papers in his own writing, I was able to produce. Holy man! How he loved that Little Company of Mary. Ladies had told me such a title would never pass in Rome. One went so far as to say that St. Ignatius came twice to Rome barefoot to pray that no female should ever have his Rule. It was very trying, just at the time we wanted letters from all the Bishops we were under, which is always done when soliciting Final Approbation. We were at loggerheads with some of them. And one positively refused, Bishop D... to whom I wrote saying it was unjust, if he did not give us such a letter, as we were bound to give a character to a domestic, or we did them an injury; and that he was bound to give us a letter or he would do us an injury. He never told me he would, but I think he must have done so, as they told us at Propaganda all our Bishop's had written in high terms.

Our own Bishop was also out with us and rather suddenly sent word he would make a Visitation before he wrote. It seemed rather alarming. I accepted the Visitation as a visit from God, and the Bishop carried it out in full form. The Canon spent hours over the books and found that by means of the Bazaar and other donations, we were not left a penny in debt. The Bishop did not tell me what his opinion was of the result of the Visitation, and I was left in doubt, and my anxiety added to when a letter by special delivery was handed to me from the Canon telling me that the Bishop had written to Rome, and he thought it well for me to know. Considering how devoted the Canon was to the Bishop, I considered this a very kind act, which showed his desire for the wellbeing of the Little Company. It was a difficult position this good Canon D... was placed in. He would often hum and ha, not wishing to cross the Bishop, but I one day said to him rather firmly, as he was rambling on, "But I am asking you, Father, as Canon of the Diocese." How he changed in an instant and gave a clear firm answer. I heard afterwards that the Bishop had sent a very nice letter, praising everything, the discipline, how the Rule was kept and so on, but that the Mother General did not remain in her house as she should, for Hyson Green was then the Mother House. Upon which he received a letter, telling him to send me back to Rome. I was then settled and the room had been boarded for the winter etc. I think it was December when we set out.

... There was a year in Rome when everyone seemed to be getting hemorrhages. Mother Catherine was called to the English College to nurse a student who had a severe hemorrhage and through her intercession he was ordained by dispensation. At the Irish College there was a youth with the same, and who had a great longing to get home to Ireland and to his mother. He was pronounced thoroughly incurable and the Doctors said he could not travel unless a doctor took him, but hearing that the English Sisters were going, said they would understand his case and he could travel with them. So we set off, I also having had the same.

On one occasion all the Sisters were home and I remember praying for a case that would give glory to God and do us good, and Mrs. Moore (Count Moore's wife) was taken ill, and in her illness she got the good thought that she would like to provide her poor people on the estate in Ireland with the same comfort in sickness that she had, and said to the Sister nursing her, "Could it be done for 1000 pounds because Arthur could afford that?" Count Moore himself told me how one day when she was very ill and he had gone to St. Peter's to pray for his wife to whom he was so tenderly devoted, he made a vow that he would bring the Little Company of Mary to Ireland, if his wife recovered, and when she was better, he did his best to fulfill this vow, but it was not so easy. I do not know the reason why we could not be on his own estate, but he finally met with a Bishop who was willing to receive us. It was rather an opportune moment as a Protestant Hospital had just been offered to the Bishop by the Municipal authorities, and Count Moore promised to put the Hospital in order for he had promised to give 1500 pounds to the Little Company of Mary to place them in Ireland-

I was in Rome at the time, but negotiated with the Bishop, sending him the rules and finally decided to go

myself. When I arrived the workmen were still at work, but I had waited some time in England and thought it better, at last, to go over with Mother Philip. It would be difficult to describe the upset state of the whole thing. A very nice contractor, but it was not his fault that he could not fulfill his contract and have the place ready for opening on the date promised. The country was terribly upset about the Land League and the Holy Father's letter. As described by a Postulant we took in, a fine Tipperary girl, describing the anger she got into, as she said defending the Holy Father, and said how she swore for him. And when we asked her what it was about, like everyone else they were too excited to understand anything but that the Holy Father had interfered in their politics, which he had no right to. A very holy and learned young priest took up some remark I made about the Land League. I saw his face cloud, and he said, "I have never approved of the Land League myself, but I should not like, for that reason, to disapprove it in others." I said, "Father, you must disapprove what the Holy Father disapproves." "It is not the Holy Father," he said, and like many others said, "He could not interfere in politics." "You have not read his letter right," I said, "he rather sides with you if he speaks of you at all. He says you are quite right to strive for your lawful rights, but you must do so by lawful means. It is against the moral law for a man to judge in his own cause and punish. You could not murder the murderer of your mother and so on."

We were talking in the meadows and a man working at a lime-kiln stopped to listen. I did not mind his hearing, but it was not wise in those days as the event proved. I do not know whether it was that night or a night or two after we were at Recreation in the evening. I was on my couch and the Sisters were practising at the other end of the room. I could not get them quite to understand what I was saying and did what I rarely do, rose up from my couch when a report sounded and a large piece of metal was shot on to the couch which I had been lying on. The report and the light were worse, evidently through having in some way caught the gas and a large piece of piping was also shot on to the couch. We all looked at one another and they left off playing as may be imagined, and cowered round the turf fire. Whether a ladder had been made use of, which was outside the window, whilst the men were scraping the walls, we never knew, and we never went out to see. It was a matter we tacitly seemed to understand we would never speak of.

This reminds me, speaking of the window, it was nearly my death before, for the night we arrived the lovely steeple of St. John's caught my gaze, and I threw up the window quickly and put out my head and looked out, but the window came down quicker than it went up. Limerick (in 1888) was spoken of by many in the place as a hundred years behind the times, and the windows had not sashes, but used to have a piece of wood put in to support them. It is fortunate I could not have put out my head very far, or there would not have been time to draw it in.

It was a dear old spot and we all felt as much at home as in any place we had ever been in, and more than in some. I have often regretted not having remained the winter as I had intended. Certainly the doctor ordered me away for hemorrhage of the lungs, but the real reason was the Hospital in Rome. News came from Rome that it really was settled at last. The Cardinal Vicar was taking the matter up in earnest, and it was thought I had better return. However, I dare say it would have gone on as well for after the Committee had been formed, the Cardinal Vicar putting himself at the head and assembling them at his own Palace, making a fine speech that they must make a fine building of the Hospital - "una casa monumentale degna degli inglesi" - and having finally fixed the opening for the Feast of the Seven Dolours in Lent, our benefactor who was paying our rent for us, wrote saying that he could not continue to do so. The Committee had known that our rent was paid for us. The offer we had made was a thousand pounds down, to pay a reasonable rent and give our services free, which everyone thought was a very fair offer, particularly as we were not at all anxious even to own the place when it was built. But it occurred to me that we could not pay two rents, and until the place was finished somebody must pay, for of course the rent for the ground had to be thought of, during the time in which the Hospital would be in course of erection.

The Committee made no response but held a meeting among themselves and without the Cardinal Vicar,

and decided that the catacombs were the most expensive grounds for building on. The Cardinal Vicar had bought this ground, which comprised the old Basilica and tomb of Saint Felicity, from a Jew into whose hands it had fallen, and had offered it to us for precisely the sum he had paid for it. When I received the decision of the Committee, which had thus acted without consulting its President, I wrote to the Committee, "Satan hath appeared among the children of men." That night I had had a presentiment of coming discomfiture and said as much to the Sisters.

The Committee never did anything more afterwards. The Cardinal Vicar expressed himself as very much surprised. He had done all that he could do; had the Catacombs opened at the time the English colony were most numerous in Rome and got De Rossi to lecture, and he addressed himself principally to the Sisters, especially speaking to Mother Catherine, to Lady Herbert and other celebrities present. It was most interesting, the old Basilica in which St. Gregory preached his homily. There was the High Altar with a mosaic of S. Felicity and her seven sons, which the damp has now somewhat damaged. The want of means has been a great denial. At the time it was offered to us, the bodies were still lying unprotected in the three tiers of Catacombs below the old Basilica. Strange to say there had been a Hospital built over the site before. The Committee did not seem interested to do much and, in fact, evidently did not care to take any responsibility.

I went to Florence, took the house in Via Ferruccio and commenced the English Sermons, which I had long contemplated. The Jesuits at Fiesole had promised to preach but, for some reason or another, seemed not able to comply. I wrote without any particular reason to Monsignor Harrington Moore, whom I had met a few times. It very strangely appeared, as he told us some time after he was installed with us, that he had tried the same thing on the Riviera, but through some jealousy had not been able to succeed. God must have rewarded his pure intention by giving such a grand field for his zeal as Florence. For two or three winters he remained with us, and his preaching gained some notable converts. The present Church of San Guiseppe was offered to us and we, thinking more good might be done if a proper English mission were established, offered it to Monsignor Moore, who after some consideration, accepted the offer, there not being much risk. The small Capuchin monastery attached to the Church was only about forty pounds a year.

We always look back to those days in Via Ferruccio as very happy ones. Indeed, there can be little doubt that the Little Company of Mary is meant to help the priest in his labours, as the Houses seem especially blessed and especially happy where they do so. The Holy Ghost seems to pour His choicest graces when invoked in the name of His Spouse, Mary. He is attracted to that spot where her children strive to honour her by imitating her virtues. The early days of Hyson Green record a long series of special graces. How we used to watch on Saturday night and pray that many might come to confession. How devotional were the services! So in Via Ferruccio. The expression was used that the place seemed full of the Holy Ghost, and I do not think the same has been since the mission was separated from the Sisters. It may have been one of my many mistakes, but I had heard it had been said that it was difficult for men to come to a convent for confession, and was glad of an opportunity to show disinterestedness, and that we did not mind who did good works as long as they were done.

We had no personal motives but only the glory of God and the good of souls, the spirit in which I hope we may always work. For religious to cloak ambition under the appearance of zeal is a fatal error, and we certainly have seen there is plenty of work to do in God's Church, and if we give up a good work we are doing, in one place we can go to another. But it (the Little Company of Mary) has never come in contact, in collision with other orders, for this is most disedifying in any Christians, but much more in those who are bound to aim at perfection. May God avert this evil from His Mother's Little Company and let them ever work in the spirit of their mother, only anxious that good should be done, God's Kingdom should be extended on earth by all whom they can influence, avoiding self in what they do, never mind giving up to others where they see it can be done.

The world is large and everywhere the Little Company of Mary can do good work, but I do not want the Sisters to go to certain places, scarcely fit for Christian women, as we have more than we can do in other parts of the

world. As there is so much work to be done everywhere, I cannot see the necessity of exposing the Sisters who could do as much good elsewhere. And I want this particularly noted, for when in the course of years, some Constitutions have to be submitted to Rome, one or two points may be inserted for the Blessing of the Holy See, not taking from what is already approved but only adding to; and the point which follows and for which I thought my wish would have been enough, I now think better inserted in the Constitutions. It is that no Sister need ever be obliged to submit to an examination or operation which her modesty shrinks from. I have a fear that some coercion might be used on the part of Superiors or even Confessors, and I strongly object. I have watched the effect, both outside our own order and in it - from the unfortunate nun of Kenmare and others who we cannot mention as they are living - I believe that it has a detrimental effect upon the soul. The Spouse of Jesus is sacred. Her body is consecrated to God. What matter if she suffer a little more or go to her true home sooner. Far better than to lose the smallest iota of the love of God, from the mistaken idea that she can do more work for Him. Our first work, before all works, is to perfect our souls.

I remember when first coming to Rome being a little perplexed. We naturally wanted to make a good impression and yet, speaking in our own praise was so foreign to us and it was quite out of our line to relate our good works. I know I felt quite uncomfortable speaking of what we did. We certainly came into Rome like David with his sling. I find other orders summing up all they do in a most methodical manner, photographs of their houses and even how much they are worth. These things had never entered our minds and when I saw in the "Voce" once, how a grand account had been sent to the Holy Father of a whole family converted in Paris, I thought what accounts we could have sent of whole families converted in Hyson Green, but we never thought of such a thing.

I admired very much in Rome the love of hiddenness, which contrasted greatly with the attitude of more recent orders founded there - the way in which holy pictures etc. are never exposed except from devotion. The miraculous Crucifix, for instance, in the Via Merulana; a lady with carriage and pair may drive up and thrust in her card and be refused, and we trudging up they knew through devotion, always allowed to satisfy it. May God protect His Mother's Little Company from worldliness, individually and as a body; may we live in the world, but not of it. In the world it is bad enough to encourage that natural tendency to show and display, but Religious, the Spouses of Jesus, who are supposed to make reparation for the offences of the world and to have entirely given up its vanities, to introduce this spirit of worldliness into God's Sanctuary is a sad profanation. May we be preserved from it! Jealousy and dissensions on the Holy Mount make us shudder. We all shudder at the soldiers dicing in the very presence of Jesus dying. Would we could see things as they are, for there are many profanations and misuse of what is holy, which if seen in their proper light we should avoid.

I used to be very afraid that personal attachment of the Sisters to myself would hinder the proper idea of religious obedience and used to enforce religious obedience to those with whom they had to work. And I remember telling them that if they did not act in this manner I would go and leave them to make sure of their having proper religious obedience. This I did, going to Quorndon and opening our first branch house, which we called the "Precious Blood." And this we would wish to be the method followed in all our settlements, or otherwise to be called Provinces. The other two branch houses that followed we named the "Holy Ghost" and "Divine Mercy." These are the four features in our Institute. The Maternity brought us the Precious Blood and the Precious Blood brought the Holy Ghost and Divine Mercy. This is brought out in some of our conferences. In Australia some of the houses were named before we were aware, or we would suggest the same plan to be followed, as this brings out these four features of Calvary - the Mother's Heart, the Precious Blood, the Divine Mercy brought into the world, the Holy Ghost, Who was poured upon the Church through the shedding of the Precious Blood. So we mention this earnestly that what has been done may not hinder in future this order in the circles of houses that may group together, and the thought that they are forming a picture of God will keep them united, more closely bound than blood relations, since they are bound together, united in the Precious Blood and their beauty and the glory they give - God is through it. Hyson Green, Quorndon, Melton Mowbray and Eastwell had these four names. The Maternal Heart has been fruitful, for in the above-

named places, our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Perpetual Succour, Maternal Heart and Sacred Heart missions have sprung up.

We had at one time five houses and in all there was good work done, and if we had had our own Calvary Priests they would no doubt be now flourishing. We perhaps had better draw a veil over the sad circumstances which caused me to decide upon closing some of them. How the Sisters endured the sad trials to which they were subjected is a marvel of grace. But, as I think of it, the circumstances are so well known of in the Nottingham Diocese, that it would be better to mention the fact that the Bishop's benevolent nature induced him to send priests who had not right to faculties anywhere. To, my remonstrances as to their being sent to these lonely places where the Sisters were converting and striving to do so much good, he replied that the good example of the Sisters would undo the effect of the bad example of the priests. It was very sad, what could be the result of a priest placed in these lonely districts without a love of prayer or love of study. That it did no harm to Sisters is true. It probably gave us a Calvary spirit, the proper spirit of reparation that everyone should have, but still a certain indignation rises within me, as those sad events come before me. The priest - a man who should be raised above the world - lowering himself as we have seen them. I must confess when I saw these and other things in the Bishop...

Mission work is one of the works of the Little Company of Mary. It is very evident that God wishes us to be occupied with His vast family, since He has so blessed this work wherever the Little Company of Mary have engaged themselves helping the priest with his mission work - what blessings have been attached, what souls saved. Conversions, instructions, united with our interior life, help to our own sanctification as well as to the extension of Christ's kingdom. The presence of the Sisters gave a certain spirit to the people, if we may express it so. The seeing in practice what the priest preached was more effectual than the sermons themselves.

Religion was not then theoretical. They saw it practically carried out - the sick administered to, the suffering consoled and comforted, the poor fed, the children instructed and the ignorant learned to love our Lord and His Spirit entered into them. There seemed little trouble in converting in those days and they were solid conversions, for the children of the present are mostly the children of our converts, and there are now hundreds where there were not dozens. How I love that work! I remember a poor woman saying, "You are very good sisters to come and help us. You must love Christ, or you are true Christians" or something of that nature, and I remember answering in the same simple strain, "We love all that Christ loves. The poor are His favourites, and we love them because He loves them, though we can never love as He did. We love the sick and the suffering for He loved them. But we can never love His Mother as He did," supposing that the poor woman never had thought of not loving Our Lady, but, of course, she never had. It was a very bigoted place, but it is better to drop little words like that. It was like sowing seeds in these souls, which we watered by love. God blessed and gave the increase.

There is something in mixing with the poor which keeps us close to God, and after my return from Rome, with all its grandeurs and graces, with the constantly seeing the Holy Father, with the holy priests who were our true friends, the visiting the shrines, the bodies of Saints, the magnificent functions of the Church, with all this when I went again among the poor, I said, "Life is worth loving," as I carried one little thing or another to relieve the sick and brought the love of God into their souls. I had not been allowed to do much in the world, but I remember on one occasion, finding that the workhouse people lost their breakfast, when they went to Communion. I arranged with some poor people for them to have their breakfast. The poor working man offered a cup of tea and was delighted when I sat down to take it. He paid such a compliment that no educated man could have said better, which indeed I have always found amongst the poor. The poor man said, "You are very humble, miss, to eat with us like this, but humble as you are, you are not more humble than you are welcome." I remember the same poor man when I asked him about his children and, without any particular reason, pressed to know how a girl of his was getting on, and was he not proud of her when she used to walk in the processions - I never saw such a shower of tears as suddenly came from his eyes. That poor girl had

gone wrong and it was too much for the father's heart, as he thought of her, walking in her white veil etc., rosary in hand, as was the pretty custom in that place. I did not do it on purpose, but I should recommend the Sisters if they know how to bring tears to people's eyes by some reminder that will touch their hearts for they are then more amenable to grace. Sorrow is the holiest part of many souls. Touch that chord and you can evoke music from those who apparently have little of the beautiful about them. Those steeped in sin can be easiest purified by sorrow. It is a grace from God, but, of course, like all graces, can be used well or ill.

1895

Some years since a not ordinary sorrow came to me, at least it came with not ordinary power, by God's permission. He must have made me capable of suffering with such intensity for His own wise ends. My eldest brother, a most noble character, had come to a sad state of scruples and been forbidden prayer, the Sacraments etc. They were afraid of his mind. In this state he strove to convert an Unitarian, without being very well instructed himself. It will scarcely be understood that there were no Catholic schools for boys in the whole of London when I was a girl (I mean except the poor schools), so my brothers went to a Protestant school and were therefore not as well instructed in their religion as other things. My brother finally lost the Faith. He recovered his health, married a Protestant, and lived a good life, more like the ancient philosophers, virtuous, so that it was said with truth of him that he was a man who had never told a lie, or uttered a word the holiest woman could not hear. How gentle and chivalrous he was to women.

He lost His wife, Phoebe, who was poisoned by mistake, and lived then a most solitary life. He was taken dangerously ill. How I prayed and felt so sure he would be all right - a sister nursing him. She wrote so hopefully, that when going to Mass, he told her to take money for the Offertory, but however, when she brought in the priest he spoke to him gently, thanking him, but saying he did not require his services. Still I hoped, but when a Sister brought me a telegram with his death and he would not see a priest, the blow was terrible. The Sister who brought me the open telegram had been that day trying me very much and seemed not softened by my sorrow. I was going to give Novices' Chapter, and have always a fear of not doing my duties when in great grief, so I told her quietly I should give it all the same, but I said, "Don't let Sr. Hilda come to me, but after Chapter tell her." She was very devoted to this Uncle, and he to her.

When Chapter was over I felt in such anguish, and never being able to cry in sorrow, I thought I would be better if I was alone with my crucifix. My door is seldom shut, but for once I shut it. I took my Crucifix down, and knelt down and tried to let my sorrow be united with the Passion, but that made it worse, for his noble face, calm and white, his form like the pictures of the dead Christ came before me (and so it came for weeks), and I thought our Lady had not sorrow like this. If she, as she looked upon Jesus Dead could have thought as I, as I (in spirit) looked upon His image, my poor unfortunate brother. I loved my Crucifix and prayed and offered my pain. No tears came, but it was well they did not, for I was not left alone long. A knock came to the door, "The Duchess of Newcastle wants to see you, Mother." I got up, bathed my eyes heavy with the tears unshed, and had to give attention to her Ladyship until Benediction. Then again was that cold white noble form before me, and so it went on for weeks. My heart pierced and I did not feel how Heaven could take the pain away, though, of course, I believed blindly.

I spoke to no one for a long time of my grief, but at last I did. I wrote the whole and I was relieved by an act of obedience. My Director, the saintly Father Armellini, said he read the letter twice, prayed for light, invoked a Saint for whose Canonization he had worked successfully etc. brought forward a recent most interesting revelation of our Lady and how God saves those related to religious. Father Armellini bid me pray for my poor brother, and I see now much that is comforting. His very quiet refusal to the last to have the Sacraments showed he was in good faith. He was loving God, reading the Imitation, left money for the Little

Sisters of the Poor.

1900

Procession at Fiesole: (my gift Raphael)

During the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, they say the first that has been on that spot for years and years, Sister Teresa and I were watching Our Lord and in trying to interest her, notice her, I was not particularly engrossed as I might have been, but as they passed bearing Our Lord, I had such a desire to offer Our Lord a gift. The Procession moved on and entered the Church and I was still anxious about poor Sister Teresa. Then one of those moments came and we must pray; and the thought how it was not only God Who gives Himself to us with such great love and we feed upon Him. God gives to us, but we also give to God and He delights in our gift. He indeed received from us and rapt (sic) to Himself, takes our little life, joins it to Himself feeds upon the virtues, and there is this union of God giving to us and we giving to God.

It is difficult to express in words the effect it had on myself; it was, I thought, "Is this death?" but I was soon brought to, by the Benediction finished in the Church and the people came up to me. And there was a new love for them in my heart, a greater knowledge of God's love for them and therefore it was a joy to say a kind word to each. As they departed, a telegram was brought to me saying my child whom I used to call the "Flower of the Blessed Sacrament" had died and must have died whilst I was wishing so to offer Jesus a gift as He passed by. She had gone to God, a pure little soul, and wished her Mother to enter with her into the joy of her God. Wonderful communion of souls in God's Church, how close we are to those who are far away, apparently closest of all to those who are with God. We meet them in God.

1904?

I wanted to tell you about the nice conversation I had with Bishop Bourne. Anyone would have thought he knew what was taking place, but I did not (as you well know I do not) speak to him, and I am sure you did not. But he spoke about religious, about the Church generally, and then branched to his own management of his Diocese. He said when proposing a matter, he weighed it in his mind for some time, prayed about it, and then brought it before his Chapter, who naturally opposed it. I looked at him, surprised. "Naturally?" "Yes," he said, "and I think rightly, for they have not weighed it over and prayed about it as I have." I saw then what he meant and said, "What a new idea to me, my Lord, of course it is more logical thus, both sides are seen." He answered, "I do not expect them to agree with me. The matter is new to them, they have not weighed it over as I have from the different points of view, therefore I ask them not to give me an answer, but to consider the matter, weigh for and against, pray, and when I call them together again, give me their reply."

The Bishop spoke so humbly and simply, and it seemed so nice to be learning something from one of the Pastors of the Church. It must have been from God, for I did not bring up the Hospital or our business. We were speaking of the Church generally and he gave me some very interesting news, but it was such a lesson to learn.

My reasons for thinking the Lateran the site most fitted for us - we want a model Mother House. I would like the Generalate as perfect a place as possible. We must have room to expand. We do not want to be hemmed in. We cannot get as large a site except at Monte Mario which, though I personally prefer it, has reasons against it, and I also do not feel is God's Will as I do with the Lateran site. The objection made that it is too far out - I ask for whom, visitors or sisters? All whom we want to, who really want us, would go there as well as here

(Via Castelfidardo). It is equally near to the centre. Regarding the Sisters, in no house can they be near to the convent as they have been here. When we first went to Hyson Green there was not even a tram or bus to Nottingham. Regarding night cases, you know I never liked them, or let the Sisters out as a rule. I like it still less in Rome.

I am trying to find the other againsts that were brought forward, but cannot. The air is proved good; the view can never be impeded. The place has the advantage of being so countrified that Doctors would probably use it for convalescents instead of Frascati. Any claim of the Government Catelli disapproves and Father Chandelery says Fr. Floch would never have offered it, but for all that I should think it right to know officially from headquarters. I have so wished to show this to you. Indeed it is a useful thought for all in office. In this particular matter of the Hospital, I see how foolish it is of me to wonder why others cannot see it as I see it and how I should have put the for and against logically, then given the Council time to reflect and pray, instead of this fitful kind of talk, then bringing it up at Council without a word of explanation. It would be [a] presumption to expect Almighty God to inspire minds. In the beginning I certainly was led and brought you all together by these impressions, up to coming to Rome, as you remember and all. But I cannot now expect, neither do I desire you all to be thus led by me and take a last place at Council, from which I have rarely differed. The last two notable instances being, changing M. Michael from going to Sydney and putting M. Raphael in her place etc. etc., but I shall make this letter too long and will now put for and against on the 2nd pages I kept. Sorry to bring this business again to you, but God will give you grace.

Cannot write any more - too full of joy that Mr. Evans has been here, just confirmed. I told, him he had to do a deal for the Church. God had marked him out, his congregation the first to come en masse; that is what we had been wanting in England. Thought Father Maturin was surprised when I said I did not know of Mr. Evans' reception, and now Father Magnier explained that it is said he was received with us in Fiesole. Mr. Evans so shy, told of a wonderful miracle, said he would like to come to us next winter, if we would allow him.

God love you all. Thank Him for all He has done. Look at all the lovely... and all the convents and good children we have. May God keep all, one heart and soul.
