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ST. TERESA.[1]

THIS biography of the most famous saint of Spain is the outcome of six years' patient study. The writer has not only utilized books and papers which were unknown to her predecessors, but, accompanied by her muleteer and a devoted servant, she has traversed the length and breadth of Spain, visiting the remotest hamlets to find traces of Teresa, living on bread and wine, and sleeping out wherever night overtook her. Teresa here finds her historic setting among the men and women of her time — a commanding figure in her eventful century — a saint with a vein of mysticism which she herself never really fathomed, and an unfailing fund of worldly wisdom that stamps her as a true Castilian and the born leader of a difficult enterprise. Her birthplace, the grim border fortress of Avila, lies about sixty miles to the north-west of Madrid. The old Castilian town profoundly impresses the imagination of a visitor. "Hung between earth and sky, clustered around its grey cathedral, on the last spur of the Guadarramas, dominating the wildest, bleakest uplands in Castille ; a city such as Van Eyck painted, or some quaint illuminator drew with minute hand on the yellow pages of a missal. Seen from afar it might be some phantom city, such as the Indians tell of in Mexico or the Andes ; or a fantastic rock balanced on the crag it clings to. Houses and boulders jumbled together, the very surface of the streets broken and pierced with rocks. The brown parameras at her feet are covered with craggy rocks. Grey rocky landscape, grey rocky towers, natural and chiselled rocks in jagged outline against the sky," frame in the picture. The cathedral — half church, half fortress — perched on the highest ground, looms over the town whose gloomy labyrinths of lanes and narrow streets nestle under its shadow. The walls, not more than half a mile apart at their widest point, follow the sinuous movement of the ridge. From the deep-mouthed gateway "a sunlit street, narrow and tortuous, deserted and silent," creeps up the hill,

between high walls fissured with time and baked by the heat into indefinable gradations of color. In Teresa's time this street, which rarely to-day echoes to the footsteps of a chance passer-by, was thickly inhabited by an industrious and harmless population of Mudejares and Jews. Then it was the main artery of the town, the central line between the walls. Through that sombre and silent gateway at the bridge once flowed the stream of the quaint mediæval life of Castille ; strange processions of mailed and plumed warriors ; hunting parties with hawks and hounds ; bishops in full pontificals, surrounded by kneeling crowds ; a tide of travellers whose weary footsteps left a mark on the rough causeway ere they went their way on their endless journey out of the memory of men and Avila. To-day a few donkeys enter or emerge through its shadow, their drivers laborers and peasants, who with the characteristic costume of the country, preserve, across so many ages, the peculiar dignity and stateliness of another world — the tight knee-breeches tied in at the knee with a bunch of ribbons ; the short jackets, black or brown, scorched by the sun into many hues ; the "abarcas" (sandals) fastened to the legs with strips of leather — or fresh-colored serranas from those little grey villages hidden in the Sierras, who still wear their national dress with the arrogance and grace natural to their race — the short scarlet or yellow petticoat, the low velvet bodice, the massive earrings of rare and intricate workmanship.

The knights of Teresa's day have gone, but the peasants still linger unchanged in garb and manners by the lapse of three stirring centuries.

Avila formed for two hundred years the mountain barrier between Christian Spain and the Moorish kingdom of Toledo. Moslem and Christian fought desperately for its possession. Alfonso VI. finally wrested it from the infidel about 1090, and turned it into a fastness bristling with defences. Henceforth Avila the Loyal, Avila of the

[1] Santa Teresa. Being some account of her Life and Times, together with some pages from the history of the last great Reform in the Religious Orders. By Gabriela Cunninghame Graham. Two volumes. 32*s*. London: Adam & Charles Black. 1894.

Knights, was first in battle, in faithfulness, in chivalry. Queen Isabella passed her youth in its palace, the Madrigal, now a deserted convent. The expulsion of the Jews, which took place in 1492—twenty-three years before the birth of Teresa—proved the death-blow to the prosperity of the town. Eleven and a half thousand Jews, including cloth workers, carpet makers, and famous artificers who enriched the place, were banished at one stroke. Whole quarters of Avila were deserted, and remain unoccupied to this day. Torquemada, the grand inquisitor, whose name is branded with infamy, lies buried in the Dominican monastery of Santo Tomás, to the south of the town. He was the chief founder of that great house. It was built with the confiscated wealth of Jews and Moors, and the first *sanbenitos* seen in Spain were guarded before its high altar. The flames of persecution first kindled against the Jews in Avila spread over the land, and robbed Spain of eighty-five thousand of her most learned and industrious citizens.

Such was the town in which the future saint was born. The convent of Pastrana still preserves a paper in her father's writing. "On Wednesday, on the 28th day of March, of the year 1515, was born Teresa, my daughter, at five o'clock in the morning, half an hour before or after." The font in the parish church of San Juan, where she was baptized six days later, stands in a dusky corner, its rim protected by a thin strip of brass carved in arabesques and covered with a heavy board of olive wood. At its base are the rough blocks of stone worn by the knees of generations of godfathers and godmothers. The saint's father, Alonso Sanchez de Cepeda, belonged to a noble Toledan family. His mother was a Cepeda—a race distinguished in the long struggle against the Moors. Teresa's mother, Beatriz Davila y Ahumada, could boast as proud an ancestry as her husband. No vestige remains of the house in which Teresa first saw the light, but many buildings still survive which help us to reconstruct it for ourselves. We can see the gloomy grey façade, irregularly studded with narrow slits, the arched gateway, the heavy doors, leading into a kind of covered entrance hall, on one side of which were the stables. Beyond lies the courtyard, round which the house is built.

On these interiors, full of intimate charm, the mediæval workman exhausted all his art. Round both stories ran open galleries, whose colonnades of Gothic arches were supported by slender columns with delicately wrought capitals, on which were sometimes repeated the arms of the house. The ground floor was occupied by the kitchen, offices, and servants' dwellings. The rooms occupied by the family were on the floor above. The projecting eaves of the roof, which rested on wooden soffits most quaintly carved, submerged the upper gallery in shadowy obscurity. Wherever the irregular wavy outline of the tiles cut against the sky, it framed a patch of dazzling, glittering light. Perhaps a vine clung limpet-like to the pillars or the walls. A conspicuous object in the centre of the courtyard was the draw-well, with its characteristic brim, buckets, and chains. In the whole building and its accessories an indescribable mixture of Moorish and Gothic elements, impossible to separate or define.

The walls were hung with tapestries or lovely leather. Wooden chests placed against the sides served both as benches and cupboards.

From Teresa's writings we learn that her father was dignified, honorable, and kindly, a great lover of books of devotion, of which he had formed a considerable collection for the use of his children. He could never be induced to own a slave, and treated one belonging to his brother, then staying with him, like a child of the house. He said "he could not for very pity bear to see a person deprived of freedom." Teresa's mother was a woman of great beauty, much younger than her husband, and his second wife. She died in her thirty-third year, having borne seven sons and two daughters during her brief married life. Teresa was her third child. It was a happy family. "They were all bound to each

other," she says, "by a tender love, and all resembled their parents in virtue except myself." Six of her brothers became soldiers and went to push their fortune in the New World, whence only two of them ever returned. Teresa and her favorite brother Rodrigo, four years younger than herself, pored over the lives of saints and martyrs till they were filled with longing to tread in their steps in order to enjoy as soon as possible the great treasures which they understood to be stored up in heaven. After talking the matter over Teresa says, "We agreed to go to the land of the Moors, begging our way for the love of God, there to be beheaded; and it seems to me that the Lord gave us courage even at so tender an age, if we could have discovered any means of accomplishing it. But our parents seemed to us the greatest obstacle." It is said — but this may have been a mere legend — that the children set out on their journey, but were espied by an uncle and brought safely back to their anxious mother.

Here is her portrait of her childhood. "I gave in alms what I could, and that was very little. I tried to be alone to say my prayers, which were many; above all the rosary, to which my mother had a great devotion, with which she inspired us also. Although I was very wicked, I tried in some way since I was a child to serve God, and did not do some things I see, which the world seems to consider of no importance. I was not disposed to murmur, or to speak ill of others, nor does it seem to me I could dislike another, nor was I covetous, nor do I remember to have felt envy." Her mother died when she was twelve years old. Henceforth Teresa was left much to herself. Stories of knight-errantry now took the place of the lives of the saints. She had caught this taste from her mother. The books had been carefully concealed from her father, who heartily and justly disliked the unrestrained licentiousness and coarseness of such romances. It was a strange phase in the history of a future saint. Teresa bitterly reproached herself in after life for the days spent in her father's old grey tower in poring over these wild and unprofitable stories.

She was now growing into womanhood. She was tall and well-proportioned, with a fair brow encircled by black curling hair, sparkling black eyes, a dimpled chin, small hands with long, tapering fingers. She had a charm of manner and a personal magnetism which never failed to produce a deep impression. The consciousness of her beauty made her eager to win admiration. "I began," she says, in telling the story of these years, "to wear fine clothes, and to wish to please by looking well, and to bestow much care on my hands and hair, and to use perfumes and every other vanity I could procure, for I was very curious." By curious she means that she was scrupulously careful as to her person and dress. In after years she struggled hard and often vainly to teach her nuns so much of this curiousness as would make them neat and clean. Beneath all her pride in dress and beauty there lay the foundation of a strong character and a sharply marked individuality. Honest and straightforward, she had all the punctilious dignity of a Castilian, and longed to excel in everything she attempted.

The only men allowed to cross her father's threshold were some gay young cousins who brought a spice of fun and laughter into her monotonous and secluded life. "We were always together," she says; "they were very fond of me, and I kept up the talk in everything in which they were interested, and they told me of their love affairs and childish folly, in no way good; and, what was worse, my soul began to be accustomed to what was the cause of all its hurts." A relative whom her mother had vainly endeavored to discourage from coming to the house abetted the girl in her amusements. Teresa says that until the age of fourteen, when this relative became her confidant, she did not think she had left God through mortal sin, nor lost his fear, although she feared more

lest anything should be said or done to reflect upon her honor. "This feeling was strong enough to prevent its being altogether lost; nor do I think that anything in the world, nor love for any person in it, could change or make me yield in this." Her father and elder sister were much grieved at her friendship with this relative, but their remonstrances were unheeded. Her eyes were opened in later years. "I am sometimes frightened," she said afterwards, "at the harm done by evil company, and had I not experienced it, could not believe it. In the season of youth greater must be the evil it works." Scarcely any trace of her early seriousness was left. She abhorred everything impure, but the intimacy gave rise to scandal and alarmed her father, who packed her off to the old Augustinian convent of Santa Maria de Gracia. Thus ended for the moment the future saint's pitiful little story of youthful frivolity.

In the cloister the girl of sixteen soon won all hearts. She had entered Santa Maria with a great aversion to a nun's life, but she was not unaffected by the atmosphere around her. "If I saw one of the sisters shed tears when she prayed, or possess other virtues, I longed to be like her, for, as regards this, my heart was so hard that I could not shed a tear, even though I read the whole Passion through; this gave me pain." She asked the prayers of the community that she might find her own vocation. She feared marriage, but hoped that she might escape a convent life. After eighteen months a painful illness compelled her to return to her father's house. During her days of convalescence she visited her married sister, who lived in the country, two days' journey from Avila. On her way she stayed with an uncle at Hortigosa, who was a strange mixture of country squire and ascetic. He asked Teresa to read aloud his favorite books of devotion. She concealed her distaste for them in order to give the old man pleasure. The result is thus told in her autobiography: "Although the days I stayed with him were few, such was the effect the words of God I read and heard had on my heart, and the good companionship, that I began to understand the truth of my childhood: that all was nothing, and the vanity of the world, and how quickly everything ended; and to fear, if I was to die, that I should go to hell. Although my will could not subject itself to be a nun, I saw that it was the best and the surest life, and so, little by little, I began to constrain myself to take it."

The girl felt no vocation for the cloister. She thought at first that one, like herself, who had been used to delicate living could not bear its privations; but this was set down as a temptation of the devil to be fought and conquered. We watch with growing pity that fierce struggle of a mind torn asunder by doubts and temptations. "Her aversion to the cloister was only equalled by a tremendous dread of hell." After three months of torture she told her father that she had resolved to enter a convent. He refused his consent. Teresa was his favorite child. He could not bear to part with her, though he hinted that after his death she might take her own course. Teresa was not, however, turned from her purpose. On November 2, 1533, the girl of seventeen rose early one morning and betook herself to the Carmelite convent of the Encarnacion, about half a mile north of the city walls. She had been repelled by the severe discipline among the demure nuns of Santa Maria de Gracia, and though she was moved by servile fear to enter a religious house, she turned towards the "merry, noisy, squabbling, sometimes hungry, chattering, and scandal-loving" sisterhood of the Carmelite convent, where she might keep for herself "a world within the world." It is a pitiful picture painted by herself. "I do not think that when I die, the wrench will be greater than when I went forth from my father's house; for it seems to me that every bone was wrenched asunder, and as there was no love of God to take the place of the love of father and kins-

men, the struggle was so great that, if the Lord had not helped me, my own resolutions would not have been enough to carry me through." Her father was sent for, and arrived in time to see her take the habit. For a while Teresa seemed at rest. She fulfilled her lowly duties with a cheerful spirit, sweeping the floors, hanging up the nun's cloaks which were left in the choir, and lighting the sisters through their dark and draughty corridors. She was neat and fond of all religious observances, but was pained because her tears and love of solitude were sometimes harshly misinterpreted. After a year of probation she became a professed nun after another terrible struggle.

The mental distress which she passed through seems to have told seriously on her health. The fainting fits from which she had suffered before became more frequent and prolonged, and were accompanied with severe pains at the heart. She had to be moved to her father's house, and when the medical men of Avila failed to relieve her, she was put under the care of a female quack — a curandera — in one of the villages. On her way to this place she stayed for a time with her sister, poring over a mystic classic by Francisco de Osuna — the "Abecedario Espirituel" — given her by her uncle. The book fascinated her. Her nuns of Avila still preserve the copy over which she pored. She has scored and underlined it, marking her favorite passages with a cross, a heart, or a hand. She was no stranger to the "gift of tears" of which Osuna spoke, and his "Prayer of Quiet and Union" was her chief solace amid these months of pain and weakness. The delicate girl suffered agonies from the brutal treatment of the curandera, which left her almost lifeless. "Sharp teeth seemed to gnaw incessantly at her heart, her nerves shrivelled up with intolerable agony; she knew no rest day or night; and, consumed with disease and fever, she became the prey of the profoundest sadness." She returned to Avila more dead than alive. One night, after a violent paroxysm, she fell into a trance which lasted four days. Her friends thought she was dead. Only her father's firmness prevented her from being buried. When she came out of her trance her eyes were full of the wax which had run down from the candles set about what seemed to be a corpse. Gradually she crept back to life. She herself considered the disease to be quartan ague, but others describe her attacks as hysteric and epileptic convulsions.

Teresa returned to the convent on Palm Sunday, 1537, after more than eighteen months of terrible illness. She was then only twenty-two. She lay for three years in the convent infirmary alone with her books and prayers. Fear had given place to love. Her cheerful resignation and care for others made a profound impression on the sisterhood. She gradually regained a measure of strength, but to the end of life was an ailing and feeble woman, only borne along the path of duty by her tenacious will and nervous energy. Few saints have been so long in reaching even a modest degree of sanctity as Teresa. Eighteen years more rolled by before her name was heard outside the cloister. The parlors of the convent were thronged with visitors, great ladies and even idle young gallants went and came without restriction. Young, amiable, fascinating, witty, miraculously restored to something like health, Teresa seems to have inspired and returned some ardent attachments. Her religious duties at one period palled upon her. She began to fear prayer, and though she managed to retain the good opinion of the nuns generally, one old relative in the cloister did not fail to utter repeated warnings. It was the old struggle between the world and the cloister which had begun afresh. Teresa labored hard to reconcile the spiritual life with the things of the world, and waged a continual war between conscience and inclination.

The death of her father opened her eyes. She had lent him books, and guided him in his meditation and

prayers, for with all her natural frivolity she had a deep vein of religious feeling. Even during her own days of spiritual declension she had not been able to resist the impulse to guide him and others. As she nursed her father in his last illness she learnt many a solemn lesson. She laid bare her heart to her father's confessor, who taught her to take the sacrament and resume her habits of prayer. It was long before she won peace, but she saw afterwards "how great a mercy the Lord did me in granting them (her bitter tears) with such a deep repentance." The change that was passing over her was not unnoted by the nuns of the Encarnacion with their lax standard of duty. They made the road rough indeed for Teresa. It was personal experience that dictated her sentence: "The friar and the nun, who, in very truth begin to follow their vocation, have more to fear from those of their own community than from all the devils combined."

Teresa was now forty-one. Her soul was weary, but her evil dispositions seemed to stand between her and true peace. One day, as she entered her oratory, her gaze fell on a wooden image of Christ which had been placed there in readiness for some convent festival. She says: "As I gazed on it my whole being was stirred to see him in such a state, for all he went through was well set forth. Such was the sorrow I felt for having repaid those wounds so ill, that my heart seemed rent in twain; and in floods of tears I cast myself down before it, beseeching him once for all to give me strength not to offend him more." Whilst thus impressed she met with "St. Augustine's Confessions." She seemed to see herself in those pages, and when she read of the voice which Augustine heard in the garden before his conversion it thrilled her heart almost as if the Lord had called on her. The spiritual world now became more real to her. She was soon an ecstatic mystic given up to devout contemplations. A layman of the town, who devoted his life to charity and good works, now became her warm friend and counsellor. He advised her to open her mind to Padranos, a young and zealous member of the Society of Jesus, which was then in its infancy. Padranos, she says, "bid me take courage, for what did I know whether through me the Lord intended to do good to many." He also led her to practise mortification and penance from which she had hitherto held aloof. One shudders to read of the tin shirt pierced with holes like a grater which she wore next her skin, wounding every part it touched, of the bed of briars, and of the scourgings with nettles and keys. "In Segovia," says her biographer, "she sent her nuns to the choir, and, rising from the bed where she lay consumed with fever, scourged herself until she broke her arm. She slept on a straw mattress; her meals were frugal, she drank no wine. For some time the tunic she wore next the skin, her sheets and pillows, were of the coarse blanketing used for horse-cloths."

Teresa soon became the talk of Avila. The mystic visions which she saw in her convent cell were discussed in town and cloister with a keenness and acrimony which we of this age can scarcely understand. The first of these experiences came one day when, "after having been deep in prayer," she began to repeat the hymn "Veni Creator." Whilst saying this, she tells us, "I was seized with a rapture so sudden that it almost carried me beside myself, and of this I could not doubt, for it was very palpable. It was the first time that the Lord had done me this favor. I heard these words: 'I no longer wish thee to converse with men, but with angels.'" This was the earliest of those divine "locutions" which henceforth guided all Teresa's conduct. She says they were "words very clearly formed, not heard by the bodily hearing, but impressed on the understanding much more clearly than if they were so heard; and in spite of all resistance it is impossible to fail to understand them." Her friends betrayed her confidences, so that her visions became known to all the town. The

recent impostures of two other nuns — Magdalen de la Cruz and the Prioress of Lisbon — were not forgotten. Teresa's visions were received with jeers and derision, as "delusions" and "snares of the devil." The Inquisition carefully investigated the matter. There is no need to accuse Teresa of duplicity and falsehood, such as the other nuns to whom we have referred were guilty of. We find an adequate explanation of the hallucinations in her long illnesses, her severe fastings, her cruel vigils. She would have been more than human had she escaped such experiences.

Her biographer points out the part which these hallucinations played in her life-work. "It was her visions and revelations which first gained for her that character for sanctity, without which it would have been impossible for her even to dream of undertaking the work which was to be the idea and dominating reason of her life. She might have practised forever, swallowed up in the shadow of the Encarnacion, all the heroic virtues of the Christian, and no one a whit the wiser that a rare flower had blossomed in and spread its fragrance through those sunlit cloisters." She herself was at one time tormented with a dread that her visions were of the devil, and at another time radiantly confident that their origin was divine. They varied according to her moods. Sometimes it was Christ with his wounds and his cross who stood before her; in brighter hours she saw him in all the glory of his resurrection. Her descriptions of her conflicts with demons furnish terrible proof of the nervous strain of this period. A little black imp rains a storm of blows on her body, her head, and her arms for five hours, leaving her exhausted and sore as though she had been beaten. Invisible hands try to strangle her in the choir, and when holy water is sprinkled on the spot she sees a great multitude of demons rush away. In Teresa's descriptions of these conflicts, Mrs. Graham discerns a grosser and more material note which is unworthy of her. We can at least discern a storm-tossed soul struggling against the powers of evil in fetters forged by her own criminal abuse of every law of health — whether mental or physical.

It was about this time that Teresa met Pedro de Alcántara, a Franciscan friar, who had founded or reformed forty monasteries in his native province of Estremadura. The old man was no stranger to such conflicts as Teresa's. When she told her story, he bade her take courage. "Go on, daughter, for you are on the right road — we all wear the same livery." It is probable that she conceived the notion of founding convents herself from Alcántara's experiences.

Teresa had now found a champion in the greatest saint of his age and order. Her friends ceased their opposition. Henceforth she was free to work out her destiny. Teresa undertook her first foundation in the same year that she met with Alcántara. One night a few nuns — her relatives and intimate friends — met in her cell. They bewailed the difficulties placed in the way of true contemplation in a convent so overcrowded and so worldly as that of the Encarnacion. One of Teresa's nieces, a thoughtless girl, conspicuous as yet only for her love of the world and its gaieties, broke forth with a practical suggestion, "Well, let us who are here, betake us to a different and more silent way of life, like hermits." The friends were thus led to discuss the probable cost of starting a little convent on stricter principles. The girl offered to give a thousand ducats of her dowry towards the work. There were many difficulties in the way, but at last the consent of the provincial of the order was gained and a site secured. Avila was soon convulsed with ridicule and abuse at the expense of Teresa and her chief helper. The Encarnacion was also stirred to its depths by this reflection on the purity of its life and discipline. The provincial yielded to the pressure and withdrew his consent to the foundation. Some of the nuns would have thrown Teresa into the dungeons. But opposition only brought

forth the nun's invincible resolution. She secured the warm support of Ibañez, of Santo Tomás, one of the most learned men in the Dominican Order. She disclosed to him the dangers of convent life as she saw it day by day. "Rather let fathers marry their daughters basely than allow them to face the dangers of ten worlds rolled into one, where youth, sensuality, and the devil invite them to follow things worldly of the worldly." Threats of the Inquisition led Teresa to lay bare her strange spiritual experiences to the friar, and at his suggestion, during the six months of suspense, she wrote that memorable autobiography which still shows us her inmost heart. It was not till the summer of 1561 that Teresa could take any practical steps to secure a convent. She persuaded her brother-in-law to come in from Alba and purchase the house as though for his own use. His wife joined him in August. From that time until Christmas Teresa was going to and fro between the Encarnacion and the house, which people regarded as her sister's, organizing, directing the workmen, and getting all things in readiness for her future convent. It was with the utmost difficulty that she found funds. In her sorest straits a sum of money came from her brother Lorenzo in Peru. A later age — "and never was there such a recrudescence of the grossest superstition as took place during the century immediately following Teresa's death" — magnified into a miracle an incident of this time. Her little nephew, who was found lying to all appearance stiff and dead, was said to have been restored by the saints. It needed all the glamour of the supernatural to carry Teresa safely over the difficulties of these initial months.

She had reached the crisis of her work, and was daily expecting the bulls for the foundation from Rome when she was ordered to start for Toledo in order to comfort a great lady of Castille who had just lost her husband. Her absence from Avila at this time seemed to threaten ruin to her scheme, yet she was compelled to go. In the beginning of January, 1562, she and her companion set out on this mission. She stayed in Toledo till June, winning the love and admiration of the widowed lady, and learning, through intercourse with another Carmelite nun, to make voluntary poverty the pivot of her reform.

On August 24, 1562, a little company of nine met at the Convent Chapel of San José to see its humble altar consecrated and its first four novices admitted. For the next six months Teresa found herself in open conflict with both the sisters of the Encarnacion and the people of Avila. She expected every hour to witness the destruction of her little foundation. "The tumult in the town was so great," she says, "that nothing else was talked of, and every one condemned me, and ran to and fro between the provincial and my monastery." The provincial and the nuns of the Encarnacion met to pass judgment on the culprit. Teresa, to quote her biographer, "characteristically simulated a compunction she was far from feeling, 'so that I should not seem to make little of what they said,'" but she was in reality as firm as a rock. The sisters accused her of seeking notoriety and public esteem, but when at last she spoke for herself they could find nothing to condemn. The provincial remained "exceedingly satisfied," and promised that when the tumult quieted down she should return to San José. It was long, however, before peace was restored. The city council discussed the matter for two days, and determined to make short work of the obnoxious convent, but when the officers appeared at San José threatening to break down the doors unless the sisters came forth, they found themselves hopeless against the quiet heroism of Teresa and her four novices. The proximity of the host to the entrance and the fact that the convent was under the bishop's protection alone prevented them from proceeding to extremities. Next day a great assembly consisting of the Council, the Cathedral Chapter, and representatives from the various religious orders, met

to consult how they might uproot the little convent. The corregidor argued that the town was so thickly studded with religious houses that it could bear no more, but a blacked-robed Dominican espoused Teresa's cause and managed, though he could not answer the arguments, to cover those who advanced them with ridicule. It was resolved to let the civil authorities proceed against Teresa because she had not secured their consent as the law of the kingdom required. It was not till two years had passed that the suit was dropped and Teresa allowed to take her course. Never during the course of that long struggle was she betrayed into any bitterness. Her sweetness and courtesy had indeed no small share in securing the victory. At last she and two companions were allowed to leave the Encarnacion to train the four novices in San José.

Teresa's little sisterhood rose at six and spent in prayer two hours in summer and three in winter. Then came mass. If there was anything in the cupboard, the bell called them to the refectory at ten in summer and eleven in winter. When they were not reduced to dry bread a little coarse fish or cheese was allowed. An hour of pleasant recreation followed, then came the afternoon siesta, or pious meditation in the cells. All particular friendships were forbidden. No sister was allowed to embrace another or touch her hands or face. At two came vespers followed by an hour's reading. Complines were said at six in summer and at five in winter. At eight the bell rang for silence. The monastic day was over at eleven. Personal property was prohibited. A black serge habit reached to the feet, the coifs and sheets were of coarsest flax, the tunics were of woollen serge, and they had hemp-soled sandals. They wore no shoes and were therefore known as the Discalced Carmelites. The house was governed by a prioress who was taught that "she who would be obeyed must make herself loved." Teresa frowned on learning, and was more than once roused to ire by inopportune displays of erudition from Maria de Salázar, her most capable prioress. "Ignorance," she said, "was the most fitting for saints." "She was no lover of Bibles or those who read them," says Mrs. Graham, "and once told a would-be novice at Toledo who brought a copy of the Scriptures to the convent, 'Away with you, wench, and your Bible!'" She actually wished her sisters to be proud of appearing ignorant. Her passion for cleanliness was one of her chief virtues; and it is pleasant to know that the nuns never fared so well as when Teresa took her turn as cook in the kitchen. She composed many simple verses to celebrate the profession of her nuns.

He will give rich jewels,
This Spouse-King of heaven;
Tender comfort, too, that none can rob,
And humble spirit, greatest prize of all.
Such can this king bestow,
Who to wed with you comes down to-day.

It was not long before the simple sisterhood won their way to the hearts of the good citizens of Avila. One or two notable accessions were gained to their number. The town became thankful to catch a little of the glory of the saint. On the great anniversaries of the order, especially on Bartholomew's day, the governor, Cathedral Chapter, and municipal authorities of Avila went in solemn procession to San José to hear four novices play in concert on the drum, the pipes and cymbals, which link these days of honor to those bitter days of civil and ecclesiastical opposition when the little convent was in its infancy.

Teresa now spent the five happiest years of her life in seclusion at San José, her "little corner-stone of angels." Here she wrote her "Camino de Perfeccion," which in its caustic irony, its penetrating knowledge of human character, and its tender sympathy for all spiritual difficulties, is her greatest work. In 1566, Ravena, the new general of the Carmelites, received Teresa back into the order. He refused to sanction any extension of the reform to friars, but gave Teresa authority to found new convents in any

part of Castille. She fixed on Medina del Campo, then the most important commercial centre in Spain, for her next move. Julian de Avila, a young priest who had long been her faithful henchman, was intrusted with the preliminary arrangements. On August 13, 1567, Teresa herself set out for Medina. There were many obstacles to surmount, but at last the little sisterhood was safely in possession. Alms poured in, and she who had left Avila with a few small coins in her pocket, was not only able to purchase a house and endow a chaplain, but also to spend on it many thousands of ducats.

Teresa's life and influence were now broadening out. We trace her from city to city founding her little communities. The general of the order had at length granted permission for the extension of the reform to friars, so that she was "laden with patents and good desires," though she had no material resources behind her for this work. Her patience and her ingenuity in the end triumphed over every obstacle. Her own life was the best illustration of her constitutions. She swept and scrubbed in the convent at Medina, secretly made the beds of the sisters, and swept and washed their cells. She met the laughing attempts of the nuns to snatch away broom or duster with the words, "Daughters, do not cause me to be idle in the house of the Lord." The greatest nobles were anxious to become patrons of one of Teresa's convents. After two months at Medina she set out to found a third nunnery at Malagon, a savage little fortress between Andalucia and New Castille. The whole population turned out to do her homage. The days were passed when she had to plant her convents in secrecy. The following February (1566), amid universal rejoicing, she brought her fourth foundation to a successful issue in the stately city of Valladolid.

In the mean time the first reformed Carmelite monastery had been founded at Duruelo by Juan de la Cruz, of the great heart and little body, the most famous of her friars, whose name is indissolubly linked with her own. In May, 1569, a settlement was made in Toledo, where the sisters were for a time sunk in lowest destitution. They reserved their one blanket for Teresa, and shivered with cold on their straw pallets. When Teresa, who felt the cold keenly, begged for more clothing, the nuns told her laughingly that she had all there was in the house — namely, their capes. They had a merry laugh together over their discomforts. The day that they started their nunnery they had only a sardine or two, which they must have eaten raw had not some good woman been moved to put a bundle of sticks in the church. A messenger arrived at this juncture from the Princess of Eboli, one of the greatest ladies in the kingdom, asking Teresa to come at once and found a house in Pastrana. It was very hard for her to leave her little sisterhood to struggle alone at Toledo. At first she refused to go, but finally consented, and was soon on her way to Madrid. At Pastrana she had to face many troubles, for the flighty princess wished Teresa to modify her rule. The prince himself brought his wife to reason, and in July, 1569, Teresa had the pleasure of seeing both a convent and a monastery founded in Pastrana. As soon as possible she hastened back to Toledo, which became her headquarters for the next four or five years. She offended the aristocrats, who regarded monastic foundations as their exclusive right, by accepting the endowment offered by a humble merchant, so that the way was rough at first, but as usual her good temper and tact smoothed over all difficulties.

In the summer of 1570 Teresa was appointed prioress of her old convent — the Encarnacion. The place was on the verge of ruin. The nuns had actually obtained permission to return to their friends in order to escape starvation. Only one woman could rescue the convent, and that was the nun who, ten years before, had been denounced and reviled by the whole sisterhood. Teresa was very unwilling to take this burden on herself, but one

day she had a vision. The Lord said: "Oh, daughter, daughter! my sisters are they of the Encarnacion, and yet thou hesitatest. If so, take courage; behold this is my will, and that is not so difficult as it seems to thee, and where thou thinkest that thy own foundations shall lose, both they and it shall gain."

The appointment had been forced on both Teresa and the convent by the visitor and the Carmelite Chapter. The nuns rose up in arms against one whose rule they dreaded, and prepared, with the help of some gentlemen of Avila, to resist her entrance by main force. The wildest uproar broke out when the provincial read the patent of her election in the choir. "Many rose up and defied the patents, vomiting forth accusations and insults against Teresa. The minority seized the cross and formed in procession to receive her, whilst two monks effected her entrance by sheer force. Then arose unholy babel, a shrieking of women's tongues, a frenzied excitement, which it is hard to imagine as having taken place within the tranquil walls of the Encarnacion. Some chanted the *Te Deum;* others breathed maledictions against their prioress and him who sent her there. The provincial, beside himself with rage, stood in the midst of a pandemonium he could neither restrain nor control, surrounded by fainting, hysterical, excited women." Teresa had remained kneeling before the altar. She now came to the rescue and calmed the angry crowd. But the battle was not yet won. The sisters resolved to defy her orders. When Teresa held her first chapter, however, she made an address which silenced these haughty and intractable nuns. The most refractory brought her the keys of the convent and begged her to distribute the offices of trust as she saw fit. The temporal affairs of the convent began to improve under her administration, though it was hard enough to keep the wolf from the door. How the strain told on her feeble frame we learn from her own words: "This house of the Encarnacion is seen notably to make my health suffer; please God I may gain somewhat by it." She was worn out by attacks of fever, which left her about two in the morning only to make way for fits of ague. Yet amid all her duties in Avila she kept up a constant correspondence with her scattered sisterhoods, advising and directing them according to their need.

In July, 1573, Teresa was set free from her heavy load, after two years of ceaseless anxiety. She set out for Salamanca, where her presence was urgently needed by the sisterhood. They had lived for three years in a ruinous place, before which ran an open sewer that made it damp, cold, and unhealthy. A house was in the market, but no one durst venture on its purchase till Teresa arrived. With characteristic courage she lost no time in concluding the bargain, though she and her nuns found the blustering knight from whom they bought the place a sad thorn in their sides.

She was soon on her way to Segovia to found another convent. She arrived there without a farthing, but in a few months bought a house for forty-six hundred ducats and fitted it out for the sisterhood. Titled and wealthy novices were eager to lay their wealth on the altar. In Medina one lady brought eight thousand ducats, in Toledo another's dowry was nine thousand. Teresa was largely blessed with worldly wisdom. She kept a keen eye on virtue, but was not less keen as to the dower. When she found, however, that the admission of women of high rank relaxed discipline, she did not hesitate to say that she would admit no more.

At the age of sixty she first carried the reform beyond her own province into the heart of Andalucia. It was midwinter when the covered cart in which she rode crept over the snowy plateaux towards Veas. There she found a welcome more gay and joyous than any she had received before. The ground was strewn with flowers and sweet-smelling rushes, every window gay with silks and velvet. At

Veas Teresa first met Gracian, the most lovable and human of all her friars, who was to become almost a son to the foundress in her last years. The Discalced Friars had now begun to make a stir in the world. They had founded nine monasteries during the last four years besides a college for Carmelite novices. Men of worth were gradually deserting the old order to join Teresa's friars. The Descalzos resorted to every kind of trickery to circumvent the sullen and powerful Carmelites. Events favored them. The Carmelites secured the pope's intervention on their behalf, but Philip II. and his advisers, who resented papal interference in the religious affairs of Spain, managed to nullify the pope's decree, and the Descalzos held on their way.

Bright days came for Teresa when her two brothers, Lorenzo and Pedro, arrived home from the Indies. Lorenzo's little daughter Teresita became an inmate of the convent, clad in a diminutive Carmelite habit. She "seems," says her aunt, "the sprite of the house, and they are all charmed with her; and she has a temper like an angel, and amuses us in recreation hours with her stories of Indians and the sea, much better than I could tell them." Lorenzo was well-to-do, and came to his sister's rescue when she was much troubled about her foundation in Seville. It is abundantly manifest from this part of her history that the cloister had not dulled Teresa's warm family affection. Her brother's return was the greatest earthly solace of the closing years of her life.

The Chapter of Plasencia, which met in May, 1575, decreed the utter extirpation of the Descalzos. Whilst Teresa was journeying to Seville a mandate was on its way to Spain ordering her to retire to a Castilian convent. She and her nuns were also denounced to the Inquisition. Gracian was startled one day when he arrived at the convent in Seville to find the street full of the mules and horses of the Inquisitors. The priest who had denounced them was lurking round the corner to feast his eyes on the sight of the nuns being haled to the dungeon. But the Inquisitors found nothing to condemn. Teresa went quietly on her way. She longed to escape from the hurly-burly of reforms. She was conscious of a great mission. "My life is short," she wrote to a friend, "I would like to have many. To-morrow is New Year's eve." Whilst the fight with the unreformed Carmelites was still raging, Teresa was greatly troubled about her convents at Malagon and Seville, which were over head and ears in debt. The only hope of escape was through well-dowered novices, and these were now hard to get. Discord and unrest were far from favorable to the growth of the reform. Teresa discusses the merit of various candidates. One has a blemish, but is not to be dismissed if her friends will pay her dowry of four hundred ducats at once; another is wealthy, but her dower cannot be counted on till her father's death; a third is undowered, but perhaps God would help them if she were received for his sake. "Money down" is the saint's maxim in every case. Her shrewdness and keen eye to the means of living form an odd complement to Teresa's sanctity; but she could never have accomplished her work without such mundane gifts. Mrs. Graham says, "it is precisely this accentuated capacity for business — this rapid and sharp insight into terrene affairs, this *âpreté* for money, this acute eye for the ducats — not for herself, but for her convents — that charms me most, and furnishes the clearest proof of her greatness."

The struggle with the Carmelites went on through the years 1577 and 1578. Teresa urged the friars to appeal in person to the pope, but none of them was equal to the task of guiding the ship amid the storm. She herself wrote to Philip II. and thus warded off one crisis. For more than two years Teresa hourly expected that the death-blow would be struck to her life-work by the subjection of her convents and monasteries to the Carmelites. In 1579 things grew brighter. Two dele-

gates were sent to Rome, and after a year of stubborn opposition from their rivals they won the day. On June 22, 1580, Pope Gregory XIII. erected the Discalced Carmelites into a separate province. They were now free from their old enemies. Teresa's work was set on a sure basis. She had kept toiling on during the dark years of conflict, and when things grew brighter she was able to found two or three more convents. Brighter days were coming. Her journey to La Roda in the early part of 1580 was a triumphal progress. The little procession set out three hours before daybreak to avoid the crowds, but it was of no avail. The people of every town and village on the route poured out to meet her. One rich farmer decked his house, prepared a feast, and gathered his flocks and herds as well as his children to receive the saint's blessing. Teresa could not stay, so he brought all his household into the road to receive her benediction.

In March, 1581, the Chapter at Alcalà de Henares separated the Descalzos forever from the Carmelites. Next year Teresa established her last foundation at Burgos. In December she was hastily summoned from Medina to Alba where the young duchess longed for the old saint's prayers in her approaching confinement. Teresa arrived worn out with sickness and with hunger for she had sorely lacked food on the way. As she was assisted to bed she said, "Oh! God help me, daughters, and how tired I feel; it is more than twenty years since I went to bed so early; blessed be God that I have fallen ill amongst you." Next morning she rose, and for eight days busied herself with the work of the convent. Then her strength failed utterly and finally. During the last illness the words oftenest on her lips were "Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus non despicies." At nine o'clock at night on October 4, 1582, "her face suddenly became illumined with a great light and splendor, beautiful and radiant as the sun, and in a last aspiration of supreme love, so peacefully and imperceptibly, that it seemed to those around her that she was still in prayer, her soul took flight." She was buried in Alba where a mass of bricks and stones were placed on the coffin-lid to preserve it from being stolen. Nine months after her death the coffin was opened and the left hand was cut off and taken to Avila in a locked casket. In November, 1585, the body itself was moved there, but a papal brief was obtained which secured its return to Alba.

Teresa's beatification was decreed by Paul V. in 1614, and on May 16, 1622, she was publicly canonized. Great effort was made to secure her recognition as the patron saint of Spain, but Santiago proved too strong to be thus deposed. But if Saint James still holds his primacy Teresa is really the national saint of Spain, whose life forms an epitome of all that is best in the Spanish character, and suggests all that is brightest in the national religion. She was forty-one before she was crucified to the world. We have seen how sore sickness and disillusionment contributed to that end. Her reputation was built up on visions and revelations over which those who are jealous for Teresa's fame do well to pass lightly. Her scheming to win the support of the Jesuits, her bargaining about the dowries of her novices, her whole bearing in the critical moments of her life furnish a strange commentary on her claims to sanctity. But when every deduction is made Teresa still remains a woman, worthy for her invincible resolve, her shrewd good sense, her masterly conduct of a forlorn hope, to stand by the side of Loyola. If monastic life were right at all Teresa's effort to purge the Augean stable is deserving of all honor. We whose lot is cast in happier times may regret that she did not become the champion of domestic purity and home piety rather than the reformer of the monastery. Few women in history would have made a nobler champion for such a cause. She had a warm heart which it took forty years to crush into monastic fetters, and even to the

end her love for her brother and his little daughter and her warm and motherly affection for her friar Gracian reveal to us the true woman's heart beneath the coarse serge habit. It is Teresa the woman rather than Teresa the saint that makes this new biography a worthy introduction to one of the most fascinating figures of ecclesiastical history.