
DOMINICANA

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RETROSPECT

By BRO. WALTER FARRELL, O. P.



WITH this issue *Dominicana* celebrates its tenth anniversary. It was in the early part of 1916 that the plans for the issuance of *Dominicana* were completed, its constitution drawn and the first number given to the public. It is in this first constitution that we find the *raison d'être* of *Dominicana*, the ideal its founders had in mind and the sources they depended upon for success.

"Recognizing the fact that journalism has become an important factor in the propagation of Christian truth, and inspired by the traditions of an Order ever zealous for the written word, whose members not infrequently immortalized their names in the pages of Catholic literature, the Novices of the Dominican House of Studies, District of Columbia, urged on by the wishes of their Reverend Superiors, in order to fit themselves for this particular and important branch of apostolic labor, have decided to issue a *Quarterly Review*."

"In doing so, however, they are well aware how futile would be even their best efforts if not aided by the all powerful force of prayer; accordingly before attempting to lay even the foundation stones of this new enterprise, they humbly dedicate their labors to JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH and DOMINIC, beseeching at the same time the aid and protection of these heavenly patrons."

Dominicana was to succeed the Dominican Year Book, for many years published by the Fathers of the Province, and was to be a means of perfecting the future writers of the Dominican Order in the United States. In order to spur these men on to their best efforts from the very first and to give the faithful the benefit of their studies and untiring efforts, their work was to be presented in the form of a *Review*. The main topics of this

magazine were to be taken from Catholic Philosophy, Theology and the history of the Order, together with articles on the arts, sciences and so on. Perhaps we do not fully appreciate the courage required to launch this new venture, but a little consideration will soon teach us that the dedication and petition for assistance given above were more than the spontaneous outburst of humility; they were the fruit of a real necessity. The difficulties to be overcome and dangers to be avoided were innumerable, and, since the magazine was to appear as an official organ of the Dominican Order in this country, it was not a case of learning by mistakes; mistakes were simply a luxury that had to be foresworn.

From the very nature of the case there were enough dangers to discourage the most optimistic. For instance the dangers to such a publication arising from the studies its contributors were at the time pursuing. The articles published were to be written by students of Thomistic philosophy and theology and these subjects were taught in accordance with the strict scholastic principles and methods. Of course this would make them capable of writing on philosophical and theological subjects but it also made it difficult to avoid the profundity and academic tone with which they were so constantly in contact. It is necessary to be precise and absolutely correct in exposing doctrine; but it is no less necessary to expose it in language that can be understood by the ordinary faithful and in a way that will assure its being read. To ask a student to discourse on the theses of the master while he is still sitting at the master's feet and at the same time expect him to transform these theses from the brief scientific form the master has given them, to the simple, lucid and pleasing style that is a necessary requirement to being understood by those outside the school, is to assign no easy task.

Then there was the danger arising from the youthfulness and inexperience of the men who were putting out this new magazine. It was destined not only for the faithful but also for practically every convent of Dominican nuns in the country, for the clergy of all sections, for all Dominican priories and for the house of every bishop in the United States; it was also to reach widely separated centers of learning as Rome, Louvain, London and Jerusalem. Again it was expecting, no demanding, a great deal from youth and inexperience to ask it to present to such

subscribers material that would not only not depend on their charity for a good reception, but that would interest them, be of solid use and benefit to them, provoke them to thoughtful consideration.

There was still another danger from the novelty of the plan. From what we have just said the reason for the unique position of *Dominicana* is quite evident. But being alone in its field, it had no examples to copy from, no precursor from whose mistakes it could learn. If it was to exist it must be entirely original; if it succeeded it could take the praise to itself, but if it failed the blame could not be shifted to someone else. It was because of all this that the original staff of *Dominicana* could advance so confidently only in the trust in their heavenly patrons. And that trust has surely been rewarded.

Dominicana has acquired a goodly measure of success. It has overcome to a great extent the obstacles that confronted it. It is not, indeed, perfect; if it were it would soon lose a great deal of its vitality, the vitality of growth and development. It has been growing and improving during these past ten years and it is our hope and constant endeavor to see it improve still more from year to year. Yet even during this adolescent period it has merited an ever growing popularity with the faithful and unqualified praise from some of the brightest lights of the American Hierarchy.

We would be but telling half the story if we were to omit the part played in *Dominicana's* history by our Superiors. It was due to the insistence and constant help of our Provincial, Very Rev. Father Meagher, that *Dominicana* was brought into being and enabled to carry on during the "lean years." It was through the constant cooperation of Father Novice-Master and the other censors of the magazine that many of the dangers arising from inexperience and the nature of our studies were avoided; that discouragements were overcome; that the individual improvement of writers was made possible. Perhaps it is because *Dominicana* realises the obligations it is under to the Superiors that makes it welcome so heartily commendation from them. For instance a chance remark, entirely unsolicited, in a recent business letter of the Vicar-Provincial, Father M. J. Ripple, assuring the workers of *Dominicana* of the success attained in the eyes of their Superiors, was looked upon as the highest reward that could be given. He says: "The *Dominicana* presents every

evidence that the wishes of the Provincial that it serve to develop the literary capabilities of our coming priests, are being fulfilled and the results are very gratifying. I am sure that I am reflecting his sentiments when I say that it is a great pleasure to encourage the efforts of the Novices in this direction."

It is not without reason that *Dominicana* rejoices and asks its friends to rejoice on its tenth anniversary. It is giving every evidence of attaining its primary object of developing writers; while as a magazine it has won a degree of success that its founders would have been rash to hope for. But the strongest motive for rejoicing is not the past or the present, but the future. The pioneer work is now practically completed; a solidly established magazine awaits the labors of the novices of the coming years. The classes to whose care the *Dominicana* will be entrusted in the future are greater in number than any that have preceded them, and no doubt are generously gifted with the genius required to lift Dominicans to a still higher plane.

The Magdalen

By BRO. AUGUSTINE ROBERTS, O. P.

A rose of rarest worth, and pearly white,
Danced revel 'mid the maddened gales of night,
Nor grieved but gloried as the star of morn
Beheld her of her precious lustre shorn.

The tender hearted Gardener came. One look,—
Then trembling 'neath those saddened, loving eyes
The earth-smirched flower with guilt all fearing shook,
And culled through love the power to realize.

The Gardener only smiled in knowing love.
No word.—A single glance to heaven above,
And lo! O'er her in sorrow lowly bent,
Soft falls a tear, the raindrop's sacrament.