

DOMINICANS AND THE PERPETUAL ROSARY

THE year 1916 gave an occasion for double rejoicing among the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary in America. As members of the noble family of St. Dominic they happily united their prayers of joy and thanksgiving with all Dominicans in celebrating, on December 22, the seventh centenary of the approbation of the Dominican Order by Pope Honorius III. This same date also marked the Silver Jubilee of their own foundation in America.

Twenty-five years ago, the first four members of this Sisterhood arrived at West Hoboken, New Jersey, from their mother house in Calais, France. Here they were met by their Reverend Founder and Director, Father D. M. Saintourens, O. P., who had preceded them to America for the purpose of securing a place in which they might commence their activities. Father Saintourens found a warm welcome at the hands of the late Bishop of Newark, the Right Rev. W. Wigger, who unhesitatingly gave his consent for the founding of this new community of nuns in his diocese. At once, the Reverend founder rented a small house in West Hoboken, and with scanty funds in his possession had to furnish, far too inadequately, this first abode for his faithful daughters from France. From this humble beginning, where frequently poverty caused them many hardships and privations, this little band of devoted daughters of St. Dominic courageously set out to establish firmly the daily Perpetual Rosary in the United States.

Being few in number they had to endure not a little hardship to carry out each day in a partial manner at least their duty of keeping before the tabernacle the Guard of Honor to the Immaculate Mother of God. Neverthe-

less, their many acts of self-denial and mortification soon enlisted many supporters in their strange environment. As thousands of American Catholics had previously been enrolled in the Association of the Perpetual Rosary, and as numberless families had cultivated the beautiful devotion of reciting Mary's beads every evening before retiring, the Sisters soon found many earnest benefactors among these loyal children of the Rosary. Spiritually as well as materially, progress manifested itself in a pronounced way, for in a few years the number of postulants was so numerous that it became necessary to seek more spacious quarters. Ground was purchased in the same vicinity, near the monastery of the Passionists, upon which a large house and chapel were built. As time went on this community steadily increased, until now its numbers are considerable.

The opportunity of branching out presented itself in 1900, and Rev. Mother M. Catherine of Siena with five Sisters, accompanied by their Rev. Father Director, journeyed to Camden, New Jersey, where on December 5th, they commenced their second community in America. For several years conditions here were very trying to the Sisters, due to the many trials and inconveniences that their extreme poverty forced upon them. The poverty of the community was appalling. Several times they were entirely without food. On one of these occasions, after Matins, Rev. Mother went to the kitchen hoping to find at least sufficient food for the following morning but there was nothing. Suddenly the door bell rang, and wondering what it could mean at so late an hour, Rev. Mother went to the door where there was an unknown man who left a large basket of provisions sufficient for a week. On

being asked his name the good benefactor would not answer but went away. Firmly convinced that St. Joseph had come to their assistance, Rev. Mother and the Sisters offered fervent Hours of Guard during the night in thanksgiving.

When the admirable manner of life of these daughters of St. Dominic became better known among their neighbors, many acts of kindness were shown them in the way of small donations and the purchases of needlework and the like. So then with the help of willing friends, together with a goodly sum of money presented by a member of the Perpetual Rosary Association a small strip of ground was purchased just within the city limits in 1901, upon which was erected a chapel and a convent. However, the applicants for admission to the novitiate grew so numerous that a more adequate building was soon required. Full of zeal to increase devotion towards the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, and moved by a deep spirit of self-denial, these earnest devotees of Mary in 1902 commenced the construction of the present imposing monastery which was completed in 1905.

The remarkable progress of the work in so short a period speaks volumes of the Immaculate Mother's love for all engaged in propagating the perpetual Rosary. At various times the Reverend Mother of this community found it necessary to acquire more land contiguous to their own property, until today it covers over thirteen acres. Although this monastery at first seemed very commodious and amply large enough for many years to come, it is at the present time far too small to accommodate the forty-five members of the community. Thus have the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary established themselves in America perpetuating the Guard of Honor to the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

And in this year of jubilee they can heartily rejoice in the knowledge that their labors have been blessed with untold success, since they now number seven flourishing foundations in our land.

A few words about the origin and principal duties of the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary may be a source of enlightenment to a great many readers. This new branch of the Dominican family is the outgrowth of an idea conceived by Rev. Father Petroni, a Dominican Father of the Province of Italy, who wished to establish a perpetual worship in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This pious son of St. Dominic, filled with a burning love for the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, gathered together in the year 1634 a large number of associates, to each of whom he assigned one hour in the year for the recitation of the fifteen decades of the beads. In this manner Father Petroni hoped to bring about a perpetual worship to the Immaculate Mother of God, analogous to the Perpetual Adoration of her Divine Son. From its very inception this salutary movement met with the greatest success, and in subsequent years numbered over a million members throughout the entire world.

Naturally enough, as time went on numerous associates professed themselves willing to have more frequent hours of guard with the Mother of God take place. The first step in the reorganization of the Perpetual Rosary devotion was undertaken by a Dominican of the Province of Lyons, Rev. Father Mary Augustine, who in the year 1858, laid down the requirement that the Hour of Guard should be kept by the members once every month instead of once a year.

Later on, it was often doubted whether the laity, occupied with business, social engagements and home life

faithfully kept their Hour of Guard. Eager to remove this doubt the present Reverend Director in America, Father Damien M. Saintourens, assiduously labored to formulate a more perfect organization. Recognizing that the most indefatigable workers in the association to be found amongst the young ladies, Father Saintourens proposed to organize communities of cloistered nuns of the Third Order of St. Dominic, following the contemplative and apostolic life. Their principal duty would be to recite the fifteen decades of the Rosary every hour of the day in their chapel, thus making absolutely certain the perpetual worship of the Immaculate Mother of God. Furthermore, they were bound to the choral duty of reciting the Divine Office. In connection with this highly contemplative part of their life, they were to act as the propagators of the Perpetual Rosary among their relatives, friends and acquaintances.

This unique plan was sanctioned by the authorities at Rome, and the first

foundation was made at Calais, France, on the 20th of May, 1880, by Father Saintourens, assisted by Very Rev. Mother M. of the Angels, of Calais, and Very Rev. Mother M. Rose of Manleon, France. Only a short time elapsed, however, before this community had to remove to Belgium on account of the expulsion of the religious in France. The Catholics of Belgium, ever devoted to the Rosary, showed keen interest in the Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary, assisting them to become solidly formed into a permanent society. Since that time two other foundations in Belgium have been made. Surely, then, has this religious form to the Perpetual Rosary Association proved its true worth inasmuch as it gives positive assurance of Mary's continuous worship. Every member throughout the entire world shares equally in the uninterrupted prayers offered up hourly by these self-sacrificing daughters of St. Dominic to the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

—Charles Kelly, O. P.

IMMANUEL KANT

TO the uninitiated the study of philosophy is something ethereal; something to be indulged in only by those minds for which the intangible affords a particular attraction. And especially is this true of speculative philosophy, in a mundane age when the structure and inclination of society tend toward hard and practical thinking. Yet when we see how the most speculative of philosophers, succeeds in stamping with his thought nearly all the public opinion, not only of his contemporaries, but also all subsequent non-Catholic philosophic systems down to the present day, it is

only reasonable to suppose that the intellectual world is interested in his personal history. Now this is the case with Kant. Now a discourse like the present one will not even permit an analysis of the most fundamental doctrines of the great philosopher. Besides, the works of Kant are not regarded with the same interest which has gathered about his name. This may be attributed to two causes; first, as has been mentioned, the unpopularity of all speculative philosophy in our day; and secondly, the language in which his works are written. For it is undeniable that everything yet pub-