

with unparalleled steadfastness. And to the question what great events, what heavenly favours, what miracles, prophecies, visions during her life account for this extraordinary popularity, the answer is, her silence, her obscurity, her very inexistence. She lived hidden, unknown except to a few friends and relatives, and to her dying day her apostleship remained a secret within the walls of a convent. That is the greatest, the clearest, and the most overpowering of her miracles, or of the miracles done on her behalf. There is no purely natural explanation to be found for the acclamation which she received. Moreover, no such explanation would suffice; not even, in my opinion, the Story of a Soul, that record of her confidences which was translated into almost every language the day after her death.

I don't want to underestimate its value or importance or influence but, whatever energy was expended in making it known, whatever appeal it has made to souls, whatever its material success throughout the Christian world, could this humble little book, in outward appearance so like innumerable other "pious books," have had the power to raise such a tide of fervour and enthusiasm, to set a match to so many tares, or rather mines going off all at once in every quarter of the inhabited globe, unless God had a hand in it? The first and sufficient cause of the popularity of this child was that God himself slipped a rare grace between the pages of her book, like a pressed flower that has not lost its fragrance, a grace immediately efficacious and capable by its very presence of opening hearts to her teaching. But, if it is a matter of grace, is it not simpler to suppose that God acts directly on the featureless crowds of those who must be led, enlightened, and directed? Perhaps it was decided in the counsels of the Almighty Wisdom that not only should no lesson from the pen of Sister Teresa be wanting in its effect but also, and above all, that her sufferings, sacrifices, and prayers, the treasury of love and expiation of her short life, should all of them be poured out again, and poured out at once, over this needy world. Persecution was rife, war was coming on with giant strides. We were threatened with terrible trials for soul and body, and hungered and thirsted after these graces.

A girl dies when she is twenty-four years old at a small Carmel in the heart of Normandy—a province not noted for its mysticism. The people there live well and drink better. Trouville is a couple of yards away, and Deauville just beyond, where the prince of this world is in charge and has already become dramseller on a large scale to the peasants as well. The body of Sister Teresa was taken to the municipal cemetery, accompanied by a few friends; nobody else took any notice. The grave was scarcely filled in when the fragrance of her goodness found its way out; everybody began to talk about her, first in one province, then in another, in France and all over Europe, in the Old World and in the New; her name was on the lips of believers and infidels, those who could still say the name of Christ and those who had forgotten it. Why should she have been chosen when there were so many others who had died about that time whose virtues had been demonstrated concretely and in public, servants of the poor, missionaries, apostles, martyrs, godly men and women of all kinds? "Teresa! Sister Teresa!" It was all Teresa. But what had she done for us during her life? Anything we could see? Anything we could touch? Nothing. Or nothing that we knew, anyway. And yet everybody was calling to her. It was enough that she had said, "I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth." That saying was snatched up repeated, broadcast. But could it be believed? It was

devotion to the "little saint" (the abuse of this diminutive drove me frantic) had successfully hidden from me the greatness and perhaps originality that was surely hers. There were too many roses, too many flowers of all sorts. I could see nothing but roses; a few thorns underneath them, of course, but then any saint without thorns is an impossibility. I revered her in her statue—from afar.

However, her miracles made me think a bit. I knew sick bodies that she had cured, souls that she had changed, scholars who knelt at her feet, persons of high spirituality, used to the heights of St. John of the Cross and the first Teresa, who nourished themselves on her words; I saw that she was the refuge of very dear friends who came to Christ only through her or lived in Him better by her. It required a strong effort for me to try again. I went at last to Lisieux, the Story of a Soul under my arm, resolved to see everything, to read everything, and to dare everything—even the chapel of her shrine.

I know that I am now going to upset many people, and I apologize in advance. But I must point out the stumbling-block that is the way of persons like myself; if I don't, they will not follow me and I shall have failed in my object. The others may be shocked by me, but their convictions about St. Teresa will remain unharmed. And that is what matters.

The chapel of the Carmel at Lisieux is at the end of a narrow courtyard and has a frozen look outside. On entering one strives hard to find some attraction in it. Were it plainer, it would not be half bad; there is a crushing excess of ornament, as useless as it is bad, yet this might be overlooked. But on turning to the right to venerate the holy relics, we are at once up against the masterpiece of hideousness and stupidity that has the high honour of sheltering them. The pseudo-renaissance cupola and its worthless stained-glass windows are the least of the absurdities. The shrine itself is showy, clumsy, quite without beauty: let that, too, pass. And I am not particularly offended by the brocade and velvet with which the recumbent image of the saint is dressed up in its gold and crystal cage. Certainly it would be preferable for this flesh-aping marble, polished, tinted, "idealized" beyond words, to be habited in woolen serge; but then in Italy and Spain the most obscure martyrs can be seen covered with jewels and glittering fabrics like stage princesses: they are in glory, so why not glorify them? What I cannot tolerate are the shrine's supernatural guardians, two gigantic angels and a child musician: they are carved so flabbily in a marble so white and soft that they seem to melt like sugar while you look at them; the child has a harp in one hand and a flower in the other, and with the flower it plays the harp. To complete the crime, the sculptor (doubtless an "eminent" one) has set out on the steps several things like marble—sugar in the form of scattered roses and—to crown the horror—from a dense oily cloud there rises a ponderous bronze cross. I will not dwell upon the decoration of the walls, pale blue "draperies" made of stucco and dripping with roses in relief. The uniform spirit of the repository, pretentiousness, jingling poeticalness, and pious adulation give a confusing unity to the whole thing. The Madonna by Bouchardon, a little affected but good, which hangs at the back and once smiled upon the saint, is hardly noticeable amid its expensive surroundings. And remember that this gilding will never be dulled, this stucco never fade, this marble never lose its shiny surface—for the lighting of candles is forbidden: bulbs of electric light have

of good taste alone: they can go to Chartres and some of them will come back converted. The crowds that descend on Lisieux and carry away its trash as well as its graces to the ends of the earth find themselves quite at home; everything there astonishes and delights them. The atmosphere of complete at-homeness invites their enthusiasm and confidence, till they are free, without knowing it, from the pretty—pretties that have led them on. As they pray they find the real Sister Teresa underneath the sugar roses and cheesy clouds, behind the platitudes and pet-names that take all the salt out of her most heroic story: Teresa, the ascetic of the wasted body and bruised heart and unbending will whose sacrifice was ceaseless, who lived on and died from a love that was all pain. That is what lay behind her smile; I have read the Story of a Soul again, and it is beyond question. Some jam must be mixed with the powder if the multitude is to take so bitter a medicine. She mixed a little herself. The convent of Lisieux has added more, perhaps too much; but doubtless they did well, since so many faithful souls have found the physic palatable.

I am speaking for the others, those who are sickened by the jam, deterred by the sham art, driven to flight by the rain of roses; and for their sakes I erase the garlands from the margins of the book of her unutterable confidences, take that distressing pastry stuff away from the walls of her chapel, reject the photographs that have been touched up, deliberately or involuntarily, to "give her a more suitable expression." I wish that I could go further and display in these pages nothing but her consumed and conquering soul—the equal in warmth and energy, if not in poetic genius, of that which made another Teresa the glory of Spain: its superior, if superior be the word, in firmness, even hardness—for to my judgement the first Teresa had a greater tenderness. But I cannot write only of her soul because, to make her comprehensible, she must be put back into her fleshly integument and shown in her own time and place, among those lower middle-class folk who provide the means by which she pleases them and whom, by a fair exchange, she recalls to their highest duties. To this I must resign myself, and my own origins are an advantage, for I resemble Sister Teresa of Lisieux in that I was born of the petite bourgeoisie, in a provincial town, and at about the same time. If I had never left that town perhaps I should have shared the taste in religious art of her family, her convent, her followers—in other words, her own. It might be better for me if I did.

2. A Spoilt Child

Approaching Alençon from the railway station by the rue Saint-Blaise there is to be seen on the right-hand side a fine sixteenth-century mansion with a courtyard in front; it was formerly the town house of the Guises and is now the residence of the chief administrative official. Opposite it on the other side of the street is a small house, also built of brick and stone but as modest as the other is grand; yet with a certain style about it. Its front is broken on the ground floor by a door and two windows, and on the upper storey by three nicely bowed French-windows opening on to an iron balcony. When too freshly painted the house looks like a new toy. A modern chapel, reminiscent in its false elegance of the one at Lisieux, fails to spoil the whole. It was here that Teresa was born.

Visitors are courteously welcomed by a charming old lady who lives in the house and looks after it with the greatest care. She is the widow of a Scots clergyman who received

earnestness, and to constant contact between town and country, the people of the western provinces of France have long been fortified against the propaganda of "new ideas." Under the July Monarchy and the Second Empire the Church took her bearings and regained almost all the ground that the Revolution had taken from her and which the Empire and the Restoration had tried to recover by politics rather than by conviction. In spite of the crimes of official dechristianization there can still be found in the French countryside not only isolated rocks of religious enthusiasm but also, as it were, great alluvial deposits, scarcely covered with sand, wherein the convictions of their forbears endure and only need a turn of the plowshare to bring them to light. The middle-class people of Alençon were practicing Catholics. At Corpus Christi they hung flags outside their houses, and officials regarded it as an honour to carry the canopy at the procession; the men went to the high Mass every Sunday and most of them fulfilled their obligations at Easter; there were few "freethinkers" among them. But Christians of the quality of the Martins were certainly rarer, and they were a cause of inverted scandal. The refrain is always the same: "They exaggerate"—there is nothing less bourgeois than exaggeration.

M. Martin's father came from Athis in the department of the Orne. He fought in Napoleon's wars and stopped on in the army after Waterloo, often changing his station. That is how the third of his children, Louis, came to be born at Bordeaux in 1824. When Captain Martin retired he settled down at Alençon, not far from his birthplace, because it was convenient for his children's education. He was as good a Christian as he was a soldier and never trifled about duty; everything had to be exact, and he would allow no deviation from rules. This piety which he passed on to Louis may well be called military, and with it went a soldierly bearing which his son never lost. Louis was a tall upstanding fellow, always looking straight before him; at twenty he was the handsomest young man in the place. But he was never a soldier. He went to some cousins at Rennes, and there he adopted Breton dress and became a clock-maker, perfecting himself under a friend of his father at Strasburg. This quiet and precise trade suited him well: it encouraged him to meditate on the shortness of life. He had a poetical turn of mind, and his childhood's habit of looking at everything from the angle of eternity led to a liking for high places, where he could feel nearer to God and worship him in his creation (he was especially fond of watching sunsets). Accordingly, when he was twenty, he set out for the Alps, travelling partly on foot and partly by stagecoach, half tourist and half pilgrim, till he came to the snow-clad solitude of the Austin Canons in their monastery on the Great St. Bernard. He did not know enough Latin to be accepted there; so, with his father's approval, he decided to take up serious studies. They were stopped by sickness. Then, disappointed but resigned to disappointment, he went back to clock-making, and after a short residence in Paris opened a small shop at Alençon. It was in the rue du Pont Neuf, a few yards from the river. The name Martin can still be seen on the signboard, surrounded by watches and clocks and rings and necklaces, for later he added a jewelry business to his trade. Here he lived a bachelor's life till he was thirty-five.

People did not know what to make of this monkish watchmaker. He was good-looking, with a full well-kept beard, reticent in manner, educated; he never went outside his shop without putting on a frock coat and bowler hat. As he went about the streets he did not look at women, even out of the corner of his eye, and seemed to think as little about

Josephs, who they had hoped would be missionaries, died in childhood. Of the surviving daughters, Mary Louisa, who by privilege of the firstborn was called simply Mary, was not quite fourteen when the youngest, Teresa, was born.

Zelie Guerin's practical aptitude was as keen as her faith, and her lacemaking business, which she had continued to carry on, became so prosperous that in 1870 her husband gave up his own shop in order to help her with the increasing work; as his father was dead there was nothing to keep him in the rue Pont Neuf. Meanwhile war had broken out and they underwent the miseries of the German invasion; had it not been checked, his age would not have prevented Louis from serving with the volunteers. His father-in-law also being dead, he inherited the house in the rue Saint-Blaise, and the family settled down there, where they lived for seven years. So we come back to the birthplace of the saint. I am reminded of the traditional account of the birth of our Lady from Joachim and Anne.

After the death of Mary Helen, when she was five and a half, Mme. Martin's sister, a Visitation nun at Le Mans, wrote to her with innocent simplicity: "I can't help thinking that you're privileged to give these chosen ones to Heaven, where they will be your joy and your crown. And one day your unfailing trust and faith will have a tremendous reward.... You may be sure that God will bless you, and the consolations that are now withheld will be the measure of your bliss. For if our good Lord is so pleased with you that he sends you the great saint that you have wanted so much to honour him with, won't you be well repaid?" Mgr. Laveille, one of the best writers about Teresa, compares these words with those that Mme. Martin herself wrote to her sister-in-law at Lisieux when she had suffered a similar bereavement: "When I have to close the eyes of my dear little children and follow their bodies to the grave of course I am utterly miserable, but my sorrow has always been resigned. And I don't regret the trouble and care that they have been to me. Everybody says, 'It would be much better if you'd never had them.' I can't bear much talk. It doesn't seem to me that pain and difficulties can be put into the balance against my children's eternal happiness."

That letter shows the quality of Zelie Martin's faith. It is alleged that she often received graces out of the ordinary, so sensitive was her spirit-foreknowledge, supernatural advice and enlightenment. And all the time she nursed her idea of giving a "great saint" to the world.

The two elder girls went to school at their aunt's convent in Le Mans. The third, Leonie, was delicate and a source of worry. Celine began to walk. Little Mary Melania died. There was no sign of the long-desired, perhaps promised, saint. Then in 1872 another pregnancy raised fresh hopes, and again a daughter came to fill the empty cradle. She was born on January 3, 1873, when Mary and Pauline were home for the new-year holiday. Their mother's suffering kept them awake, till at midnight M. Martin tapped at their door and told them that they had a baby sister.

Next day Mary Frances Teresa Martin was christened in the church of our Lady. It is the most beautiful church in Alencon, with a triple gothic porch, strong and delicate, a very garden of carved stone: this was her doorway into the world of grace. The font whereat

presents on her. Her collection of toys shows that in this respect she was certainly spoilt, and for a long time she fancied that everything was hers by right: she had only to say "I want it."

Teresa was eager, intelligent, headstrong, and almost unbelievably stubborn: when she had said "No" nothing could move her. Sometimes when her father wanted to hug her or her mother came to kiss her in bed she pretended not to know them: she wanted them to want her. She was a woman. She liked to have her arms bare because she looked prettier that way, and she would pose to herself before the mirror. The story of the penny gives an idea of her amour-propre. Her mother told her that if she would kiss the ground she should be given a penny. "No, thanks, mamma. I'd rather not have the penny," replied Teresa.

The importance of her childhood's exploits must not be exaggerated, although she has confided them to us; there was another side to them. She was not afraid to give trouble to her father and mother and to oppose them; that was in accordance with her high-spiritedness. The second stage was when her guardian angel moved her to self-reproach and shame and to beg pardon. Then she would cry for hours, and it was not easy to comfort her.

But there was one person whom she would on no account grieve when he came to her mind (and already she thought about him a lot): that was the child Jesus, who was very much alive for her. She lived partly in the mysterious world of supernatural reality familiar to her parents. Once when she was in the garden she saw, or thought she saw, near the summer-house, "two horrid little spirits on the rim of a lime barrel, dancing like mad although there were iron chains on their ankles." They looked at her "with blazing eyes" and dived inside the barrel as if they were frightened; then they took refuge in the linen-room. Seeing they were so nervous she looked in at the window to see what they were going to do. "The poor little demons were running about the tables not knowing where to hide from her eyes..." Was she calculating the strength of her innocence and did she suppose she could overcome the Evil One without coming to grips with him? She did not yet know the oppositions within her own nature and the weapons which these could lend to Satan. At four and a half years old this is not surprising.

The most disquieting feature of Teresa's early childhood, referred to above, can hardly be overemphasized; it characterizes her, it sums up her temperament, her possible destiny, her actual destiny. The watchful Satan pounced on it and began to hope.

Celine and she were playing with their dolls, when Leonie came up with hers, "laid in a basket full of dolls' clothes, nice bits of stuff, and other desirable things."

"'Here you are,' she said. 'Choose.'"

"Celine had a look and took a ball of braid. I considered for a minute and then, exclaiming 'I take the lot!' I snatched basket and doll and everything."

Mary Martin had given to each of her sisters a special sort of rosary that was used by the pupils at the Le Mans convent to keep count of their "good deeds." Each time they voluntarily did without something they wanted, or helped somebody in distress, or kept their temper in trying circumstances, one of the beads could be separated from the rest and added to the string of self-denial. Children are attracted by any devotional practice that is like a game and at the same time smacks of heroism, especially if, as in this example, there is an element of competition. So Teresa, whose pride could not bear to be beaten by Celine, entered on the path of self-denial; she found that on these terms there was a certain pleasure in being good. The asceticism of these two small girls urged them on to own up when they had done something wrong (or thought they had), to bear punishment without complaining, to refrain from justifying themselves at the expense of the real culprit when they were wrongly accused. They found all this exciting and thrilling, and it was not very difficult. The habit of self-sacrifice and going without became second nature, and they surrounded their virtue with a mysterious secrecy that increased its worth in their eyes.

One Sunday Teresa came back from a walk with a glorious bunch of wild flowers—and once she had got hold of anything she did not easily let go. And now her mother, quite unconscious of how much she was asking of the child, claimed the bouquet for our Lady's May-shrine. Our Lady cannot be refused, one's mother cannot be refused: Teresa gave it up. She did so with great unwillingness and sickness of heart, but her disappointment and her tears were hidden and only Celine guessed them. In spite of her rather morbid sensitiveness a time was to come when she would not even cry.

A few months after the death of her sister, Mother Mary Dosithea, who had taught the elder girls at Le Mans, Mme. Martin was struck down by a disease that she had kept hidden for sixteen years. Acute and increasing pain made her admit that she was suffering from a tumour in the breast. She was operated on, but it had been left till too late and it only hastened the unavoidable end. Her strength was quite gone, and she had to resign herself to "giving up her lace and living on her investments." Would Heaven deny her the happiness of seeing her younger children grow up? Leaving them at home with their father she joined a pilgrimage from Angers to seek health at Lourdes where, in the overpowering heat of June, 1877, she plunged four times into the icy water. She came back to Alençon worn out and murmuring the words of our Lady to Bernadette: "I promise to make you happy in the next world, but not in this."

As Mme. Martin gradually sank, Celine and Teresa were boarded with a neighbour to spare them the daily sight of their mother's agony. The last time she got up was to "preside" with M. Martin at a make-believe prize distribution, arranged by Mary in her bedroom. Celine and Teresa were dressed in white to receive the books and gilt paper crowns from their mother's hands. Viaticum was brought on August 26, and Teresa was present at this last communion and anointing. Soon it was all over. Teresa was dry-eyed when she kissed the cold forehead; but she stayed a long time by the coffin in the passage. She had not imagined that death could cleave so great a gulf. Nevertheless, she stood up to loss and grief; her small daily sacrifices enabled her to face more cruel ones

which would be refused by a provincial town hall, is actually supposed to recall the hidden and heartrending moment when M. Martin heard the first avowal of his daughter's vocation.... The house itself has been respected, except that they could not resist turning the child's room into a chapel. This is nearly always done: it is the same with St. Catherine's room in the dyers' quarter at Siena, and with St. Benedict Joseph Labre's near Santa Maria dei Monti in Rome. This is not the way to bring us close to the saints and make them real. Surely it could be managed so that the honours given to them in the very place where they slept and woke, prayed and meditated, should at least safeguard the physical appearance of their private surroundings. In the present case, however, the distraction is lessened because the rest of the house is almost intact.

The road from Lisieux to Trouville is an expensive-looking boulevard. The visitor to Les Buissonnets leaves this road on the right, taking a shady footpath that winds upward among orchards and terraced villas till he reaches a door in a blank wall; it has stone steps and a small grating. This is it. Within, a curving gravelled path leads through the sloping lawn and oval flower-beds to the front of the house. It is a pleasant red and white villa, with an attic and two dormer windows, surrounded by trees that are worthy of a district whose trees are royal. The garden at the back is rather higher and half is given over to kitchen produce: there are cherry trees, currant bushes, and rows of peas, firs and spindle trees, more turf, and thick curtains of laurel and ivy suggesting secret passages and fine hiding-places. Against the wash-house wall somebody has reconstructed one of those tiny cribs that it gave Teresa so much pleasure to build of pebbles and shells and bits of straw and wood; and a small plot near by was "my garden," where she grew crocuses and blue periwinkles and ferns. Here indeed she can be seen and touched, and when you go into the house she goes with you.

It is gloomy compared with the one at Alencon. The only authentic thing in the first room, which was the kitchen, is the red-brick hearth where the children put out their shoes on Christmas Eve. But on the right one looks straight into the past: the dining-room, an unimpeachable piece of evidence. This old-fashioned furniture has kept all its memories, and they agree with ours. Such furniture can be seen anywhere; we had foreseen it here, it had to be here. There is the sideboard with twisted columns, introducing (as is only fitting) two shooting trophies carved in oak, partridges, pheasants, and rabbits. Similar columns adorn both the tall narrow armchairs and the dining-chairs. There is a thick round table supported on a single massive leg that blossoms out into four feet covered with acanthus leaves. The mirror above the fireplace would not be fulfilling its duty did it not reflect two glass chandeliers and a gilded bronze clock under a glass cover. On the walls there are two engravings "of the period," of ecclesiastical or biblical subjects, after David or Girodet. To crown all, impenetrable window curtains wrap everything in a semi-obscurity according to custom. It is a perfect harmony of the proprieties, a museum specimen of genuine nineteenth-century provincial middle-class comfort, in all its plainness and solidity, as it was displayed once for all in the place in which one ate. I am not laughing at it, for I find it rather touching. Granted the aesthetic premises, there is not a fault to be found with that room.

with Teresa, a walk by the river with rod and line, a call on M. Guerin, return home, supper, evening prayers with the family. Teresa's time was divided in the same way between lessons, the garden and fields, and prayers. Religion was always with her: God wanted her to learn for his sake, to be good for his sake, to smile at beggars for his sake. For him she built rustic altars and of him she dreamed on the river bank while her father fished. She would sit on the grass in some hidden spot, letting the multitudinous sounds of nature sink in; then the blare of a bugle from the barracks would recall her to "the world" and, in her own words, sadden her heart. She liked the rain as much as the sun; a thunderstorm right overhead pleased her; she would have bathed in dewy grass had not her sense of modesty held her back. A complete young pagan? Most certainly not. Such a one as poor Anne de Noailles, drunk with nature and earthly love, feels her limitations and can only fall into despair. Teresa Martin can see further. This world contents her and disappoints her too, but for quite another reason—because it speaks of, pre-figures, and at the same time is not, Heaven.

Without morality there can be no true mysticism, where there is no personal virtue there is no prayer. Teresa once hurt a poor man by offering him a penny as though he were a beggar. She thought that the cake she was just going to eat might be more acceptable to him, but did not dare to offer it for fear of another refusal. How could she reconcile sensitiveness with love? Then she recollected that she had heard that no gift is withheld on one's first communion day: she would wait till that day came and then she would pray for him. She remembered her resolution for six years, and when the time came carried it out. To have a brotherly charity that neither grows slack nor dissolves into useless sighs is a trait among a thousand.

As the fields have their seasons so has the Church. In his *Annee liturgique* Dom Gueranger, the restorer of Solesmes, has shown how every day they bring a fresh blossom or a new fruit to our daily prayer. On winter evenings M. Martin was wont to listen to the reading aloud of this invaluable book, and so Teresa learned to know the Christian seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, with their changing hues of green, violet, white, and red, and the never-ending procession of saints across them. On Sunday morning she found again the God of flowers and brooks and tempests in the solemn Mass at the cathedral church of St. Peter, where the family assembled in a chapel on the epistle side quite close to the high altar. It was there that a sermon, the first she could understand, showed her the God-Man nailed to the cross, suffering, dying, and she never forgot it. When at six years old, she found herself inside a confessional for the first time—she was so small that the priest could not see her or she him—she had no difficulty in realizing that her God was there, for she knew that it was to him that she was confessing. By grace and prayer the thought of God hardly left her mind: she was entering step by step into the reality of Christ.

Meanwhile, she was growing up; the woman began to show and to become aware of her own attractiveness. On Sunday evenings at M. Guerin's she received a lot of notice and petting and small flatteries, for she was the living image of her mother. When she went for a short stay at Trouville people used to stop her on the promenade to admire her

task and exacted obedience without appeal; from her Teresa learned to overcome the little weaknesses of everyday life, absent-mindedness, whims, foolish fears. "Sometimes you would send me alone after dark to fetch something from a room at the other end of the house, and would allow no refusal. That was very good for me, otherwise I should have become very timorous. It is not easy to frighten me now."

Once a thing was settled Pauline never altered it; Teresa had got to learn to deserve, which is the a, b, c of the love of God. "Have I been a good girl today? Is dear Jesus pleased with me?" she would ask before going to sleep. And if she had to be told "No" she would sob in her dark room for hours, try as she would not to shed those accusing tears. Every year there was a prize-giving, specially for her, when her father put into her quivering hands rewards exactly proportioned to her progress. It was "like a rehearsal of the Last Judgement."

Pauline listened to her confidences, resolved her doubts, explained the eternal mysteries; she was full of questions and an answer was always forthcoming. "Why doesn't God give the same glory to all his chosen?" Pauline sent her for her silver mug, hardly bigger than a thimble, and for M. Martin's big tumbler; then she filled them both to the brim to illustrate how all the blessed receive full measure according to their capacity. Teresa in her heart of hearts wanted to be a large vessel, but she resigned herself to her littleness and soon made a virtue of this necessity.

From his attic room, whence he could see a great distance over the tops of the trees in all directions, M. Martin arranged and directed the life-work of those committed to his care. Pauline would become a nun, and possibly Mary would follow her, Leonie was more doubtful, but Celine was promising. As for Teresa, he felt her to be such a part of himself, so perfectly at one with him in thoughts and ideas, that he gave her as he gave himself, without suspecting that in ten years' time, when the hour had come, he would find his promise most hard to keep.

He looked forward expectantly to the visit of his "little queen" every evening, and would keep her with him a long time. Up there between heaven and earth they talked lovingly together about the beauties of this world and the glories of that which is to come, and sometimes about the evils of the times, France, her difficulties, her future—M. Martin was not yet out of the flesh. Though he was a bit of a dreamer, after the kind of Chateaubriand or Rousseau, with something of the Promeneur Solitaire about him, he was nevertheless level-headed enough, a sensible solid Frenchman. The politics which he would apply to his country's affairs were drawn from the Bible; he made suggestions and proposed remedies. Teresa was lost in admiration of his lightest word. "If you talk like that to the great men in the government they will take you away and make you king sure enough, papa dear. And then France will be happier than she's ever been before.... But then I shouldn't have you to be my king all to myself. I think I'd like it better that they shouldn't know you." A lover's jealousy. Her father would smile and kiss her.

Teresa would watch her father at prayer—a saint could not pray better—and she tells us that when there was a sermon in church she would look at him more than at the preacher:

trials, but happiness was unbroken. Les Buissonnets was a garden of Eden, where they loved one another and loved God. The Benedictine nuns were preparing Celine for her first communion. On the evening before, Teresa sat in a corner at home and listened to the further guidance given by her elder sister. From that she learned that from this great day one must "begin a new life," and she resolved to renew hers from Celine's day. When she was eight and a half she began to go to school at the abbey of Notre Dame du Pre, which Leonie had just left. Celine was already in a higher class, and Teresa could only see her from afar. She did not at all like going away from Les Buissonnets, but every evening the maid, or more often M. Martin, fetched her back to her loved ones, her dreams, and her bed.

To reach the school she had to go right across Lisieux; past rows of respectable middle-class houses, through the park, with its trees and terraces, that surrounds the museum (a handsome building in the style of Versailles), and past the cliff-like towers, one romanesque and one gothic, of St. Peter's cathedral in the square where M. Guerin lived; then through the narrow, picturesque, and dirty streets of timber-framed houses, with little square panes to the windows, and lastly through the workingmen's quarter in which the Benedictine convent seems to be lost. Lisieux is like a cow in a meadow, a quiet, gloomy, heavy, sleepy town, without the friendly sociable look of Alencon; it is traversed by inky rivulets and dark sordid alleys on which the factories leave a permanent deposit of thick soot, and the place only comes to life, with a raucous laugh, on market days or when a fair is on. The Teresian pilgrimages will bring about its modernization one day, but they will not spiritualize it or even succeed in making it quite clean; they only increase its commonplaceness: it is a show-place for tourists and a spa for the pious.

I do not think Teresa at all liked having to plunge into the old quarters of the town, although she only went into their churches and convents. The abbey had high grey walls and was a place of bare courtyards, sickly lime trees, and nooks that hardly saw the sun. Did she like it? . . . When she entered there she had to leave flowers and fields as well as home behind her. Did she still have at least the joys of God?

She had a companion, her cousin Mary Guerin, who was fond of her and, it seems, admired her. They were both of an age and shared the same taste for prayer and quiet. But when one is not used to it, it is difficult to be recollected in the middle of a crowd of more or less wild little girls, who in class do the bare minimum that will keep them out of trouble and in play-time go right off their heads. The common life of a school was very distressing to so rare and fastidious a spirit, shy as much from pride as from modesty. Teresa had no idea of human society; she was a hot-house plant, sheltered from all contradiction. Here she found jealousies, rudeness, spite, disputes, in their childish guise, and into that hurry-burly she was thrown.

She was put into the green class, so called because its members wore a green ribbon for badge, and though she was the youngest she was also the most advanced. As she worked hardest as well and was most anxious to get on—to please God and her father and herself—she was top in everything except spelling and arithmetic. "I found it very hard," she says, "to learn things word for word." The nuns who taught never noticed this, but

heart, and discovered that Pauline had the same ambition. It seemed to her obvious that they should seek it together.

Presently she was promoted to the violet class, and began to prepare for her first communion. At catechism she sat among inattentive companions and drank in the chaplain's words. She asked him questions, and difficult ones, too. She did not agree, for example, that children who die without baptism enjoy only a natural happiness, without the sight of God. Why should this be so, since they have not sinned? She was desperately anxious that everybody should be saved, whether they wanted to be or not. She found free-will a stumbling-block. "I wanted God to force everybody to be good, because he was able to." If not, then she would do the forcing, she, little Teresa. Her will to power and her will to conquest had found their object.

Then one day she heard Pauline tell Mary that she had made up her mind to enter Carmel as soon as possible. That was the wilderness that she had talked about and that Teresa was to share with her. And now she was going to leave her behind! "In a flash I experienced the reality of life," she writes; "I did not yet know the happiness of sacrifice.... I was weak, just weak."

She actually thought she was going to die. Pauline comforted her and explained the cloistered life: Teresa was at once enamoured of it. She stopped crying and felt a new and strange joy filling her heart: she knew quite certainly that God was calling her too to Carmel. She told her sister at once, and Pauline let her carry her news to Mother Mary of Gonzaga, who was the Carmelite prioress. So it came about that Teresa for the first time entered the house which she was so greatly to honour. She was only nine, and a postulant must be sixteen. The prioress pretended to believe in her vocation, and Teresa began to consider what name she should adopt in religion. Her own was already taken by another, and worthily: "Teresa of Jesus." But she was unwilling to give it up. Why not Teresa of the Child Jesus, since she loved him so much? Certainly that should be it. Before she left the prioress said to her, "When you join us, dear child, you shall be called Teresa of the Child Jesus." Such a happy coincidence of thoughts delighted her, but she had scarcely reached the street when her pleasure was dashed: "Pauline is going away. She will be lost to me!"

This devastating thought soon became an obsession. Pauline went into the convent on October 2, 1882, and Teresa was allowed to catch an occasional glimpse of her for a few minutes in the parlour: she hated that room, with its grating and curtains. She did not eat, she did not sleep, and by the end of the year the disconsolate child was suffering from a series of chronic headaches that put a stop to her schooling. It was the beginning of a bad breakdown, whose nature denied medical diagnosis; Teresa, in the *Story of a Soul*, attributes it to the malevolence of the Evil One.

Was it a nervous disorder or a case of possession? The Devil is fond of making a dead-set at saints, especially when they are in embryo and relatively frail. Being unable to harm the soul directly he wreaks his malice on body and brain; hidden powers control his victims, who break out into physical contortions and terrifying cries, uttering

smile. In a minute all my sufferings were gone, and two big tears rolled down my cheeks." They were tears of unalloyed and heavenly joy.

"Our Lady came towards me, still smiling.... How happy I am, I thought, but I won't say so to anyone, for then my happiness would go away. Then without any effort I turned my eyes and saw my dear Mary; she was looking at me lovingly and seemed very moved, as though she guessed the grace I had received."

Mary had indeed seen the reflection of that divine smile in Teresa's eyes, and had a presentiment that she was healed. She was, completely healed. Within a few seconds her malady—the malicious one, if you prefer—had gone.

Teresa was so closely questioned by her sister that she told Mary what she had determined to tell nobody, and, as she had foreseen, her delight was soon at an end. For Mary saw fit to relate the miracle at the Carmel. Teresa was fetched thither and, unless she was to be rude, she could not do less than try to answer the nuns' questions.

"Was she carrying the holy Child?" "Were there angels with her?" It is easy to imagine it all. The colour of her gown, of her girdle, of her eyes, how she was, or was not, shod—they wanted to know everything. And as they had their own ideas on all these matters they even anticipated the answers. Teresa was fussed and hurt and would not say more than "Our Lady seemed to be very beautiful."

The nuns were dissatisfied. Some began to fancy that she had not looked properly or had seen wrongly, even became suspicious that she was lying or keeping something important to herself. The next thing was to decide that she was unworthy of the grace she had received; finally, to cast doubt on the vision itself.

"Our Lady allowed me to be thus tormented for my own good," she writes, "otherwise I might have become conceited. Instead of that, I was so humiliated that I could not think of myself without extreme disgust."

She wrote this a long time after, and it may well be that she exaggerates. Nor would it be surprising if she carried away from this visit a not very favourable idea of Carmel from a human point of view. All the more reason for her to enter it.... What is certain is that in the end she paid for her miraculous cure with redoubled suffering, which was now spiritual. The expression, or simply implication, of doubt about the truthfulness of her evidence revived an affliction from which she had already suffered and which was still latent, the affliction of a scrupulous conscience. Clouds closed over our Lady's smiling face, and they opened only twice again during the rest of Teresa's earthly life.

5. Scruples And Vocation

There could be no question of sending Teresa back to school at once after this serious warning. She must have a long rest and plenty of diversion: there was indeed a tendency to overdo it. Several old friends invited M. Martin to stay with them near Alencon. He

being," said the prioress. She was crying at the altar, much to the surprise of her fellows, who supposed that she had some qualm of conscience or was missing her dead mother or the absent Pauline. They knew nothing about weeping for joy. A deep and unutterable happiness had in fact swept across her and overflowed from her eyes.

"O my God, I love you. I am yours for ever."

That was all she could think and all she could say. She asked nothing of her Lord, he asked nothing of her; there was a reciprocal gift, without conditions. It was more than a kiss, she said, it was a making-one. The drop of water was absorbed in the limitless ocean: Teresa surrendered her own will and joined her weakness to the almightiness of her King.

The new communicant went to visit the novice Pauline, and the day ended with a family party at Les Buissonnets. She was given a watch for a present. It did not seem to her the most important thing.

The Bread of Life brings hunger at the same time that it nourishes. Teresa made her second communion, with her father and Mary, on Ascension Day, but afterwards had to wait a long time, till other big feasts came round, and the time went very slowly. Confirmation, on the following Whit Sunday, brought her a new grace, the strength to suffer, and she was soon to be in need of it. Soon after she had an example of human fickleness and unreliability. A friend of whom she was very fond went away for a time, and her return was looked forward to with quivering excitement. When she came back she had forgotten Teresa and hardly looked at her. Teresa tried to work off her abounding affection on this or the other of the nuns at school, but they did not lend themselves to it, and indeed did not seem to understand what she wanted. It is hardly to be expected that they should, for reserve and diffidence paralyzed her tongue before it could give any hint. So she continued to be lonely. This was a good thing on the whole, for it probably saved her from worse disappointments and she already had enough ties to break without adding to them.

She was approaching the anniversary of her first communion when scrupulosity, which had been troubling her imperceptibly, became disturbingly apparent. The attack lasted for nearly two years.

The sinner has no scruples because he has no conscience, or else because he has trained it not to be upset by anything. Scrupulosity always indicates a desire for perfection, even when it bewilders and leads astray. It is a sort of hyper-sensitiveness of the conscience that ferrets out the by-ways of the soul; it probes into actions and motives, analyzes them, isolates them, lays bare what it finds—and then what it does not. It leads to a chronic shortsightedness which makes everything doubtful and suspicious, so that there is no certainty even of a good intention. From being unable to judge, the scrupulous person becomes unable to act, and wears himself out with self-torment and self-reproach. Unless he can get over it—and abandonment of oneself to God will restore sanity—he is done for: despair and suicide lie in wait for him. This form of mental alienation is always a hell

knowing it. But she saw herself already sunk in profligacy—if she knew what the word meant. "What should I have become," she asks later on, "if the world had smiled on me from my birth . . . if my heart had not been so soon turned towards God?" Mary did her best to comfort her, but the next minute Teresa would fall back into an agony of uncertainty.

She used to go to her former school to take part in the meetings of the Children of Mary sodality. "I would work away quietly at my allotted task, and then, when I had finished and nobody was taking any notice, I would slip into the gallery of the chapel and stop there till my father came to fetch me. It was there that I found my only consolation; wasn't Jesus my best friend? I could talk happily only to him: my spirit was oppressed by conversation with people, even about religious things." To talk alone with God was her saving refuge.

At this period of her life she seems, whether out of shy respect or for fear of troubling him, to have been reticent with M. Martin about her interior trials. When therefore Mary also went into Carmel and Teresa accordingly lost her only confidante she turned towards the innocent souls of the little brothers and sisters who died before her birth. Surely, she thought, those who are living in peace and happiness before the throne of God, who never came even within the shadow of the wings of the Prince of this world, must pity her distress and be able to enlighten and relieve her. An answer came on the night of Christmas, 1886: the newly-born Babe of babes, without utterance or showing of himself, changed her darkness into "torrents of brightest light"; he who was made weak that she might be made strong gave her back her weapons of love. As usual, she had put out her shoes in the hearth (doubtless she had no illusions about this proceeding, but it was very nice to have presents and surprises, whether they were brought by little Jesus or by her father and sisters). When she came back from midnight Mass she overheard her father say, "This is much too childish for a big girl like Teresa. This will be the last time." The apparent reproach might have upset her grievously, but in fact her heart was changed. She kept back her tears, and was unaffectedly pleased with the presents that she found in her shoes; her simplicity of outlook had come back and henceforward she was able to get the better of her sensitiveness and scruples. "The source of my tears dried up and afterwards flowed only occasionally and with difficulty." She had learned from the Child in the manger that all her troubles arose from self-sufficiency and self-esteem, from a vainglorious concern about her own reactions and the inordinate value that she put on herself. What God actually asked from her was simply good will. She had got to forget herself and carry his care and love to others. "Charity came into my heart . . . and from then on I was happy." We shall see for how long.

One day a card slipped partly from her missal, disclosing a single nail-pierced hand of the crucified Saviour. That precious blood runs down to the earth and nobody comes forward to gather it up; who will stand by the cross to receive the life-giving stream and pour it out upon the multitudes? "I will," said Teresa; "that is my vocation." Her Well-beloved thirsted, and the more he emptied himself the greater was his thirst; he shed his blood only that we might thirst and be filled, till our souls are running over and he too may drink thereat. A longing to drink at this fountain had taken hold of Teresa, to drink

