

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CARMELITE CONSTITUTIONS.

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,—The reviewer in the July BLACKFRIARS of the *Life of the Venerable Anne of Jesus* says: 'We are told nothing of the origin of the two versions of St. Teresa's Rule still followed by the two branches of Carmelite nuns in this country—one descended from the French, the other from the Flemish foundation.' This last should read, *English* foundation.

We do not understand how the idea has arisen that there are two branches of the Order in this country, each following a different version of St. Teresa's Rule. (We should say Constitutions, for the date of the Rule is 1247 and is the same for men and women.) The Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus came into France bringing with her the original Constitutions of St. Teresa. The Paris Carmelites possess one of the actual copies (1588) from which their constitutions and ours were translated and printed. When the battle for these constitutions was being waged in the Low Countries, our English convent at Antwerp, founded by the first Spanish Mothers, fought the hardest to keep them, and for this reason was placed under the government of the bishops.

The English convent at Antwerp is now at Lanherne, the English convent founded from it in 1648 is now at Darlington, the English convent at Hoogstraet founded from Antwerp in 1678 is our own, and we all keep and ever have kept the same constitutions as the Paris house now at Clamart (Seine) and its foundation at Notting Hill.

Consequently there are not two branches of Carmelite nuns in this country. We are one, keeping hour by hour the same rule.

We shall be grateful if this is understood, as the *Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, published last year, has a paragraph concerning our convents with several misstatements—one being that the nuns of the Order are divided into three observances, Calced, Discalced, and Discalced of the Primitive Observance; another that there are four 'mitigated' convents in England, by which the four English convents are meant.

There are actually now only two versions of the Constitutions approved by Rome, those approved in 1924, which are ours, Clamart's, and Notting Hill's with its foundations; and

those approved in 1926, kept by one convent in England, Wells, Those who keep the last-named Constitutions are not looked upon as belonging to a separate branch; like ourselves, they vow at their profession to keep the primitive rule until death.

Yours, etc.,

THE CARMELITES OF CHICHESTER.

THE TIERCE DE PICARDIE.*

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,—It almost disarms criticism to discover that one's reviewer is a personal friend—to wit, Fr. Moncrieff; but, alas! his letter leaves me no alternative but another 'gentle and joyous passage of arms.'

(1) My reviewer objected to my employment of the T.D.P.—*i.e.*, a final *major* chord, and gave no hint that his ear demanded any alternative save a *minor* one.

(2) I cited the rule which demands a major chord *or* the bare fifth as an alternative.

(3) My critic then (*for the first time*) plumps for the bare fifth, saying: 'Precisely; that is all I am asking for.'

(4) He adds that to the ear of himself and others it is irritating to hear T.D.P. 'repeated at the end of every verse of a carol,' though he would allow it in the final verse.

(5) He further adds: 'That' (*i.e.*, the sense of irritation produced by repetition) 'perhaps is why . . . Bach modified the earlier rule' (*i.e.*, the rule which demands T.D.P.). *Ergo*, the whole question is a matter of taste.

To which I reply:

(4) Bach's chorales contain usually more (never less) verses than most of my carols, yet when Bach employs T.D.P. he applies it to *every* verse.

(5) But did even Bach 'modify the earlier rule' to the extent presumed by my critic? Let us see:

(a) Bach's collected works contain harmonizations of 385 chorale-melodies.

(b) Of these, 219 are in major keys and are, therefore, irrelevant to our discussion.

(c) That leaves 166 (in minor keys, or in modes), to which T.D.P. is applicable.

* For brevity's sake, I allude to it throughout as T.D.P.