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Fragments for a Chapter.... II.

2. The Vision.

"It was the Thursday after Sexagesima Sunday (February 25, 1847), whilst assisting at Benediction at the parish church, she was seized with one of those violent headaches to which she was subject, and which deprived her of the use of her faculties. Not being able to pray, she contented herself with adoring Our Saviour crowned with thorns, to Whom she sensibly united herself in the spirit of expiation for the sins committed during the Carnival. She remained for a long time in this state, and on coming to herself she felt ill and thoroughly worn out. That night she saw in a dream a bust of Christ. Whilst she was admiring it it became animated; she saw before her a living face divinely beautiful. It was Christ in His Passion, covered with blood, and His face and mouth wounded....

"The next morning she resumed her ordinary occupations with great calmness; but during Mass, after Communion, she saw reproduced within herself the same picture she had seen in her dream. This time she was wide awake and perfectly recollected; never before had she seen anything similar to it.... That same night, Friday of the Carnival, she was making the Stations of the Cross, when to her surprise, at the Sixth Station, she again beheld the representation. She fell into an ecstasy, and begged Our Lord to impress His holy image on her, as formerly He did on Veronica's handkerchief...."

D'Hulst, Life of Mother Mary Theresa, pp. 66, 67.

3. The Painting.

"Mother Isabella sent her to her confessor, who ordered her to undertake the painting. She had never worked without a model, and she knew not how to begin: nevertheless she set to work with great faith. She had chosen a Friday, and had so arranged as that she should be alone. On her knees before the canvas, scarcely had she taken up the brush when she was thrown into an ecstasy: the vision was renewed within her; she painted the portrait. Sometimes the violence of Divine Love deprived her of the strength to work; at others an astonishing activity caused her to use her brush with a facility and rapidity hitherto unknown to her. She devoted four Fridays to the task, and great was her joy when she found there was a resemblance." -- Id. p. 78.

Notes.

1. Msgr. D'Hulst devotes several pages to a discussion of the legitimacy of the use of the imagination in mental prayer, and to the difference between true visions and the hallucinations of hysteria. While the Church has not yet pronounced on the supernatural character of the visions of Mother Mary Theresa (her cause of Beatification is in process), Msgr. D'Hulst makes out a good case. A study of the picture itself will convince the average layman that it is not a product of hysteria.
2. Mother Mary Theresa (she was then Theodelinda Debouche; her community was not founded until 1848) traveled to Tours to show the picture to Sister St. Pierre and her community. This Sister had taken up the devotion to the Holy Face (the picture called "Veronica's Veil") in reparation for blasphemy and the desecration of the Sunday; this motive of reparation became predominant in Mother Mary Theresa's foundation. M. Dupont (the Holy Man of Tours) was director of Sister St. Pierre's community of Carmelites; he had the picture copied, and then sent it back to Paris.

This Week's Red Hat....

is conferred in statu quo on the lay cardinals who can manage anything and everything but themselves - the Grippers.