

**MARIE TH?RESE COUDERC:  
FOUNDRESS OF THE  
CONGREGATION OF OUR  
LADY OF THE CENACLE**

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**C. C. MARTINDALE**

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MARIE THÉRÈSE COUDERC

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## DEDICATION

DEAR MRS. DALTON,—

To offer this book to you and your sister is an act of gratitude, due, now, for many years. And when I think of you and of her, I can't but remember, need I say, one whom we all love and without whom I shouldn't have met you. And with all of you, I think too of Australia; it was one of the happy paradoxes of those sad years of war, that a new Continent has come to mean so much to me, and that I can widen my affection so honestly and so far. I like to think of the days when you made your rooms at Oxford into a home for so many Australian cadets, who met on our side of the globe not always what we'd have wished for them, nor what they'd hoped for; but they found, with you, how much that was happy and healthful, and that reminded them, and that encouraged them! Better still, perhaps, were your visits to the wards of so many hospitals—the Base, Cowley, Headington, and the rest. I know what it meant to those men, and not least to the black sheep—who were not so very black, were they, after all, not to mention the one who turned out so white a lamb! I think they all of them have got home to the wide spaces and the



sun and the golden wattle—all save one. No one out there will ever know, perhaps, how you brought his home to his else so lonely deathbed; you *were* his home to him; he saw it all in you during his last days. You won't forget how his eyes lit up, and how his voice, for a space, grew stronger. You brought him more than that: he was not a Catholic, but you brought Our Lord beside him; and when Christ comes, He doesn't desert.

Now there are no more hospitals—at least not the same ones. But your name has grown loved in Whitechapel and Fulham; and I can think of many whose lives would be emptier without you; and of one in particular to whom you went so often, and over whose horrible pain the Faith dawned in peace.

Very well, remember that, and trust the future, and God, and His Holy Mother's prayers; and continue yours for me.

Yours very sincerely,

C. C. MARTINDALE.

BRUSSELS, LONDON, OXFORD.

## INTRODUCTION

As long ago, I think, as 1903, I opened the book of Fr. Longhaye upon the Cenacle, of which I then knew nothing. Immediately and vehemently struck by the portrait of Mère Marie Thérèse, I took it to Fr. Garrold, who was no less profoundly impressed. "It is the face," he cried, "of a soul in Purgatory." Ever since then, and more than ever during the last five years or so, I have prayed to be allowed to write something which should make her history more accessible to English readers. This desire, which sprang first, as I said, from the impression produced by her personality, was reinforced by my ever-increasing conviction of the enormous need of Retreats for all classes of the community to-day. It seemed, therefore, a direct answer of Providence when a most gracious request reached me from the Mother-House of the Cenacle, now at Brussels, that I should write the life of Mère Marie Thérèse for a French no less than for an English-speaking public. I was promised many documents inaccessible to Fr. Longhaye, and it was felt that the book would be no mere adaptation

of his admirable work. However, the near approach of the introduction of her Cause precluded me from quoting such material as should actually constitute the depositions of the various witnesses, although I was able to see a good many original documents and to collect, as it were, some first-hand history, and above all was privileged to meet some of the Mothers of the Cenacle congregation who had actually known their foundress, including the venerable Mother-General who for five years was the Superior of Mère Marie Thérèse.

I was able, therefore, at many points to check, correct, and enrich my personal impressions; and although the perspective of this short study is slightly modified, yet with the blessing of God it may not fail altogether of its original purpose; and while it cannot claim to be an exhaustive and official history of the co-foundress of the Cenacle or of the Cenacle itself, yet it may serve to make her, and her work, better known amongst us, and to add momentum to the great enterprise of giving of Retreats.

It may elicit, too, from the faithful, those prayers which shall best advance her Cause at Rome. Needless to say, by no premature ascription of heroic sanctity or of miracles to Mère Marie Thérèse do I wish to anticipate the decisions of authority.

I may add that though, so far, the volumes of the "Household of God" series have con-