

**REV. GABRIEL BROWNE, O. CARM.**

1834-1907

By the REV. ANTHONY C. DRESSEL, O. Carm.

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FATHER Gabriel Browne, the - son of Robert Browne, and Mary Reynolds, was born in New Jersey, May 7, 1834. In baptism he was named Richard Alexis James to which the name Gabriel was added by the Order.

His early studies were all made in the North Jersey area. His ambitions, upon the completion of his academic studies, are not known. However, he joined the Northern Army for the duration of the Civil War, saw action and later became paymaster on the U. S. S. Mendota. On Memorial Day veterans always visit his grave bearing the G. A. R. insignia in Mount Carmel Cemetery, Pittsburgh. His record as a soldier, however, is not recorded in Washington, where investigation has been made. Perhaps it could be found if one knew his proper classification. At the close of the Civil War he took up the higher studies for the priesthood at Laval University, Quebec, being ordained to the secular priesthood on May 30, 1874, by the Most Rev. E. R. Taschereau, Archbishop of Quebec. At the time of his ordination he was forty years old. Late in 1879 he entered the Carmelite Order at Niagara Falls and received the habit on July 16, 1880, taking the name of Gabriel. He made his simple profession on August 20, 1881.

During his novitiate he assisted at the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace, Niagara. He was then appointed pastor of St. Patrick's Church at Emerald, Kans. where he succeeded Father Lucas Degierse. Here he remained from 1882 to 1884. Having spent one year as assistant at St. Cecilia's, Englewood, he was sent to Pittsburgh. His next assignment was to teach at New Baltimore. He remained there from 1894 to 1900, returning to Pittsburgh, his last assignment. Here, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, 1905, he celebrated the Silver Anniversary of his entrance into the Order.

Father Gabriel was not with the Carmelites very long before he became ill and found it difficult to stand for any length of time—on rare occasions being forced to omit his Mass. However, he proved himself a valuable man in many respects. He was a popular confessor and always ready to oblige.

During his years at New Baltimore he taught scriptures and homiletics and spent hour upon hour translating important writings from German, French and Italian authors. His excellent knowledge of French and Latin was a great help to him.

By means of a one-finger system he made good use of a primitive typewriter. Exercising marvelous patience, he hammered out one thesis after another.

His illness made it impossible for him to preach. His deep knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, of the Fathers of the Church, of Church History and of the Lives of the Saints, together with a natural gift for oratory would otherwise have qualified him for the pulpit.

Father Gabriel's pet hobby was gathering historical data concerning the Order. A brilliant conversationalist, he was an excellent companion. One could always be certain of spending a pleasant half hour in his company. He had at his command a fund of stories ranging from southern tales to the strangest historical and scientific episodes. He was always interesting. However, his illness did, at times, cause him to be irritable, and there were not wanting those who delighted in teasing him. These unusual outbursts were over in a moment and his appeal for pardon and forgiveness was always most humble.

Father Gabriel's habits of study are aptly illustrated by the fact that once recreation was over he would go immediately to his room and automatically take up the book he happened to be working on at the moment.

The Fathers who knew him as a teacher in New Baltimore have only the fondest and most happy recollections of the hours of instruction spent with Father Gabriel. His fatherly nature and his kind and patient disposition made him an excellent instructor.

He died rather suddenly in Pittsburgh on October 19, 1907, at the age of seventy-three. A Solemn Mass of Requiem was sung by the late Father Berthold O. Lauzau who was assisted by Father Dominic O'Malley and Father Vincent Metzler—Father Sebastian Urnauer acting as master of ceremonies. Father Peter R. Kramer preached the funeral sermon in which he lauded the abilities of the departed, who, in spite of his illness, was ever an industrious student, good religious and pious priest.

Father Peter drew attention to his fervent faith and complete submission to the Holy Will of God. He was, indeed, a soldier of Christ.