A VISIT TO LORETTO.

For the CATHOLIC RECORD.

Far away in sunny Italy, in one of the white-walled villages of Recanati, is treasured the most miraculous of relics -none other than the Holy House of Nazareth, the home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Every Canadian Catholic is, I am sure, especially devout to the Holy Family. To Canada belongs the honor of having embraced from the very foundation of the colony this beautiful devotion, so highly recommended by Our Holy Father in a recent Encyclical. Let us, then, in order to reanimate our fervor make in spirit a pilgrimage to that blessed shrine, there to vener-ate the sacred walls that heard the Angel's Salutation and were the silent witnesses for thirty years of the hidden life of Our Saviour, His Blessed Mother and foster father.

A beautiful morning in the early part of August, we arrive at the little station of Loretto. A carriage is in waiting, and we proceed up the hill to the town itself, about three quarters of a mile distant. The incline is steep; the day is hot-oh! very hot and our horse not over - well fed, like man other animals in Italy, decides to take a rest. While he is resting let us view our surroundings. We shall not, however, enjoy the scene long at our ease ; for I see a troop of beggars coming out to meet

What a perfect day, if it were not s very hot ! And oh, what a delightful view, to us so novel, of a beauty altogether unlike that of our Canadian landscape ! There is no grand rushing river-the rivers of Italy are grand by reason of their historical associations-nothing of the cascade and craggy mountain scenery that delights the eye of those who visit our Canadian shrine of Beaupre. On one side the pale blue waters of the Adriatic, the other the limestone cliffs of the Appenines bound the horizon. Between, as far as the eye can reach the white walls of compact little vil lages or baronial chateaus crown the summits of the hills. Olive orchards, summts of the fills. Only e orchards, orange, mulberry and fig trees and vines that hang in graceful festcoms, between the ridges of Indian corn, adorn the valleys. Here and there a double yoke of milk-white oxen, attached to an antique plough, are lazily shuffling along. Various roads that in the distance appear. It's chell that in the distance appear like chalk marks lead into the villages. From one direction comes a diminutive dondey, slowly creeping along, under the heavy load, that is equipoised on his back. From another band of Italian peasant women decked out in their grotesque multi-colored costumes, bear ing on their heads baskets of clothes, or large earthen pitchers of water, approach, amid a cloud of dust that arises up from their sunburnt feet.

We must make a start, for the mendicant battalion is about to besiege us. It is a motley crowd of men, women and children. Nowhere are there more beggars, and nowhere are the beggars more beggarly than in poor, down trodden Italy. They climb up on our carriage or run along in dangerous proximity to the wheels, offering wares-pictures, statues, gaudy ornaments, etc. Among them may be seen poor mothers with sickly infants in their arms, to which they call your attention with such an imploring look that it would be hard indeed to refuse them an alms.

Arrived at the town we proceed on foot to the Basilica by way of the prin-cipal street, the Via Coronari. If we wish to procure some religious article or souvenirs of Loretto we can not complain of lack of variety in the show-cases along the way. Now we enter the square piazza in front of the Basilica itself. Within is the Italians' beloved Santa Casa, that priceless treasure that God in His mercy saw fit to bear away by the ministry of angels from an ungrateful land, and to place, for safe keeping, in the midst of a Christian people, within the very territories of His earthly Vicar. Before entering let us review the history of the Holy House, that, bringing vividly before our minds the principal us. facts connected with it, together with all that our Catholic faith and sentiment suggest to us, we may approach with greater love and reverence This brings us back nineteen cen-turies, to the little village of Nazareth, in Galilee, not far from Mount Thabor. O, Nazareth, now dear is thy name to the Christian heart ! St. Luke tells us, in that beautiful first chapter of his Gospel, that the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth to an-nounce to the Blessed Virgin the glad tidings of the Incarnation. Mary, then espoused to Joseph, dwelt in her humble home, which indisputable evidence proves to be none other than the Holy House that we are to visit today. Here "the Word was made Flesh." Here Jesus lived with Mary Here Jesus lived with Mary and Joseph, from the time of their return from Egypt until the commence ment of His public ministry, when He went up to the Jordan to be baptized by St. John the Baptist. After the Ascension, the Holy House, as attests Venerable Bede and others, was solemnly consecrated to divine worship by the Apostles, for whom, as well as for the first Christians, it was an object of special veneration. In the early part of the fourth century, St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, at her own expense, erected over it a magnificent basilica. Subsequently it was venerated by many saintly and royal pilgrims, who have borne wit-ness to its entire preservation. Among others we may mention after the lapse of so many conturies, St. Jerome, and, later on, St. are still solid and entire." Francis of Assisi and St. Louis To conclude, let us cite the testimony Francis of Assisi and St. Louis of France, who visited Nazareth of that brave champion of the glories and success. Remember Hood's cures.

about the year 1252. About this time the Mahometans were again obtain-ing a foothold in Palestine, which the brave crusaders had rescued from their grasp. European strife drew the at tention of those valiant warriors from their praiseworthy purpose, and in the latter part of the thirteenth century, the Holy Land was again taken, and the Basilica fell a victim to the destroying hand of the inveterate enemy of the Christian name. The cupidity of the infidels, however, proved a safe-guard for the Holy House itself. They preserved it with the greatest care, for the sake of the revenue which it

brought them. Now it was that the hand of God in tervened, to manifest His glory and to afford to Christian Europe a further motive of confidence in His Blessed Mother, as a gage of His mercy and protection especially against the en-croachments of the Israelite. The same year, 1291, that saw the complete overthrow of Christian power in Palestine, saw the Holy House borne away by angels and deposited at a place called Rannizza, in Dalmatia, between the cities of Tersato and Fiume. Shortly afterwards the Blessed Virgin appeared to the parish priest, a very holy man, who was confined to his bed by an incurable disease. She told him that the house which had so mysteri-ously arrived in his parish was the Holy House of Nazareth, which God would not permit to remain in a country desolated by murder and impiety that the altar was the same that had been consecrated by St. Peter ; that the crucifix was placed there by the Apostles, likewise the wooden image of the Virgin and Child. "In fine," said she, "that you may be a living said she, " that you may be a living proof of the truth of what I say, be thou cured, and go relate to the people what I have told you." The fame of the Holy House soon spread throughout the surrounding country, and multitudes came to visit it. The joy, however, of the inhabitants of Tersato was of short duration. Three years and a half after its arrival at Rannizza (on the 10th of December), in the year 1294, the mysterious sanctuary was again transported to the other shore of the Adriatic, in the territory of Recanati. Paul de Sylva, a hermit, writing in the year 1297 of the arrival of the Holy House in Italy, and of its two sub sequent translations, gives, in substance, the following testimony, which he gathered from eye-witnesses of the miracle. Near midnight, while all nature was sleeping in silence, a beau tiful light coming from the East lit up the sky. At the same time heavenly music delighted the ears of the astound ed shepherds who watched their flocks along the shore. Soon they beheld a house borne over the water by the hands of angels, who deposited it in the midst of a laurel wood. Great numbers of pilgrims came to venerate the mysterious shrine, and left their valuable offerings as tokens of their faith. By reason of the wealth thus accumulated within the Holy House, the surrounding wood became infested with thieves and robbers. Pilgrims could no longer visit it in safety, and

in a short time it was abandoned. Eight months after its arrival it wa again mysteriously transferred to the summit of a hill which belonged to two brothers. The inhabitants, being once more free to satisfy their devo-tion, flocked to the shrine and adorned it with precious gifts. The brothers, tempted by the demon of avarice, had decided to seize upon the rich treasure, and were disputing about the division of the spoil, when, by a third miracle, the Holy House was removed about a stone's throw to its present position, in the centre of the public road, that leads from Recanati to the sea-shore. That the sanctuary we are about to visit is in truth the Holy House of Nazareth, a constant tradition, innumer able documents and the testimony of the Sovereign Pontiffs, forty-five of whom have celebrated its glories, clearly prove. Paul II., in thanksgiv ing for the miraculous recovery of his health at the shrine of Loretto, ordered, in the year 1464, the erection of the magnificent Basilica that we see before Clement VIII. had the following inscription placed on the Eastern wall of the Holy House :

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

of Mary, the venerable Pius IX. Here are his own words: " From our tenderest years, we have always professed the most tender and filial love for the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and the Mother of all us poor sinners. We have always, and more especially in our necessities and dangers, experienced the powerful effects of her constant protection. It is this that urges us today to give public testimony of our devotion and love for the Most Blessed Virgin Mary; and this testimony we have wished to place in the sanctuary of Loretto as being the most august and the most sacred. Was it not indeed by a singular prodigy that this Holy House was transported across land and sea, from Galilee into Italy. By a su-preme favor of the God of mercies it rested in our pontifical dominions, where it has remained during so many centuries, celebrated for its miracles, the object of the greatest veneration for the people of the entire world. It

is, then, with good reason that all who come to visit it with a true faith do not appear to visit so much the house of the Virgin as the Virgin herself." With like sentiments let us approach

the birthplace of Mary. It is encased in an exquisitely wrought marble screen beneath the dome of the Basilica. Numerous lamps are suspended around it. A few pious worshippers pass quietly in and out ; while others recite their beads as they make on their knees the circuit of the shrine. We will be surprised and doubtless indignant coming as we do from a free country to see stationed at the entrance an official of the Italian Government. Those guards may be met with in many of the confiscated churches of Italy. They have no respect for the holy place, nor do they uncover even in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. This is one of the fruits of Cavour's policy of "United Italy

We enter and kneel within the Holy House. It consists of a single room about 30 feet long and 12 feet wide. At one end is an altar, above and a little in the rear of which, resting against the chimney, is the antique statue of the Virgin and Child. This, together with the crucifix on the opposite wall, have accompanied the house from Nazareth. The original roof has been taken down and placed under the pavement of the altar. There are three doors, an extra one having been made by order of Clement VII. to enable pilgrims to pass in and out more conveniently. Light is ad-mitted through a single window, the same at which tradition says the archangel appeared. The walls are constructed of thin stones much resembling bricks in shape and color. As has been said they rest upon the gravel of the road, without any foundation. Being on a hill they do not even rest evenly on the earth, and it is possible, by in troducing a light, to see the rough under-surface.

Delegation sent by the inhabitants of Lersato and Loretto and lastly by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, dur ing the pontificate of Innocent XII have examined the walls, and have

found them to perfectly coincide, both as regards demensions and material, with the foundation, that remained at Nazareth. It was after this last official examination that the Pope permitted the feast of the Translation of the Holy House to be celebrated with Mass and office proper.

privilege is ours, to kneel What within those sacred wall so closely associated with the daily life of the Holy Family ! They are, as it were, the true book of the Imitation of Christ, wherein the learned and the un learned alike, may read lessons of holiness, of charity, of humility, purity, of every virtue. May the sweet souvenirs of this visit bear fruit in our hearts and increase our love for her whom the world honors here as the Virgin of Loretto ! Pilgrim.

THE DECADENCE OF FAMILY dren. It is a most important agency WORSHIP.

We learn from a Protestant contem porary that a veteran missionary was once asked, on his return from the Orient, what sign of change during his ten years' absence had most im-pressed him. He replied : "The decline of family worship in the Christian homes where I am a guest." The writer goes on to say that the same contrast exists among Unitarians, and 'notonly is the family prayersomitted, but also the blessing at the table. Some theory of cause," he adds, "is likely to come first to mind, but a more important matter is a consideration of effects.

We are not surprised that the writer avoids the discussion of causes, for it must be a very unpleasant subject to all Protestants. The truth is, and they know it well, the cause of the decad ence of family worship among the descendants of the Puritans is the waning of that faith with which their ancestors were animated. The Puritans had unbounded faith in the Biblethe whole Bible-as the Word of God That was the foundation of their faith and they always used it in family worship. Now, unfortunately, their descendants are losing faith in that foundation, and they are all at sea. As faith wanes love grows cold, doubt supervenes, confidence is lost, and laxity of life and conduct is the inevit

able result. The Puritan Fathers were distinguished for their fidelity to this im portant feature of family religion. It they were a little tedious sometimes in their long extempore prayers, and their not very short graces at meals, they deserved credit for their fidelity to their family duties. It is sad to think that the neglect by their descendants of this important duty is the result of a weakening of faith and devotion.

This same writer points out, with truth, that the religious feeling, like all others, is strengthened by expres sion. If we love and honor God, our love and reverence grow stronger and more fervent when we call upon Him in prayer as our Creator, our Father and our Saviour.

And when we pray in company with a congregation or a family our fervor is greater than if we prayed alone. The family is the foundation, or, as it is called, the "unit" of society. If the family is good, dutiful, ruled by Christian principle and Christian mor ality, then society itself, which is made up of families, will be sound and good Family prayers ; the worship of par Family prayers; the worship of par ents and children; regularly, all to gether, bring God's blessing and help. We do not say that it is impossible to preserve the faith of parents and children without family devotion, but they certainly will be a great deal more likely to preserve the faith, especially a lively faith, with than without that devotion. If the neglect of family devotion among Catholics does not indi cate a want or a waning of faith, i certainly does indicate a want of fidel ity, of zeal, and fervor and a truly Christian spirit. There is such a

thing as dead faith. That is, a man may have the faith, but it is so repressed and kept down and over whelmed with the spirit of the world with devotion to business and ambition for success and social distinction-that it is at times difficult to distinguish such a one from many devotees of the

world who have no faith at all. Is it not a sad fact that many of our lics-even those who a leading, influential ones-never think of gathering their families around the domestic altar, and bending their knees and bowing their hearts before that Divine Providence whom they at least theoretically acknowledge as their Creator, Preserver, Benefactor and Re deemer-the Author of all their bless ings and the source of those graces which are essential to the Christian life ?

in deepening the religious impressions and giving tone to the moral charac-We know of no more beautiful ter. and edifying sight on earth than that of a truly Christian family where religion is the pervading, controlling in-fluence. The duties of religion in such a family are not looked upon as a penance-an onerous and disagreeable duty to be shirked rather than performed. There is no unnatural constraint there. They do not wear long and solemn faces. All is cheerfulness and galety; peace and harmony reign among all the members. The duties of religion are performed as a matter of course, with cheerfulness punctuality and conscientious fidelity. At least once a day they assemble round the family altar and unite in fervent prayer and thanksgiving, one of the older children, perhaps, leading in the rosary and other prayers, and at table no one thinking for a moment of partaking of the bounties of Providence without at least a silent recogni

tion by the sign of the cross, which is as natural to the children as it is to eat Such a family is a little heaven upon earth. Now that Lent is over God grant that all our good Catholic families may continue to set less fervent ones a good example by keeping up family devotion throughout the year. -Sacred Heart Review.

The Duty of Parents.

. They (the parents) seem to forget that religion is the most important concern in this world and that, therefore, religious instruc-tion should have the first place and constitute the basis of education their children. The interests of this world seem to occupy a supreme place in the motives, desires and plans for their children. What is the conse quence? Why, the melancholy con sequence is that hundreds of our Cath olic children, whose religious educa tion has been neglected, when they grow up, are not prepared to meet the objections and plausible reasonings and seductive influences of a predominant Protestant society; they are easily led astray, become skeptical and finally lose their faith and, too often, it is to be feared, go to the bad entirely. Even comparatively

intelligent young persons are oftimes very much embarrassed by not being able to answer questions and meet objections by Protestants on the most common and familiar doctrines of their Church, as, for instance, infalli billity, transubstantiation, indulg ences, confession, etc.

The fact is, it is not enough for our young people to take for granted these familiar, every day truths of their re-ligion. They must understand them and be able to explain and give a reason for them, as well as to answer

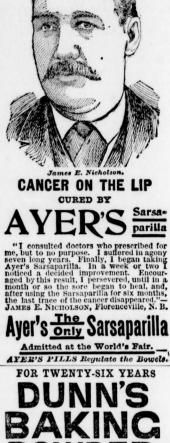
part of some parents to allow their children to "graduate" from the Sun-day school, and, we may say, from all formal religious instruction, too soon. Especially is this the case with the children who have been confirmed. It would almost seem as if the impres sion prevailed among some of our people that when a child was confirmed his salvation was secured for time and teternity, and he had nothing more to learn, whereas such children have only just started in the race; they have just enlisted in the warfare of life. They have received grace, indeed, to make them

"strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ," but the battle of life is before them, and their success will depend greatly upon their intel-lectual equipment. Therefore, let them be kept as long as possible in Sunday school, in the perseverance class and any other society or organization which may exist in the parish for carrying on the work of instruction until mind is thoroughly furnished and the young soldier completely equipped to fight the battle of life successfully. Sacred Heart Review.

JUNE 6, 1896.

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to this spot, you have before you the Holy House of Loretto, celebrated Holy throughout the entire world both by the sublime mysteries which were here accomplished and by the miracles without number of which it is the theatre. Here it was that Mary, the Virgin Mother, was born ; here she received the salutation of the Angel; here the Eternal Word of God was made flesh. In the year 1291, under the Pontificate of Nicholas IV., the angels bore it away from Palestine and placed it near Tersato in Illyrium. Three years later, at the commencement of the Pontificate of Boniface VIII., they transferred it again to this province of Picenum, in the neighborhood of the town of Recanati. It first appeared in the midst of a wood that crowned the summit of this very hill ; then after wo other translations, accomplished in the course of the same year, it rested at last on this spot, more than three hundred years ago. Since then this Holy House has ever been the object of the greatest veneration. Not only the inhabitants of the neighboring countries, the witnesses of the prodigy of its miraculous translation, but also those of the most distant lands, flock hither to visit it and to offer the tribute of their gifts and their homage. These venerable walls rest upon the earth without any foundation, and

A Hint to Subscribers.

The following, taken from the writings of the late Mr. Nye, is not by any means applicable in the case of the great majority of our subscribers. Those few (if any such there be) whose conduct it fairly describes will do well to read it with attention :

"A man may use a wart on the back of his neck for a collar button; ride on the back coach of a train to save interest on his money until the conductor comes around ; stop his watch at night to save the wear and tear; leave his 'i' and 't' without a dot or cross to save ink; but a man of this kind is a gentleman and a scholar compared to a fellow who will take a newspaper, and when asked to pay for it puts it into the post office and has it marked, 'Refused.'"

New Newspaper Game.

A new game, called the "Editor's Dalight," is played this way : Take a sheet of ordinary writing paper, fold it carefully and enclose a bank note sufficiently large to pay up all arrearages and one year in advance. Keep an eye on the editor, and if a smile adorns his face the trick works like a Now is the time to play the charm. joke.-Hazel Greene Herald.

Most coughs may be cured in a few hours, or at any rate in a few days, by the use of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. With such a prompt and sure remedy as this at hand, there is no need of prolonging the agony for weeks and months. Keep this remedy in your house.

The never-failing medicine, Holloway's Corn Cure, removes all kinds of corns, warts, etc.; even the most difficult to remove can not withstand this wonderful remedy.

There is truth in what our Protest

ant contemporary says about the influ ence of habit in social devotion. I Almighty God has promised His special blessing to two or three who are met together in His name, surely He will take special pleasure in manifesting His gracious presence to the family who in humble, common devotion seel

His blessing and return thanks for His manifold mercies. The very act of kneeling down to worship God has a tendency to keep alive a sense of de-pendence and obligation and to promote that spirit of true piety and devo tion which is so essential to the Christian life.

Surely no intelligent, right-feeling Catholic would ever think of being de terred from so important and essential a duty by a feeling of shame, espec from the fear of being called ially A consistent Catholic need pious.'

not be ashamed of being called pious in derision. It is the inconsistent. worldly, half-hearted Catholic who is open to the sneer of those who are like himself. There is nothing in true piety to be ashamed [of. On the contrary, that Catholic has most reason to be ashamed who habitually neglects family devotion and recognition of Providence at the family table.

It is customary for some families to have the special devotion of the rosary season of Lent and to sus during the pend it for the rest of the year. But if that devotion is good and useful dur ing Lent it is hard to see why it should not be equally good and useful during the whole year. Surely it should not be looked upon by any loyal Catholic or good Christian as an act of penance suitable only for the penitential sea-

son. There can be no doubt that family Results Tell the Story.

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