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Witness

Vol. LV., No. 14

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1905

PRICE FIVE CENTS

HOLY HOUSE OF LORETTO ELOQUENTLY DESCRIBED.

The first time, and the only time, that it has been our privilege to visit the wonderful shrine of Loretto, we entered by that marvelous road, the Potenge, richly wooded, rare in foliage, in coloring and in variety of sweet sounds. For several days before we started from the little fishing village, from which we prosaically took train, we had observed curious-looking carts and wagons, containing apparently all the worldly possessions of the poor "Contadini," who conducted them and who relieved the tedium of the journey by singing—as far as the air went, at least—for the meaning of the word did not reach us—some of the most lugubrious strains it has ever been my lot to hear.

"There," said my companion in tones of deepest compassion, "look at those poor creatures, obliged to give up home and country, poor things," thinking as did I also, that we had come across a band of emigrants on their way to the station. Several times on our journey I observed the same kind of wagon, and still thought the groups were indeed leaving their sunny land, to find work and food on some foreign shore, but, when quitting the railway, we turned our steps towards Loretto, the meaning of the procession was clear to us. Here were real pilgrims. They had been several days on the journey, and when they reached the Basilica, all went down on their knees, and, in this posture, recited prayers and litanies, made their way up the long aisle to the chapel containing the Holy House. It was September, too, nearing the 8th, and crowds of pilgrims from all parts were here for the keeping of the special festival.

But many picturesque spots did we pass before we actually arrived at the Basilica. Girls and women washing clothes with great splashing of water at the river, a pretty sight with rich background of mountains and forests. They stopped us to beg that we would recite an "Ave Maria" for them in the Holy House, which, needless to say, we promised to do. As we entered the quaint little city we were literally besieged by the vendors of rosaries, medals, pictures, tiny images and such like, who all pressed their wares upon us, making their supplication and commending their several articles of merchandise in French, Spanish, German and a little English, but we were very obturate.

It has been said, and I think truly, that few places have preserved more perfectly the character of their origin than has Loretto. The little town has risen up about the Holy House, which alone gives it the importance it now boasts, and the interest is centered expressly in the Holy House and in the magnificent structure which now contains it. Full of light and immensely spacious, the Basilica is adorned with images and symbols which breathe of joy and triumph. Its very statues appear living and exultant.

According to the opinions of many the desire of later days to complete what was evidently not in the mind of the founders of the Loretto Basilica, tends rather to destroy than to improve its special mark and character. It was evidently intended to be an edifice of metal and stone, almost exclusively. All the churches, they argue, of the latter end of the XV century distanced the painter's art. The walls, chapels, altars, porches, etc., were rich in bas-relief or stat-

uary, and the first sculptors of that epoch contributed to enrich the House of the Mother of God. Antonio Calcagnini chiselled the monument to Sixtus V., the Pope whose native city was in the neighboring marshes, and who, in 1586, made a city of the Borgo, or hamlet, which arose about the Church of the Miracle. Lombardo wrought the great bronze gates, Cendrea Sansovino, Tribolo, Baccio Bandinelli, Guglielmo della Porta, enriched with bas-reliefs the marble walls with which Sangallo enclosed those of the Holy House. Domenico Almo and Raffaele de Montelupo, crowned the roof with the history of her whose House was contained therein. Tiburzio Vergelli wrought in bronze the beautiful urn of the Baptismal Font. It is a triumph of XV century sculptor, and offers typical examples of those long-limbed, slender female figures which were so dear to Benvenuto Cellini, and which were held at that epoch as the ideal type of Italian grace and beauty. The impression produced by the outer Basilica is eminently one of richness and strength, which the later addition of the frescoes rather impairs than adds to. The church enclosing the House of the Mother of God should have been permitted to preserve intact the beauty with which it was clothed by the art of the XVI century. A magnificent white pile where triumphed only marvels of art in marble and bronze, indestructible materials, eternal almost, and most fitting the faith and art which animate them. In no other church, perhaps, if we except St. Peter's in Rome, is this impression of grandeur so marked. The principle is the same and the result is the same.

And this spectacle of beauty harmonizes well with the bent of the Latin races. Those who lament the want of dim Gothic cathedrals, and aver that the Italian Basilicas are not made for prayer, little know the temperament of this people. The marble steps surrounding the Holy House are deeply grooved with grooves worn by human knees. Thousands, nay, millions, of sorrow-laden souls come year by year to lay their load of affliction at the feet of the Mother, whom their warm faith renders so near, so dear and familiar to them, in this house where so many years of her mortal life on earth were spent. It is real prayer, and the light and splendor of the outer Basilica, the grandeur of the sculptured marbles, neither distract their simple earnestness nor offend their sorrow-stricken souls, and the marble, which remains seemingly indestructible, bears in itself the impress of their passing pilgrimage. Indeed, this continual stream of human suffering seems to infuse a new and mystic life into the old statues. The contadini of the Marches have carried something of their own mystic spirit into the rich Basilica whose great cupola seems to protect the entire region, and those far fields of Castelidardo, where the last brave battle for Papal independence was fought.

The old tradition is keenly alive amongst the population of the outlying hamlets, and the pallor of the complexion, with the peculiar fashion of draped garments which marks the inhabitants of the district, giving something of an Oriental air to the villages, strike the stranger with the idea of indeed entering an Eastern village, though this is of course a purely incidental circumstance.—Beatrice Della Chiesa, in New World.

Gladstone," says Archbishop Keane. "These were reasons enough to make me eager to see and know him, when I first visited Europe on my way to Rome as Bishop of Richmond. There were two other reasons of a more personal character. The first was that he was the most influential advocate of a special devotion to God the Holy Ghost, the devotion of the interior souls who stop not at the externals of religious duty, but are led by the grace of God into its inner spirit, of which St. Paul says: 'The love of God is poured forth in your hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to you.' 'The second reason was that he was the leading advocate of Catholic total abstinence. 'The Father Matthew of England.' The Providence of my life had led me to an active though humble share in these two great movements for the purification of Catholic morals and the elevation of Catholic piety. Therefore, did I stop in London to offer my homage to our great leader, and to derive fresh inspiration and zeal from personal contact with him. 'I lodged with the Oblates of St. Charles, the community of zealous missionaries whose superior he had been, and through the kindness of their then superior, the saintly Father Rawes, I was introduced to the great Cardinal. From the very first those two grand objects of pastoral endeavor in which we were both so profoundly interested, formed links that bound us in sympathy and affection for life. Thereafter he insisted on me always lodging at his house, that we might have better opportunities for familiar talk. And never shall I forget the blending of simplicity with greatness which made his home, as well as himself, unique in all the world. 'Often did we converse, away into the late hours of the night, on those momentous concerns of the Church and of the world, which formed the usual themes of his meditations. 'Not only in London, but throughout Great Britain he established the League of the Cross, numbering tens and tens of thousands of true-hearted children of the Church, men and women, who, at the voice of their great leader, and for love of Jesus crucified, had crushed under their feet the appetite for drink, and were laboring with him to save their fellow-Catholics from the curse, and to deliver Mother Church from the disgrace of it. Their annual rally in the Crystal Palace was an event which, up to his death, he never failed to honor with his presence. And even in his death he taught by example what his words and writings had so eloquently advocated. 'In his extreme weakness, his physicians urged him to take some stimulant. Calmly but almost sternly he refused. Then they gave him a drug that had a similar effect. Beckoning for his faithful attendant, Megr. Johnson, he whispered: 'That drug has flushed my face and dimmed the clearness of my brain, and I will take no more of it.' And so, with unclouded mind, and true to the League of the Cross, he passed to our Eternal Judge. 'In the midst of the aristocracy of England, who honored him as a prince among men, he was always a Catholic democrat. One day he said to me: 'I have been giving some statistics to my aristocratic friends. We Catholics in England now number about a million and three hundred thousand. I told them I would give them the three hundred thousand (the English who had held to the faith) and I would keep the million—the poor faithful Irish who, having kept the faith in their own country, had come over and saved it for us.' The last time that I bade him farewell, fearing that I would never see him again, I told him that among the many things for which I had to thank God, I was especially thankful for the intimate acquaintance with His Eminence that had been granted me. After some words of most gracious reply he added: 'Yes, I believe I am better understood and more kindly thought of in America than even in my own England.' And in America he looked for the highest and best results in his two chief aims: the apostolic spirit in the clergy and Christian sobriety, self-denial and virtue in all ranks of the Catholic laity. 'One day, in company with another American prelate, I spent the whole afternoon in most intimate communion with Cardinal Manning. The hours had slipped away unnoticed, and the shades of evening were on us ere we knew it. As we left the house, my companion turned to me, and, standing still, in the intensity of his emotion, exclaimed: 'For the first time in my life I have felt what it was to sit at the feet of a great man.'"

MSGR. KEANE ON MANNING.

"While I was still a young priest, Cardinal Manning was renowned over the world, both as the learned, eloquent and majestic head of the Catholic hierarchy in England, and because of the leading part he had taken in securing the definition of Papal Infallibility by the Vatican Council and in defending the dogma against the unfair attacks of Mr.

CHILDREN AFTER SCHOOL DAYS.

The above is the general intention for October recommended by His Holiness. We reproduce from the Canadian Messenger the able article from the pen of the Rev. E. J. Devine, S. J.:

The real object of education is to give children resources that will endure as long as life endures; habits that time will improve on, not destroy; occupation that will render sickness tolerable, solitude pleasant, age venerable, life more dignified and useful, and death less terrible. The famous writer who penned these words—Sydney Smith—knew well that the effects of sound education should persevere long after a child had closed his career at school. What benefit is it to youth if the habits of virtue, barely formed during the impressionable school-years, disappear under the first adverse pressure that is brought to bear against them? However, no sane educator may seek for effects greater than the causes that produced them: only time and careful cultivation can give him the results he is looking for. A youthful body must wait for years to attain to manly vigor; and thus it is with the youthful soul, whose education is not complete when its schooling is ended. The seeds of virtue are undoubtedly sown; but those tiny grains already sprouting in favorable soil, need careful watching and tending, if the roots are to sink and spread. There are many fathers and mothers who think that their duty is done when their children have reached the end of their school-days. This is a strange error; a child's training then is merely begun. He still needs to be guided, encouraged, strengthened. Religious instruction, good example, pious practices, are to be continued in the years that follow. These are precisely the years when life presents itself to a young man in new phases; when he begins to reflect more deeply; when the essential difference between right and wrong, lawful and unlawful, virtue and vice, forms new and vivid concepts in his mind. New sources of knowledge, not always healthy, are opening up to him. This knowledge must be controlled; else its very abundance may overwhelm him. The child's mind, through lack of experience, is not able to think, judge, reason; and even if it could, the untrained will, drawn into so many alluring paths, is neither free to lead, nor prone to follow, whither it should go. It is an uncommonly hard task to put an old head on young shoulders; hence the absolute need of direction for the young after school-days. When a farmer plants a sapling by the roadside, he puts a strong guard-rail around it, to prevent injury to it from outside sources. After a few seasons, the sapling, grown in strength, may brave the winds and storms; the guard is removed, and the tree begins its career alone. Similar methods should be followed by parents and others having the responsibilities of children. The age fraught with danger to young souls is hardly the school age, especially in centres where Catholic teachers supplement the watchfulness of parents. The dangers lie hidden in the years immediately following the abandonment of school. These are the years—say from fourteen to twenty—when bread-winning begins, when youth is left to its own devices, when the tendencies of character and temperament are asserting themselves. Too much care cannot be taken to cultivate the virtues that are still only in germ. If fostering care on the part of parents and guardians is needed over those who have had the advantages of Catholic teaching and religious training, how much more do they stand in need of it who have passed their tender years under the blighting influences of non-sectarian and public schools? Institutions from which religion and religious instruction are excluded, are destructive of the basis of morality, even though positive doctrinal errors are not taught; the very absence of religious influence suffices to do the baneful work. The human frame may be destroyed merely by poison, but quite as surely by want of nourishment. Human

IRELAND; HER FAITH AND HER FUTURE.

Summary of Archbishop Ryan's Address at Queenstown.

Speaking at Queenstown, previous to his departure for home, Archbishop Ryan, pointing to the cathedral, said that it was a great monument to religious zeal. It would be a great cathedral in any city in the world, and that Ireland in her poverty should be able to aid as she had done in the building of that church was a touching tribute to her spirit of faith; for though aid had been forthcoming from beyond the water, yet without the perseverance shown at home, and without the faith that inspired liberality, and without the poor, the offerings of the rich could never erect such a temple. It was faith indeed the liberality and effected wonders which the outside world could not understand, and because of this misconception it was that some people blamed them, and said to them, "Why not use the money for other objects?" Dearer than any other object, as the very foundation of all prosperity, personal and national, was the faith that inspired Christian civilization, and Catholicity was the only faith that perpetuated what it inspired. It was that deep abiding faith that would in the future produce the changes that he firmly believed were in store for Ireland. He believed that Ireland had the ingredients of a great nation. She had the religious and moral foundation, without which a people could never be permanently great. People might become great as the Roman Empire was great, but greatness to be perpetuated required a mastery over human passions. These moral elements Ireland pre-eminently possessed, and wherever Irishmen went they carried with them that abiding faith and hope and liberality which characterized them. Ireland had given to America and Australia Bishops, priests and nuns, and it was only fair the country which had done so much for them should receive back something at least to help her to build her cathedrals and her parish churches, and to aid her in the work of elevating a religion to spread and extend which she had done so much for the lands beyond the seas.

Speaking to the address, His Grace said he would certainly endeavor to do what was in his power in the mission that had been given him as a Christian Bishop, and also to do all in his power for the dear country of his birth. As he journeyed through those beautiful vales and saw those green fields, the scenes of his youth, and scenes which though not of his youth were dear to him because they were scenes in Ireland, he thought to himself, was it possible that this land should be abandoned by so many of her strong and should-be-hopeful children? Everything, however, was in the hands of God. Sometimes they did not see His wise designs. What was best for the individual and best for the nation was best for all time. That was best which was best for eternity. The Almighty had His designs in making their nation a nation of apostles. Their countrymen had carried the faith to the ends of the earth, and when the designs of God were accomplished in this respect He would bless a glorious young nation. He believed that a day of hope was coming for Ireland. The local councils of the country had shown in their limited extent—the ability of local communities to govern themselves and if the people had proved themselves fitted for this government in miniature there should be an extension of the law, and the nation should be allowed to govern itself. Irishmen governed in other lands, and Irish ability, Irish energy, Irish purity, Irish faith and Irish push had made their mark in America and Australia, and why not in Ireland? Therefore, let them hope that the days of her sorrows would be few, and that, retaining the faith that sanctified her in the beginning, she should be sanctified again and be again a great nation.

Why, indeed? The Sacred Heart Review refuses to join in the enthusiasm shown by some other Catholic papers over the number of young men with Irish and Catholic names who are prominent in athletics in the big non-sectarian i. e., Protestant Colleges. "Why," it asks, "why are not these Cooney and Doyle and O'Briens and McCarty and Driscoll and Crowley and Mahers and Donalys attending colleges of their own faith?"—Fortnightly Review.

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