

The Holy Coat.

At this moment hundreds of thousands of people of all nationalities are wending their way to Treves in Germany, there to pay their respect to the Holy Coat, which is now on exhibition in the Cathedral of Our Lady. A correspondent at present making a pedestrian tour of Europe under date of Treves, August 8th, writes:

During a ramble along the Moselle River, I could not resist the temptation of visiting the quaint, ancient town of Treves, that lies so beautifully cradled between two ridges of vineyards.

Leaving my knapsack and staff at an humble inn, I went out in search of the remains of old Roman monuments, for which the town is famous. Returning in the evening, tired and dusty, the innkeeper, a stout, jovial German with a round, peck-marked face, enticed me into a conversation about how I liked the town, of which he seemed to be not a little proud. He asked me if I had seen the "Holy Coat." I shook my head. "Go there by all means," he said, shaking his huge pipe; "don't leave Treves without seeing the 'Holy Coat.' It was exhibited in 1844—before you saw the light—and drew one million pilgrims from all parts of Europe to Treves." He had become quite excited during the preceding conversation and asked his wife to bring us some genuine Moselle wine from his cellar. We drank it out of ordinary water glasses, according to the custom there, and excellent it was indeed.

"At the time of the exhibition of 1844 I was only a mere boy!" Then he denounced in bitter words the enemies of the church who also wished to do away with the "Holy Coat." It seems that in 1844 a chaplain named Ronge, who had been excommunicated from the church for his liberalism, published an open letter to the Pope denouncing the worship of the "Holy Coat" as idolatry. Through his endeavors he originated the German Catholic Church, which split into different sects and eventually died out.

My host was a staunch Catholic, like almost all the population, and crossed himself fervently every time he mentioned anything sufficiently pious to deserve it.

"And," continued the jovial innkeeper, "why should I not, above all others, believe in the miraculous power of the 'Holy Coat,' as it brings me so many visitors during the summer season. If you have no objection, my daughter, Lisbeth, will accompany you to the cathedral, where it is preserved; we are acquainted with the chaplain!"

Early the next day I set out, under the guidance of Lisbeth, who, although no great beauty, boasted two heavy plaits of blonde hair neatly combed back, and fair skin and red cheeks; she was neatly dressed in a white chintz dotted with little rosebuds, that made quite a pretty effect.

I asked her if she thought the "Holy Coat" was genuine.

"Oh, there is no doubt about it. Some society in Frankfurt, who can be depended upon, examined the coat and agreed that St. Helena must have brought the coat back with her from Jerusalem, where she had made a pilgrimage, and presented it to Agrotius, who was bishop of Treves at that time." Then she gave me a suspicious look, considering me quite a pagan, no doubt, as I was ignorant of things which were as familiar to her as the alphabet.

We called at the chaplain's house. He was a little old man, rather shabbily dressed, with a wrinkled, clean-shaven face, a shuffling gait, continually coughing and murmuring to himself. He was not over polite to us, only honoring us with a scrutinizing glance as to whether the remuneration would be worth his labor.

The cathedral, looming up with its old, weather-beaten walls, that have resisted centuries of religious wars, recalled to me the struggle that the Christian church had to go through until its name became identical with civilization. Then we entered. Only a few peasant girls and some old men and women were kneeling in the aisles.

We went straight up to the high altar. "There it is," said Lisbeth, pointing to a beautiful shrine of wrought gold, half hidden from the curious gaze.

The chaplain opened it and disclosed a very old, threadbare, hand-woven piece of cloth, supported by a lining, and apparently repeatedly patched up. It hung from a golden rod which ran through it from arm to arm. The little old chaplain began to tell us in a monotonous voice, often interrupted by his hectic cough, what is known to all travelers. "The coat had been spun from lambs' wool by the Blessed Virgin and woven into a garment by Mary Magdalen on the Mount of Olives. It is seamless—as the Scriptures describe it, with the words: 'The coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.'"

I scrutinized the coat in the meantime. The color was hardly discernible, but seemed to have been originally gray. It had short sleeves, a round opening for the head, and resembled somewhat the tunic of a priest, being without any ornament.

The chaplain talked for half an hour, for the coat boasts of a long history, intermingled with all sorts of pious legends and old-time traditions, which the student should look up in some religious encyclopaedia.

It occurred to me that in any other but its gorgeous surroundings the coat would not be thought worthy of a glance and would soon find its way to a junk shop. I also thought it strange that garments could be preserved for so long a time and then the shortness of the coat made me suspicious as to whether it could ever have been a Jewish garment.

A fit of coughing, more ardent than the preceding, finished the chaplain's discourse. He closed the shrine carefully and then showed us some other relics, among them some hand-written documents in which the "Holy Coat" was mentioned for the first time, a small piece of ivory with a curious carving representing the ceremony attending the arrival of the coat in the cathedral of Treves. As yet this is the most important evidence which proves the genuineness of the Holy Coat beyond all doubt.

"But how is it there are twenty different 'Holy Coats' existing?" I queried.

"Why shouldn't there be? Do you think our Saviour only wore one coat in his lifetime?" was the blunt reply.

Then I handed him a fee which he accepted with a faint smile and grumblingly shuffled away through the half dark aisles.

"Will the coat ever be exhibited again?" I asked Lisbeth.

"Yes, they expect to soon, but our holy father, the Pope, is tardy in giving his consent. His Holiness is trying his best to bring it about. It would be a real blessing for the folks of Treves."

And apparently the present bishop, D. Rorim, has succeeded in gaining the Pope's approval, as an exhibition is announced beginning probably on the same day of St. Helena, 16th of August, and lasting for six weeks during this summer.

"My grandma could tell you a good deal about it," my companion informed me. "I should like to hear as much as I can about the 'Holy Coat,'" I answered, and so it happened that we went to see her grandma. We found her in a humble but sunny little room, with old fashioned furniture and sand strewn over the white floor. She sat knitting at the window, peering out over the flower pots.

"Oh, my, you want to hear about the great pilgrimage in 1844. I really don't know where to begin. Eleven bishops were here, and every day somebody arrived of whom the people could say: 'Oh, he is a well-known man, you must know.' I have forgotten their names. What a crowd there was. Oh, my, one saw so many strange looking people. Times will never see anything like it again. There were Russians, with long straight hair and flowing beards. We hadn't the fine hotels then that we have now, but even they would not have been large enough to shelter the crowd. But all the private families took in boarders, for they paid very well."

"Give the gentleman a glass of wine," she told Lisbeth, with the hospitality of the Germans who offer something to eat and drink whenever they find an opportunity.

"Arnoldi was our bishop in 1844. He said high mass almost every other day. The cathedral was always decorated with fresh flowers. Special altars were erected. The priests put on beautiful vestments, the choir of boys was enlarged. The processions were gorgeous—everything glittered in gold and precious stones. The holy coat was carried under a baldaquin, with great ceremony, from altar to altar. Beautiful little children in white dresses strewed flowers and the altar boys swung the censers, and the incense was such an expensive one—oh my, yes! And thousands kneeling and praying—it was a great sight! and as for the miracles that were performed, they are too many to be counted. Many old people in this town could quiet all disbelievers. I had a friend myself who was ailing with consumption—the doctors had given her up. 'Bettie,' I said to her, 'you go and pray to the holy coat; that will cure you.' So she did."

"Did she get better?" I asked.

"She lives across the way. There she is at the window!"

So we chatted for hours.

The following morning I again seized my "knapsack and staff," took a hearty leave of my kind host and his family and pursued my pedestrian tour. Walking along the Moselle River I could not help thinking of the Holy Coat and all the legends and traditions attached to it, and how strange

to me that since the death of St. Helena, 328 A. D., I believe, until its first exhibition in 1196—a lapse of 800 years almost—nothing can be said for or against its origin. Suddenly it is mentioned as lying hidden in a stone crypt. Who knows if the whole legend has not been invented by some witty monks and endorsed by some ambitious bishops, who wished to raise his diocese in importance.

Of course the great feature of Treves nowadays, and the one thing with which it is always associated, is the Holy Coat, or seamless garment of Christ. This celebrated relic is now in the treasury of the cathedral. The legend of its origin is as follows: It was found by St. Helena, a British lady and the mother of Constantine the Great. St. Helena was born at Colchester. She became a Christian at the age of 18. It was she who discovered the true cross and the other instruments of the passion. The true cross was distinguished from those of the two thieves by a miracle, namely, the healing of a sick person who was touched by the three crosses in succession. The nails used in the crucifixion were also found. These were three in number. For this reason many pictures of the crucifixion represent Christ's feet nailed to the cross by one nail only. One of the nails St. Helena put in the helmet of her son Constantine. Another one was thrown in the sea to appease a storm and was afterward recovered by a miracle. St. Helena presented the seamless garment, said to have been woven by the Virgin Mary herself, to the city of Treves, where she had resided for many years. The earliest written testimony to this effect is found in the "Lesta Trevorum." St. Helena is said to have presented the relic to the Church of Treves during the episcopate of Agilinus, 314-334. Several other notices of the Holy Coat are found in documents mounting nearly up to the twelfth century. But the most remarkable and interesting piece of evidence given in support of the authenticity of the relic is an ancient ivory belonging to the cathedral. This ivory was for some time lost, but was recovered in 1844. The Emperor is represented on it seated at the church door and awaiting the arrival of a procession closed by a chariot in which are two ecclesiastics guarding a chest. Above the chariot is the face of Christ, by which some relation between the Saviour and the contents of the chest seem indicated. The ivory was examined in 1846 by the Archaeological Society of Frankfurt, with the result of fixing its date at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. The relic was translated from the choir to the cathedral in 1106. After an interval of more than 300 years from 1312 to 1512 and on several other occasions in the sixteenth century, for the veneration of the faithful. During the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the relic was deposited in the Castle of Ehrenbreitstein, and afterward at Augsburg. In 1810, by permission of Napoleon, the Bishop of Treves, Mgr. Mannay, took the relic back from Augsburg to his own city, and, in spite of the confusion of the times, many pilgrims, numbering over 200,000, visited Treves. But the most striking and successful exposition was that of 1844, when eleven bishops and more than a million of the laity flocked to Treves from all sides during the period from Aug. 18 to Oct. 6, for which the Holy Coat was exhibited. Several miraculous cures were reported, together with the joy and the piety of the throng. Certain Catholics took offense and wrote against the authenticity of the relic. Among these were Czerski, an ecclesiastic of Posen, and Ronge, a suspended priest of Breslau. A long controversy ensued. In the course of which many seceded from the Church and formed a German Catholic Church. The historian, Herr Von Sybel, published a book showing that there are no less than twenty seamless garments, each claiming to have been that worn by the Saviour. The most celebrated of these are in Argenteuil and in the Church of the Lateran at Rome.

His Vacation.

"Did I have a good time on my vacation?" echoed Fogg. "Of course I did. To be sure, I nearly starved to death and tried to sleep in a bed which it would be a flattery to call a rack. But what of that? I had my name in the paper! I won't deny that they spelled my name wrong and gave me brand-new initials; but then you can't expect to have every thing perfect in this world."

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A Pet Tiger.

(From The Art Journal.)

In 1857 two officers of the Fifth Lancers while on a shooting expedition in the Lerar encountered a fine tigress with cubs. They killed the tigress, but not before she had severely lacerated Captain Thackwell's arm, so severely, indeed, as to render amputation necessary, the operation, unhappily resulting in the death of the unfortunate officer. The two cubs were captured and taken to Lucknow, where they used to play about the Fifth Lancers' mess. One, however, choked himself with a lump of raw meat which he had purloined. The surviving cub was presented by Captain Chally to the Madras Fusiliers, who gave him the name of "Plassey," and constituted him their regimental pet.

Plassey became very tame, and was almost friendly terms with the men. He lived at the officers' mess, and when allowed to be at large he amused himself by stalking a small donkey which was wont to wander about the mess compound. He was also introduced to an antelope and a dog, with whom he lived amicably while the regiment remained in India. Plassey accompanied the One Hundred and Second to England, being granted a free passage by the captains of Her Majesty's ships Junna and Himalaya. Two young leopards and his canine ally were his fellow passengers. Plassey landed with the regiment at Dover, where suitable quarters were provided for him in the main fosses of the citadel beneath the officers' mess.

There, Plassey lived a happy life with his friend, the dog, his "personal attendant" being the adjutant's groom, who fed and looked after him. At meal time Plassey always allowed the dog to have the first "go-in," but when he thought his canine companion had taken a fair share he would give him a gentle pat with his paw as a reminder. When Plassey was nearly full-grown, and in the zenith of his popularity with the Fusiliers, an old lady resident of Dover wrote to the General, commanding the district, and stated that she had seen Plassey disembark, and that ever since she had remained a prisoner in her house, fearing to go out lest Plassey should have escaped and be roaming about town.

So frequent were this old lady's letter and complaints that at last the General felt compelled to take notice of them, and so poor Plassey was sent off to the Zoological Gardens, accompanied in his exile by his faithful dog. Plassey developed into a magnificent animal, and never outgrew his amiability. He was several times visited by an officer of the One Hundred and Second (from whom the writer obtained the above particulars), whom he invariably remembered with affectionate remembrance. Plassey died at the "Zoo" in the Spring of 1877, and his head and skin were long preserved in the officers' mess of the One Hundred and Second.

For sleeplessness, a physician recommends a light meal of plain food just before retiring.

"Why, what hour is this to be coming to bed, Mary?" her mother cried out, as she tried to sneak past her door. "Well, George said 'good-night,' four hours ago, and then I said 'goodnight.' Then he told me he wouldn't let any woman have the last word and I wouldn't let him have the last word, so we kept it up." "Well, how did it end?" "We both simply said 'good-morning.'"