

The True Witness



Vol. Senate Reading Room

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1907

PRICE FIVE CENTS

PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES.

Rev. M. L. Shea, Gives Vivid Picture of Famous Shrine.—Sincere Devotion and Ardent Faith Characterize the Attitude of the Pilgrims.

Monday, Aug. 19th, after a visit to the Church of our Lady of Victory in Paris, I gathered up my traps and made ready for a pilgrimage to Lourdes. It was still daylight when I got aboard the train, and ere darkness had set in I was journeying through the country of the Loire. The route may be compared to a splendid panorama. Whether one looks to the right or to the left, the eye continually catches glimpses of landscapes that are wonderfully beautiful. There are pretty woodlands and green pastures, undulating hills and neat little villages, the tinned spires of the parish churches rising above the rest of the houses along the way. Daylight is now fading; the darkness is becoming more pronounced, and as the hours advance our garrulous "compagnons de voyage" grow tired and sleepy. Soon the shades are pulled down, the blue mantle drawn over the light, and all are lulled into slumber.

When I awoke in the morning a brilliant sun was shining in at the window of my compartment. The merry birds were about, but their song was drowned in the noise of the train; the peasantry, too, were making their way to the fields, so that the hour for the day's task had arrived.

At 8 a.m. out train steamed into Lourdes—the great center of Catholic devotion in Europe,—and was quickly followed by another, while a third train announced itself by whistling in the distance. Thus they continued to come for hours until the number of faithful pilgrims had run up in the thousands.

Each pilgrimage was accompanied by many priests, and from what I can learn they were mostly from France and Belgium.

The population of the little town, so superbly situated at the base of the Pyrenees, and famous for its pilgrimages, is usually about 9000 inhabitants, but that day there must have been upwards of twenty thousand within its limits, and none could help but admire the ardent faith, and the sincere devotion of the humble pilgrims as they performed the different exercises in connection with the pilgrimage. It was again additional evidence of the fact that the people of France have not given a deaf ear to the appeal of the Blessed Virgin: "Go and tell the priests to build here a church; I wish that they should come here in procession; go and drink at the fountain and bathe therein;" but on the contrary it was a public manifestation of their sentiments of loyalty and devotion and an expression of love for our Lady that none could gainsay.

By special privilege, I was able to say the Holy Mass at the main altar, in the magnificent Basilica dedicated to our Lady, and in presence of a great multitude of pilgrims.

Then I joined the pilgrimage of La Provence, which counted upwards of 1200 pilgrims, under the guidance of the distinguished Bishop of Digne, Dr. Castellani, which moved slowly towards the statue of the Blessed Virgin singing the beautiful hymn of the Provence:

O Mary,
Do thou protect
Our country,
Be thou our help
And our consolation.

Round the grotto stood the awe-stricken pilgrims, while near the pool, oh! how great the piety and the recollection of the multitude. You hear those Christian supplications in favor of the afflicted who were there in numbers, and the human voice could not give expression more intensely than that coming from the breasts of thousands:

O Mary, heal them, we pray thee.

Afterwards we visited the hospital where Bishop Grallier is presiding over a procession of the Blessed Sacrament before the departure of the sick and the infirm for the Grotto. And there, as around the Grotto and in the holy places of Lourdes, we

contemplate with the deep feeling the very extraordinary devotedness of those angels of charity who attend the afflicted with a mother's love.

Then followed a series of sermons by the priests to their pilgrims and the recitation of the beads.

Awaiting the procession of the afternoon we see at the foot of the statue of Our Lady groups of children, under the direction of the Sisters of Nevers, the graceful little orphan in their white hoods, recalling thus the remembrance of Bernadette—"the majesty of innocence," as recorded by Henry Lasserre.

The procession was formed and moved with splendour and impressiveness. Fully ten to twelve thousand people were in the line which led to the Grotto, singing the sweet "Ave Maria."

We now enter the hall where the cures are examined, and find a Mr. Le Bozec, who had come with the national pilgrimage of Paris. His sickness was consumption in the third degree: hemoptysis; state of emaciation. Enlisted in November, 1895; bronchitis in 1896; spitting tinged with blood; discharged with No. 2 certificate in March, 1896. He was treated first in the Laennec Hospital, then in the Lariboisiere; he suffered from continuous smotherings. Arriving at Lourdes with the National pilgrimage, he is bathed in the pool, 10th August; a violent contraction of the guttural nerves seems to smother him entirely; then he feels better, and is free from all blood spitting. The case was a most interesting one to study.

Another case was that of Vincent Filippi, of Paris, seven years blind; he sought in vain for a cure in different hospitals in Paris; waiting impatiently for a bath in the pool, and declares himself cured. His was time will surely place its signature in confirmation of the fact.

We saw other cases, of children, for example, but as human prudence requires great reserve in speaking about these very serious facts called miracles, I wish to register only cases seen and examined by doctors present, who specially pointed out to us those cases as interesting cures.

Solemn Vespers was chanted in the Church of the Holy Rosary, and an eloquent, impressive and interesting sermon was preached by Bishop Dubois.

After the torchlight procession, it remained for us to attend to the fourth and last part of the pilgrimage to Lourdes—The Adoration by night.

At the stroke of midnight the doors of the Church of the Rosary are opened; Masses follow Masses, and new crowds of the faithful hourly come and go, whilst the illuminated Cross on the top of the "Jer" shines in all its splendor.

The scene is one of wonderment. I have no words to describe it. But I will say that it matters not with what preconceived ideas you approach the sacred shrine, whether you believe or disbelieve in the intercession of the Saint and in the miraculous effect of the prayers offered up, you cannot fail to be stirred into emotion by the sanctity of the place and by its surroundings.

A devout Catholic visiting the shrine at Lourdes, is immediately wafted away to the "Ages of Faith," when the pilgrim, with staff in hand and cross on breast, trod the weary paths that led to the great centres of devotion; he bends before the shrine, in presence of the more recent paraphernalia of the distressed and the afflicted that tell of hundreds of cures operated, and he rises up a better man, a truer Christian and a more fervent Catholic. If a man has no faith; if he be an unbeliever—an atheist—he cannot fail to admire the deep, sincere and earnest faith of the multitude of pilgrims that he will meet at this great "centre of devotion."

The Late James M. Walsh.

Prominent Knight of Columbus Succumbs to Pneumonia.

(Los Angeles.—California Tidings, 20th Sept.)

The Catholic community of Cananea, Mexico, suffered a distinct loss in the death of Mr. James M. Walsh, a native of the city of Quebec, son of Mr. M. F. Walsh, Ottawa, and brother of Walter D. Walsh, Los Angeles. The immediate cause of death was pneumonia, after an illness of exactly one month.

Mr. Walsh was one of the most esteemed men in Cananea; he was a charter member of Bisbee Council, K. of C., prior to which time he was a member of Butte Council, Montana; he was also subscriber to the Tidings for the past several years; he was an ardent worker in all matters pertaining to Church affairs of the church there, and it was largely through his untiring efforts that the Americans were afforded a commodious place of worship in Cananea. Wherever there was any good to be done Mr. Walsh was always first on hand, and his demise will leave a void that it will be difficult to fill. After being embalmed, the body, at the request of the parish priest, was removed to the latter's residence, where it lay in state for forty-eight hours.

Funeral services were held on Sunday in the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Cananea. A large number of Knights and American Elks journeyed from Bisbee, Ariz., to be present at the obsequies. A mass of requiem was celebrated by the pastor, Rev. P. O'Dell Russell. Prior to the absolution Father Russell spoke very feelingly of the deceased. He said in part:

"I have been a priest for twelve years and have had a cosmopolitan experience. I have seen service and done duty in Asia, Africa, Philippines, Cuba and the Isthmus of Panama. I have seen death in every shape on the battlefield, in the hospitals and in the monasteries, but never have I felt as I did on Friday last when I bid my friend James Walsh, of the Father, who created thee—in the name of Jesus Christ, who sanctified thee, and the Holy Ghost who dwelt in thee, and never before did I say those words with the same assurance that this prayer would be heard at once by Almighty God.

"Jim' Walsh was a good Elk and I know he was a good Knight of Columbus, because he was a good Catholic, but I will not call him a good fellow. If a good fellow is one who will stand for anything, listen to anything and go the limit, then he was not a good fellow—but if a good fellow is one who stood for a principle, and who would not stand for anything that he thought was wrong, who would always extend the hand of fellowship to those who needed it, regardless of their creed or their condition in life, who always had a cheering word and a helping hand for them, then he was a good fellow.

"I have no hesitation in saying that I have lost my best friend in Cananea, and you owe this church to his untiring zeal and energy for the glory of God."

The remains were brought to Los Angeles and arrived here on Monday. On Tuesday morning the funeral was held from St. Vincent's Church with a solemn requiem mass. The remains were interred in Calvary Cemetery.

in that cheering sight we see a promise of the early return to the practice of their faith and the vindication of its honor by the people who bear the noble name of Franks.

For the present, Most Holy Father, we respectfully invite you to turn from the saddening scenes that surround you, and to take courage at the sight of the ripening harvest of the faith in the lands far off—the God's spirit has made fruitful for His glory and His Church's welfare.

There you shall be pleased to find children who glory in the name of Catholic, and who, enjoying under free constitutions the priceless boon of genuine liberty, deem it a sacred duty to promote the honor of the Holy See, and increase its power for good by their contributions.

It is, therefore, Most Holy Father, the humble wish of our devoted Australian children to enhance in their own measure the honor of St. Peter's chair, and to strengthen your arduous work which recent calamitous events in France have made one of urgent need. In order to promote both these objects we purpose this year to make the annual offering of Peter's Pence from our diocese larger than usual.

While praying God long to preserve your Holiness to His Church, we earnestly beg your blessing on ourselves, our clergy and faithful people, and on all the Australian Commonwealth.

The address was signed by Cardinal Moran and all the Archbishops and Bishops, and the Right Rev. Abbot of New Norcia.

The dreaded twentieth of September passed without any grave breach of the peace. The Government seems to be awake to the necessity of showing itself capable of keeping some kind of order. The perpetrators of the assault upon Cardinal Merry del Val were arrested.

Their capture revealed the activities of a band of anarchists who, fraternizing with socialists and republicans, are all one as to the antipathetic part of their programme.

The saddest part yet of this whole movement against religion is the Government's collusion with the subversives, as indicated by a circular letter of the Minister of Education, Signor Rava, in which, assuming that all the scandals badly published about certain religious schools were true (though proven false), he ordered a general and particular inspection of all the religious schools in Italy preparatory to taking legal measures for their suppression.

It bodes more evil than seems on the surface, for, of course, the investigation is not and does not mean to be an honest inspection.

They are looking for excuses, and will find them, no matter how hard it will be to twist circumstances.

The children of Italy are struck at in this circular. They will be the sufferers even more than the religious.

The fathers and mothers of Italy had better look to it in time.

One happy feature always of the life of the Father of all the faithful has been the reception, day after day, of groups of his children from near and far, of all complexions and tongues, coming as representative bodies to lay their love and loyalty at the feet of the shepherd, and to receive in return assurance of his love and care and his blessing for themselves and families, for their country and kin.

It is a fine old patriarchal custom, and gave joy and comfort to the heart of many a Pontiff in hours of trial.

The stories of these receptions are a literature in themselves. They are always read with pleasure, for, though they are a daily occurrence, they are each time a new experience to the happy recipient—an event in their lives full of memories like that of their first Communion day or the wedding day.

They were, too, a great bond of unity between the Shepherd and his vast flock with whose interests he was thus kept in close touch. The warm heart of Pius X. took special delight in these pilgrimages, and showed himself always the gentle Shepherd of Christendom to each and every one of every group. Yet, while he had a personal happiness in these meetings, he never failed to turn the pilgrims' thoughts to the fact that it was to the shrine of Peter they were paying fealty.

Judge, then, how hard it must have been for the Holy Father to order the suspension of these pilgrimages for the months of August, September, October and November, lest his visiting children be exposed to insult and inconvenience from a small but noisy and active crowd of ruffians who are outraging Roman citizenship and Roman hospitality, and who seem to have the very demon behind them, so violently are they against everything religious.

A late number of Rome says: "Early in November Rome is to pass through the turmoil of another municipal election, which will decide whether the Eternal City is to be handed over for a number of years to the forces of disorder and irreligion. One may still hope that the storm will pass and that the coming year may open peacefully

Abbey's Effervescent Salt

Clergymen Need Just such a Tonic as Abbey's Salt. It gently regulates stomach, liver and bowels—helps appetite and digestion—strengthens and invigorates the whole system.

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enough to permit Catholics from all parts of the world to pay their tribute of homage and affection to Pius X. here in the centre of Christendom.

"But in any case it is well to remember that there are many ways of keeping the Pope's Jubilee besides that of coming here to Rome. His Holiness himself has declared that he would wish to see it observed by a renewed activity in carrying on the good works that have been founded everywhere in the interests of religion, of youth, of the poor and the suffering. Then again Catholics can well express their feelings by local demonstrations of rejoicing. And finally, for one person who can make a pilgrimage to Rome from English-speaking countries there are thousands who can afford to make a special offering of Peter's Pence, however small, for the occasion."

There is an extraordinary emigration from Italy. No other country in Europe has so sad a tale of its children fleeing in such numbers. Over 2000 a day it averaged during the year 1906, and the returns for 1907 will not be less.

There must be "something rotten in the State of Denmark" when the people flee from perhaps the finest and most productive land in the world.

Cardinal Vincenzo Vannutelli is just home from the great Catholic Congress in Metz and Wurtzburg. He is enthusiastic over the fervor of German Catholics; their splendid management of the details of the Congresses, and the public processions. He was gratified, too, by the great deference shown him by public officials everywhere he went in Germany as the Pope's representative. All of which was very pleasing to the Holy Father and very creditable to the Germans, Catholic and Protestant.

Don Perosi is hard at work, in spite of poor health, on a musical composition which will enshrine Florence in a grand orchestral symphony as he has already done with Rome and Naples. He says in a letter to the press only a day or two ago:

"I intend, if God gives me health, to write a good deal of symphonic music, in which compositions I find a special artistic satisfaction, and by giving such music names of cities of Italy I have an opportunity of offering my modest tribute of great affection for the country which gave me birth."

This is the priest-composer who was mobbed by anti-clericals who were so patriotic, but who bring only disgrace on the Italy that Perosi works hard to honor.

Mgr. Kahmani, Patriarch of the Syrian Catholics in Turkey, has written the following statement with regard to the position of Catholics in the Ottoman Empire:

"Our government accords us full and complete liberty of worship. The regime of the cities every Christian confession draws up a list of its adherents. Each year these lists are published and presented to the authorities who verify them through Turkish functionaries. When the lists are shown to be correct—and there is nothing objectionable in the system of verification adopted—permission is given to build a church after complying with a few simple formalities. Never has an authorization been denied us either for the foundation of a school or a bishop's residence. In many cities processions are freely allowed to pass through the streets and the other manifestations of worship are also free. Thus in funerals the priest accompanies the cortege which is always preceded by the cross. Nay, more—the bishop enjoys certain distinctions and privileges. They form part of the administrative council of the province and take a most important part in the elections for this council as well as in those of the Judiciary Assesors."

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Notes from Rome.

ROME.—The following letter has been sent to the Holy Father by the Episcopate of the Australian Commonwealth:

Most Holy Father:

Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, and the other Bishops and Archbishops of the Australian Commonwealth, with devoted attachment to the Chair of Peter, and loyal affection for your Holiness, wish to make known to you our sentiments and those of our clergy and faithful people in the present crisis of the Church of France.

We are filled with grief at the sad spectacle now presented to the Christian world by a nation whose rulers are raging against God and against His Church, have trampled on the sacred rights of the Apostolic See, and shamefully dishonored the common father of Christians.

Throughout the trying ordeal, through which the French Government has forced your Holiness, you nobly defended the right and never for a moment forgot the gentle claims of mercy towards those whom your Master redeemed with His Precious Blood.

But, dark as is the storm aroused by the fierce passions of wicked men, who would, if they might, remove from the world the sun of religion, we take hope from a gleam that has shone across the darkness. We have seen the venerable body of the French Episcopate stand together to a man beside their Pontiff in resisting the invasion of their rights, and

Shamrocks Postpone Trip.

The Shamrocks will not go to Ireland this year. It was announced last night by Mr. H. McLaughlin, president of the S.L.C., that the executive had decided to postpone the trip to Ireland till next March. After considering the trip fully, practically all had agreed that it was could play increase.

The Shamrocks have been informed that Messrs. Tassie and Moran will bring the Minto Cup down on the 15th, at which time a little dinner will take place. It will be the occasion of returning the congratulations from the Shamrocks sent up to Ottawa a year ago.

MAKING A STAB AT IT.

"You're rather a young man to be left in charge of a drug store," said the fussy old gentleman. "Have you any diploma?"

"Yes—er—no, sir," replied the drug clerk, "but we have a preparation of our own that's just as good."—Philadelphia Press.

Where can I get some of Halloway's Gern Cure? I was entirely cured of my corns by this remedy and I wish some more of it for my friends. See writes Mr. J. W. Brown, Chicago.

Parents Buy Mother Graves Worm Exterminator because they know it is a safe medicine for their children and an effectual expeller of the drem and an effectual expeller of the drem and an effectual expeller of the drem.

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