

Wanderings in Umbria and Tuscany

(Dublin Freeman's Journal) While the morning air was still fresh, and the beautiful Umbrian landscape was brilliant as an enameled picture in the bright sunlight, we left proud Perugia set high upon the hill top, and passing through the Porta San Pietro, drove rapidly towards Assisi. The roads are deep in dust; the trees are white and heavy with it. Long continued drought and the great heat which prevails have burned the landscape brown. For over two months not a drop of rain has fallen, and the dried and withering vegetation seems drooping and dying. We pass by the wide bed of a river tributary to the Tiber, but there is not a drop of water in it. The drive to Assisi occupies two hours and a half—the last half hour being particularly heavy on the horses, as Monte Subasio, the hill upon which the town is built, is steep. The stopping place, at which we descend, is just outside the cloister or portico, surrounded by a low pillared porch, which opens in front of the Church of St. Francis. Whether from association of ideas, or from the spirit of the place itself, you feel that this saint is the beginning and the end of the interest. On this hill, as a modern French writer puts it, stands one of the capitals of the Spiritual Life; and another author, moved to eloquence by the consideration of what has been accomplished here, describes it as the Jerusalem of Italy. As you enter the porch of the church, the change from the blinding sunlight without to the very dim and shadowy light within, renders it impossible to distinguish anything for some seconds. Then gradually the extraordinary charm and artistic loveliness of this low-collared, tun-like church come upon you. This is the lower church, above this rises the grand, brilliantly-lighted Gothic church; one suggests the burden and travail and obscurity of the earthly things of Assisi apart from Saint Francis, fitfully illumined by glimpses of the other, the pure, constant, undimmed light of heaven. And the spot itself suggests the centuries that have passed since the foundations of this building were laid, and that in a most impressive manner, in the style of construction, in the object, in the art with which it is adorned, in the monuments that surround you, your thoughts are brought back to the Middle Ages. Dante was the friend of Giotto who has painted the frescoes that overshadow the high altar; a Gothic tomb on the right of the entrance transept is supposed to be that of a woman of Cyprus, named Hecuba, who died at Assisi in 1240, twenty-five years before Dante was born. In a certain sense it is to St. Francis that the world owes the "Divina Commedia." Ozanam tells us that at the beginning of the 13th century St. Francis appeared, and he, impassioned for the poor, would only sing in the language of the people. It was in Italian he composed his "Cantic of the Sun." The first cry awakened echoes which should be silenced no more. A Franciscan Monk of Verona, Fra Giacomino, wrote in the Venetian dialect two little poems, one on Hell and the other on Paradise, clearing a path for the author of the "Divina Commedia" at the same time. Another religious, Jacopone of Todi, wandered amid the mountains of Umbria, composing in the crude language of the country, not only naive canticles, but songs of considerable length, into which he poured all the mystic theology of the Bonaventura, all the severity of an avenging saint, which pardoned neither the disorders of the people, nor the fallings of the clergy. This bold man had done as much as Dante; he preceded, one might almost say he inspired, him. And the art of the Middle Ages is here in its remarkable examples. As you walk through the semi-gloom of the lower church towards the dim light, faintly illumined by a single light, the quartette of frescoes painted by Giotto, the great pioneer of the 13th and 14th centuries,

appear before you. These frescoes which are painted on the ceiling over the high altar, are acknowledged unquestionably to be his work. They express in painting the spirit of the work and life of St. Francis and its reward. They represent the cloister virtues: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, and the reward of those virtues—the Glory of Heaven. St. Francis had scarcely passed away in death when he began to live again in Art. A magnificent church, and a spacious convent, built on buttresses and arches out from the hill, like the hanging gardens of Babylon, were soon erected; and the man whose life appeared the least artistic became an exalted influence in Art which still endures. Giotto, though the greatest, was but one of the many painters and sculptors who labored here, leaving behind them specimens of the highest order. Cimabue, Buffalmacco, Lorenzetti, Guina Pisano, Ottaviano, Nelli, and others of less renown than these. As a great French writer has it: "The men of the Middle Ages did not think they had finished a monument merely by placing stone upon stone, it was necessary that the stones should speak, that they should speak the language of painting which is understood by the ignorant and simple, that the Heavens should become visible, and that the angels and the saints should remain present there in their images in order that they might console and preach to the people." Giotto's interpretation of Poverty is conveyed in the picture of the Marriage of St. Francis with Poverty, who— "When Mary still remained below, She mounted up with Christ upon the cross!" as Dante has it. The supposition that Giotto took the theme of this fresco from the well-known lines of Dante referring to the mystical marriage of St. Francis to Poverty, will not hold according to Lina Duff Gordon, who in her "Story of Assisi," notes that Dante wrote the XI Canto of the "Paradise" long after Giotto had left Assisi. The picture is remarkable. The scene is laid on a bare rock. Christ stands between St. Francis and Poverty, holding the arm of the latter while Francis places a ring upon her finger. She is pale and thin, clothed in a poor white robe, all worn and frayed at the skirt, acacia thorns are around her feet—the same sort of thorns that were woven into the crown with which Christ was crowned. On one side a couple of boys cast stones at her, and a dog barks at her—the treatment which the world ordinarily awards to poverty. At one corner of the picture a man of the world—some describe him as a miser—clutches his purse, and a youth fond of sport, who carries a falcon on his wrist, turns a deaf ear to the good suggestions of an angel and a friar who are standing beside him. On the other side the fruits of good example are made evident, a young man gives his cloak to a beggar. Angels are around the spouses, and others float in the air. Dante well says that Lady Poverty, a "certain Dame, to whom, as unto death, the gate of pleasure no one doth unlock," remained long unwed after Christ departed. "She left of her first husband, scorned, obscure, One thousand and one hundred years and more, Waited without a suitor till he came." The cry of St. Francis, "Poverty is the special way for salvation," explains the allegory depicted by Giotto above the high altar in this church. Holy Chastity—the next virtue of the cloister life—is personified by a young woman seen in prayer at the window of a tower in a strong castle. An angel floats on each side of this tower, which has a marked resemblance to the towers that once surrounded Florence. On the left St. Francis as Miss Duff Gordon notes, welcomes three aspirants to the Order—Bernard of Quintavalle, typifying the Franciscans; St. Clare, the

Second Order, and one, who is said to be the poet Dante, in a Florentine dress of the period, the Third Order. Two angels in the central group pour purifying water on the head of a youth standing in a fort, and two others stand forward with Franciscan habits in their hands, while leaning over the wall of the fortress are two figures, one presenting the banner of purity, the other the shield of fortitude to the novice. Here are mailed warriors with lash and shield in hand, denoting the perpetual warfare and mortification of those who follow St. Francis. Then there are warrior monks, bearing the signs of the Passion in their hands, aided by one in the garb of a Penitent, with angel's wings. The winged bear falls backwards, followed by a demon and a winged skeleton, emblematic of the perpetual death of the wicked, while blindfolded Love, with a string of hearts hanging from his neck, is driven away. Obedience is expressed by placing a yoke upon the shoulders of a kneeling monk. Two divine hands appear from the clouds above holding up St. Francis by his yoke, and two angels unroll the rules of the Order. Here also are many figures, each representative of some virtue, but the picture would require a long time for its complete elucidation. Glory is the reward of all this. St. Francis, the model of these virtues, arrayed in the rich robes of a deacon, is seated upon a throne, and is surrounded by throngs of fair-haired angels, who are intoning a hymn of perpetual praise and jubilation. This is the outcome and the guerdon of all the suffering he endureth on earth and all the good he brought to men. "In the dimness of this cave-like church," says the writer already quoted, "built to serve the purpose of a tomb and keep men's ideas familiar with the thought of death, these frescoes are glimpses into the heaven of the blest." As we wandered yesterday around the high altar, craning our necks to look up at this marvellous ceiling, with its frescoes unfading, and telling for over six hundred years these lessons of love and of sacrifice, we could not but recognize that Art has done its share here to make known the virtues and the merits of St. Francis to the world at large. Art, in itself or for itself, was not much in the line of the Poor Man of Assisi, all that he had or would have to do with it was concentrated in the use it might be turned to as an aid and a decoration in the worship of God. He was like others of the men whom the world acknowledges as great. Ozanam puts it clearly when he says that Francis wandered, begged, at the bread of others, as did Homer, Dante, Tasso and Camoens, as did all those glorious poor ones to whom God has given neither roof nor rest in this world, and whom He has wished to reserve for His service, wanderers and sojourners, to visit the people, to provide them with relaxation and frequently to instruct them. In literature his influence is profoundly felt; having dignified the popular tongue by composing in it that marvellous Cantic of the Sun, others followed in the same line, and the Italian language rose from crudeness into force and elegance and beauty. In this cantic, which takes its expressive name from this outburst, rendered by the late Matthew Arnold: "Praised be my Lord God with all His creatures, and specially our Brother the Sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light, fair is he, and shining with a very great splendor: Our Lord, he signifies to us Thee" we feel, as it were, a breath of this Umbrian earthly Paradise, where "the sky is so golden and the earth so burdened with flowers." This land was soon after filled with poetry and song, forming a very chorus of laudation to God and the Saints, by those who were moved to higher things by the spirit of St. Francis. Another literature, under rather peculiar patronage, is promised from Assisi: At the beginning of the month of June there was an inauguration made here under what has been described as "solemn circumstances" of the "International Society of Franciscan Studies." The name of such a Society is attractive, and its scope wide enough for all ordinary purposes. I could not think of leaving Assisi without making an effort to see this centre of studies, having St. Francis, his life and his influence as its chief object. It was a very warm day, and the sun blazed in the streets of Assisi. Accompanied

by an intelligent native of the place, we went to seek the librarian or custodian of this International Society of Studies. Of course the place was closed, everything is closed in Assisi from 12 noon to 4 p.m. save the churches, which are re-opened at 2. We found the abandoned palace, formerly the property of a nobleman of Fabriano, but everything here was closed, though a marble slab of the dimensions of an inscription announcing that this was the centre of these Franciscan studies. If we had come early in the morning, the person who keeps the key would have been sent for, we were told, or if we would remain till evening a like kindness would be done us, but it was materially impossible to see the place otherwise, or at this hour of 3 o'clock. Another reason as to a person of importance connected with the city, who would do us this kindness, had to seek a deputy to represent the "Society" at the inauguration of a statue of St. Francis in Alverna that was to take place on the morrow. Our disappointment increased when we were informed that the collection of books and documents and reviews and even newspaper articles, which it was promised would be placed here was at present very scant in number and insignificant in quality. There was besides no catalogue yet made of the material contained here. The only visible actual testimony to the existence of this Society which we could see in Assisi was the tiny marble slab on the wall of the palace with the inscription already mentioned. Perhaps other visitors may be more fortunate than we have been. The moving spirit in this work is a French Protestant professor—at least a non-Catholic—M. Paul Sabatier, who is the author of a Life of St. Francis of Assisi, which has been very successful, having now reached its 27th edition. This gentleman, who seems to have devoted himself to making the Saint of Assisi more widely known, is reported to have been a favorite pupil of the late M. Ernest Renan. It is a strange preparation for writing the life of such a saint. Yet, as the rich and worldly flock to Assisi with special eagerness, though they have not the least idea of following even the mildest of the maxims of St. Francis, so, as Paul Bourget notes, no saint has remained more venerated by the intellectually proud, by those who, like M. Renan, have founded their greatest renown on a destructive analysis of the mystic beliefs on which the monk lived. Perhaps this may explain something of M. Paul Sabatier's interest in St. Francis. It is unfortunate for the success of the project of M. Sabatier in regard to International Franciscan studies that he has petulantly complained, in a recent interview with a writer in "L'Italie," of Rome, that the Vatican is against him. Attacks and enmities, he says, have come from Rome and the Vatican. And the reasons for this are, he says, very simple. "The first is that at the Vatican, Protestantism is not pardoned. . . . the second . . . is that we are placed under the high patronage of an august lady, whom these bigots (intransigents) cannot pardon for her piety and her virtues." The third reason is that imprudent articles, doubtless with good intentions, have appeared in his favor in the Italian press. The "intellectual pride" which distinguished the master seems to crop up in the pupil, when he attributes to himself the honor of being crushed by "Rome and the Vatican." It is such a grand excuse for his failure! The "august lady" who gave her "high patronage," as M. Sabatier puts it, to the project is the Dowager Queen Margaret. One might at first blush, wonder, indeed, why she was chosen as Honorary Patroness of such a society, there is a palpable gap evident to the dullest understanding between modern Royalty and the Franciscan law of life. And it is, to say the least of it, ungenerous and thoughtless of M. Sabatier to say that the "intransigents" of the Vatican cannot pardon the Dowager Queen "for piety and her virtues." It is not rash to say that the Vatican is, perhaps, better able than M. Sabatier to judge of these qualities, even in queens. The closed door of the "International Society of Franciscan Studies," and the difficulty of finding out who or what is its custodian, if it have such a functionary, were the cause of regret to me; and I could not help thinking that if the work had been done about by the Franciscans instead of M. Sabatier, in the



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way of their great founder, in humility and with prayer, without the lustre of great names or high patronage, it might in time turn out a fruitful source of information and an impulse towards good. P. L. CONNELLAN. SEVEN DAUGHTERS AND ONE SON. The neighbors may sometimes be mistaken, as is shown by a little parable told by a contemporary. "Once upon a time there was a household where girls were not wanted or welcomed, but they came and came with the most absurd feminine persnickency till the magic number seven could be counted over their unlucky heads. The neighbors had grown used to saying 'another burden' when anything happened over the way, but one morning the wonderful news went forth that a man-child had been born, and they nodded their heads in a satisfied way and remarked, complacently: 'They had a long run of bad luck, poor things, but now they'll have some help in their old age.' Well, the years went by. The 'burdens' grew apace and proved to be industrious maidens. Two of them worked themselves up from going out sewing by the day into a firm of fashionable dressmakers, two more became teachers, one is a trained nurse, another is a book-keeper and the youngest remains at home to take care of the old people." By their combined efforts the seven 'burdens' freed the farm from debt, bought a snug home for themselves in the city, and—most herculean task of all—they educated the "help." Nature had been rather niggardly with him in the way of brains, but the girls were ambitious and he was their only brother, so they paid his way through college, and by dint of scolding and much advice, to say nothing of the waste of money, they forced him through the law till he came out a full-fledged lawyer. And then—before he had secured a brief—the 'help' brought home his bride. It was a little hard on the 'burdens.' They had counted so on being taken out and made much of on account of their distinguished 'help.' They had even cherished the 'intentions of shifting a little of their responsibility to his broad shoulders; but, after shodding a few bitter tears, they generously buried their own hopes and set up the family idol in a brand new office. There he may be found to-day, with nothing nobler in the vista of the future than the advancement of his own bumptious, selfish self."

THE RHEUMATIC WONDER OF THE AGE BENEDICTINE SALVE. This Salve Cures Rheumatism, Felons or Blood Poisoning. It is a Sure Remedy for any of These Diseases. A FEW TESTIMONIALS. 193 King Street East, Toronto, Nov. 21, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Toronto. DEAR SIR,—I am deeply grateful to the friend that suggested to me, when I was a cripple from Rheumatism, Benedictine Salve. I have at intervals during the last ten years been afflicted with muscular rheumatism. I have experimented with every available remedy and have consulted, might say, every physician of repute, without perceptible benefit. When I was advised to use your Benedictine Salve, I was a helpless cripple. In less than 48 hours I was in a position to resume my work, that of a tinmith. A work that requires a certain amount of bodily activity. I am thankful to my friend who advised me and I am more than gratified to be able to furnish you with this testimonial as to the efficacy of Benedictine Salve. Yours truly, GEO. FOGG. Tremont House, Yonge street, Nov. 1, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Toronto: DEAR SIR—It is with pleasure that I write this unsolicited testimonial, and in doing so I can say that your Benedictine Salve has done more for me in one week than anything I have done for the last five years. My ailment was muscular rheumatism. I applied the salve as directed, and I got speedy relief. I can assure you that at the present time I am free of pain. I can recommend any person afflicted with Rheumatism to give it a trial, I am, Yours truly, (Signed) S. JOHNSON. 288 Victoria Street, Toronto, Oct. 31, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Nealon House, City: DEAR SIR—I cannot speak too highly of your Benedictine Salve. It has done for me in three days what doctors and medicines have been trying to do for years. When I first used it I had been confined to my bed with a spell of rheumatism and sciatica for nine weeks; a friend recommended your salve. I tried it and it completely knocked rheumatism right out of my system. I can cheerfully recommend it as the best medicine on the market for rheumatism. I believe it has no equal. Yours sincerely, JOHN MCGROGGAN. 475 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, Ont., Sept. 18, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Nealon House, Toronto, Ont.: DEAR SIR—I have great pleasure in recommending the Benedictine Salve as a sure cure for lumbago. When I was taken down with it I called in my doctor, and he told me it would be a long time before I would be around again. My husband bought a box of the Benedictine Salve, and applied it according to directions. In three hours I got relief, and in four days was able to do my work. I would be pleased to recommend it to any one suffering from Lumbago. I am, your truly, (MRS.) JAS. COSGROVE. 7 Laurier Avenue, Toronto, December 18, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Toronto, Ont.: DEAR SIR—After suffering for over ten years with both forms of Piles, was asked to try Benedictine Salve. From the first application I got instant relief, and before using one box was thoroughly cured. I can strongly recommend Benedictine Salve to any one suffering with piles, Yours sincerely, JOS. WESTMAN. 12 Bright Street, Toronto, Jan. 15, 1902. John O'Connor, Esq., Toronto: DEAR SIR,—It is with pleasure I write this word of testimony to the marvellous merits of Benedictine Salve as a certain cure for Rheumatism. There is such a multitude of alleged Rheumatic cures advertised that one is inclined to be skeptical of the merits of any new preparation. I was induced to give Benedictine Salve a trial and must say that after suffering for eight years from Rheumatism it has, I believe, effected an absolute and permanent cure. It is perhaps needless to say that in the last eight years I have consulted a number of doctors and have tried a large number of other medicines advertised, without receiving any benefit. Yours respectfully, MRS. SIMPSON. 66 Carlton Street, Toronto, Feb. 1, 1902. John O'Connor, Esq., 199 King Street East: I was a sufferer for four months from acute rheumatism in my left arm; my physician called regularly and prescribed for it, but gave me no relief. My brother, who appeared to have faith in your Benedictine Salve, gave me enough of it to apply twice to my arm. I used it first on a Thursday night, and applied it again on Friday night. This was in the latter part of November. Since then (over two months) I have not had a trace of rheumatism. I feel that you are entitled to this testimonial as to the efficacy of Benedictine Salve in removing rheumatic pains. Yours sincerely, M. A. COWAN. Toronto, Dec. 30th, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Toronto: DEAR SIR,—It is with pleasure I write this unsolicited testimonial, and in doing so I can say to the world that your Benedictine Salve thoroughly cured me of Bleeding Piles. I suffered for nine months. I consulted a physician, one of the best, and he gave me a box of salve and said that if that did not cure me I would have to go under an operation. It failed, but a friend of mine learned by chance that I was suffering from Bleeding Piles. He told me he could let me a cure and he was true to his word. He got me a box of Benedictine Salve and it gave me relief at once and cured me in a few days. I am now completely cured. It is worth its weight in gold. I cannot but feel proud after suffering so long. It has given me a thorough cure and I am sure it will never return. I can strongly recommend it to anyone afflicted as I was. It will cure without fail. I can be called on for living proof. I am, Yours, etc., ALLAN J. ARTINGDALE, with the Boston Laundry. 256 1/2 King Street East, Toronto, Dec. 18, 1901. John O'Connor, Esq., Toronto: DEAR SIR,—After trying several doctors and spending forty-five days in the General Hospital, without any benefit, I was induced to try your Benedictine Salve, and sincerely believe that this is the greatest remedy in the world for rheumatism. When I left the hospital I was just able to stand for a few seconds, but after using your Benedictine Salve for three days, I went out on the street again and now, after using it just over a week, I am able to go to work again. If anyone should doubt these facts, send him to me and I will prove it to him. Yours forever thankful, PETER KUSTEN. Toronto, April 10, 1902. Mr. John O'Connor: DEAR SIR—I do heartily recommend your Benedictine Salve as a sure cure for rheumatism, as I was sorely afflicted with that sad disease in my arm, and it was so bad that I could not dress myself. When I heard about your salve, I got a box of it, and to my surprise I found great relief, and I used what I got and now I can attend to my daily household duties, and I heartily recommend it to anyone that is troubled with the same disease. You have this from me with hearty thanks and do with it as you please for the benefit of the afflicted. Yours truly, MRS. JAMES FLEMING 18 Spruce street, Toronto. Toronto, April 16th, 1902. J. O'Connor, Esq., City: DEAR SIR—It gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to testify to the curative powers of your Benedictine Salve. For a month back my hand was so badly swollen that I was unable to work, and the pain was so intense as to be almost unbearable. Three days after using your Salve as directed, I am able to go to work, and I cannot thank you enough. Respectfully yours, J. CLARKE. 78 Woolsey street, City. 119 George street, Toronto, June 17th, 1902. John O'Connor, Esq.: DEAR SIR—Your Benedictine Salve cured me of rheumatism in my arm, which entirely disabled me from work, in three days, and I am now completely cured. I suffered greatly from piles for many months and was completely cured by one box of Benedictine Salve. Yours sincerely, T. WALKER, Blacksmith. Address C. R. JOHN O'CONNOR, 199 KING ST. E. FOR SALE: BY WM. J. NICHOL, Druggist, 170 King St. E. J. A. JOHNSON & CO., 171 King St. E. Price, 61 per box.