PORTIUNCULA.

THE GREAT INDULGENCE CALLED THE "PARDON OF ASSISI."

IT WAS GRANTED TO ST. FRANCIS IN ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER FOR MERCY FOR SINNERS. AND CAN BE GAINED BY THE FAITHFUL FROM VESPERS ON AUGUST 1 TO SUNDOWN,

It was in the month of October, in the year of our Lord 1221, according to the most authentic authority, when to St. Francis of Assisi praying for mercy for sinners, in his poor cell, an angel appeared and desired him to repair quickly to the church where he would behold our Lord and His Blessed Mother, with a multitude of angels and saints. Joyfully the saint obeyed the summons, and prostrated before the altar, heard the voice of the Lord, who addressed him thus: "Francis, you and your companions have great zeal for the salvation of souls, you have been placed as a light to the world, and as a support to the Church, ask then whatever you will for the benefit of mankind, and for My glory." Any of us would have asked substances, riches, health and even wisdom, but the saint replied with profound humbleness: "My Lord, I am a sinner unworthy to be looked at and heard in my prayers, but through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, to whom I dedicated this small sanctuary, and through the intercession of all the angels and saints, of whom she is Queen, I beseech you to grant that all who visit this church may receive a plenary indulgence world and the next, for their sins, after having confessed to a priest." "Francis," replied our Lord, "you ask

go to my vicar, to whom I have given | feast. the power to bind and loose on earth, ask him to ratify what I now declare." So ended the vision. Next morning Francis. with one of his companions, Friar Masseo, repaired to Perugia, where Pope Honorius III. was in those days. The saint was admitted to an audience, and with the simplicity of his character, he explained his mission to the Sovereign Pontiff. The request was new and start-ling, so that the Pope hesitated to grant it; and, after being absorbed in a long meditation and prayer, as if under the influence of the inspiration, three times he uttered these words: "Francis, it is my will to grant what you desire:" and immediately added: "I grant this indusgence in perpetuity, but only on one day during the year." Francis bowed his head, besought the Papal benediction, and, happy and joyous, was departing from the Pope's presence, when the Pon-tiff exclaimed: "Simple man, where are you going? Do you not expect the Papal prescript? What proof have you for what has been granted you?" "Holy Father," replied Francis, "your word is sufficient for me; if this indulgence is the work of God, He will make it mani-fest to all the world, Jesus Christ will be the notary of your approbation, the Blessed Mother the parchment, and the angels the witnesses. Now it belonged to the holy patriarch

to appoint the day for said indulgence; but that saint, who never did anything of his choice without asking light from heaven, also on this occasion wished that Christ Hmself would appoint the day: and, in fact, with the new vision our Redeemer told him that the day should be from the vespers of the 1st of August the saint inquired how this should be made known, and was told to present himself before the Vicar of Christ, and take in honor of the Blessed Trinity, three roses, that he miraculously should find upon the altar, as a testimony of the truth of his assertion. After this a Te Deum was sung by the angels on their

golden harps, and the vision was ended.
Francis journeyed to Rome, accompanied by Friars Bernard, Peter and Angelo; announced the will of God to the Holy Pontiff, producing the three roses; and the Supreme Head of the Church of God, by the oracle of his liv-ing novice, decided that the day of the indulgence in the Church of the Porti-uncula would be from the 1st of August till the sunset of the 2nd, this being the will of God revealed to His servant Francis. Besides, after having confirmed again and solemnly the indulgence, he delegated the Bishops of Assisi, Perugia, Todi, Spoleto, Foligno, Nocera and Gubbio to proclaim it in the city of Assisi at St. Mary of the Angels, on the following 1st of October.

To the Bishops this privilege seemed too abundant, and they wanted to limit this favor to only ten years, even had they all agreed to limit the indulgence to ten years, but when each attempted to pronounce the words, "ten years," they found themselves unable to do so, and were compelled to say "in perpetuity." Thus another unequivocal testimony given to the truth of the revelation, and to the value of the indulgence.

Not many years passed away, and the fame of the great pardon of Assisi was spread all over the world, and beautiful was it to see pilgrims in crowds of fifteen and twenty thousand ascend the slopes to Assisi; among them kings, princes, nobles and illustrious chevaliers with their vassals and subjects all, all to visit the holy Basilica and altogether unite in prayer to the Most High, and entreat His pardon through the intercession of the holy patriarch. But in the progress of time the throng become so excessive, that in some years even the soldiers could not restrain them, and on one occasion thirteen victims suffered by the trampling

of the people.

Seeing all the inconveniences, the glorious Pontiff XV., by his Bull, Splendor Paternæ Gloriæ, extended to all the churches and public chapels attended by Franciscans the same privilege of the Portiuncula; so that all the faithful of both sexes, in any part of the world, after having received absolution and Holy Communion, may receive the same in-dulgence in any Franciscan church as they would receive in the sanctuary of

The Bull of Gregory XV. was afterwards confirmed by the venerable Innocent XI., on the 22nd of January, 1680, field by a brief on the same day and year

declared that the indulgence might also Therestory.

where the Fathers or the Brothers live in community, enjoy the same privilege of the Pardon of Assisi, as in the Bull of Peter Sedias of the 10th of December, 1715, by Benedict XIII.

The peculiarity of this indulgence is, that it may be gained toties quoties, that is, as many times as the church is visited, though in the same day; and this custom of visiting again and again many times the same chapel or church of St. Francis, in order to gain this indulgence in suffrage for the departed, on each of there visit has never been each of these visits, has never been reprobated, as has been decided by the Sacred Congregation of the Council on July 17, 1750. Nay, more; in the same congregation, held February 22, 1847, the question was proposed whether in visiting, on the 2nd of August, churches of each one to adore God and make known the order of St. Francis, the Pienary In- the needs of his soul in his own simple dulgence could be gained every time the words. But the Church, too, has her visit was repeated, and was decided in | needs, and must claim that same liberty the affirmative.

The following are the simple conditions for gaining this wonderful indulgence.

A worthy Confession and Communion, a visit to any Franciscan church and the recitation of five Paters, Aves and Glorias for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

As each visit will take but a few minutes, so the faithful in going out of the door of the church and entering again may renew the holy practice, and gain in a short time many Plenary Indulgences for the souls of their departed friends who expect their suffrage in Purgatory, remembering that at each visit they may free a soul from that prison.

The Sacred Congregation, by a decree of the 22nd of February, 1847, declared that Confession and Holy Communion for all the punishment due both in this | requisite for the indulgence need not be made in a Franciscan church.

The weekly communicants are not bound to make special Confession to gain great things, but you shall receive still this indulgence, provided they receive greater. I grant what you demand, but holy Communion on the day of the

> May the Almighty give us grace to appreciate the great privilege bestowed upon us by his servant St. Francis; and may we make a treasure of it, for the benefit of our own souls and the souls in Purgatory .- the Catholic Universe.

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THE EARLY CHURCH.

Development of Worship and Discip-

Dr. Loughlin delivered the last lecture of his course at Plattsburg on Friday morning, July 19th, saying in sub-

The Christian Church is primarily what we have heard Dr. Harnack oppositely designate "an Institute of Worship." She is not a mere ecclesiastical establishment for the aggrandizement of dignituries; neither is she a school of philosophy for the intellectual entertainment of learned mens. Her very essence and nature is the worship of God; her prime duty, around which everything pertaining to her centres, is prayer. Just as a private theologian. were he ever so learned and orthodox, if he forgot to pray, would not deserve the name of Christian, so also would the Church, no matter how carefully she preserved the doctrines of Christ, pure and in the event announced on Sunday, July unaltered, be utterly false to her Master, in the impossible hypothesis of allowing on the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. At the sacred fire of Divine worship to be all the services in the Boston Cathedral, come extinguished upon her altar. But on Sunday, July 7th, the good tidings never has it happened, nor will it hap- were thus made known: "The debt on never has it happened, nor will it happen, that the prophecy of Malachias shall be made void. From the rising of the sun to the going down, My name disbanded." The Cathedral of the Holy is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts."

Who shall explain the gross perversity of those who have conceived so mortal a hatred of the great Church which first taught their forefathers to ahandon the worship of stocks and stones for the sublime adoration of the Creator of heaven and earth? "Men revile the Catholic Church," says Cardinal Newman, "who, had it not been for the Catholic Church, would not have been able to talk at all. This is so ungrateful and so unhuman, that of itself it must convince one of the existence of an active and intelligent devil always at work to counteract the blessed work of God. But not even the devil can fool the people for all time. Men are beginning to read histors for themselves, and will no longer trust to their nurses for a knowledge of the past. All that the Church asks is that men look at her record as it stands written on the face of Christendom."

Justin, after an unsuccessful search for wisdom among the stoics and the Peripatetics and the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, had a wish one day for quiet meditation, away from the beaten track of men, and so went to a bit of ground not far from the sea, "and there," he continues, "just as I was nearing the place where I looked to be alone with my thoughts, an old man, of a pleasing countenance, and with gentle and dignified mien, came following me a little behind. I turned upon him, and stood still, with my eyes fixed closely on him, at which he said, 'Do you know me? I replied in the negative. The old man was evidently a Christian priest, and improved the opportunity to demonstrate that there is something more solid than philosophical reasonings and theories. How pregnant is his opening remark: Ah, you are then a lover of words and not of action, or of reality. You are one, I suppose, who cares more for reasons than for facts, for words than for But the chief benefit conferred deeds.' " upon the philosopher by the wise missionary was contained in the concluding words of this extremely interesting conversation: "Pray, pray thou then that the gates of light may be opened for thee; for those things can only be seen and known by those to whom God and His Christ have given understanding. Pray, pray, O proud philosopher; down on thy knees and approach thy God as a suppliant."

In addition to the prayers which are privately poured forth from the hearts of pious Christians, the Church as the body of Christ is ever engaged in the

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worship of God, in imitation of her Master, "who in the days of His flesh with a strong cry and tears offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His reverence," and her worship is identical to that of our Lord, inasmuch as it consists, like His, of

prayer and sacrifice.

I am aware that the very perfection to which the Church, has carried divine worship in her office has been objected against, as destroying the spontaneity and enthusiasm of prayer. But this objection is without solid foundation. The Church is far from discouraging private outpourings of the heart in any language which conveys orthodox sentiments. In each one to adore God and make known of laying them before the throne of mercy in the manner best befitting her dignity and her close relation to the

If there is one point of Christian history more luminous than any other, it is that the Church has from the very beginning possessed an altar and offered a true sacrifice. Remarkable it is, when we consider how jealously the Church kept the secret of her liturgy, not only from the heathen but even from her catechumens, how clearly we can trace the history of the Mass back to the apostolic age. The fact of secrecy is itself a proof that the Church had some thing to guard too hallowed for profane ears to hear.

Although the early Christians were so careful not to divulge the nature of their sacrifice to the uninitiated, yet their writings place it beyond doubt that they did offer sacrifice and that their sacrifice was identical with that now offered on Catholic altars,-(atholic Standard.

RELIGIOUS NEWS ITEMS.

European exchanges announce the leath of Rev. John Kelly, rector of St. Joseph's, Birkdale, Diocese of Liverpool. A notable convert to Catholicism is Bernard Harrison, the eldest son of the well-known positivist, Frederick Harrison.

Chicago has 124 Catholic churches, valued at \$8,720,000. Catholic population is 546,000 souls, owning property to the value of \$376,843,000.

A ritualistic Church of England clergy man in Cardiff has publicly asserted that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin is a necessary complement of the Christian dispensa-

Sister Mary of the Compassion, formerly of Limerick, Ireland, the Mother Visitor of the Order of the Sisters of Good Shepherd, is making a visit of six weeks at the Good Shepherd Convent in St. Louis, Mo., on a private mission pertaining to the devotions of the Order.

The date when Archbishop Chapelle will be invested with the pallium has been fixed for October 17, and it is expected that the ceremony will be one of the most imposing ever witnessed in the Santa Fe Cathedral. Monsignor Satolli and Cardinal Gibbons will be present.

The golden jubilee of Most Rev. John leseph Williams, Archbishop of Boston, had its crown and culmination, not in the last event of the jubilee proper, but 7th-the liquidation of the entire debt Cross is one of the great works of Archbishop Williams' episcopate.

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CONVERSIONS.

How They Came to Join the Church. If any one had predicted to me fifteen years ago that I would some day become a Catholic I would have scouted the idea

as the most unlikely thing that could possibly happen. I had been strictly brought up by good

and pious parents, who were old-fashioned Episcopalians and knew nothing of Catholicism except that our servants mostly professed that faith, and that it was considered a good religion for them and other uneducated people, whom I pitied for their blindness to the "pure light of the Gospel." The only time that I can remember entering a Catholic Church I was persuaded by a friend to go to Vespers at St. Stephen's. The music was considered very fine, and it was rather the fashion for young people to go to hear it on Sunday afternoon. With my ignorant prejudices against the Church I felt all the time as if I were doing something very wicked. I felt great pity for the poor "idolaters," as I thought them, who bowed to the altar, and my only devotion while in the church was a fervent act of thanksgiving for Luther and the glorious Reformation Furthermore, I felt it my duty to go to my own church in the evening to atone for my sin in taking part in a Romish service!

As we grew older, some members of my family and some intimate friends be-came "Anglo-Catholics," and, though I despised their ritualism and endless talk of lights, vestments, altars, etc., I was induced to read some of the books writ-ten by "advanced" English clergymen (almost all of whom, by the way, have since become Catholics), and insensibly I came to believe in the apostolic succes sion, the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, non-communicating attend ance during the communion service, etc. Later, some friends persuaded me to go to confession to a prominent Ritualistic clergyman, and never shall I forget the anguish of mind I suffered while reading to that gentleman my general confession

covering more than thirty years.

Shortly after my brother told me one day that he feared he would have to become a Catholic. I was struck dumb with grief and horror, while he proceeded to quote to me the numerous texts in the Gospels proving the supremacy of St. Peter and the unity of the Church; how to St. Peter alone were given the keys of heaven; how, in mentioning the apostles, he almost always comes first, and it is generally "Peter and the other apostles;" how our Lord paid the tribute-money only for Himself and St. Peter; how He said, "I will pray for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."

A light seemed to break in upon me and I felt from that moment that if our Lord did, indeed, found a Church, that Church was the one I had always despised as only fit for the poor and ignorant. It was a most unwelcome conviction, for it is a hard trial to turn one's back on all the traditions and teachings of the past, and to wound the hearts of relations and friends who felt deeply the slight put upon their own form of worship. But the inner voice could not be stifled, and I had one great blessing to be thankful for, in addition to the grace of conversion: my husband felt as I did. In vain we tried to believe in the "branch theory." Everything we read in history, now that our eyes were once opened to the truth, confirmed us in the belief that there is but one Church, and that that one was founded on a Rock. So, after a delay of eighteen months, in order to be quite assured of our convictions, we had the unspeakable blessing of being received together into the fold of that dear Mother Church, and never can we suffi ciently thank Almighty God for His great gift of faith.—The Monitor.

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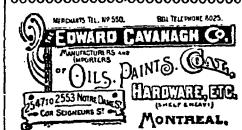
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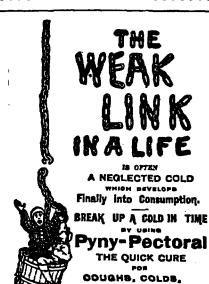
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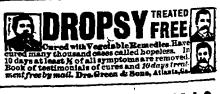
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