

The Legend of the Scapular.

For the Carmelite Review.

THESE were troublesome times in "merrie England." The Holy Father, the Vicar of Christ upon earth, had vainly remonstrated with the infamous monarch John, who at that time wielded the scepter upon the English throne.

Innocent III, in consequence of the scandalous conduct of the king, had deemed it proper to set aside the custom which had, up to that time prevailed, of consulting the ruling sovereign upon the appointment of a bishop to any of the vacant Sees. The Bishopric of Canterbury being vacant he placed therein one eminently fitted for the exalted position, but in so doing he incurred the wrath of the rebellious prince. John, venting his rage upon all who supported the Pontiff, or loyally tendered their ready submission to the holy prelate, sent his minions to despoil an adjacent abbey, and banish the monks from their much loved home.

Nothing remained but to place the kingdom under an Interdict, a punishment which was never resorted to save when gentler measures had been tried in vain, and mild persuasion been laughed to scorn. The nature of an interdict is, generally speaking, well known, still it may not be a-miss to devote a few moments time to say that it is a something calculated to strike terror to the strongest heart, and fill with anguish the devoted clients of our holy church. During its continuance none of the exterior rites of religion can be observed. The spacious cathedral and the simple village church must alike divest their altars of the adornments with which piety or wealth had decorated them. The symbol of man's salvation must be entirely concealed. The dear pictured faces of the saints, so loved and venerated, are lost to view. Their mild, compassionate glances and sweet smiles so consoling to the sorrowful heart are hidden

away, for crucifixes and pictures, saints' relics and statutes alike are covered with thick black veils. The belfries seem to mourn for the loss of the sweet toned bells whose chimes are silent now, and none can go forth joyfully to attend the holy mass. No, for the divine sacrifice could not be celebrated until the portals of God's holy temple were closed and barred. Baptism and communion were permitted only to the dying, youths and maidens going to unite their hearts and hands in wedded love were met with pitying glances as they stood in the church yard to speak their vows away from the altar they loved so well, and mourning relatives were forced to bury their dead in soil unhallowed by our mother Church.

Yes! faithful hearts were sad in England. But our Lord who never forgets His own devoted children, sent into the world about this time one who was destined to command an army by far outnumbering the mighty array of the infamous John—an army which would welcome beneath its standard the great and lowly, the monarch upon his throne, and the beggar at the gate,—decrepit age, scarce able to bear the burden of years, and innocent youth, carling for pure joy that it had never known a grief.

The mightiest intellect was glad to assume the insignia, and the poor ignorant children of the church were consoled when admitted to the band.

ST. SIMON OF THE STOCK was the one called by our Lady of Mount Carmel to work such marvels, not in "Merrie England" alone, but, as time rolled on, wherever the symbol of salvation proclaimed that the faith was there.

He was born in the County of Kent, and when but twelve brief years had passed over his head, at an age when childish sports occupy so large a space in the heart of the growing boy, he left his home and for twenty years dwelt in the hollow trunk of an ancient oak. From this circumstance he was called "St. Simon of the Stock." * * * Our blessed Lady, for whom he had always