



The Miraculous Crook

IN the grand duchy of Mecklemburg, to-day a protestant country, but formerly devoutly Catholic stood a famous old monastery, renowned for the learning and sanctity of its monks, but especially through the miracles wrought there, the fame of which attracted numerous pilgrims from all parts of the world : It was the abbey of Doberan, situated on the banks of the Baltic Sea, and in those days the burial place of the dukes and their descendants. We relate one of the miracles which caused this abbey to be so universally renowned.

A poor shepherd named Stephen had for some time been the victim of a most unfortunate fate. Every week he saw his flock decreasing in number, sometimes carried away and devoured by the wolves, sometimes by an epidemic disease breaking out and slaying his choicest lambs. Even the pasturage seemed to have lost its nutritive juices ; the grass on the hill-side no longer strengthened his sickly flock, the brook in the valley no longer quenched its thirst.

One day as Stephen was seated at some distance from his flock, sadly thinking of the ruin which threatened him, he saw a man coming towards him, whom he judged by his long black cloak and white cap to be a dignified sheriff, and who addressed him saying : " You do not know me Stephen, but I have known you for some time. I am aware of all the losses you have sustained those last years. I am sorry for you and come to inform you of a means by which you can put an end to the evils which pursue you. The first time you go to Communion, keep the Host the priest gives you and insert it in your crook ; then go and lead your flock into the valley, fearing no longer either wolf or epidemic."