

PROTESTANT PRESS TESTIMONY TO A MIRACLE AT LOURDES.

The Paris correspondent of the Glasgow Herald reports in that paper (August 31, p. 7) a marvellous cure recently wrought at Lourdes. The correspondent who reported the miracle is clearly not a Catholic, and that fact gives greater value to the almost reluctant testimony he is obliged to give with regard to the wonderful cure at Lourdes. Appended is the whole of his account in reference to the case of Mme. Courel. What he calls "the alleged miracle" seems too great to marvel to be got over, and the question with which he concludes his account gives really greater weight to the simple record he is obliged to publish. This is his report:

IN THE LAND OF "MIRACLES." (From Our Own Correspondent.)

Paris, August 20. Lourdes, it goes without saying, is just now the locality whence "miracles," duly attested by medical men, are reported. Notable cures, be it also remarked, are alleged to have been effected at the shrine of Notre Dame des Victoires. Having heard, through the channel of the clerical papers, that a certain Mme. Courel, aged forty-six (a street singer by calling), had had her sight restored by the healing waters of Lourdes, whether she went with the pilgrims the other week, I undertook a journey to the Latin quarter in order to see if possible the woman. It was a long trudge—a veritable little pilgrimage in its way—to the queer old corner of Paris where she resides with her husband. When I called she was out, gone somewhere, her concierge told me, to return thanks to the Virgin for the unexpected recovery of her sight. I questioned the concierge (an aged man, and by no means a model of piety) concerning the alleged miracle, which, he it noted, is for the moment the talk of the district. He affirmed that his lodger, Mme. Courel, had been stone blind for the last three or four years. On account of this infirmity, which prevented her from earning her living otherwise, the city authorities allowed her to sing in the streets or in the courtyards of private houses, her husband accompanying her with his guitar. Being assured if I fixed an hour and a day Madame Courel would keep an appointment, I gave her a rendezvous, to which she very punctually came.

Our conversation was distinctly curious. The woman, be it said, had not, or at any rate had not, previously to her Lourdes visit, a spark of religion in her composition. She went to Lourdes without either faith or hope, she said, and solely in order to content her husband and a worthy Sister of Mercy who had frequently helped her in time of need. To please the latter and make herself eligible for Divine mercy, she consented to be baptized about a couple of months ago, and confessed that she, the whole ceremony seemed to her ridiculous, whilst as to the accounts of miracles she compared them to fairy tales, or "histoires de brigands," as the French say. Relating her experiences at Lourdes, she said when at the sacred grotto two young girls dipped her handkerchief in the holy water, and sought to apply it to her sightless eyes. She resisted the attempt at first, declaring the Paris hospital doctors had enjoined her to bathe her eyes in luke-warm water and never to use cold water. She added, "I am not going to make a fool of myself." Nevertheless, almost unconsciously, she did apply the moistened handkerchief to her eyes, and simultaneously she felt a sharp pain in them. She grew very angry, imagined she had done herself harm, but at the same moment she began to perceive objects. She was almost frightened, thought she was dreaming, but ultimately was compelled to admit the astounding fact that she could see with one eye and see perfectly well. The other eye remains blind, however. The first thing she noticed after recovering her sight was a couple of ladies near the grotto who wore, as she put it "extraordinary hats," such as she never remembered seeing. The next thing she remembered was several people laid hold of her and almost carried her to an adjacent medical "bureau," where the "miracle," with all its details, was consigned to paper.

Her husband, the guitar player, says that since the age of twenty his wife had been under treatment for her eyes at the Paris hospitals. Very gradually, he asserts, her sight became worse and worse, until about three years ago, when she became totally blind. Now, she affirms, she can read with the easiest eye the smallest handwriting, but her great anxiety is to know whether, being no longer sightless, she will be allowed by the police to continue to earn coppers by street singing. She hopes, however, that the Virgin who has cured her will not leave her to starve.

Such is the "miracle" story briefly put. As it is impossible not to be sceptical on the subject, one is inclined to ask whether Mme. Courel was ever really entirely blind, and whether, perchance, she did not feign to be so in order to obtain the authorization to sing in the streets. The doubt thus expressed by the correspondent of the Glasgow Herald is shown to be unreasonable by the Glasgow Observer in the following paragraph: "The suggestion that the blindness of the woman was feigned is absurd on the face of it. Had it been feigned, why should the woman have gone to the shrine at Lourdes, as she did? Why More than that, the attestation of the medical bureau at Lourdes is something which cannot be got over. The doctors there deal with all these cases in the most frigidly scientific way, and if the woman was shamming, she would not pass that test without detection. The miracle is one of the most remarkable in the whole history of Lourdes, and the fact that it is published by Protestant press with such a wealth of detail

indicates that the miracles of Lourdes are beginning to percolate even the thick pachyderm of Protestant prejudice.

THE SECRET OF THE CHURCH'S STRENGTH.

The Detroit News Tribune has a regular department in its Sunday issue dealing with religious affairs. The department contained Sunday, Sept. 23, the following answer to the query, "Why is there not among Protestants a revival of religion?" "The reason why we have no revivals of religion is because the people have no faith in the sincerity of revival preachers. The impression abroad is that these men do not 'serve God for naught.' There is money in it and, they are after the money. The frequent 'calls' to higher salaries which preachers accept, and the fat purses presented to rivalists who 'got up a successful revival,' foster and strengthen this popular sentiment. But let there be sacrifice and suffering manifested, let the cross be borne publicly, then people will begin to think that preachers themselves believe what they preach—now they doubt it. This is what makes the Roman Catholic Church the power in the world that it is. It is not the hierarchy; it is not gorgeously apparelled Popes, Cardinals, Bishops and priests; it is not the pompous ceremonial of the Mass, nor the magnificent vaulted domes of its cathedrals; it is the religious men and women who go barefoot, wear hair shirts, tie a rope around their waist and beg bread for their religion; it is the priests who forego matrimony for their religion; it is the nuns who nurse leprosy, small-pox, fevers, and worse, not for \$20 or \$30 a week, but for a bare living, and their religious life is a sacrifice; it is not a theoretical but an actual giving up of the world and doing works, menial and unpleasant, as a proof of their professed faith. And, until Protestants display somewhat of the same spirit of sacrifices as an evidence of the genuineness of their faith, comparatively few Catholics will be converted to Protestantism, and supplanting the Catholic Church with something better will continue to be a dream, and there will be no genuine revival of evangelical religion.

Yes, all these things are true. But the fundamental point is missed. All the fine qualities which this writer finds in the Catholic Church flow from the fact that it is the Church founded by Christ Himself—the Church against which He promised that the gates of hell should never prevail—the Church with which He promised to remain until the end of time. If there is found among its priests and nuns and lay a spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion more marked than that presented by the people of other creeds it is the firm and unshaken faith in Christ's words spoken when he established the Church which is the source of all. There are no doubts in the minds of the Church's children as to her divine foundation and her divine mission. They know she is the Church of Jesus Christ, that she speaks to them with the authority of Christ. This is what sustains the Pope in his arduous work of administration and government; this is what sustains the other officials under him; this is what sustains the Archbishops and Bishops in every part of the world; this is what sustains the priests in their life-long labor for the salvation of their people; this is what sustains missionaries, brothers, nuns, of all kinds, in heathen lands, in leper hospitals, in lazar houses—everywhere. This faith is the life principle of the Catholic Church. Other churches founded by men do not possess it. Hence their weakness when compared with the one true Church of Jesus Christ.—Sacred Heart Review.

"THE NEED OF A PROTESTANT CONFSSIONAL."

PITTSBURGH MINISTER TELLS HIS FLOCK THE PRACTICE WOULD LESSEN IMMORALITY.

From the Pittsburgh Gazette-Times, Sep. 23. Confession would prevent many scandals in churches, declared the Rev. Dr. B. Stocking, of the Universalist church, Allegheny, in his sermon yesterday morning on "The Need of a Protestant Confessional." He instanced particularly the recent elopement of a pastor with a deaconess, and said in part: "Nothing will so aid the individual in attempting to live Christianly as the fixed determination and habit of confessing sin. Not simply to confess sinfulness and depravity, but particular sins—the particular evils committed, calling them by name. If one is guilty of bearing false witness, confess that fact. So of slander, so of stealing, so of extortion, or lying, or hypocrisy. Acknowledge the theft, acknowledge the lie and he forsake them.

"In the Roman Catholic Church confession is made a strict religious duty. In some countries confession is made legally obligatory. In the Church of England it is a voluntary practice. In the Roman Catholic Church the communicant is expected to make admission or acknowledgment to the priest—on pain of a fault or a crime, to know one's wrongs, and I am persuaded that if this practice was taught and observed in our Protestant churches there would be less immorality among the ministers and church members. There would be fewer instances of ministers alienating some parishoner's wife's affections, less elopements, as in the case of the Rev. Mr. Coombs, of the Leaning Tower Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, whose case concerning administration and discipline. If all were under solemn obligation to confess their faults there would be less wickedness in our Protestant churches.

"I know of nothing that would tend to produce a better state of moral purity than the obligation to make confession of individual faults among the ministers and the brethren, unless it be to emphasize the great fact that there is no escape from the consequences of one's own sin, either in this world or in the world to come."

THE QUEEN OF THE ROSARY.

"Since the dawn of Christianity, Mary has been loved and honored as the mother of its Divine Founder," says Our Parish Calendar. "She has ever been invoked as the advocate and protectress of all those who love her Son. But no devotion has been handed down to us from our Catholic forefathers, which bears more evidence to the love they had for Mary, than the Rosary. The Rosary! How tenderly the words appeal to all true Catholic hearts. What beautiful thoughts of Mary, linked with still more beautiful thoughts of Jesus it brings before the mind. In what harmony it blends these two lives, and leads to the contemplation of their combined sufferings. Beginning with the angel's visit to announce to Mary that she had been chosen from among all other mortals, to become the Mother of the Eternal God, it leads us step by step through the mysteries of the birth, passion, life, death and glorious resurrection and ascension of our Divine Lord. It leads us through the manifold sufferings of Mary. His mother, to her union with Him in Heaven. How beautifully suggestive it is throughout the entire devotion. Surely a prayer which leads us to the contemplation of these mysteries which form the very basis of our religion, can not fail to be pleasing to our Divine Saviour; it can not fail to be efficacious. And, as if to render it more powerful, we offer it through Mary 'Queen of the Rosary,' to Jesus her Son."

A HINT TO THE CARD-PLAYERS.

Says the Catholic Columbian: "The long cool evenings are coming, when the lights will be lighted early and the members of the family will stay indoors. To prevent the free time from being wasted and to provide a useful form of recreation, the old custom of reading a book aloud to the home circle should be revived. Many old persons can recall that in the days that are gone they spent delightful evenings listening to such readings. Often it happened that an interesting passage made for an explanation of some passage not understood by a younger member of the group, and still more frequently it occurred that interesting chapters or incidents formed subjects for discussion at the time or at the next meal. And much was learned that it was worth while to know. Books are cheap. Good ones are better than theaters or concerts, or card parties, or going to meetings. They are introductions to the best works of some of the finest minds that ever were created."

THE BLOOD OF ST. JANUARIUS.

MIRACLE OF ITS LIQUEFACTION WITNESSED BY OUR BOMBE CORRESPONDENT.

Roman Correspondence Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times. Naples, September 20. We have heard and read many accounts of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius in Naples, but we had only a very faint idea of the awe with which one is inspired on standing by while a miracle is being wrought, of the enthusiasm of the Neapolitans and Catholics from other parts at its accomplishment.

There are two days in the year on which this miracle takes place. The first occasion happens early in May, the second on September 19. We had the privilege of being present yesterday in the Piazza of the city, while the miracle was wrought, and we believe few things would be more welcome to our readers than an account of it.

Januarius, protector of Naples, suffered martyrdom under Diocletian about the year 305, in company with Festus, his deacon, and Desiderius, his lecturer. As Bishop of Benevento, he attracted the attention of Draconius, the governor, and on refusing to certify the gods, was by his orders decapitated at Pozzuoli, two miles from Naples. His body was brought to the city, and buried in the church of St. Januarius, where it remained until the execution a pious woman collected some of the dead Bishop's blood, which she brought to Naples in two phials. This is the blood which, after sixteen centuries, we beheld yesterday—fresh, living blood, as if it had come from veins but a few hours before.

These few remarks are sufficient prelude to giving a detailed account of the liquefaction. The great event may take place at any moment between seven and twelve, and therefore it was no wonder to find a crowd in the church at an early hour. By 9 o'clock the Piazza was filled, while in the chapel of the cathedral treasury, there were about fifteen hundred persons laboring under intense excitement. On the steps of the high altar of this chapel an aged canon stood, holding the phial half full of Daemo's blood. Priests, laymen, soldiers and gendarmes stood around. Outside the rails young and old, rich and poor stood jammed together, praying, singing, crying out to the protector of Naples that the miracle might take place. The tension was great, for Neapolitans believe if the blood does not liquefy they shall suffer either pestilence or scarcity of crops. They regard St. Januarius as father from whom they expect almost everything. Their confidence in him is strong, but they know that on more than one occasion the blood did not liquefy and a plague followed. His protection saved the city of which they are so proud from being destroyed by Vesuvius two or three times, especially in December, 1631; but they must admit they have not always deserved it. It was not a thing to be surprised at, therefore, that the various people were rather hysterical.

THE MIRACLE.

From the moment the canon held up the phial to the light of a candle before the concourse until the liquefaction occurred forty minutes passed by. Litanies, hymns and various prayers succeeded each other, yet no sign of any change in the hard mass was apparent. At length it began to grow soft. Pieces of the dark lump commenced to fall off. Then, the next moment, the whole phial was almost filled with blood—and the miracle had taken place. A cry went up from the crowd, and a

wild scene followed. "Ecco! il miracolo è fatto!" "Look, the miracle has taken place!"—came from every side. Words of thanksgiving, repeated in a hundred forms, were given to "San Gennaro," only to be drowned by the strains of the "Te Deum," in which all joined. From the heights of the citadel cannon boomed out the glad tidings over the city, and on every tongue were the same words—"Ecco! il miracolo è fatto!" And Neapolitans, always merry and happy, were more so than ever. The coming year was to pass without mishap, for "San Gennaro" would still protect the city. And that day in restaurants, in the streets, in hotels, at railway stations the miracle was the dominant theme. Men wrangled over the precise moment the liquefaction had taken place; shrill-voiced women argued about how long "San Gennaro" had delayed them, but all were happy and agreed on one point—their protector has not forsaken his beloved city. VERITAS.

THE CATHOLIC CONFSSIONAL AND THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

This week we present to our readers complimentary notices of Father McKeon's little book, by three eminent theologians, viz. Rev. G. R. North, editor-in-chief of the CATHOLIC RECORD, Rev. Wm. Foley, S. T. D., and Rev. L. A. Lambert, editor-in-chief of the New York Freeman's Journal.

"The Catholic Confessional and the Sacrament of Penance" is the title of an exceedingly interesting and instructive pamphlet, just published by the Rev. G. R. North, S. T. D., of St. Columban, Ontario, Canada. The author treats his subject in a lucid, forcible and able manner, and his explanations are clearly and supports them with an abundance of Bible texts referring to them. In fact, he bases all his arguments on Scripture and on an appeal to common sense. In his answer he clears away a vast amount of false information and misconceptions about the Catholic doctrine of penance. Father McKeon's work is an earnest and direct talk to the reader, and holds the attention of the sincere seeker of the truth, from beginning to end. It is just the kind of book for the Catholic people, and it holds the attention of the sincere seeker of the truth, from beginning to end. It is just the kind of book for the Catholic people, and it holds the attention of the sincere seeker of the truth, from beginning to end.

From Rev. G. R. Northgrave, editor-in-chief of the Catholic Record, and author of "Mistake of Modern Indulgence": "The Catholic Confessional and the Sacrament of Penance" is a book that should be in the hands of every Catholic. It is well written, and within the resources of the most meagre pocket-book. Father McKeon's work is a most valuable contribution to the requirements of the twentieth century. It is not less thoughtful or less thorough than those of old, but, instead of folios, will write six penny tracts and will write one tract to the student of the school, but to the man on the street, their language must be thoroughly modern and simple. It is a book that will run its course, and reading may comprehend. Hence there are no 'purple patches' and devoted to the exposition of a much misrepresented subject. It is a book that should be in the hands of every Catholic. It is well written, and within the resources of the most meagre pocket-book. 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