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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1895.

Calendar for the Week.

- Dec. 19—St. Urban V., Pope.
- 20—Vigil of St. Thomas. Ember Day.
- 21—St. Thomas, Apostle. Ember Day.
- 22—St. Thomas, Apostle. Ember Day.
- 23—Of the Ferial.
- 24—Vigil of Christmas. Fast.
- 25—Christmas. Holiday of Obligation.

Gloria in Excelsis.

With what manifold blessings of sweet peace and innocent joy does not Christmas-tide come laden each year to poor exiled humanity. We have not here a lasting city. The home that endures, that fills to overflowing our cup of joy, is not found on this mundane sphere. Christmas joys are but a prelude to those; Hope points to a better world. They are the joys of sinless souls, jubulations of angels, transferred, however so faintly, from heaven to earth. Only those can enjoy them and bear in their ecstatic fulness, who are, like the angels, pure-minded, guileless and just. Of Christmas joys, as of Heaven's delights, it may be said: "nothing defiled may enter here." Innocent childhood claims Christmas as its own special holiday. It is the feast of the King of Kings, leaving His throne on high, to visit the earth, in search of little ones to love Him. Ye heavens rain down the Just One, and let the earth bud forth a Saviour, and let all the promises of the Patriarchs be accomplished, and the predictions of Isaiah be fulfilled: "For a Child is born to us and a Son is given to us!" And all the young, and the lowly, and the humble ones, rejoice when Jesus, in His orb, or in the arms of a Mother Immaculate, is presented for their loving homage and adoration. Christmas gifts are poured out in profusion, nay the very poorest retire to their hovels laden with cheer, and blessing the hand that gave; while Christmas chiming ring out their merriest ere sunrise, and angels commingling with man, as they mingle with the shepherds on Judah's hills, their songs of gladness, borne along on the gentle breath of morning, are echoed back and repeated under every sky and in every Christian household: "glory to God on high and on earth peace to men of good will."

Old age, which like the snow fleck'd hill top, has braved life's rugged storms and rests securely in well earned repose, enjoys too its full share of Christmas consolations and joys. Extreme meet; what entrances childhood delights old age. Every recurring commemoration of the mysterious birth in Bethlehem, while consecrating childhood, crowns with blessed hope the declining years of men. Sons and daughters have gathered to enjoy one more day of unclouded bliss beneath the paternal roof, there is a noble rivalry between them as to which may confer the highest honour, or pay the most reverential tribute, to the bent form and snow crowned head of him whose life's ambition it has been to promote their well being, and who still lives to tender opportune counsel in trials

hour, and invoke at all times God's blessing on their every undertaking. There is no reasonable excuse for the carelessness, or the crime, that would prevent the typical Christian family from being found under every roof in the civilized world to-day, the benign light of Bethlehem's Star has shone with softening, quickening radiance in every nation, and to every people under the sun. And glory to God is sung and peace on earth proclaimed to every man that breathes and lives. But the prophecies of universal brotherhood, and Isaiah's picturing of general peace and love amongst men, can never be realized in us, until all old feuds shall have ceased, and all discordant elements have been readjusted, and until all unworthy jealousies and rivalries have died out. All we can do is to strive and pray for so glorious a consummation, that the day may not be distant, when Bethlehem's Star will shine out on a believing, forgiving, and united humanity; when all peoples may be as one in repeating the angelic hymn "glory to God on high and peace on earth to men of good will."

Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Christ the hope of man is born
Shout the anthem! join the Angels!
Tis our Saviour's natal morn!

T. D. McGee.

Where the Thorn Flowers on Christmas Day.

Ancient Glastonbury, the scene of the saintly Richard Whitting's martyrdom, the grave of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, is the subject of a notable article in the new number of The Cosmopolitan. The cone shaped hill which stands, like a sentinel, in the flowery vale of Somerset, called the Tor of Glastonbury, has a history that deserves the veneration of the English people, but, until the recent pilgrimage of the Catholic Truth Society to Glastonbury, it is doubtful if one Englishman in a thousand ever heard its story. History is now however, experiencing a revival. The writers of The Cosmopolitan article briefly summarize some of the leading legendary and historical associations of the Tor.

Two hundred years before Constantine declared Christianity to be the religion of the Roman empire a Christian settlement flourished on this Somersetshire hill. Among the ruins, which crown it still and grace its southern slope, you stand, if legend be not wholly false, as near the footprints of the devoted man who saw the dreadful deed that was done on Calvary, and who walked and talked with the Master in Jerusalem, as if you wandered among the mouldering ruins of old Rome. A long low hill behind the Tor stretches towards the south, and on its western slope that "rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple," and who, as St. Matthew tells, "began from Pilate the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his own new tomb," came one day in the year 63 with eleven disciples, sent to Britain by St. Philip, who was preaching the Word in Gaul. Joseph and his companions stowed their craft up an arm of the Bristol Channel to this commanding isle of Ynyswitrin, where they landed greatly fatigued after a perilous journey. The long low hill where they disembarked is known to this day as "Wear-all Hill," in commemoration of their perilous adventure. The men of the country came down to enquire what manner of pilgrims these were; and not hating their mission bade them depart. The natives threatened so fiercely that Joseph, to defend his little band, drew the bold Britains by a miracle. He thrust into the earth the staff which he had brought from Jerusalem, where he had cut it from the tree from which was made the crown of thorns. Above his knotted stick he made the sign of the Cross and cried: "By the grace of Him, who for us men hung upon the tree of Calvary, wearing the thorny crown, I bid thee be as thou wert wont to be in the bloom of Spring." Then in the pale sunset light of the December evening, as the frosty mists crept upward through the leafless branches of the surrounding trees, there grew before the astonished gaze of the Pagans a beautiful thorn bush, which shot forth green leaves and presently burst into full bloom. The wintry air was filled with a fragrance sweeter than had ever saluted the native senses in sunny May or June.

The pilgrims were made welcome, were given by the King of the country the island of Ynyswitrin, upon which they built a chapel of wattle rods and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. This rude chapel was the "Vetus Ecclesia" of the Romans, where St. Patrick taught his monks. It was preserved in lead by Paulinus, Archbishop of York, in the seventh century, and seven hundred years after the death of St. Patrick was destroyed by fire.

The fierce vandalism of the English under Cromwell is history. Recently we produced in The Cosmopolitan Cromwell's memorandum ordering the murder of the abbot of Glastonbury and his monks. The writer in The Cosmopolitan gives an account of a fanatical soldier's endeavor to get rid of the miraculous thorn tree.

You will not find the thorn tree which sprung from the staff of Joseph still standing. It was cut down by a fanatic soldier who had no love for "Popish relics." This vandal warrior made a bad business of his wood cutting, for a chip from the bark flew into his eye and so blinded him that he made a false stroke with his ax and cut off one of his legs. The brave knave, however, succeeded in destroying the trunk of the tree which had grown from the single root. The second tree was destroyed by an imitator of his zeal about the end of the eighteenth century. But two hundred years or more before that, ships had been taken from it and its companion and planted in the garden at Glastonbury, where several descendant trees are now extant and may be seen flowering at Christmas time.

BLESSING THE STATUE.

Imposmg and beautiful ceremony at the Cathedral.

The blessing of a beautiful piece of statuary—La Pieta—representing the Virgin Mother holding the form of the Saviour taken from the Cross in her arms—was the occasion of a solemn ceremonial on Sunday evening in the Cathedral. His Grace the Archbishop, who purchased the statue for the Cathedral, presided, being assisted by Rev. Fathers Ryan, Treacy and Oline. The service opened with a number from Rossini's "Stabat Mater," sung by the Cathedral choir under the leadership of Father Rohleder and Mr. Lemaire at the organ. The principal parts were sustained by Mrs. O'Hara, Mrs. Tapsfield, Miss Murphy, Mr. Staek, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Egan, Mr. Russell, Klingenstein's String Quartette—H. Klingenstein, 1st violin; C. Wagner, 2nd violin; I. Telgmann, viola; P. Hahn, violoncello—played Gounod's "Ave Verum," and an Andante by Mozart.

The sermon by Father McBrady of St. Basil's, was upon the sorrows of the Mother of God. It was a magnificent effort, and was listened to with the utmost attention by the congregation that crowded the cathedral. He prayed that the beautiful piece of statuary unveiled that evening would for long days be the centre around which the devotion to Mary of the cathedral congregation would find expression. In the afternoon many all those who are burdened by sorrow, who are in labor and distress, who are battling with temptation from without or within, who are sad and hungry for sympathy look up into the face of Mary with trust; she who is the Mother of Sorrows, our mother and our queen, because Christ, her son, is our King for ever.

A procession composed of little girls in veils, the altar boys, the priests and the Archbishop then formed in the sanctuary and followed the Cross around the church to the spot where the statue stands in front of the right hand side altar. The statue was beautifully illuminated. The Archbishop having performed the ceremony of blessing, addressed the congregation briefly. He said this beautiful piece of statuary represents the most momentous event that ever occurred in the annals of mankind. The divine tragedy of Calvary is the centre of the world's history; it is the completion of all the prophecies of the past, and in the Christian age takes its rise. The piece of statuary should remind the people of two things that it would be well they should always bear in mind—the grievous enormity of sin, and the infinite love of God for us. The ruin of man, and the curse of the earth, itself followed the fall of our first parents. To open the gates of heaven to fallen mankind God Himself assumed human nature and was born into the world on the first Christmas night. God lived amongst us and died on the Cross, purchasing for men plentiful redemption. All the children of Adam were redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and this stupendous thought the beautiful piece of statuary now unveiled commemorates and symbolizes. The devotion of the Catholic Church in this matter is in perfect harmony with the teaching of the religion of God. Reflect that a parent, a brother, sister or dear friend, who is dead, how dear we hold a photograph or any object of theirs that brings to mind the dear departed or connects us with them. So it is we hold in reverence those memorials and symbols that bring to our mind the love of God and the sufferings of Jesus Christ for us and the sufferings of His beloved Mother. Cold and heartless must be the religion that banishes such reverence from the world; cold and heartless and unsatisfying to the human heart must be the religion that is without faith such as this. And the Catholic Church in this and in her other doctrines is in entire accord with the teaching of the religion of Jesus Christ; our system of devotion lifts up the human heart in the very life and wealth of faith. So it is that

this beautiful piece of statuary will remind us of our dear Lord and His Mother, for although the statuary is nothing itself, it is the memorial and reminder of what God has done for us, and tells us to lift up our hearts to Him. May the merciful love of Christ always be with us and may we one day see Him and His blessed Mother in the kingdom of His glory.

Benediction followed. Mrs. Klingenstein sang "Ave Maria." By L. H. accompanied by the string quartette. Hundreds examined the statue which upon its fine oak pedestal will henceforward be a striking object in the Church.

AUSTRALIA IS LIVE.

The Proposal for a National Convention Enthusiastically Supported.

The following article taken from The Freeman's Journal explains itself: THE COMING GREAT CONVENTION.

The project of a meeting in Ireland of the Irish race in Council has been taken up in Australia with boundless enthusiasm. The papers that reach us are as yet inspired only by the admirable suggestion of Archbishop Walsh, of Toronto, to Mr. Blake. We can judge from their editorials how warm will be their approval of the action of the Irish Party on the subject, and how hearty their co-operation making the Convention a magnificent and unparalleled success. The Sydney Freeman's Journal attributes, and rightly attributes, the crushing defeat of the Liberal Home Rulers largely to Irish dissensions. It deplores the disunion which is the main obstacle to Home Rule.

In the Irish Ireland beyond the seas (it declares) there is such disunion, and hence we have an admirable idea. Archbishop Walsh's suggestion that a Convention should be held at Dublin representative of the Irish people both at home and abroad, with the express object of settling out the discussion which at present exists in the Irish Party and defining the policy of the Party in the future (it America and all the other great colonies, each an object lesson in itself of the virtue of Home Rule, sent their delegates to such a Convention there would be at once an atmosphere of pure Irish patriotism created, which the daily quarrels of the Irish people, the jealousies of rival leaders could not give, and magnificent proof given of the perfect unity of the Irish National sentiment in all Irish hearts. Who that has seen the Irish people at such a demonstration might not move even the English Pharaoh's heart? 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