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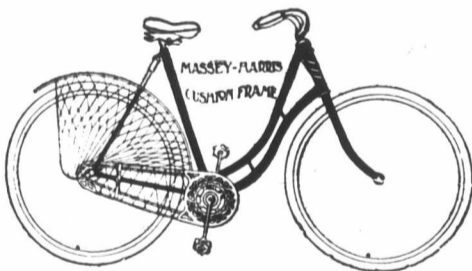
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REFLECTIONS

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all the responses, and in silence the kneeling brothers waited.

Outside the church the birds were singing gladly, as in the autumn mornings we often hear them; now and again the crowing of a lusty cock or the lowing of cattle told of life without. Inside all was still for a few moments, and then the silver tinkling of a little bell told them that the mysterious Pledge of Eternal Life had descended to His earthly altar.

Robed in his white chasuble, which was rich with dainty embroidery, and preceded by the acolyte bearing a lighted candle, the vicar carried the Blessed Sacrament to the dying penitent. With bowed head he received it, and then the priestly benediction; and then, with closed eyes and a look of perfect peace, still kneeling, he rested his head against his brother's shoulder.

"Requiem aeternam," he murmured. When the priest returned again from the altar, having removed his chasuble, he found the two still there, and still kneeling. Kneeling too, he said gently: "O Michael, militie cœlistis signifer, in adiutorium nostrum veni, princeps et propugnator."

The dying man stirred, and opened his eyes.

"Pray for me," he whispered; "oh, pray always. From the gates of hell deliver my soul, O Lord."

And the voice of the priest rose to the throne of God.

"Suscipiat et Christus, qui vocavit te et in sinum Abrahe Angeli educant te. Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei."

And when the words were ended, Michael Pengersek has passed into the unseen world.

The next day they laid him to rest under the pavement at the foot of the fresco of Michael the Archangel.

Chapter VIII.

The morning, which had so long been looked for, dawned at last. The forty days' fast was over. The temple which had taken so many years to build, which had been so near the hearts of all those simple-minded and God-fearing people of Breage, that temple was about to be given to God for His service forever. No wonder, then, that long before the hour for the early celebration—in the aisle that had been the old church—at the little altar which had been hallowed for six hundred years already—crowds of devout and ready worshippers assembled. The good vicar, who had been there late into the night at his work of hearing the confessions of his flock and giving them God's assurance of forgiveness, looked somewhat worn and weary, and yet very joyful, as he passed to the altar and beheld his church full of those waiting to hallow this Feast of Dedication by themselves receiving the Body and Blood of their Lord.

In those days the parish feast meant literally what it was called. All, unless let or hindered by reasonable cause, came willingly to the altar as of their bounden duty. They would have deemed it a disgrace, indeed, to stay away. There was no questioning of God's commands, as there is now. He said: "Do this in remembrance of Me;" and without hesitation, they

were cleansed from their sins and came.

It often strikes me as one of the strangest things in Cornwall that the dear old Church Feast of Dedication is kept still—kept on the same day as of old, but with no thought of the first reason for that yearly feast; no remembrance of that House of God in the midst of them, for the sake of which their forefathers worked and laboured and prayed; no thought of that communion of saints by which God's holy Church is bound together through all ages! Oh, that Cornwall—the land of saints—may one day return to the faith of God, Who made it so beautiful, may shake off the fetters of unbelief and misbelief which so utterly defile it now!

This first Feast of Dedication. There was no chapel, you see, and no Dissenters (such people were not heard of) to tell the good people not to go to church, and to laugh at them for keeping God's commandments. Only those stayed away who were really unable to come, and so it came to pass that hundreds of communicants worshipped God that day, and afterwards waited and watched for the Bishop to come and dedicate their beautiful high altar.

Sir John Ude, the vicar, and John Pengersek stood at the west end and looked. Let me tell you what they saw. Seven lofty arches of granite, supported by slender granite pillars, each pillar composed of four small ones and four inverted ones, and the capitals delicately carved. The floor was laid with rich tiles. No seats marred the symmetry of the nave. People did not sit down to pray to God in those days. A pile of woolen mats was near the door, and each worshipper who entered took his mat and knelt wherever he liked. The walls were rich with the gorgeous frescoes, and the eyes of the good priest rested lovingly for a moment on the triumphant figure of Michael the Archangel. The windows were lovely in all their radiant colouring—such crimson and such deep, dark blue, as we only dream of now, never seen in modern glass, softened by such tender, dainty colouring in brown and yellow and white.

And then straight across the church at the fifth pillar rose the lofty rood-

*Fragments of the old windows remain, showing what the colours were.

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screen of carved oak, with many a cunning leaf and flower and head of bird or beast or fish delicately carved thereon. All the lower panels were painted with the figures of Cornish saints, and above all were the figures of Christ on His Cross and St. Mary and St. John each side.

(To be Continued.)

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