

OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

WRITTEN BY FATHER CRUISE FOR THE
CATHOLIC REGISTER.

From time to time, since the day of her Assumption into Heaven, the Glorious Mother of God has deigned to refresh this weary earth of ours with her beautiful presence; and names of the sanctuaries founded to commemorate these various apparitions are famous throughout Christendom. Dear to the hearts of the faithful are the shrines of Our Lady of Gennezano, of Savona, of Monte Pulcovera, of the Garde, and of La Salotte; nor have these favors of the Queen of Heaven been confined to any single nation. The love of the mother embraces all her children. As we should expect, Italy, the home of the vicar of Mary's Son, holds the first place in the recorded number of these celestial favors. Then comes France—the oldest daughter of the Church. But Germany can boast of its shrine of Our Lady of Kevelaer; Switzerland, its Einsiedlen; Spain, of Montserrat; Mexico, of Guadalupe; and even poor England has had its shrines of our Lady. The faithful of that heresy-darkened land can recall, with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, the fact of the apparition of Our Lady of Mount Carmel to St. Simon Stock, and of the consequent wide-spread adoption of the Brown Scapular.

But Mary reserved for France and for our own day her crowning favor, in the apparition, or rather series of apparitions which she designed to vouchsafe at Lourdes in the year 1858.

Let us listen to the majestic simplicity with which the Roman Breviary tells this wondrous story. It may be almost called the official account given by the Catholic Church of those prodigies, and it will be so read in the ages to come by the clergy yet unborn, when, please God, we shall be gazing upon her glorious countenance, whose praises are here recited. Perhaps in the centuries that are to follow the faithful will envy us who lived in the time when events so wonderful occurred and will think—surely God and His mother seemed nearer the earth in those days, than in common-place later times.

In the fourth year after the dogmatic definition concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the Virgin herself appeared many times at the grotto of Massabielle, on the bank of the river Gave, near Lourdes, in the diocese of Tarbes, to a very poor, but honest and pious child, named Bernadette. The Immaculate Virgin was of youthful and kind countenance; she was clothed in a snow white robe, over which was a veil of the like whiteness. She was girdled by a blue cincture, and golden roses adorned her bare feet. On the first day of the apparition, which was the 11th February, 1858, she taught the child by her example to make the sign of the cross correctly and piously, and to recite the holy Rosary, passing through her fingers a chaplet, which at first was suspended from her arm: this she also did in the succeeding apparitions. On the second day of the apparition, Bernadette, fearing a diabolical illusion, sprinkled holy water upon the Blessed Virgin. But Mary, smiling slightly, looked still more kindly upon her. When for the third time the Virgin appeared she asked the child to go to the grotto every day for fifteen days. During these days the Immaculate Virgin frequently conversed with Bernadette, exhorted her to pray for sinners, to kiss the ground for them, and to do penance. She commanded her to tell the priests that they should build a chapel for her there, and go thither in solemn procession. She directed the child to drink of the water of a fountain which as yet was hidden in the earth; but was soon to be burst forth, and to wash

therein. Finally, on the feast of the Annunciation, Bernadette, having most earnestly begged to know her name with whose presence she had been so often favored, the Virgin, joining her hands before her breast, and raising her eyes towards Heaven, answered: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

This is the first of the historic lessons of the office of the feast, and contains a brief account of the apparition. The next two lessons relate the results of these marvels.

The Breviary continues: "The report of the grace which the faithful were said to have received at the sacred grotto, spreading widely, increased daily the multitude which the sanctity of the place had already summoned. Accordingly, moved by the report of the miracles wrought, and by the innocence of Bernadette, the Bishop of Tarbes, four years after the events related, having made a judicial enquiry into the circumstances, declared the apparitions to be supernatural, and permitted the veneration of the Immaculate Virgin at the grotto. Soon a chapel was built; from that day almost innumerable multitudes of the faithful go thither yearly, in fulfilment of vows, or to obtain favors, from France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and other countries of Europe, as also from the distant shores of America, and the name of our Immaculate Lady of Lourdes is celebrated throughout the whole earth. The water of the fountain brought to all parts of the world restores health to the sick. The Catholic world, mindful of such great benefits, has built a magnificent temple there. Innumerable banners, tokens of favors received, sent thither by cities and by nations, decorate the Church of Our Lady in a most splendid manner. Here, as if on her throne, the Immaculate Virgin is continually honored; in the daytime by prayers, by hymns, and solemn ceremonies; at night by those sacred processions in which vast crowds of pilgrims walk with lighted tapers and torches, singing the praises of the Blessed Virgin.

It is evident to all how pilgrimages of this description have increased; how they have given courage to profess the Christian law, and how marvellously they have promoted devotion to the Immaculate Virgin—in which wonderful profession of faith the Christian people have had as their leaders priests, who conduct their flocks to the shrine. Bishops, too, frequently go to the sacred spot, are at the head of the pilgrimages, and preside at the more solemn functions. Nor is it rare to see even Cardinals going to Lourdes in the humble guise of pilgrims. The Roman Pontiffs themselves, in accordance with their devotion to the Immaculate Lady of Lourdes, have enriched the Church with most noble gifts. Pius IX. gave to the Church at the grotto the privileges of an Arch-confraternity, indulgences, and the title of a minor Basilica. By his Apostolic Legate in France he crowned with solemn rite the image of the Mother of God venerated at Lourdes.

Leo XIII. gave innumerable privileges to the Basilica, such as indulgences in the form of a Jubilee on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the apparition, promoting by his words and his authority pilgrimages to the shrine, and causing to be solemnly dedicated in his name the Church of the Rosary. These favors he further amply increased when, at the request of many Bishops, he permitted that a solemn feast, with special office and Mass, should annually be celebrated under the title of the Apparition of the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary.

Such is the account of the apparition of our Lady of Lourdes as given by the Roman Breviary.

When we realize that the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,

did actually appear upon this earth in our own day, with what emotions we are filled! On that morning, 11th February, 1858, this world bore the same toll-worn appearance which it has now. Men talked in Paris of the policy of the Emperor, of wars, or of new operas. Gloomy London's streets were busy as at present with traffic. In New York stock-broking and speculating went on as on other days, and yet the greatest of God's creatures, the Queen of the Universe, was upon our earth. Perhaps at this Mass that morning the holy Pontiff, Pius IX., felt some unusual thrill of joy, not divining the cause, not knowing that the sweet mother whom he, of all the Popes, had most highly honored was about to confirm with her own blessed lips the infallible oracle pronounced by him but a few years before.

Oh how dull this world seems when we think of the bright Paradise where Mary reigns as Queen. How we long for the time to come when we shall see that vision of loveliness, not for a few minutes, as Bernadette saw her, but for a long and glad eternity. How often are spiritual beings near us, and we are unconscious of their presence. Absorbed in our work, our pleasures, or our cares, we heed not, we do not think of the unseen world which is all the while so close to us.

It is now at the beginning of Lent, that our Mother appeared at Lourdes. She told the little Bernadette to pray for sinners—to do penance, and to kiss the ground for them. If we cannot fast or perform great austerities, we can at least do so much. Our Lady did not exhort to heroic deeds of penance. Can we not do what she desires? If small acts of penance seem too trivial, why, then, try great ones, but let us not altogether put away from us the spirit of penance. Pride is at the root of so many sins, if not of all. Little acts of humility—humility carried to what would seem to the proud intellect childishness—contain within them a mighty antidote against the power of the evil spirit. Whose cry has been from the beginning: "I will not serve."

Personalities.

Keep clear of personalities in general conversation. Talk of things, objects, thoughts. The smallest minds occupy themselves with personalities. Personalities must sometimes be talked, because we have to learn and find out men's characteristics for legitimate objects; but it is to be with confidential persons. Do not needlessly report ill of others. There are times when we are compelled to say, "I do not think Bouncer is a true and honest man;" but when there is no need to express an opinion, let poor Bouncer alone. Others will take his measure, no doubt, and save you the trouble of analyzing him and instructing them. And, as far as possible, dwell on the good side of human beings. There are family boards where a constant process of depreciation, assigning motives and cutting up character goes forward. They are not pleasant places. One who is healthy does not wish to dine at a dissecting table. There is evil enough in man, God knows; but it is not the mission of every young man or woman to detail and report it all. Keep the atmosphere as pure as possible and fragrant with gentleness and charity.—Dr. John Hall.

From the Far North.

In northern climates people are very subject to colds, but the natural remedy is also produced in the same climate. Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup cures coughs, colds, hoarseness, asthma, bronchitis and all throat and lung troubles. Price 25c. and 50c.

A marriage will shortly take place between Mr. Thomas M. Burke, son of the late Sir Thomas Burke, Marble Hill, and Miss Catherine Burke, second daughter of the late Major-General Burke, R.E.

A dreadful gun accident occurred on the night of January 28th, in a field adjoining Bamford House, by which Captain Kerneet F. Rickman, of the 18th Royal Irish Regiment, Adjutant of the Kilkenny Militia, lost his life.

Not So Here.

Watson's cough drops will give positive and instant relief to those suffering from colds, hoarseness, sore throat, etc., and are invaluable to orators and vocalists. R. & T. W. stamped on each drop. Try them.

Irish Items.

William Norton Ferras, Esq., of Roxborough, Loughrea, has been appointed a Deputy-Lieutenant for the County Galway.

On the evening of January 29th, a procession to celebrate the release of Mr. James Egan, took place in Dublin, and afterwards a meeting was held at Boreford place, which was addressed by Mr. Pierce Mahony, Mr. John Redmond, M.P., and Mr. Egan.

Captain Uvedale Corbet Singleton, R.N., of Adare House, has been sworn as High Sheriff of Meath, with Mr. Joseph Lowry, of Bachelor's Lodge, Navan, as under Sheriff. Mr. John Clark, solicitor, 37 Westmoreland street, Dublin, has been appointed returning officer.

The announcement of the death of Mr. James Nash, J.P. Limerick, which occurred on Sunday, January 29th, has occasioned much regret. Mr. Nash was an extensive house and land agent. He was one of the oldest members of the local St. Vincent de Paul Society, and for 28 years held the position of honorary secretary to the Limerick Council.

On the night of Jan. 29th, when the Navan Nationalists were returning from the Gormanlough meeting they were attacked by a gang of Remondite rowdies. Father Flynn was struck with a stone, and several others were struck in like manner, including policemen, who came to protect the Nationalists. Additional police were drafted into the town.

The following changes have been made in Achonry Diocese by Most Rev. Dr. Lyster: Rev. J. McKoon from Keash to Bonnyconlon; Rev. J. Morris from Swinford to Ballymote; Rev. D. Gallagher from Bonnyconlon to Swinford; Rev. A. Callaghan from Foxford to Keash; Rev. P. Conlon from Ballymote to Foxford. The Bishop fixed the 2d February to ordain the Rev. Patrick Morrisroe, Deacon, Mynnooth, a distinguished student on the Danboyne establishment.

An inquest was held at Fermoy, on Feb. 2d, on the body of a child named Newton, who had died suddenly during a football match at Fermoy Protestant College the previous day. The evidence showed that the child had been subject to fainting fits, though no one but his mother knew it. He fell and died after a run during the game. It was stated that no rough play of any kind was indulged in. The boys played voluntarily. A verdict of death from failure of the heart's action was found.

In the Board of Governors of Omagh District Lunatic Asylum for the current year, an infusion of new blood has been made by the appointment of four Nationalists, viz.:—Edward Boyle, J. P., Omagh; Michael Devlin, J. P., Omagh; James Hamilton McKelvey, Protestant Home Ruler, Omagh; and Edward Gallagher, Strabane. They are selected in lieu of the following gentlemen:—Colonel L. M. Buchanan, Edenfall, Omagh; Colonel M. Brown, J.P., Mullaghmore, Omagh; Rev. William Charters, Drumagh, Omagh; and Rev. C. K. Toland, Strabane.

Father McFadden's description of the condition of affairs in North West Donegal, (which we print in another column,) demands serious and instant attention. The Poor Law has entirely failed to grapple with the necessities of the people, and they are in a most pitiful plight. Disease has now added its afflictions to destitution, and the poverty of the people clears the road for its ravages. Such is Father McFadden's picture. He appeals to Secretary Morley "to cheer his friends and confound his enemies by a message of encouragement to West Donegal." Fail as are the Chief Secretary's hands he can not allow this appeal to pass unconsidered.

A representative meeting of the tenantry of the Coolmooney estates of Sir Edward Synge Hutchinson, was held, recently at the Glen of Imaal, to consider the grave agricultural crisis. The following resolutions were adopted:—"That inasmuch as the judicial rents fixed by the Land Commission have now become rack-rents in consequence of their having been fixed on a wrong basis and not in accordance with the spirit of the Land Act—for we are paying rent on our own improvements—and that the continual fall in the price of sheep and cattle and farm produce generally forms a strong reason for our urging on the Government to reduce the present judicial rents by at least one-half. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Right Hon. John Morley, Chief Secretary for Ireland and to the Press."

Rushville, Schuyler Co., Ill., U. S. A., Feb. 14, 1889. "I have been afflicted with dyspepsia over twelve years, and I know I have found nothing that has benefited me like Diamond Vera Cura. The first few doses relieved me of fullness and soreness of the stomach and shortness of breath. I was also troubled with palpitation of the heart, which it has relieved, and I feel better in every way since I commenced using Diamond Vera Cura, and cheerfully recommend it to all suffering from dyspepsia or indigestion." JOHN W. HAYES, Elder, Union Baptist Church. At druggists or sent on receipt of price, 25 cents. Address E. A. Wilson, Toronto.