

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL.

There must be few, I think, among the great numbers of English-speaking travellers, pouring year after year into Italy, who have had an opportunity of witnessing the celebration of the "festa" at any of the great shrines, and to whom has not occurred those beautiful lines of Longfellow:—

"This is indeed the blessed Mary's land,
Virgin and Mother of our dear Redeemer.
All hearts are touched and softened at her name;
Alike the bandit with the blood-stained hand,
The priest, the prince, the scholar, and the peasant,
The man of deeds, the visionary dreamer,
Pay homage to her as one ever present."

Though this thought had often occurred to me, I had never, I think, so forcibly presented itself as when, on the feast of Our Lady's Nativity, it was my good fortune to visit, in the little village of Genazzano, some thirty miles from Rome, the world-famous shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The village of Genazzano, in itself insignificant, is most picturesquely situated. It lies on a tongue-shaped eminence, stretching down into a beautiful valley, between two ranges of the Sabine mountains. The town is built on a steep slope, and the houses rise in irregular lines one above the other, the whole being crowned by the spire of the Madonna's Church. Down the valley on the right lies the bed of a stream, in winter no doubt a foaming torrent, but now dried up by the scorching rays of an Italian sun. In front the mountains slope down into a plain, and away in the distance lie the Volcanic mountains, through a cliff in which we get a glimpse of the Mediterranean. This part of the Sabines is known as the mountains of Palestrina, and Genazzano itself is not over six miles distant from that once-famous stronghold. Nowadays, however, Palestrina has greatly declined in importance, while the name of its neighbor is known throughout the Catholic world as the resting place chosen by Our Blessed Lady under the title of the Madonna of Good Counsel. The devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel at Genazzano goes back to a date long before the arrival of the picture. In the ages of paganism the site of the village was occupied by a temple of Venus, but when, after his conversion, Constantine bestowed this part of the country on the occupants of St. Peter's, the worship of the impure goddess gave place to the devotion to the chaste Madonna, and either St. Marcus in the 4th, or St. Sixtus IV. in the 5th century, erected on the foundation of the old heathen temple church to Our Lady of Good Counsel. For long ages the church remained, but after ten centuries it had become ruinous and dilapidated, and in 1856 the O'Connell family, desirous of preserving it from total ruin, handed it over to the care of the Augustinian friars, who were able to restore it partially so that it lasted for another hundred years. At length, about the middle of the 15th century, a holy widow of Genazzano, named Petruccia, a tertiary of the Augustinian Order, felt herself inspired to build a new church to Our Lady. Her own means were all inadequate to the end, but, strong in faith, she began the work in spite of the sneers and prophecies of disaster of her neighbors. The work was far advanced when her means came to an end, and the prophecies seemed near fulfillment.

Nothing daunted, Petruccia trusted in the help of Our Lady, and she was not deceived. On the 25th of April, 1467, while the people were celebrating the Vespers of the Feast of St. Mark, suddenly the sound of Heavenly music was heard, and in the air over their heads appeared a white cloud of astonishing brilliancy. This opening disclosed a picture of Our Lady, which, slowly descending, took up a position behind one of the unfinished altars of the new church. At the same time all the bells of the town rang out of themselves a joyous peal, and the astonished citizens broke forth into glad hymns of welcome. The story of the apparition and the extraordinary prodigies worked at the new shrine, soon spread abroad, and in a few days there arrived at Genazzano two travel-stained pilgrims, who told a strange story and joyfully recognized the Madonna. To understand their story we must go back some time and transport ourselves across the Adriatic to the little town of Scutari, in the territory of Albania. This unfortunate country, by its defection from the unity of the Church by heresy and schism, as well as by the gross corruption and immorality into which it fallen, had called down on itself the wrath of Heaven, and about the time of which we write its frontiers were threatened by the advancing hosts of Islam, under the victorious Mahomet II. For a time they held out bravely under a good and valiant king, Castriot, but when he died, in the year 1467, all hope seemed to have deserted them, and the inhabitants betook themselves to prayer and fasting to avert the anger of God. But their repentance had come too late, and they were to be shown by a signal token that their fate was sealed. In a little chapel near the town was a famous shrine of Our Lady, known according to some as the Annunziata, and to others as Our Lady of Good Counsel. This shrine had long been under the care of two men named De Scavia and Giorgio, among the few who, in the general defection, had remained faithful to the Church. These two, dreading the advancing heathen, had determined to leave their native country, and went together to pay a last visit to the Madonna. What was their astonishment when the picture, leaving its shrine and enveloped

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In a white cloud, raised itself in the air and moved away slowly in the direction of the sea. Marvelling they set out in pursuit, and followed the picture day and night. By day it was surrounded by the cloud, which by night became brilliantly illuminated. Soon they reached the shore of the Adriatic, and filled with faith, they passed onward over the water, which gave to their feet as firm a resistance as the dry land. Thus they arrived in Italy, and continued following till, as they came in sight of the walls of Rome, their guide disappeared. Entering the city, they sought for news of the Madonna, but for some time in vain.

Soon, however, news reached Rome of the miraculous apparition at Genazzano, and, going thither, they at once recognized their beloved Mother, and spread abroad the story of her translation. Miracles followed fast—the sick were cured, the dead raised to life, and the Augustinians kept careful record of all that took place, which record still remains. To this day the miracles still continue, and well-authenticated cures are of common occurrence. It is a historical fact that in the four centuries during which Genazzano has possessed this great treasure it has been singularly free from all the epidemics, plagues, earthquakes, or other afflictions which have from time to time devastated the neighboring villages. Within the last century researches have been made, which all go to confirm the history of the miraculous apparition. The chapel at Scutari still stands, though in ruins, and in it is to be seen the niche from which, according to a tradition handed down among the people, the Madonna took its flight. At a short distance from the chapel was discovered a stone, on which was impressed an image of the Virgin and Child, like that at Genazzano. Even the Turkish occupants of the country respect this sanctuary, in which from time to time prodigies and miracles still occur. In Genazzano itself the two Albanians who followed the picture took their residence, and though the De Scavia are now extinct, the Giorgi is still one of the principal families in the little town. But for confirmation of the miraculous event we need look no further than to the picture itself, for it is of its very nature a miracle. It had always been not attached to the wall, but was actually floating in the air without any support whatever, and on the 25th November, 1682, when the ceremony of coronation took place, this fact was placed beyond doubt, for it was found that the picture having no connection with the wall, except at one point, where it merely touches a projection, it was impossible to fix the jewelled crown to it, and it was necessary to suspend it from above by cords. Furthermore, it was found that the painting is not on canvas, wood, or any other firm substance, but is merely the colored surface of a fresco, which, detached from the plaster on which it was originally painted, is now as thin and flexible as a sheet of paper. These wonderful facts would seem incredible were it not that we have them confirmed by the sworn testimony of seven witnesses deputed by the Roman Congregation of Rites to examine into the matter, and who, on June 11th, 1747, again opened the shrine, and by actual experiment verified the existing tradition. Another confirmation has been afforded in our own times by Mr. Dillon, the devoted servant of Our Lady, who has written an exhaustive history of the Madonna, and who was privileged to examine it closely.

But now let us betake ourselves to Genazzano, and see with our own eyes the great devotion to the Madonna. For some days before the 8th of September, the little town has been full of bustling activity, for a three days' fair will begin on the Feast and the pilgrims who will come from far and near to satisfy their devotion will combine business with piety, and carry away with them to their mountain homes new supplies of clothing and household necessities. Strangers, too, have been gathering in for the festival, and in the narrow streets we meet little parties of Roman clerical students, among whom I recognized the purple of the Scots, the more sombre black of the English, and the blue and black of the North American Colleges, while some few Roman sight-seers in their modern city dress seem to mar the otherwise medieval character of the scene. And now it is the eve of the festival, and the first of the pilgrimages have begun to arrive. Every town, village, and hamlet for miles around sends in its contingent, and all this evening and all to-morrow the roads in every direction will be crowded with pedestrians, sometimes alone or in twos and threes, more often in little bands of from twenty to thirty, men, women, and children, tramping along cheerfully behind a pole bearing a picture of the Madonna, and reciting the Rosary or singing in chorus some hymn to their beloved Mother and Queen. On they come—hundreds, many thousands, of them, carrying little provision for the way, for a little bread and fruit, and a dry place to sleep on—under a tree or on the steps of a church, or even in the very streets of the town—are all that they will require during their pilgrimage. As the evening of the vigil approaches, the church begins to fill up with an expectant crowd, evidently waiting for some event. At the head of the right aisle is the famous shrine, rich with many coloured marbles and carved brass work, and surrounded with a strong iron railing to keep back the pressing crowd. As yet a veil hangs behind the altar, and the Madonna is concealed from view; but not for long, for as the hour for First Vespers approaches, a priest comes from the sacristy, vested in cotta and stole, and accompanied by boys bearing candles and incense. He unlocks the gate, and enters the shrine, and the crowd is hushed in expectation. He draws back the veil and raises the metal door, and the Madonna is revealed to the eyes of her humble but loving children. Instantly from every throat in the crowd there goes out a wild shout of joy and welcome, and the feast has begun. From that moment, for the two succeeding days, while the picture remains uncovered, except for the few hours during which the weary pilgrims lie sleeping in and around the church, the building will scarcely cease to re-echo with the shouts and songs and prayers of hundreds of lusty voices. Even during the solemn Vespers, sung by a powerful choir, the

piety of the devout crowd, and a strong voice will give vent to another "Evviva!" which will be taken up by the whole body till the air is fairly deafened.

As each little pilgrimage arrives in the piazza in front of the church, all drop on their knees, and, blessing the ground as they go, they proceed thus up the steps into the church, and men and women with white hair and bent with toll, young men and maidens decked out in their picturesque holiday attire, children of all ages, all vying with each other in showing devotion to the Madonna. Once inside the church they join their voices to the "Evviva!" of the crowd. Perhaps some girl, the sister of her village, will sing the verses of a popular hymn, while the whole crowd join lustily in the chorus. Again, the priest of some parish, or the leading man of some pilgrimage, will read out a long prayer to the Madonna, and then all together pray to the Ave Marias. And so one pilgrimage follows another, and the first comers, making way for their successors, go out into the streets to enjoy the fair and bargain over their purchases. In the evening there are fireworks and fire-balloons, and as each event takes place there goes up a great shout of "Evviva Maria." And now it is night, and the streets are lined with sleeping forms taking a little rest before the morning, when they must be up by times to pay their farewell visit to the Madonna and start away home again in the cool hours before the heat of the day. Nor is it all excitement and shouting and singing hymns, but there is real practical piety below it all, for the Augustinian Fathers have called into their assistance a large number of priests, and all day long, from early morning to late at night, the confessional in the church are in constant use for the women, and in the sacristy and passages, wherever a priest can get room to sit down, there are crowds of men waiting patiently for their turn, while during the entire morning a priest is hard at work dispensing the bread of life to the thousands who approach the rail, and who would not think the feast complete without going to their duties. And now, before we say good-bye to Genazzano, let us listen to the hymns which the people are singing, as the sound echoes down the valleys and along the mountain sides. We often hear it said that though the Catholic Church carefully discriminates between the devotion to be paid to God and to His Blessed Mother, the common people are apt to forget the Deity and pay supreme honor to the creature; but let us listen, and we will hear the first refrain—

"Viva, viva, sempre viva, quelle tre Per-
son Divine.
Quelle tre Person Divine, La Santissima
Trinita."

("All hail! All hail! For ever all hail
to the Three Divine Persons of the
Most Holy Trinity.")

And in the favourite hymn to the
Madonna—

"Evviva Maria, Maria Evviva!
Evviva Maria e chi la creò."

("All hail to Mary, to Mary all hail!
All hail to Mary, and to Him Who
created her.")

Showing clearly that in all the honour paid to Mary, it is to her as a creature—the most perfect certainly, but still a creature—to whom we pay honour, in imitation of her Creator. Who honoured her by becoming her Son. Truly great is the faith of these simple people. The Madonna to them is no far-off queen, no great historical personage, but their own Mother, a real factor in their daily lives, watching over them, guarding them from evil and guiding them to Heaven. To our cold northern temperaments all the shouting and singing, and praying aloud before the shrine, may seem absurd and fanatical, but as we glance at their earnest faces, the eyes often drowned in tears, as they pour out some heartfelt petition to the Madonna, we wish that they could communicate to us a little of the strength of their faith and the fervour of their piety.—G. H. B. in the London Monitor.

HER VOCATION.

[A variety of "morals" will be drawn from this little sketch, and some people will fail to find a moral. It depends upon the reader.]

SHE was very tired of waiting. "I have waited so long," she said, and the good priest, who was the recipient of all confidence, replied: "Wait a little longer still, my child."

She thought almost rebelliously that it was easy for a man to counsel a woman to patience. Years ago, Kate Mordaunt had wished to be a nun, though this feeling was rather an impression than the deep-seated desire and conviction it should have been to bring a vocation. She did not know why she wished to enter the convent, at least she thought she did not. There are some things a woman can not acknowledge even to herself. It is fortunate that confessors can usually read one's soul like an open book and know without the telling the things a penitent would tell if she knew them herself.

Kate Mordaunt failed to understand her own heart, and she told him all she knew of herself when she said: "Father, I have often wanted a vocation; I mean a religious one. When I was a child I longed to be a nun. I was an orphan, and when my aunt died and left my little cousin all alone I felt I must take care of her. Estelle was ten years younger than I, and all I could do, the only talent I had, was to act."

I put my little cousin with the good Sisters of the Sacred Heart, for I knew she was safe there, and I went on the stage. I loved the work, though there were many things about the roving life I could not well endure, but I had to for ten years.

Then Estelle joined me. She was a lovely girl, small and graceful with blue eyes and hair like brown silk. I never wanted her to act, but she had far more talent than I, and she would go on the stage. Of course I was always with her, and then came the time when she mar-



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ried." Kate's voice trembled a little and her auditor looked at her keenly, but she went on steadily. "He was an actor, a good man, rising in his profession, much older than Estelle, and he loved her devotedly. Then I thought the time had come for me to leave them. She did not want me. She had him." Her voice was a little bitter and her proud face flushed. The good priest read all the story of this woman's heart; torn with anguish in seeing the two she loved best, each love the other more than they did her. He saw, but he only said very gently:

"Well, my child, what then?" "Oh! Then I thought perhaps our Lord wanted me, and I told them I meant to leave the company. Estelle cried and begged me to stay with her; and then he spoke, her husband. He asked me to remain. I knew, so well, he said, the dangers and pitfalls of a woman's life upon the stage. Estelle was so young; he could not be with her always; he was busy and harassed; who could so well guard her as the one who had been more than sister and mother to her? He did not want her to act, but he would not force her to stop until she would do it willingly. He loved her with all his soul and would do everything to make her happy. I loved her too, he said. Would not I stay and help him? He thought only of her. He never once thought whether I was to be happy too!" Again a shiver of pain went through the sweet voice. "At first I thought I could not stay, Father, but you said always the same thing: 'Wait, wait, and though my whole soul cried out in anguish that I could not stay, I consented. Five years—God knows what weary years they were—I stayed and tried to think only of my darling and make her happy. She was never strong and she faded and passed away from us in the spring time. As she lay dying she gave a hand to each of us and said faintly, 'Be good to Hugh, Kate, and take care of my little Kate. You've both been so good to me.' Then she whispered something to her husband, and after the last sacraments she slipped away from us as sweetly as she had lived."

"Her little daughter clung to me, and Hugh begged me to stay and take care of her. He could not bear her away from him just then, and so again you told me to wait, Father; and I waited and tried to fill her mother's place to little Kate, my good child. The old life in the company went on, and I was neither happy nor unhappy—too busy to think of myself."

"Now Kate is too old to go about with her father, and she is to go to the Sacred Heart, where her mother was. My work in the world is done. Does our Lord want me now, or is it too late? Have I set aside my vocation so long that He will not have me? Have I lived in the world so long I could not lead the heavenly life of prayer? Ah, Father, let me go! I cannot tell you why it is, but my life is a long, long torture of self-abnegation. I feel as if I must fly to the cloister for peace!" and she clasped her hands together, looking at him appealingly.

"Dear child," the tender words fell upon her ears like a benediction; "the life of one who follows the Master must always be one of 'self-abnegation,' as was His. He always wants you, but His will is for you to live the life for which He fitted you by nature and in which you can do the most good, and He does not want you to fly to a cloister for peace." He does not want you cowardly to shirk the duties of life. A true vocation to the religious life is a very blessed thing, but it comes only to those who love our Lord with such a devotion that they desire nothing else. I have never thought your vocation was for a convent, but I will not keep you away if you feel you must go. Wait but a little longer, a month and perhaps the light will come. Pray, my child," and the holy man who had known her all her life blessed her tenderly and sent her away, saying to himself with a sadly sweet smile, "She does not know her heart as yet, and mistakes her vocation utterly."

(Conclusion on seventh page.)

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Venerating Relics.

The exposition and veneration of the relics of St. Eusebius at St. Mary's, Fiskestone, a ritualistic church, has called forth an expression of surprise and incredulity from a correspondent of the Times, who asks whether "the adoration of relics is a novelty in the Established Church." A novelty in that religious communion it certainly is, but not in the Christian Church as anyone who takes the trouble to read up Church history can easily ascertain for himself. The preservation and veneration of the relics of the martyrs and other saints dates from the beginning of Christianity and goes even farther back. The respect and reverence paid to the relics of the servants of God is not "adoration" in the sense in which the writer uses that much abused and misinterpreted word; and its adoption by the Anglo-Catholics, while inconsistent with the doctrines taught by the "Reformers," is another sign of that return to Catholic belief and practice which Ritualism is promoting. The writer is apparently shocked at the congregation "bowing low to the earth before these mortal remains," but we presume he sees nothing shocking in persons attending a drawing-room at Buckingham palace bowing low before a mortal, who has no pretensions to sanctity, seated upon a throne. Bowing before a sovereign who is the living symbol of the supreme power in the State, is a reverential recognition of authority; for "all power comes from God." Reverence to the relics of the saints, is reverence paid to those in whom the power of God was made manifest, not adoration in the common acceptance of the word, and has nothing idolatrous in it.—London Monitor.

Although a very busy man, Dr. R. V. PIERCE, of Buffalo, N. Y., has found time in which to write a great book of over a thousand pages entitled, *The People's Common Sense Medical Adviser*, in Plain English, or Medicine Simplified. Few books printed in the English language have reached so great a sale as has this popular work, over 630,000 copies having been sold at \$1.50 each. The profits on this enormous sale have been repaid its author for the great amount of labor and money expended on its production he has now decided to give away, absolutely free, 500,000 copies of this valuable book, the recipient only being required to mail to the World's Dispensary Medical Association of Buffalo, N. Y., of which company he is president, 31 one-cent stamps to cover cost of mailing only, and the book will be sent post paid. It is a veritable medical library, complete in one volume. It contains 1008 large pages, and over 800 illustrations, some of them in color. The *Free Edition* is precisely the same as that sold at \$1.50 except only that the books are bound in strong manilla paper covers, instead of cloth. It is not often that our readers have an opportunity to obtain a valuable book on such generous terms, and we predict that a few will miss availing themselves of the unusual and liberal offer to which we have called their attention.

October Devotions.

Below is given an authorized translation of the prayers of St. Joseph to be offered throughout the Catholic world during the month of October.

"O Blessed Joseph, we fly to thee in our tribulation, and having implored the help of thy Most Holy Spouse, we confidently ask for thy protection also. By thy affection which united thee with the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and by the fatherly love with which thou didst foster the Child Jesus, we mercifully beseech thee look kindly on us who are the inheritance purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ and help us in our necessities by thy powerful assistance."

"Protect, O Most Provident Guardian of the Divine Family, the elect race of Jesus Christ; banish from us, O Most Loving Father, all taint of error and corruption; do thou, our strong support, assist us from the height of heaven with thy efficacious help in this struggle with the powers of darkness; and as formerly thou didst snatch the Child Jesus from the danger of death, so now defend the Holy Church of God from the treachery of her enemies and from all adversity, and shield each one of us with thy lasting protection, so that following thy example and supported by thy help, we may be able to lead a holy life, die piously and obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen."

To those who piously recite this prayer an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days is gained for each time.

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Yawn and Laugh Often.

It is not very long since a foreign scientist discouraged on the benefits of yawning. This act, which is generally regarded as partaking of the nature of a tired condition, or symptom of such a condition, of the respiration and of the need for fresh air, is said to be of great service in clearing the cutaneous tubes of the ears. These tubes lead from the back of the mouth to the inner side of the ear drum, and yawning is looked

upon in the highest hygienic exercise which benefits the structures in question.

Another scientist has no difficulty in showing that when we laugh we increase the play of tension in our lungs. One result of this increased tension is to attract the blood flow in the lungs and to induce the taking of deep inspirations. These latter are healthful things, for many parts of our lungs are not called into active use in ordinary breathing. The apex or top of the lung, is notably a part which does not actively participate in the movements of breathing, and as this is the special seat of consumption attack we may reasonably hold that the law of disease explains the greater liability of this portion of the organ to the onset of disease. The free and active use of a part, strengthening and toning it, as it were, is an essential condition for health; hence laughter, by bringing in to play the whole of the lungs, or at least by favoring an increase of lung work, is to be reckoned an admirable exercise.

Besides this physical effect of laughter we have also to take into account its mental side. There is a certain brain stimulus to be noted, a psychic result, in addition to the physical effect, and it is pretty certain the mental phase of a good, hearty laugh is, in its way, as healthful as its physical aspect. Singing is also praised as an excellent lung exercise, and public speaking is as effective a lung tonic as one may wish for. The only drawback to the work of the speaker is the foul condition of the atmosphere in which he has often to do his work.—Exchange.

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