

1625 Urban VIII gave this title to Ladislaus, who afterwards became King of Poland, and in 1700 Innocent XII gave it to Cosmus III, Grand Duke of Tuscany. At an earlier period, in the year 1425, the Emperor Frederic III, being at Rome for his coronation, received from Nicholas V permission to see, in the habit of canon, the veil of St. Veronica." (*Voy. a Rome*)

In a fragment of one of those numerous works of piety mentioned of St. Jerome, which has been happily transmitted to us, St. Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, about the year 311, and soon afterwards a martyr, has preserved the interesting account of the translation of this relic to Rome. Here is the substance of his narrative:

The fame of the miracles of our Saviour had reached the ears of Tiberius through public rumor and the official reports of Pilate. The emperor having fallen sick, desired to see this extraordinary personage who was living in Judea. "If He be a god," said he, "He can cure me; if He be a man, He can help me by His counsel." He called one of his officers, named Volusianus, and sent him to Palestine with orders to bring Jesus to him. The officer embarked immediately, but, having an adverse voyage, he arrived in Judea only after the death of our Lord. Not being able to accomplish his mission, he wished at least to bring back to the emperor some memorial of the Nazarene. He learned that a woman who was living in the city of Tyre had been cured by Jesus and that she possessed His portrait. Volusianus sent for her and obliged her to follow him with the likeness. On his return Volusianus presented this woman to Tiberius, on seeing whom the emperor asked her if it were true that she had been cured. "It is so," replied the woman, presenting the image of our Saviour to Tiberius, who was cured on the spot. Penetrated with gratitude, the emperor repaired to the Senate and proposed to place Jesus among the number of the gods. The senators refused, upon which the prince, giving way to his anger and resentment, put to death many of the members of this illustrious assembly. As to the woman of Tyre, she remained at Rome and bequeathed the image of the Saviour to Pope St. Clement, who carefully preserved it and transmitted it to his successors.

Several observations may be made on this tradition: 1st. It says that Tiberius knew the miracles of our Saviour. This fact is also attested by Tertullian and St. Justin, who say in their Apologies that the acts of our Saviour, written by Pilate, were preserved at Rome in the archives of the Senate; and we know moreover that the governors of the provinces used to send to the emperors accounts of all the extraordinary events that transpired under their administrations. A similar practise prevails even now in France, in England, and in many other countries. 2nd. It contains no circumstance repugnant to reason, or which contradicts known facts. 3rd. It affirms that Tiberius, irritated at the refusal of the Senate to have Jesus Christ admitted into the number of the gods, avenged himself upon that body by putting many of its members to death. This detail, so far from being contrary to history, in reality accords with it by giving the reason of a fact reported by Tacitus and Suetonius—that is, the vengeance exercised by Tiberius against the Senate. However this tradition may be regarded, one thing is certain, that the *sacred veil* has been honored at the Vatican from the remotest antiquity. As early as the eighth century a solemn feast was established in its honor.

It will be said, however, that the sacred veil is honored in several churches, just as certain critics of our day are not afraid to assert that the body of the

same martyr is honored in many places. We will briefly reply to those pretended difficulties: 1st. It imports but little what passes in other churches; it suffices to know that the *sacred veil* is preserved at Rome, invested with the three principal proofs of authenticity—the antiquity of its testimonials, the priority of its veneration, and the judgment of competent authority. 2nd. The simultaneous existence of several veils or kerchiefs, sanctified by the touch of the Saviour, is not impossible; indeed, to those who are acquainted with the history of the first Christians it even seems probable. Many may have been called sacred veils because they contained particles of the true one. Particles, or even dust of filings, from the true cross are frequently deposited in others of various materials. Now, in the common language of Christians, these second nails are called sacred; and, although they have pierced neither the hands nor the feet of our Saviour, they are not the less objects of a just veneration. Many other answers could be given, but we have already passed the limits of simple note.

The Veronics venerated in certain churches can only be fac-similes, with perhaps a fringe from the border of the original; or they may, perhaps, have simply touched it. I myself possess one of these latter fac-similes imprinted on linen, which was given me at Rome. Those who desire more ample details of this holy relic, its authenticity, the solemnities of which it has been the object in all Christian ages, etc., will find them fully set forth in the Bollandists' collection, vol. iv., pp. 454, 463, and vol. xxvii, p. 87.

On my return from Rome, having presented one of these *Holy Faces* to a pious lady, she observed immediately that the holy crown was not represented on it.

With the opinion that I myself held at the time, that Jesus wore the thorns from the Pretorium to Calvary, I did not know what to reply. Some days afterwards, in reading over the Bollandists, I believed I had found (vol. xxvii, p. 87) the answer to this difficulty where I read that a veil had been offered to Jesus by St. Martha also, who, in company with other holy women, were seeking Him at the moment He came out from the grotto of Gethsemani, immediately after His agony, and before being betrayed, and that the same miracle as that performed in favor of Berenice was then wrought. But I have since, I think, found a better explanation in the text of the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus:

"And Jesus went out from the Pretorium, and the two thieves with Him. And when they had arrived at the place which is called Golgotha, the soldiers stripped Him of His garments and girded Him with a cloth, and they put on His head a crown of thorns, and they placed a reed in His hands. And they crucified also two thieves," etc.

The words of this text plainly lead us to believe that the horrible farce of the Pretorium was re-enacted on Calvary, that the reed and the crown, as well as the inscription for the cross, were borne at the head of the procession as trophies of chastisement and as a proof of accusation, and that consequently Jesus had not this crown on when Berenice met him. To give more weight to our supposition let us add a word on the import of the apocryphal writings which we have just quoted. Tischendorf and Thilo, two of the most learned Protestants of our day, find nothing in this gospel indicating an origin posterior to the acts even of Pilate and a pseudo-gospel of St. James. There is no passage which may not have been written by one of the faithful living in the first ages of the Church. Nor can we dissent from this opinion.