

That old and homely symbol of Redemption,
Worn by the touch of time, and dark with age,
Revealing still to reverent attention
The Sacred Wounds—Love's dearest heritage ;—

For more than thirty years, the white-capp'd Sisters
Had, kneeling, bowed before its sacred shrine,
Whence, like the brazen serpent in the desert,
Was lifted up Salvation's mystic sign.

But none amongst them, not the eldest daughter
Of all St. Vincent's band that worshipp'd there,
Could tell whence came that Cross above the altar,
Or who had throned it in that place of prayer.

But, as the years, (each one a tranquil river),
Swept with their peaceful freight to God's great Sea,
Like gentle doves their nest adorning ever,
The Sisters 'round that shrine wrought ceaselessly.

And what with linens and with fleecy laces,
With flowers, and lights to guard the sacred Pyx.
The sanctuary's fresh and radiant graces
Quite put to shame the time-worn Crucifix.

And so it chanced, one day, that some sweet Sister,
Moved by a zeal for God's fair dwelling-place,
Set a new crucifix above the altar,
And bore away the ancient sign of grace.

And to that spot, that pure and peaceful chamber,
The room of the Community,—she went:
Before a statue of our Blessed Lady,
The homely image placed: and was content.

A day elapsed: but one brief day, and busy,
When, like a flower, fresh with morning dew,
Fresh with the dews of prayer, the Sœur Assisi
(A little suffering Sister) closer drew.

To the old Crucifix. Around it floated
A ruddy glow, as if from fiery heat
Hidden within;—a rusty hinge she noted
Beneath the shadow of the Wounded Feet.

And, pressing on it with a trembling finger,
The Crucifix swung open at its base,
And in that little secret, hollow chamber,
Behold! revealed, a tiny silver vase!

A cross upon its lid, its fair enclosure
Fretted with gold,—a long-forgotten shrine:
Within the tiny cup (O strange disclosure!)
The Sister saw the Sacred Host divine!

Borne on the bosom of some missionary
(Whose bones long since had crumbled into dust,
Over the breezy stretch of Western prairie,
Thro' summer sunshine and thro' wintry gust

The Crucifix had gone upon its mission,
Hid in the breast of pastor brave and bold,
Bearing the dear Lord in His tiny prison
Unto the sick and dying of the fold.

Until, perchance, the shepherd's feet had faltered
Beside some rushing stream, in some dim wood;
And, one sad day, with visage white and altered,
They found him, dead, in that wild solitude;

And, searching, lifted from that breast, in sorrow,
The little Crucifix, which gave no sign
Of the great Presence hidden in its hollow,
Under the shadow of the Feet divine!

O Crucifix! thou tellest the sweet story
With the mute speech of every Wounded Limb,
Tellest of one who perished for God's glory,
And for the precious souls redeemed by Him.

And as (tho' long-conceal'd) thy Guest, unbidden,
Revealed Himself most graciously at last.
So shall that Christian hero's name, long hidden,
Shine forth, one day, all glorious from the past.

VERONICA.

The Woman Who Handed a Veil to Jesus With Which to Wipe His Face.

When Jesus was on his way to be crucified, a woman came out of her house to look at the procession going to Calvary, and seeing Him pale, disfigured, and covered with blood, could not restrain herself at the sight; but overcome with compassion, she pushed her way through the soldiers, and presented Him a veil wherewith to wipe His adorable face. Jesus pressed it to His countenance and, thanking her, returned it. This woman was called Beronice. It was she, according to the general belief, who had been cured of a flux of blood by simply touching the hem of His sacred garment.

However extraordinary the action of this pious woman may appear, says the author of "The Last Journey and Memorials of the Redeemer," those who know the then existing custom among Jewish women of wearing a woollen, silk or cotton veil on the neck or head, will not be surprised at it, as we also know that it was customary to offer it to friends met in tears or who were otherwise suffering. This, then, is in fact the primary signification of the word shroud, which Bergier defines in his theological dictionary: "A veil or handkerchief to wipe the face." This woman, therefore, only conformed to the custom of her country, though she had to encounter the fury of the soldiers and the rough treatment of the mob; and by her charity and generosity she was worthy of winning a pledge of eternal love. Her action, so full of devotion, will be extolled in all ages; and pious souls will bless her unceasingly for the honor she rendered to Jesus in His painful agony.

A low door at the left side of one of the streets of Jerusalem and a pillar of red granite lying almost at right angles with the entrance indicate the house of this holy woman; "or, to speak more correctly, the place on which that house was built, for even the ruins of it have disappeared, and it is now the site of the habitation of a Greek family." (Geramb, t. i. p. 324.) This is the Sixth Station of the Cross, distant about one hundred and fourteen paces from where Simon began to help Christ to carry the Cross; between the two the road rises moderately.

Entering her house and unfolding her veil this woman sees, with mingled feelings of wonder, joy, and tenderness, that Jesus in His infinite power had requited her compassion by imprinting upon this cloth the image of His divine face such as she had just seen it, pale and disfigured. What a precious memorial bequeathed to her by the Saviour! From that moment she was no longer known among the faithful by her former name of Beronice, but by that of Veronica, a name composed of two words, the one Latin and the other Greek—*vera, icon*, true image.

Kept during the first stages in the Catacombs, this miraculous image passed into the Constantinian basilica of the Vatican. It is now at St. Peter's in Rome, under the name of *Volta Santo*. It is preserved with other relics in one of the four pillars which sustain the dome of the basilica. "The relics, which are shown to the people on certain days," says Baron de Geramb, "are preserved in elegant niches above the statues, to which they ascend by steps hewed to the thickness of pilasters. Only the Canons of St. Peter's can ascend to them; so that whoever desires to see them must first be named titularly canon of that church, a favor which is accorded only to strangers of great distinction. In the year