

The Catholic Journal

— THE LEADING DIOCESAN NEWSPAPER —

Twenty-first Year, No. 13

Rochester, N. Y., Friday, December 14, 1935

An Old Man's Story

"Grandfather?"
"Well, my boy, what do you want?" asked the kindly old man.
"I want you please to translate these two lines for me. The officer who was here last autumn said how well you spoke French."
The old man, who was sitting in an arm chair by the fire, smiled as he took his pipe from his lips.
"Yes, who should know it if not I?" he said. "I was four years in France, and after that I served in the army. Show me the lines."
The boy brought his lesson book to his grandfather's side. But the daylight was fast waning, and age had dimmed the old man's sight.
"I have not my glasses. Read the lines to me lad."
The boy obeyed.
"Si le nom de Marie dans ton coeur est grave,
Pieu perlerin, n'oublie de la saluer d'un Ave!"
The old man listened attentively, and made the boy repeat the lines two or three times, correcting his pronunciation. Then he said:
"Those words seem familiar to me. I must have read them somewhere at some time." And he passed his hand slowly over his wrinkled brow, as if thereby to awaken memories of days long past. "Ah, I have it!" he exclaimed presently. "It was long ago, long ago; but there are things which it is impossible to forget. It was in Luxemburg, at the corner of a street in the upper part of the town. A large image of the Blessed Virgin stood there in a niche, with a lamp always burning before it. Underneath those words were inscribed in gold letters on a slab in marble. I well remember standing there once at midnight with the friend of my boyhood, Anthony Miller—on the eve of our departure from home to seek our fortunes in France. We liked the motto under the statue so much that we wrote it down and learned it by heart."
"But what does it mean?" interrupted the boy.
His grandfather made him read it again, slowly and carefully. Then he said:
"This is what it means:
"If the name of Holy Mary is graven on thy heart,
Say an Ave, pious pilgrim, where-soever thou art."
"A beautiful motto, is it not? And I advise you, my boy, to lay it well to heart. I have never forgotten it, and my friend, Anthony Miller—God rest his soul! He died two years ago—held it all his life in high esteem. And truly he had good cause to do so, for to the constant manner in which he obeyed the exhortation, conveyed in this beautiful and expressive couplet he owed his deliverance from imminent danger of death, his life and his subsequent good fortune. You know that the Miller's are well-to-do—their business has proved a very lucrative one. But you are too young dear, to understand. I will tell you the motto saved the life of my friend. Again I have heard the story from his own lips."
"Tell it to me now, grandfather!" the boy eagerly exclaimed.
"Do—please do."
The old man filled his pipe afresh, lighted it with great deliberation, settled himself comfortably in his armchair, and began his tale.
"It was in Luxemburg, as my friend, Anthony Miller, and myself were strolling through the streets one dark night we were attracted by the glimmer of the lamp which hung before the image of the Madonna. We approached nearer and read the inscription which made so deep an impression in our hearts. We were both young, merry and light-hearted; but young people are very different nowadays from what they were then. We were poor in the goods of this world—two itinerant artisans, the whole of whose possessions were contained in two closely-packed knapsacks, and whose small sum of money was carried in their pockets my friend being merely a cooper, while I was a locksmith. But when we left our home,

we bore with us a priceless treasure which we inherited from a pious mother, I mean sincere and earnest religious feeling, and tender devotion to Mary, the Blessed Mother of God. It brought us many blessings and preserved us from much that was evil which one can not but see and hear in the wide, wide world, delivering us from many perils that threaten the young and inexperienced in the course of their voyage over the stormy ocean of life. Before that statue of our Blessed Lady we both promised to repeat the Angelic Salutation least once every day, and never to pass by an image of the Madonna without greeting our Heavenly Mother with an Ave Maria.
"The resolution was a wise one; it brought us both good fortune. As we failed to find employment in Luxemburg, we went straight to Paris. We stayed there two years, worked hard, and learned a great deal. Then the love of wandering awoke in us again, and we went on farther to the south of France. In Bordeaux we separated. I wished to go to Lyons and thence to Geneva because in both cities the locksmith's art had attained a high degree of perfection and I desired to learn many details of which I was as yet ignorant and to qualify myself to return to my beloved home in Germany and set up in business for myself in my native town. It was well for me that I did so. My companion wandered farther afield; he wished to enter Spain and behold the beauty of the fair land.
"It would have been better for him if he had done otherwise for the times were troublous just then, and the northern provinces of the Spanish peninsula through which he took his way were prey to unrest and civil war. No work was to be had; and he was totally ignorant of the language of the country; he found himself confronted by difficulties of every kind. On one occasion he was taken prisoner by the troops of the government as a supposed spy, and would in all probability have been shot if at the last moment an officer who was conversant with the German tongue had not saved him from this terrible fate by examining his papers, which were all in order, and convincing himself of the inoffensive character of the young German artisan. He was advised to quit as soon as possible such dangerous ground and make his way with all speed over the French frontier. But this was no easy undertaking; for it was in the Basque provinces that the civil war was raging most fiercely; deadly skirmishes were of every day occurrence, and all the roads teemed with soldiers belonging to both parties.
"Utterly exhausted, tired to death, penniless, and unable through ignorance of language, to induce some kind-hearted individual to bestow on him where-withal to appease his hunger, his feet led him to a small town in the neighborhood of Vittoria—an unlucky road, as it proved to be. In this town the rebels had strongly entrenched themselves, and the troops of the government were pressing on along the roads; shots were freely exchanged in all directions, and bullets constantly whizzed by the ears of my poor young friend. In order to protect himself as far as possible from the murderous cross-fire, he sought shelter at the foot of a high garden wall, where an image of the Mother of God stood in a niche. Faithful to the habit he had formed, he stepped up to it, and saluted his Heavenly Mother with an Ave Maria. You will understand that the prayer was a very heartfelt one considering the dangerous circumstances in which the suppliant found himself. Ave Maria! Mother of Mercy, help me! he cried aloud in distress.
"At the same instant a bullet struck him and laid him low at our Lady's feet. Severely wounded, he sank prostrate on the ground. A mist swam before his eyes and there was a sound in his ears like the muttering of distant thunder. But as he felt he folded his hands, and his trembling lips repeated once more, Ave Maria! Mother of Mercy, help me! he cried aloud in distress.
"How long he lay at the foot of the wall, and what befell him, we never knew; for he fainted and died away. When he recovered consciousness he was lying in a spacious room, and a grave quiet lady was sitting by his bed and tending him with maternal kindness and solicitude. She was the wife of a Spaniard, the owner of a vineyard whose young German had sunk down when struck by the murderous bullet. There he had been found at the feet of the Mother of God, severely wounded and lying in a pool of blood. On the same day the afflicted pair had lost their only son through the fortune of war and with true Christian charity and compassion they took the stranger in and cherished him as if he had been their own son until he had perfectly recovered.
"In order in some measure to show his gratitude for their great kindness, he remained with the bereaved couple, worked hard, and in his capacity of cooper made himself very useful to them. And, like the patriarch Jacob of whom you have read in Scripture, in process of time he married the daughter of his benefactor, brought her to Germany, and, in conjunction with his father-in-law, established a most prosperous business. When he died two years ago—his wife having preceded him to the grave—he bequeathed to his son, besides his business, a considerable amount of property. And whom had he to thank for his great and unlooked for good fortune? Mary, the ever-blessed Mother of God, whom he never forgot to salute whenever he lay to heart the beautiful motto. Read it out for me once more."
"That is not necessary, grandfather," proudly returned the boy. "for I know it by heart already."
"If the name of Holy Mary is graven on thy heart,
Say an Ave, pious pilgrim, where-soever thou art."
In the meantime darkness had set in. From the tower of the church near by sounded three solemn strokes of the bell. Henceforth his mother entered, placed a lighted lamp on the table and said:
"The Angelus is ringing; let us say it."
And the Angelic Salutation had never been more devoutly repeated by the little group than it was on that evening.—Ave Maria.

Photographs

Lehnkering's Studio was crowded all last week. Everybody is after the beautiful \$8 photos, is making for \$5 per dozen. They are the finest photographs ever made for the money.
Come in the morning if you can, storm or sunshine makes no difference. If you choose you can make an appointment by phone 1468.
Studio 24 State St., over the White Kitchen.

Weekly Church Calendar

Sunday 28—St. Stephen, first martyr.
Monday 27—St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.
Tuesday 26—The Holy Innocents, martyrs.
Wednesday 25—St. Thomas, a Belknap, Archbishop and martyr.
Thursday 24—St. Sabina, Bishop, martyr.
Friday 23—St. Sylvester, Pope confessor.

The celebration of the 5th anniversary of the foundation of the Church of the Assumption, Peekskill, N. Y., took place recently. At the same time the blessing of the new \$150,000 parochial school took place.

The Monitor of San Francisco brings news that there is a move on foot in California to honor the memory of Peter Burrett, first American Governor of California. California Catholics will take a special pride in the flower of his anhed and prime, accepted the teachings of Holy Mother Church and became, not only a true Catholic, but one of the ablest defenders of the faith in America.

School closed on Wednesday for the Christmas vacation. Branch 123, C. M. B. A., will hold their regular meeting on Tuesday evening, December 23.
Special music is being prepared by the choir for the midnight mass on Christmas eve.
An anniversary high mass was celebrated on Monday morning for our former pastor, Rev. J. J. Leary. A month's mind high mass was celebrated on Tuesday morning for Mrs. Gullen.
A birthday surprise party was given Miss Gladys Bohrer of 87 Woodward Street, by her friends on Tuesday evening.
On New Year's a solemn high mass will be celebrated at 9:30 o'clock. The sermon will be preached by J. F. O'Hern.
The Christmas crib has been erected in the chapel, St. Michael's.
Next Sunday at the 7:10 o'clock mass the girls of the Christian Doctrine Class will receive Holy Communion.
The annual Christmas collection will be taken up at all masses Sunday.
There will be solemn veppers and benediction at 3 o'clock Christmas Day.
Sunday being the last Sunday of the old year there will be veppers and benediction at 7:45 o'clock.
The requiem masses for this week was for Anna Holsen, Mr. Horack, Felix and Catharine Felix.
Miss Lucy Kolb of Avenue A is seriously ill. We wish for her a speedy recovery.
The funeral of Bernard Heber took place Monday morning at 9 o'clock.
The funeral of Adam Holsen took place at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Anthony Geld, 1223 Jay Street, Saturday morning at 8:40 from the house and 9 o'clock from the church.
The funeral of Barbara Lehmann took place from the family home, Emerson Street, Tuesday morning at 8:15 from the house and 9 o'clock from the church. The deceased was a member of Council 14, C. R. B. A.
The funeral of George Hamn, Sr., took place from the residence of his son, John Hamn, Jr., 22 Mildred Street, Wednesday morning at 8:30 o'clock from the house and 9 o'clock from the church.
The Bernardine Circle from the Holy Family Church have presented Sister Eusebius with \$50 in gold for the benefit of St. Ann's Home as their annual Christmas gift.

Five Minute Sermon

Christmas Day

"And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrius, the governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of the Lord shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

IDEAS FOR XMAS!

Opera Glasses, Reading Glasses, Pocket Magnifiers, Handkerchiefs, Field Glasses, Spectacles, Thermometers, Lognottes, Magnifying Mirrors, Barometers, Kodaks.

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