

PILGRIMAGES—YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

STEPHEN FITZGERALD, O.P.

(Continued)



HE curtain rises on the Third Act of the pilgrim drama—the domestic pilgrimage. The relics of Christ continued to be venerated in Palestine; like the moon, He bathed the Holy Land in His light; but His martyred and sainted followers soon appeared like the stars, enshrined in increasing numbers in the heavens of the Christian world. They had lived for Christ; they had died for Christ; and now their resting places and their shrines were made glorious by God and by those who came to learn from them how to live and die for Christ.

We learn that pilgrimages to the shrines of saints early became an effective means of performing penance. The Church imposed them for certain crimes; the wearing of the penitential garb, the begging along the way, the long, rough journey afoot, mingled in the pilgrim's cup bitter drops of penance with the sweet of its consolations and joys.

Each country had its favorite and characteristic shrines. It is interesting to view them country by country, as scene by scene in an animated, ever-changing play. Italy, that narrow, boot-shaped peninsula jutting out into the blue of the sea—now ready to kick against the goad; now ready to walk the ways of God—Italy the turbulent, Italy the Catholic—is sanctified by four principal centers of pilgrimage: Rome, Assisi, Suriano and Loreto.

Rome, the fairest gem of all in Western Christendom—dipped in the blood of a host of martyrs—has attracted pilgrims in every century and from every coast—pilgrims lowly and great—pilgrim sinners and saints. Here are the Stairs of Pilate's praetorium, worn down by the knees of thousands; here are the tombs of the be-headed Paul and the crucified Peter; here are the Catacombs where the persecuted Christian worshiped and where were laid the bodies of those who chose to offer to the true God the incense of their sacrificed lives rather than place a grain of it on pagan altars.

St. Jerome, who lived in Rome during the Fourth Century,

gives us our earliest account of the Catacombs: "When I was a boy," he tells us, "receiving my education in Rome, I and my schoolfellows used, on Sundays, to make the circuit of the sepulchers of the Apostles and martyrs. Many a time did we go down into the Catacombs. These are excavated deep in the earth, and contain, on either hand as you enter, the bodies of the dead buried in the wall."¹ Another visitor writes: "Entering it from a vineyard near the Appian Way, the visitor descends a broad flight of steps, fashioned by Pope Damasus, and finds himself in a kind of vestibule, on the stuccoed walls of which, honeycombed with *loculi* (oblong niches large enough to hold from one to three bodies), are a quantity of rude inscriptions, some of them thirteen and fourteen centuries old, scratched by pilgrims who visited out of devotion the places where Popes and Martyrs who had fought a good fight for Christ, lay in peaceful gloom, awaiting the resurrection."²

Only He Who knows the hearts of men and the workings of the invisible world could tell what a zeal-inflaming effect these martyr shrines have had upon the saints, on missionaries and on the leaders of the Church. Here knelt founders of Religious Orders—St. Dominic, Dante's "hallow'd wrestler"—St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius Loyola; missionaries like St. Francis Xavier and the Dominican "Apostle of the North", St. Hyacinth; here knelt St. Philip Neri, the "Apostle of Rome", and St. Catherine of Siena, counsellor of Popes and ardent lover of the spotless spouse of Christ, the Church. Truly, it can be said, that at Rome holy men and women knelt to venerate and arose to convert nations, to "renew the face of the earth."

To Assisi, in the North of Italy, pilgrims journey to pay homage to one of the most lovable of the Church's saints, Francis. There are venerated the relics of the "Lover of Lady Poverty", the friend of the birds and beasts, the saint who has won both Catholic and non-Catholic hearts to himself and to God with an irresistible magnetism. As we hear the pilgrims at his shrine daily singing his praises we are struck with the truth of the words applied to him in the Offertory of the Mass in his honor: "Christ shall be magnified in my body whether it be by life or death . . ."; and the inspired words of Scripture send back the echo: "In the midst of his own people he shall be exalted: in the multitudes of the elect he shall have praise and among the blessed he shall be blessed."³

¹ John Laux, *Church History*, (New York, p. 89).

² *Ibid*, p. 81.

³ *Ecclesiasticus*, 24—3, 4.

Less than three hundred miles southeast of Rome, in the toe of Italy's boot, nestles the olive-treed Calabria. The olive trees are of Spanish origin, planted there by King Philip IV of Spain, and form at Suriano an appropriate setting for the shrine of a Spanish saint, Dominic of Calaruega. It was on September 15th, 1530, the Octave Day of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, that Mary, ever kindly to the sons of St. Dominic, entered the magnificent convent of Suriano and bestowed upon the friars a picture of their Father. It would seem that she would again inspire them to zeal against the errors of the Reformation, as she had emboldened Dominic to chain the Albigenian monster with the Rosary. In the Dominican calendar, the feast of the "Commemoration of St. Dominic in Suriano" is celebrated on September 25th; in the Second Lessons of the Office we find the following: "To bestow greater honor on Dominic, God deigned to consecrate by frequent miracles his celebrated picture reserved in the town of Suriano and venerated by the ardent devotion of the people." A hundred and thirty thousand pilgrims are known to have gathered at the shrine in one pilgrimage, and history speaks of eight Popes who enriched it. In 1783 the beautiful convent of the Friars was ruined by an earthquake; but the miraculous picture was preserved. Another convent was built; it was profaned and looted during the French Revolution. Beside the picture there is now venerated the statue of St. Dominic which, during a ceremony of the Friars, was seen to move as though preaching to them.

In the September of 1931 Suriano presented an inspiring spectacle. It was the Fourth Centenary of the reception of the miraculous picture. In the December 1931 issue of *El Santisimo Rosario* Father Ricardo Casado, O.P., gives a living, vivid description of the event. First he pictures for us the venerable ruins: parts of the massive walls still stand; pillars, the table of the main altar, three great cloisters and underground galleries bring to mind the Catacombs of Rome; a library, hospitium and infirmary. In awe we gaze at the crumbings of former religious stateliness and murmur: "*Quanta fuerit, ipsae ruinae docent.*" Then the ruins spring to life—with the life and prayers of a hundred thousand pilgrims! Lights, tapestries, music lend color and melody. A procession is in progress; the miraculous picture and statue are placed on the table of the altar; the ruins are so covered with pilgrims that not a stone can be seen; on top of pillars they stand and on the confessionals—a sea of heads—men, women, children and old folks, praying, singing, electrified with tender devotion. It seems another Pentecost, so many

are the tongues spoken, so many nations represented and such a fiery glow of fervor animating all.

During the novena the Friars are working night and day reaping the vast spiritual harvest: now High Mass is being sung; Confessions and Communion last till noon; now the children are receiving their First Holy Communion; in the hall, conferences, religious, scientific and social, are being held by learned professors; pilgrims are receiving the habit of the Third Order of St. Dominic; twenty-four are being professed, five of whom are priests; a Bishop, too, is making his profession. As the shrine fades out of view in the twilight and we move northward to Loreto, we cast a lingering glance at the Friars laboring among the harvest of souls and at the miraculous picture and statue of their sainted Father enshrined on the altar and there comes to the ears of our soul a strain from Dante's "symphony of word music" written in praise of St. Dominic:

And there was born
 The loving minion of the Christian faith,
 The hallow'd wrestler, gentle to his own,
 And to his enemies terrible
 . . . and so they called him Dominic.
 And I speak of him, as the laborer
 Whom Christ in His own garden chose to be
 His helpmate. Messenger he seemed, and friend
 Fast-knit to Christ."⁴

At Loreto in central Italy, near Assisi, is a shrine of Our Lady famous since the Thirteenth Century. According to long accepted tradition, the House wherein the Holy Family dwelt at Nazareth, wherein the "Word was made Flesh" in the womb of a Virgin, was in danger of profanation by the victorious Turks. Angels transported it over the seas to Loreto where it was held in affectionate veneration. It gave a new impetus to the cult of Our Lady in the Middle Ages. During that age of chivalry, gallant knights and fair ladies might be seen riding to and from the Holy House. Sir R. Guylforde writes: "We all by one assent avowed a pylgrymage made in all our behalffe to our blessyd Lady of Loreto."⁵ In the Sixteenth Century the imposing structure known as the "Church of the Holy House" was completed. While misguided souls during and since the Reformation cried down the honor shown Christ's Mother, an eleven ton bell, a gift of Pope Leo X, sent both a challenge and an invitation from the shrine's campanile; its resounding tones carried on

⁴ Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XII.

⁵ Sir R. Guylforde, *Pylgrymage*, p. 68.

the melody of Mary's prophetic hymn: "Behold from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed."

Before allowing the curtain to fall before Loreto's shrine we are attracted by a tomb in the shadow of the Holy House. It is that of a saintly poet of the Seventeenth Century, Richard Crashaw, who, after his conversion to Catholicism, was ordained at Rome and passed his remaining priestly days as chaplain of Loreto. After the lovable poet's death, Cowley, as David over Jonathan, thus sang his friend's elegy:

"How well, blest swan, did Fate contrive thy death
And made thee render up thy tuneful breath
In thy great mistress' arms! Thou most divine
And richest offering of Loreto's Shrine!
Where, like some holy sacrifice to expire,
A fever burns thee, and Love lights the fire."

The next pilgrim scene is laid to the northwest of Loreto, in the heart of Switzerland. Twenty miles from the picturesque Lake Lucerne is the Benedictine monastery of Einsiedeln. Yearly, more than a hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims journey there and pray before the miraculous statue of Our Lady set up by St. Meinrad. It delights the Catholic to see the fair "Lily of Israel" blooming in the land where the cankerous weed of Calvinism first struck root.

Germany's chief center of pilgrimage is Cologne. Its Gothic Cathedral is one of Germany's richest contributions to art. Men of the Thirteenth Century saw its massive foundations laid; men of the Nineteenth saw the grandeur of the completed masterpiece—a profession of faith, a symbol of an immortal soul aspiring heavenward. It contains the tomb of the "Doctor Subtilis", the Franciscan, Duns Scotus. The city of Cologne is sanctified, too, by the relics of the "Doctor Universalis", the recently canonized Dominican St. Albert the Great. Modern pilgrims, in increasing numbers, visit the Church of St. Andrew which shelters the precious remains of that giant of wisdom and sanctity.

Of all the European shrines, Compostela, in northern Spain, ranks high both in popularity and in interest. Here, according to the Spanish tradition, fortified by a bull of Leo XIII, are the authentic relics of the Apostle, James the Greater,—he who, with Peter and John, saw the glory of the Transfiguration. Putting on our historical opera glasses, we might see pilgrims of the Eighth Century wending their way to the shrine. Among its more famous pilgrims of the Middle Ages, was the powerful Duke William X of Aquitaine, father of the "Medieval worldling", Eleanor of Aquitaine; the Duke, according to Katherine Brégy, "died at Compostela on the Good

Friday of 1137 while seeking to do penance for a fairly faulty life."⁶ On the homeward journey, pilgrims wore scallop shells from Galicia as a proof of the pilgrimage. The practice became so popular that all pilgrims wore them—even those returning from other shrines. On August 5th, formerly St. James' feast day, the children of London—even to-day—build grottos of oyster shells.

There are two more pilgrim shrines at which we shall glance before leaving Spain—Montserrat and Segovia. Each shrine has become doubly memorable by the visits of great saints. To Montserrat came a soldier just recovering from a wound received in battle. It was Ignatius Loyola. After resolving to dedicate his life to God, "like a true Christian knight, he paid homage to his Lady—the Madonna in the abbey church on Montserrat. He confessed his sins, gave away his charger and armor, laid his sword as an *ex voto* on the altar, and spent the night in prayer."⁷ In a few years he and his zealous followers were crossing swords with the forces of the Reformation.

At Segovia is a shrine to the founder of the Order of Preachers, St. Dominic. It marks the spot where Dante's "loving minion of the Christian faith, the hallow'd wrestler," scourged himself, wept and prayed far into the night for the conversion of sinners. In the Sixteenth Century he appeared to St. Teresa of Avila as she prayed there seeking his guidance.

Were France crowned Queen of the Pilgrimage, her diadem, gorgeous with many smaller jewels, would wear five large and lustrous gems: a flaming ruby for Paray-le-Monial, where Christ revealed His Sacred Heart; on either side, two blue amethysts for His Mother's shrines at La Salette and Lourdes; a snow-white pearl in back for His Spouse's shrine at Lisieux, and beside it a sapphire of deepest purple for the Grotto of His Penitent, St. Mary Magdelene, at Sainte Baume.

It was fitting that in this modern age, when so many exalt worldly wisdom and deify vice, Our Lady, the "Seat of Wisdom", should appear to "little ones" whose Angels in heaven, said Christ, see the face of His Father Who is in heaven. La Salette and Lourdes, popular pilgrimages of to-day, mark the sites of these Nineteenth Century apparitions.

In the September of 1846, the Mother of God appeared to two peasant children, Mélanie and Maximin at La Salette. The

⁶ Katherine Brégy, *A Medieval Worldling: Eleanor of Aquitaine*, Cath. World, July, 1932.

⁷ John Laux, *Church History*, p. 463.

shrine attracts throngs of pilgrims yearly; it is now cared for by the Missionaries of La Salette, a band of religious founded to foster devotion to Mary and to administer at the Church built on the site of the apparition.

Twelve years later, in 1858, before the warmth of devotion excited by her appearance at La Salette had subsided, Our Lady appeared again; this time to the young peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, in a grotto near Lourdes in southwestern France. "I am the Immaculate Conception", said the celestial figure in blue and white. Then there was seen a miraculous spring, free of curative chemicals, but rich in health for those who bathe in it with faith in the Physician of Nazareth and His Mother. Yearly, six hundred thousand pilgrims visit the basilica of Notre Dame erected at the Grotto. Yearly, such marvellous and merciful cures are wrought both at the spring and during the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, that it can be said even of the most skeptical, as it was said of those who saw Christ raise to life the twelve year old girl: "They were astonished with a great astonishment."⁸ To other witnesses of the wonders of Lourdes, may be applied the words of St. Luke describing the reaction of the people when Christ restored to the widow of Naïm her "only son" who was dead: "And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: 'A great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited His people' "⁹

What an inspiring pageant of religious devotion Lourdes presents in this irreligious age! The winding, singing procession of pilgrims from every nation; the Lourdes hymn, "Ave! Ave! Ave! Maria!", rising from the devoted hearts of thousands as the procession moves along; the passing of the Blessed Sacrament along the lanes of the sick and crippled; the cry—bewildered, joyful, thankful: "A miracle! I walk! Thank God!" Then the voices trembling with praise: "Ave! Ave! Ave! Maria!" As the inspiring scene fades—the scene where hope has been born anew in tortured bodies and despairing souls—we pray God that Lourdes may be for many years the consolation of the afflicted. We turn our eyes to the schools and churches in America and hear a host of children singing with vibrant voices:

"Lady help in care and sorrow;
Soothe those racked on beds of pain.
May the golden light of morrow
Bring them health and joy again."

⁸ Mark, 5—42.

⁹ Luke, 7—16.

May that prayer, as merciful water, be drawn to the clouds of heaven, and in those white "argosies of the sky" be sped to Lourdes and dropped as refreshing rain upon wasted bodies and parched souls.

In northwestern France is Lisieux where St. Thérèse is honored; in southeastern France is the Grotto of La Sainte Baume, a shrine to St. Mary Magdalene. At the two extremes of France these saints are honored, as on two different paths—the one of saintly innocence, the other of saintly penitence—they reached the throne of the Master. That quiet, affable Carmelite nun who preached by her life the "little way" of love, has won a place in the affections and devotion of many millions. Even before her canonization in 1925—thirty-eight years after her death—her shrine at Lisieux saw a daily throng of modern pilgrims.

Vernon Johnson wrote of his visit to the shrine before his conversion; with touching simplicity he tells of the Hall of Relics—the fork and spoon she used in the refectory, her needle case, habits, sandals, her chair and table, the pictures her ever-busy hand had painted and the colored paper flowers her dying hands had fashioned; and, as proof of the ardor of her love, her discipline of knotted cords. Then, with child-like charm, he describes what he saw in her home: her room where, as a girl, she was consoled in her illness by our Lady's miraculous smile; and behind glass doors are reverently preserved her toys and exercise books, her rosary and catechism. He then tells of the "charming little house set in the middle of the garden where St. Thérèse, as a child, had played. In this garden I saw the little alcove in the wall where she placed her baby altar and, at Christmas, her baby crib; the very figures which she used can still be seen." He concludes the story of his pilgrimage: "Putting aside the novelty of it all, the beauty of the old town of Lisieux, its exquisite setting in the loveliness of a Normandy spring; and allowing for the fact that the saint had died in the attractiveness of her youth, I still knew that I had been in the presence of the Supernatural as never before.—Love radiated from her shrine and gathered into supernatural fellowship those who knelt around. I had been where the Unseen was very, very near, and where the veil was very, very thin."¹⁰

Crossing the English Channel to see Canterbury, England's most famous shrine, we must cross back through the centuries,

¹⁰ Vernon Johnson, *One Lord-One Faith*, Chapt. 2.

too. For the days of its fame date to the four centuries preceding the reign of Henry VIII. In one of the Chapels of its stately Cathedral, St. Thomas à Becket was murdered by four retainers of Henry II because in the face of the angry king he claimed the rights of the Church. When his friends were about to close the church doors against the murderers, St. Thomas replied: "A church is not to be closed like a fortified place besieged by the enemy; I must conquer by suffering, not by fighting."¹¹ It was in 1170 that he "dipped his stole in the blood of the Lamb," the year that saw the birth of "Christ's hallowed wrestler," St. Dominic. In the floor of the Cathedral may be seen a square hole where a piece of the pavement, dyed red with the martyr's blood, had been taken out and brought to Rome. There, too, in proof of its popularity as a place of pilgrimage, may be seen the marble steps worn down by the pilgrims of four centuries.

The Canterbury pilgrimage has been immortalized by the "First Modern Poet," the kindly and Catholic Chaucer, whose "authentic portrait shows him with inkhorn and rosary, with a rounded face and a merry twinkle in his eyes."¹² His "Canterbury Tales" describe a pilgrimage to the shrine of the martyred saint. Thus runs the quaint English of the Prologue:

"Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
 (And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
 To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
 And specially, from every shires ende
 Of Englonde, to Caunterbury they wende,
 The holy blisful martir for to seke
 That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
 Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
 In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
 Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
 To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
 At night was come in-to that hostelrye
 Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
 Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
 In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde."¹³

In the Prologue, too, we find a very human picture of very human pilgrims: a Crusader, "a verray parfit gentil knight," a Monk, "a manly man, to been an abbot able." Chaucer, with a twinkle in his eye, then wisely remarks for the edification of that worldly monk:

¹¹ Fr. Cormier, O.P., *Saints and Saintly Dominicans*, p. 567; Edited by Fr. Thomas à Kempis Reilly, O.P.

¹² Brother Leo, *English Literature*, p. 121.

¹³ Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*. Prologue.

“Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterless,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterless.”

The Prioress, the Pardoner, the Doctor, the Lawyer and the Wife of Bath (who had made many pilgrimages: “thryes at Jerusalem,” to Rome, Compostela and Cologne)—each is pictured with an understanding and masterly stroke; all on their way to Canterbury—the lordly and the poor, the pious and the impious—“most of them,” as Brother Leo writes, “taking their religion seriously; few of them taking it sadly.”¹⁴ As we visualize Chaucer’s word-picture of Catholic England and ponder over such works of art as William Blake’s engraving, “Canterbury Pilgrims,” as we look in admiring awe at Canterbury Cathedral—now a temple without its God, and no longer echoing the pilgrim prayer and song—, we grieve in the knowledge that there is a dark page in England’s history which tells of her apostasy from the faith of her fathers.

The New World is not without its shrines and pilgrims. In the North is venerated a holy mother; in the South is the shrine of her Immaculate Daughter: the mother in Canada—St. Anne de Beaupré; the daughter in Mexico—Our Lady of Guadalupe. Pilgrims from the United States and Canada stream steadily into the church of St. Anne de Beaupré. God has sanctified the spot by remarkable cures, and for many years devoted thousands have thronged to it. The faithful seem to sense the dignity of the mother who bore the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God. They find her, too, a model of parenthood. To see the constant stream of pilgrim-tourists stopping to pay homage, of parents to ask a sainted mother’s blessing on their homes; to see hanging there the crutches of those who “arose and walked”; to see the thank-offerings of those upon whom the compassionate saint has smiled, draws the fervent exclamation: “*Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis!*”—“God is wonderful in His saints!”

Her Immaculate Daughter has been honored in Guadalupe, Mexico, since December 12th, 1531, the year of the presentation of the miraculous picture of St. Dominic at Suriano. She appeared to an Indian convert, Juan Diego, and instructed him to request the Bishop to build a shrine to her at the place of the apparition. On the cloak of the Indian was found her image and, like the picture of St. Dominic presented at Suriano in that year, it has been hallowed by many miracles. The picture is on Indian fabric coarsely woven; it is thought to represent the Immaculate Conception; the figure of

¹⁴ Brother Leo, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

the Virgin is surrounded by the sun, the moon, stars and an angel beneath the crescent. Painters have been puzzled by the delicacy and brightness of the colors and the artistic perfection of the heaven-painted tapestry.

Such has been the devotion of all Mexico to Our Lady of Guadalupe that December 12th has been constituted the patronal feast of the country and a holy day of obligation. It was Pope Benedict XIV who named Our Lady of Guadalupe the patroness of Mexico. Mexican priests have the privilege of saying the special Mass and Offices of the feast on the 12th of every month. Even the enthusiastic devotion of the Calabrians for their beloved St. Dominic at Suriano is not more ardent than the attachment of the Mexicans to their Patroness.

The final scene in the pilgrim drama has Auriesville, New York, for its setting, the site of the Mohawk village of Osernenon; on a hill is the shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs; bathed in the ruddy glow of the setting sun, it commemorates the "sacrifice unto blood" made by the heroic Jesuit, Isaac Jogues, and his companions, Goupil and Lalonde, who were martyred there by the Iroquois toward the middle of the Seventeenth Century. Three centuries ago, Father Jogues took literally Christ's command to preach His Gospel and bear witness to Him to the ends of the earth. He turned his back on Old World safety and plunged into New World perils. For six years he labored for the souls of the Indians of the Great Lake region; hardships of Indian life so vividly told in "*Jesuit Relations*" were his daily Cross. For thirteen months he was a slave of the Iroquois. Aided by the Dutch of Fort Orange, he escaped and returned to Europe. With two fingers of his right hand burnt off, he stood before Pope Urban VIII seeking the privilege of saying Mass. In granting permission, the Pope spoke words that will not soon be forgotten: "It is not fitting," he said, "that Christ's martyr should not drink Christ's Blood."

After two years, he was again in America prepared and yearning "to give all his blood for Christ." He was recaptured at Auriesville, New York. It was near the crystal Lake George (which he had named "The Lake of the Blessed Sacrament") that he was tortured pitilessly and, like the zealous missionary, St. Paul, beheaded. In 1925, he and his companions were beatified by Pius XI. (It was the year of the canonization of the Little Flower—that prayer-missioner and ardent prayer-friend of missionaries.) In 1930 they were canonized and the popularity of the shrine increases daily.

Auriesville attracts pilgrims not only because saints were martyred there, but because ten years later, in 1656, a saintly Indian maiden, Catherine Tekakwitha, was born there. Striking proof that the "blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians!" Where flowed the blood of martyrs, there the "Lily of the Mohawks" first bloomed! At Fonda nearby, she was instructed by Jesuit missionaries and later baptized. She clung fast to the faith and advanced in holiness despite the irreligion and impiety of her people. After a life of heroic sanctity in the Indian Reservation at Caughnawaga on the St. Lawrence River, the "Lily of the Mohawks" was culled for the gardens of heaven at the age of twenty-four—the same tender age at which God plucked from a bed of pain the "Little Flower of Jesus," St. Thérèse.¹⁵ Her epitaph, engraved in Iroquois on a noble granite monument, describes her as "The Fairest Flower that ever bloomed among true men." To her relics, which are preserved near Caughnawaga, have been attributed apparently miraculous cures. Her cause having been introduced at Rome during the past summer, we have high hopes that she will soon bloom on the altars of the Church as the second flower of sanctity sprung from American soil. For it was over two centuries ago—in fact, it was during the lifetime of Catherine Tekakwitha—that the first American saint, the Dominican tertiary, Rose of Lima, was canonized. Then, as pilgrims, we shall pray at her shrine in the words of the prayer for the Feast of St. Rose: "O Almighty God, Giver of all good gifts, Who, watering . . . (her) . . . by the dew of Thy heavenly grace, wast pleased that . . . she should blossom with the beauty of virginity and patience, grant unto us Thy servants, that hastening towards the fragrance of her sweetness, we may deserve to become the good odour of Christ."

Pilgrim shrines undoubtedly exercise a salutary influence on those who visit them. There we are inspired to imitate. For, whether we kneel at Assisi or Suriano, at the Catacombs, Auriesville or Lisieux, we know that these saints, as St. Ambrose says, "were not of a different race from ourselves; they were only more faithful"—"*naturae non praestantioris sed observantioris.*" As these words inspired Just de Bretenières to face martyrdom in Korea during the last century, so they encourage us to face the martyrdom which is the Christian's daily life.

The shrines of the saints incite us to pray; for there we sing the praises of the God Who is "very near to His people" and so "wonder-

¹⁵ Father La More, O.P., in his recently published play, "*The Lily of the Mohawks,*" has dramatized the spiritually romantic life of the maiden.

ful in His saints;" there we pray for ourselves and for others; there we hearken to the piteous pleas of our departed, voiced immortally by Tennyson's dying King Arthur:

"I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure!
But thou, if thou shouldst never see my face again
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands in prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

And as we review the scenes of prayer and worship which brighten the globe from Jerusalem to Auriesville, the words of the dying King Arthur re-echo: "For so the whole world is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God."