

"It is good to see you. I have been inquiring for you every day by telephone."

"Why did you not come to see me before this? I have been able to see visitors for over a week."

"I did come once, the day after the accident, and they told me that you were critically ill."

"That was true enough." His hand rose unconsciously to his bandaged head. "But why did you not come again?"

"I could not."

"I do not understand," he said, puzzled.

"The first time I came, it was because I was terribly worried about you. The seriousness of your injuries alarmed me. I left the hospital that day, even more disturbed, and the anxiety increased until I did not know what to do, where to turn. If I could have prayed—but I could not believe. In desperation, I walked here and there and a voice within me seemed to whisper, 'Pray, pray: now your soul sees the need of God and His help.' I tried to stifle that voice. I was passing St. Brendan's and again that inner voice seemed to tell me, 'Go in and God, Whom you have insulted, will hear you, will help you.' I tried again to stifle that voice but I found myself kneeling before the altar in St. Brendan's, and sobbing, 'God, help me to believe! Help poor John!'"

"Later I went into the rectory and spoke with Father Kane. He quieted my fears and he was so kind that soon I was telling him about my own difficulties. He took the article 'Science,' written by the well-known astronomer, Father Hagen, S.J., in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, and analysed it for me. The result was that I came away with several excellent books. I spent hours at home reading. And each evening Father Kane answered my difficulties."

"I learned how shallow were the arguments which had robbed me of my faith and I found that there is a vast difference between a hypothesis, or an unproved theory and an established truth. Now I know that the Church's stand towards science is remarkable. Her loyal children have been the leaders in scientific studies. I found that practically all great scientists were either Catholics or believers in Christianity; that Pasteur, Mendel, and others, world leaders in scientific research, became more and more convinced, by their researches, of the necessity of admitting the loving providence of God in material creation and of believing in the Catholic Church."

"That is what I wished to tell you," Desmond interposed. "Now tell me why you delayed your visit here so long."

"If you interrupt me like that, I shall go right home," she said, with a mock attempt at severity. "I made up my mind never to see you again until—now do not interrupt," she said, pointing with warning finger; "until—until I was a Catholic once more. And now, I am back in the true Faith and I see how shallow writers deceived me. I received Holy Communion this morning."

Desmond had closed his eyes as if in annoyance, evidently occupied with his own thoughts. Could it be, thought Margaret, that she meant no more to him now? His

apparent indifference turned her buoyant joy to disappointment.

With the slightest quivering of her lips, she began:

"I thought that you would like to know —"

The Story of Our Lady's Grotto, Carfin, Scotland

(By REV. T. N. TAYLOR, Rector of Carfin, in *St. Peter's Net*.)

The Carfin Grotto is a modest shrine erected in honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God by the men of that mining village, with the hope of adding in a small way to the fulfilment of her ancient prophecy:—"Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." They builded better than they knew, little suspecting that in the space of a year it would be necessary to trouble her face.

Devotion to Mary is ever ancient and ever new. She was, surely, more than a child when Gabriel saluted her as full of grace and blessed among all the daughters of Eve. Alone among those daughters she has been kept free from the stain which Eve's rebellion in Eden brought upon the human race. The Mother of Christ is, in Wordsworth's immortal phrase: "Our faintest Nature's solitary least."

On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX, the infallible successor of the Shepherd whom Christ had bidden to feed His sheep, proclaimed to the world the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He declared that the doctrine of Mary's exemption from the stain of original sin was an integral part of the Catholic faith. The Church of God exulted with joy, and three years later the Virgin came to Lourdes to acknowledge the honor in person.

In 1920 a group of the parishioners of the Catholic village of Carfin, by Motherwell, took part in the Scottish National Pilgrimage to Lourdes. On their return, a hearty response was made to the suggestion that a similar Grotto might be erected at the same time as their new Institute of Our Lady of Lourdes. A site was chosen in the adjacent hillside, across the road from the little Church of St. Francis Xavier, and under the auspices of the Little Flower of Jesus, the good work was begun about the date of her Feast, September 30, 1920. An amphitheatre was dug out in the hill now known as Maryknowe. This was encircled with a hedge of golden elder, while on the eastern side, charmingly framed in walls of iridescent slag, was placed the marble statue of the Madonna. Beneath it runs the inscription:—"Behold thy Mother!" and under this again, a smaller slab of Iona marble enshrines a tiny piece of rock from the niche at Lourdes, the gift of the late Dr. Cox, of the Medical Bureau there. On the ground below knelt Bernadette, sculptured, like the Madonna, in Italy, and to her right—conveyed by a pipe from the Institute close by—water bubbled up among the stones. It must be admitted that the well was an afterthought, due to the entreaties of former pil-

"Pardon the interruption, Margaret." His eyes opened. "I make it there are two weeks more in September." The ripple on his face broadened into a happy smile. "Do you like October for the wedding?"—*Messenger of the Sacred Heart*.

grims to Massabielle. Similar wells, natural or artificial, are commonly found in Lourdes Grottos. Oostacker, in Belgium, has a simple drinking fountain supplied from the main, and it was at Oostacker that occurred the famous miracle of Pierre de Rudder, the classical Lourdes cure, when a broken leg which had defied for years all medical skill, was suddenly and perfectly set.

On the feast of Notre Dame de Lourdes, February 11, 1921, the Institute was blessed and opened, its first event being a lecture on her great French sanctuary. When the feast of the Blessed Thérèse came round in 1922, the new shrine at Carfin was ready. The task had not been a simple one, so stubborn was the nature of the soil, that when success was despaired of, the Little Flower came to the rescue, and the work never looked back. Rosary Sunday, the day following her feast, was chosen for the unveiling of the image of the Immaculate Queen. It had rained throughout September, and the thirtieth was the rainiest day of all, but the Rosary month broke in brilliant sunshine, and so continued to the end. Over a thousand visitors attended the ceremony of the opening. It was performed by the writer, who thirty years before had made his first pilgrimage to Lourdes. The Grotto and the artificial spring were solemnly blessed, water from Bernadette's miraculous source being poured into the latter. People remarked how at the blessing of the statue itself the sun, for a short space veiled by clouds, lit up with its rays the white Madonna—auspicious omen! The Rev. Dean Brown and Father Petruskas, of Mossend, Father Doyle and Father O'Brien, of Cleland, Father Conway of Hamilton, and Father Murphy of Carfin, assisted at the service, which concluded with the singing of the Carfin version of the *Ave Maria* hymn.

Winter passed into Spring; pilgrims came and went, though not in crowds. Perhaps the largest contingent came from the Convent of Notre Dame, Glasgow. Gradually the water began to be carried off for healing purposes and it became noised abroad that it possessed a virtue of its own. A woman of the parish, afflicted with an appalling varicose ulcer, found herself cured by a novena of Rosaries and the application of the water. This happened at the beginning of December, 1922, but the knowledge of the alleged cure—attested by her medical attendant—was confined to the priests and the immediate neighbors. On April 29, the Venerable Carmelite of Lisieux became the Blessed Thérèse and a month later the invasion of Carfin began. The direct cause