

The Family Circle

AN OLD IRISH WOMAN'S ROSARY.

I bless myself, and I kiss the cross,
And the holy Creed I tell;
And the Paters and Aves trip off my tongue,
For it's me that knows them well.

For it's many a day these same old beads
I told in the same old way—
I got them my First Communion morn,
And that's sixty years this May.

'Twas the Joyful Mysteries then I liked
(And I said them joyfully),
When Our Lord was only a Child Himself
At His Blessed Mother's knee.

Ochone! but it's many and many a year,
I've turned from the joyful deeds;
And I cry on the Sorrowful Mysteries
With tears as big as my beads.

For my beautiful boy with the fever went,
And "himself" next morning died.
Do you wonder I think of the Mysteries
That end with the Crucified?

For it's then as I'm telling each blessed bead,
A-kneeling beside my bed,
We two women, God's Mother and me,
Have many a talk of our dead.

And that's why I'm liking the beads that tell
Her pains and her darling Son's:
It's plenty of time I'll be having in heaven
To think of the Glorious ones.

POWER OF THE ROSARY.

The Sword of Goliath.—There is no sword like to it. Give it me.—1 Kings xxi, 9.

With our little Rosary we can map out the course and incidents in the history of the world.

The strength of the Rosary suffices against all our foes. We must use it not only for our own private personal needs and necessities, but also to fight against the enemies of the Church and of mankind.

Whenever any great interest is at stake, be it in important elections to office, important decisions in State affairs, the making of laws, projects of peace or war between Christian peoples, let us always and in every case hasten to make use of the Rosary. Each Rosary that we recite with devotion is an auxiliary force for the cause of God and the Church. With it we can decide elections, make laws, bring wars to a good ending, have safety in time of danger, govern the world, and even take part in the counsels of the most Holy Trinity. By means of the Rosary all fierce attacks against the Church are terminated, all troubles disappear.

In combating the Rosary our enemies meet a sure defeat, ruin and disaster.

When we have our Rosary in our hands, we have all that we can desire, and need have no fear.

MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY.

The month of October is consecrated by the Catholic Church to Our Blessed Lady, under the title of the Rosary. The Church teaches her faithful children this most noble devotion, than which none is more widely practiced throughout the Catholic world. The frequent use of the Rosary, particularly its family recitation, during the month of October, is the earnest desire of the Catholic Church.

The beauties of the Rosary begin with its name. This comes from the Latin word *Rosarium*, which means "plantation of rose trees"; because the pious prayers and aspirations with which it is formed ascend to heaven as the perfumes of a plantation of rose trees; because, with

the repetition of a determined number of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" we form like a garland or bouquet of odorous flowers, and we offer it with childlike pride to Our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God. Thence the names of "Corona" or "Chaplet," whereby this devotion is known in some Catholic countries. And, certainly, these sublime prayers may be regarded as spiritual roses; for as the rose is considered the most beautiful of earthly flowers, so also these prayers are the most suitable to adorn and crown with Mary, the Mystical Rose.

The vocal recitation of these prayers forms the first part of the Rosary devotion. The pious meditation of the Mysteries of our Redemption must accompany the repetition of the "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" in order to make it perfect. Reciting the Rosary we recall to our minds the joys, sorrows, and glory of our merciful Redeemer and His dearest Mother, and thus their divine love is increased in our souls. Finally, after the consideration of so many mysteries wrought for our redemption, of so many graces bestowed upon Mary, we ascend at the end of each ten to the very throne of the Almighty, and there we glorify Him, repeating in profound adoration: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost"; and thus we acknowledge that the source of every grace proceeds from Him, that to Him alone eternal praise and glory are due. This twofold element, therefore, makes up the devotion of the Holy Rosary; vocal prayer, with the thorough meditation of the life, death and glory of Christ.

If we regard this devotion as it really is, we find immediately that it constitutes pre-eminently the prayer of the people, and that it is adapted alike to the use of simple and learned. In fact, it is the most popular of devotions, the most suitable for all kinds of persons, the distinctive religious practice, after the Mass, of Catholic countries. A summary history of its origin and progress will make this evident.

Originated, perhaps, among the lay-brothers in the monasteries during the Middle Ages and preached and fostered particularly by the Dominican Order since the days of its foundation, the Rosary spread in a few years all over Europe, and was immediately found wonderful in its effects. By its devout recitation heretics were converted, the power of the Turks was crushed, Austria and Poland delivered from their enemies. The Rosary soon became the daily devotion of every Catholic country. The Popes enriched it with almost numberless indulgences, and instituted a special feast to venerate the Mother of God under this beautiful title. Religious Orders made use of it in their conventual exercises. Missionaries taught their new congregations to recite it; so that from the 16th century till our own days the devotion of the Rosary has gone side by side with the growth or decline of Catholicism, both in the Old and New World. Pope Leo XIII., in a series of Encyclical Letters, beginning in 1883, commended in the most earnest terms to the whole Catholic world the devotion of the Rosary, especially the family Rosary, during the month of October.

The countries which stand foremost in Catholicism—Ireland and Spain—are prominent also in the devotion of the Rosary. Spain, in fact, is called by many writers "the nation of the Rosary" and it is well-known how the Rosary has always constituted the prayer of every Catholic family in the Green Isle. Canon Sheehan has given us some beautiful pages on *The Rosary in Ireland*. And all remember how, in the penal times, when all kinds of "Romish superstition" were forbidden and punished with death, and relatively few priests were able to comfort the Irish people with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the ministration of the other Sacraments, the Rosary practically was the devotion with which the Irish nation kept and increased their attachment to the Catholic dogmas. All recited the Rosary; all were consoled invoking the help of the Mother of God by the repeated "Hail Marys" counted on the Rosary beads.

We see the great O'Connell," says a writer of our own days, "wincing under the fiery eloquence of his opponent, but preparing himself by reciting the Rosary for that grand effort of his, which procured hope for the country he loved full well, and freedom for the Church he loved better still."

It is a well-known fact that Marshal Foch, the great general who led the allied forces on to victory, was often