

Saint Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556)

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In the summer of 1521, a handful of Spanish soldiers were holding the unfinished citadel of Pamplona, against an invading army of the allied French and Navarese. A cannon shot from the assailants dislodged a fragment of stone which wounded the left leg of a young Spanish officer, while the ball itself broke his other leg. He fell, and, as he had been the soul of the defence, the fortress fell with him. The conquerors honoured the bravery of their gallant foe; they dressed his wounds, and carried him gently to his home not very far distant, and there set him free.

His name was Inigo or Ignatius de Loyola, one of the sons of a nobleman of ancient family, whose old castle lay in the broad and beautiful valley from which the family surname was derived. Young Inigo had been sent as page to King Ferdinand the Catholic, the first monarch of a united Spain. But the youth wearied of the soft life of court; he longed to be a soldier. His relative, the Duke of Najera, took him into his service and Ignatius won his spurs in actual war at the conquest of the town from which the Duke took his title. He was as true as he was brave, and universally popular. Though a man of the world, and fond of society, his lips were never sullied with any foul word, nor his life by a disgraceful deed. He was a poet too in his own way, and sang the praises of St. Peter in a long epic.

The army surgeons had very unskilfully set his broken leg, and he had to go through such horrible operations that his life was despaired of. On the eve of SS. Peter and Paul he received the last Sacraments. But that very night St. Peter appeared to him, and he perfectly recovered his health. Still he was deformed and crippled; for not only was the leg that had been broken much shorter than its fellow, but the bone stood out with an unsightly lump. The fashionable hose of those days would reveal the deformity, and the young officer bade the surgeons, at the cost of any torture to himself, to reduce the disfigurement and to stretch the limb. He bore without flinching a very martyrdom of vanity. For an active mind like his the sick room was itself a torture; and to quiet his mind and to kill time, he asked for a novel of the period—some romance of knight-errantry. But books were rare in those days, and there were none of that kind in the Castle of Loyola. They brought him a Spanish translation of Ludolf of Saxony's *Life of Christ*, and a volume of the *Lives of the Saints*. For want of anything more to his taste, these he read and read again.

Inigo, with the spirit of a soldier who never flinched before any odds, said to himself: "What St. Francis did, and St. Dominic did, why cannot I do?" What most attracted his fearless soul were the self-inflicted penances of the Saints. This seemed to him the chief point in which he ought to imitate them, and he only longed to gather strength and to leave his bed, in order that he might put in practice his stern resolve of leaving house and home and all the world holds dear to lead a life of austerity and seclusion.

Those were days of tremendous issues for God's Church. The riches and the luxury of the time, the ferment of new ideas which the learning of the east and the invention of printing had produced, the newborn paganism and laxity of life, all had made the soil ready for a rank crop of evil within the

Church, and even of revolt against her teaching. At this very time Luther, the apostate monk, had thrown aside the mask and publicly burnt the Pope's Bull as a sign of open rebellion. In England and in France, as in Germany, error was lifting its head, and everything presaged a mighty moral convulsion, of which even the most foreseeing could not measure the results.

One night Inigo, stirred by his longings for higher things, leapt from his bed; and, kneeling before a picture of our Lady, dedicated himself in an ardent prayer to his Blessed Mother. A tremor as of an earthquake shook the castle, and split the solid walls with a rent, which can be seen to this day. Hell seemed to have realized how great a recruit had been enrolled in God's army. Mary appeared to her servant with the Blessed Child in her arms, and accepted by her presence the offering thus made. Long before his strength had fully returned, Inigo bade good bye to his brother, who was then the head of the house. The lord of Loyola had half divined the purpose of Ignatius, and strove in every way to retain him. But our Saint tore himself away under the pretext of being obliged to pay a visit of compliment to his relative, the Duke of Najera.

No sooner had Inigo fulfilled this duty, than he sent back his two attendants, and on his mule, for he was still very lame, he pushed right across the North of Spain to that great sanctuary of our Lady which nestles under the crags and peaks of Montserrat. On his way he bound himself by a vow of chastity in honour of our Lady. Shortly after he fell in with a Moorish gentleman, many of whom were then still in Spain. The Mahomedan denied the virginity of Mary after the birth of our Lord, and Inigo strenuously upheld it. When the Mussulman had left him, it seemed to the converted cavalier that he had done wrong in allowing the blasphemer to go unpunished; and in doubt as to what he ought to do, he let his mule go its own way, ready to revenge the honour of his Lady if it should follow the Moor. However it turned off by another road, and Inigo was saved from staining his hands with blood under a misguided impulse.

When our Saint had scaled the precipitous mountain, he made a most exact and general confession to one of the Benedictine monks, a saintly Frenchman. It was so broken with sobs and tears of contrition that it was not completed for three days. Then, at nightfall, on the vigil of the Annunciation, he stripped himself of all his fine clothes, to his very shirt, and gave them all to a poor man, putting on a rough dress of sackcloth, which went down to his feet. In this his new armour, like the squires of those days before receiving knighthood, he spent the night at the statue of our Lady, on his knees or leaning on his pilgrim's staff, within the old church. There, at Mary's shrine, in the first light of dawn, he hung up his rapier and dagger—the badges of a gentleman in those days—and then approached Holy Communion.

Before day had fully broken over the huge spires of Montserrat, with one foot bare, but the other, still swollen and sore, in a rough sandal of esparto grass, such as the Spanish peasants wear to this day, he came down the rough mountain side. He had given his mule to the monastery. Some kind souls showed him the road to a shelter in the nearest town, and there, in the poor-house or hospice of St. Lucy in Manresa, he went to live among the poor of Jesus Christ. He made himself the poorest of the poor. Once so particular about his appearance, he now let his hair and nails grow, and tried to conceal under squalor and neglect all signs of his noble birth and breeding. He begged his food from door to door, and gave the best he got to the sick and hungry. His only food was bread and water; save that for his Sunday dinner he added a few herbs savoured with ashes. The most fetid and loathsome of the sick were the object of his tenderest care, and no service was too revolting for him. Seven hours of his day were spent in prayer, without counting those which he gave to hearing Mass and attending the public services of the Church. But Ignatius, as he now

began to be called, wished for a spot where his prayers and penances might be unobserved. He found it in a long narrow cavern in a defile not far off running down to the swift river Cardoner. Its entrance was hidden by a rich growth of thistles and thorns, while from a fissure in the rock he could look out on the jagged heights of Montserrat. There he was free to pass his time in prayer, there he could spend his days in absolute fast, there he could wield the scourge unseen or unheard, and bind his waist with the cruel girdle of prickly leaves, still to be seen at Manresa. But there too, in return, God communicated to him His choicest gifts. Within that cave was revealed to him that system of Christian perfection which is known by the name of the Spiritual Exercises, taught him by our Blessed Lady and impressed on his soul by practical experience and fidelity to grace.

There is hardly a spot in that picturesque town which does not remind us of God's dealings with St. Ignatius, and of the heroic penance and profound humility which prepared him for the great work God destined for him.

There is the Cross of Tort, looking out over the bright river and rich valley, with Montserrat rising up dark and weird beyond. On his knees before this sacred sign the mysteries of the Catholic Faith were revealed to St. Ignatius with such vividness, that in after life he used to say that even if those truths were to be made known to him in no other way, he was prepared to die a martyr's death for each doctrine of the Church from the knowledge of it which he received in Manresa. There too is the Church of the Dominicans, such kind friends to the Saint, where the ineffable depths of the Blessed Trinity were opened to him, and where he was privileged to understand the mystery of the presence of our Lord on the Altar. There in the adjoining convent, now alas! a theatre, he was tenderly nursed by the good Fathers through a severe illness which was the result of his awful austerities and his still more terrible scruples. There again within the ruins of the Hospice, covered by a fair chapel, is the spot where was his little room which looked out on the old Church of St. Lucy. This was the scene of the marvellous rapture, like to the sleep of death, lasting for a whole week and more, during which, in spite of the reserve under which Ignatius hid the favours of God, it seems certain that he saw the future of that Society which he was called to found.

Temptation of disgust at his squalid, hard, cruel life; temptations of vain-glory at the honour which his marvellous virtues began to win for him; doubts about the genuineness of his past confessions—all these trials and many others gave him a practical insight into that mysterious warfare which is waged with more or less violence in every soul which lives for God.

A year or so had now gone by since Ignatius came to Manresa. He had passed through a fiery probation, by which the old life was burned away, and the soul purified and free was ready to receive like molten metal a new form. The life of our Lord had, by prayerful study and painstaking practice, become his life. It was time for work. Longings which had not yet taken perfect shape, the seeds of mighty works for God, were stirring in his soul. And so he left Manresa, and made his way alone, though many would have gladly borne him company, to the beautiful city of Barcelona, with its church towers rising from gardens of myrtles, and cedars, and orange groves, there to take ship for Civita Vecchia, and for the Holy Land. While waiting for a fair wind, a fortnight or so went by. Through a fierce storm, in the early spring, Loyola crossed the Mediterranean.

They were wild and lawless times for the weak and defenceless, but Ignatius, on landing at Gaeta, pushed forward to Rome, and there he spent Holy Week and Easter week. On Low Sunday he was admitted to receive the blessing of that great and good Pope, the Belgian Adrian VI. Every one told Ignatius that it was useless for a poor man to think of going to the Holy Land. The Crescent was

everywhere victorious, and the brave knights of St. John had just been forced to yield up their fortress of Rhodes. But our Saint, who had learned for Christ's sake to love poverty and pain, went on to Venice, and even gave away what had been forced upon him to pay his passage. He begged his food by day and slept by night like a vagrant under the arcades in the great square of St. Mark. One of the Council of Ten, Mark Antony Trevisano, a Venetian nobleman, was wakened up at night by hearing words like these: "While you are sleeping in a soft bed, my servant is lying on the bare ground!" He got up at once, and went to look for this servant of God. He stumbled upon the sleeping stranger, and made him come to his palace. But Ignatius disliked its luxury and splendour, and succeeded in obtaining a free passage on a Venetian man of war bound for Cyprus. So boldly did he reprove the bad life of some on board, that, but for a contrary wind, the sailors would have cast him away on some desert island. At Cyprus Ignatius found a pilgrim ship, and on the last day of August he landed at Jaffa. To be in Jerusalem was to him such a happiness that he would have stayed there all the rest of his life, if God, by means of the Provincial of the Franciscans, had not bade him depart.

Two months brought Ignatius back to Italy, and he set off from Venice poor as ever and on foot for Genoa. But Lombardy was ablaze with a fierce war, and the pilgrim fell in with a party of Spanish soldiers who stripped him and searched him with every insult, and then dragged him as a spy before their commanding officer. Ignatius had assumed a rough and country fashion of speech, to suit the humble state of life he had chosen. But now there came the doubt whether he ought not to address the officer with respect, lest he should expose himself to even worse treatment. He decided to invite reproach; and, with the exception of denying that he was a spy, he said not a word when cross-questioned. He had but to tell his name, and he would have been saluted with applause as the hero of Pamplona. As it was, the commander bade the men let him go, and soundly scolded the men for bringing in one who was evidently mad. The soldiers vented their anger on Ignatius, kicking him and beating him unmercifully. But again the Lord comforted him with the thought of His sufferings at the hands of the servants of the high priest and of Herod. An old friend, the Admiral of the Spanish Galleys, whom he chanced to meet at Genoa, carried Ignatius on board his fleet to Barcelona during the Lent of 1524.

He was then thirty-three. His scheme for evangelizing the Holy Land had fallen through. His heart burned all the more to labour for souls. Now for this some education was necessary, and he began heroically to learn his Latin in a public school. But strange to say, amidst the toilsome drudgery of the Latin grammar, he found his soul carried away by a torrent of devotion such as he had never experienced in the time of prayer, or of penance, or even in Holy Communion. In vain he strove against the strength of its sweetness. But long watchfulness and his practised eye soon detected the enemy; and taking his teacher into the Church of our Lady of the Sea, he solemnly promised that for the next two years he would devote himself with all diligence to his lessons, and he begged him on his knees to flog him as he flogged any boy-idler in his class, if he caught him with his mind away from his work.

1. Two years of study had at length fitted St. Ignatius to go on to his higher studies, and he went by advice to the new University which the great Franciscan statesman and Cardinal, the holy Ximenes, had then so lately founded at Alcalá. There Loyola threw himself with fervour into his studies. But he aimed at so much at a time that he made but little progress for all his labour. However, he sought and found his consolation in slaking his thirst for souls. And wonderful were the conversions he wrought; so wonderful, that in the days when

many wolves were about in sheep's clothing, he excited the suspicions of some of the authorities of the University. He was arrested and carried off to prison. As he was hurried along to gaol, there was among the lookers-on Francis Borgia, the young son and heir of the Duke of Gandia.

2. Ignatius' friends flocked to him in his trouble, and he spoke to all so marvellously, and with such enthusiasm, of the love of God and of the grandeur of suffering for Him, that one of the most learned professors of the University forgot his lecture in the delight of listening to the poor prisoner, and when he rushed back breathless to his class, his first words were, "I have seen St. Paul in prison." Ignatius was set free, but forbidden to work for souls till he had completed a course of theology. He was taken aback by this decision, and resolved to go to the older University of Salamanca; and to Salamanca he went. But either rumours of his late troubles had gone before him, or his ceaseless zeal among the students and townsfolk gave rise to suspicions. Ignatius and his companions were once more sent to gaol. Though not thrust, like some of his party, among the felons, the room in which he was confined was unsavoury and filthy, and he was fettered to his fellows by a long chain which was fastened to a stake in the floor. But all these aggravations of his hard lot were so many additional delights to one whose sole desire was to suffer like his Lord. "There are not in all Salamanca fetters and handcuffs and chains enough but that I would wish to bear more for love of God," was his answer to those who compassionated his hardships.

Again he was closely cross-questioned on matters high and deep on theology, and even a knotty point in Canon Law was proposed to him. He humbly avowed his ignorance, but when pressed for a reply he completely satisfied his examiners.

Gradually the plans of God were making themselves known to His servant. It had begun to dawn clearly upon him that, in face of the altered state of things, a new Order was required, and he had commenced to gather in companions. So now a fresh horizon seemed to open out before him. He must not confine his work to Spain alone. Paris, the metropolis of the student, the first University of its day, where the new learning and new heresies were in open contest with the old and the true, that was the place for Ignatius to begin the work with which God was charging him.

The war was still raging between Spain and France. The good people of Salamanca were very sorry to lose our Saint, and grim horrors were foretold him; but the hand of God was leading, and nothing could affright him. So, bidding his companions to follow him, he went, in 1528, to Paris. Their courage, however, failed, and they did not go.

One thing Ignatius had learnt by experience: that order and method, doing one thing at a time, was as much needed in education as in most other things; and he therefore resolved to begin all his studies afresh from the very beginning and to go to class again with boys to learn his Latin grammar, as he had done before at Barcelona. So too he accepted the alms sent to him from his old and fast friends at Barcelona, in order to be able to devote himself without other worries to his books. But a rascally companion, to whom he had given hospitality, made away with all he had; and he was forced to seek refuge as a pauper in the Spanish Hospital of St. James, at the opposite end of Paris to the College of Montaigu, where the Saint was attending the classes of grammar. The doors of St. James' Hospital closed too early at night, and opened too late in the morning, for him to be able to follow the lessons as regularly as he desired. There was nothing for it but to go, at the advice

of a religious, to beg for alms during the summer vacations from the Spanish merchants at Antwerp, Bruges, and London, so as to be able to take a lodging nearer to his school.

It was in 1530 that St. Ignatius came to our great capital to seek the aid of the Spanish colony in London. They lived in those days for the most part about old Broad Street, under the shadow of the Church of the Austin Friars, and round about the Spanish Embassy, which seems to have been lodged in that religious house. The dark cloud of the divorce of Henry VIII. was gathering thick over the realm, and things looked ill for England's faith. How changed is that ancient place, in the very heart of the city!

Ever full of desire to win souls to God; Ignatius began after his return to Paris to cast out the nets of earnest exhortation, which derived their power from his fervent prayers and constant penance. Three youths had, after making the Exercises, left their Colleges, to share the hardships and poverty of the hospice with their new master and guide. The disputations on Church holidays began to be ill attended, as so many young men gave their time to prayer and going to the Sacraments, while others left the world altogether and entered religion. The professors were ill pleased at the apparent interference of our Saint. They viewed him as an innovator and a reformer. He was accused before the Inquisition by one who was hereafter his close friend, the learned canonist Dr. Ortiz. Though he cleared himself from any suspicion of error, the students took the law into their own hands. They tore the young men from the side of Ignatius and carried them back to their colleges. Thus he found himself again without a companion.

The wretch who had robbed our Saint had quickly squandered all his ill-gotten money, and had fallen ill at Rouen, where he had gone to take ship for Spain. As soon as Ignatius heard of his distress he determined to visit him, and more than this, for the benefit of this man's soul, to go fasting and on foot the whole way. Three days of swift walking, though without food or drink, brought him to the bedside of the sick man. The heroic sacrifice was accepted; and Ignatius put him on board ship, rejoicing and forgiven. At Rouen the Saint learnt of the charge laid before the Inquisition against him, and fearing lest he should seem to have fled from justice, he hastened back to Paris, and under these circumstances appeared before the Inquisitor, Father Ori, who ever after proved his defender.

Ignatius had at last efficiently completed his preparatory studies and, in the October of 1529, he entered the College of St. Barbara, which was close by his former College of Montaigu. He was given a room in an old turret, where he found a young Savoyard, Peter Favre, who had already taken his degree in Philosophy, and who, at the request of his professor Pena, undertook to help him in his course. His room was shared by a young professor, Francis Xavier, who took his name from his birthplace, a castle in Navarre, not far off Loyola. Francis was of high family, very gifted in body and mind, but he cared little for the pious sayings and unworldly ways of Ignatius. However, constant acts of kindness, the power of example, and the often repeated reminder, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world?" broke down the stubborn will of the young professor, whose dreams of earthly glory made way for an all-absorbing thirst for suffering and humiliation, in order to be like His Lord. Two other Spanish students, who had known St. Ignatius at Alcalá, James Lainez and Alphonsus Salmeron, followed him to Paris, and soon renewed their acquaintance with him. Simon Rodriguez, a Portuguese, who had a scholarship at St. Barbara, and a Spaniard, Nicholas Bobadilla, who was attending the lectures of Xavier at the College of Beauvais, were joined to this close circle of friends.

But the heads of the College still looked with little favour on the influence which Ignatius exercised; they remembered the flight of his former companions to the Spanish hospital, and the falling off of the attendance at the public discussions. It was Pena, the professor of philosophy at St. Barbara, who urged the Rector of the College, James Gouvea, a Portuguese, to inflict upon Ignatius a public flogging, or as it was called at Paris, a hall, the chastisement reserved for students who were incorrigible or convicted of leading their comrades astray. Ignatius was warned by his friends of what was in store for him, and at the first hearing of it he trembled at the very thought of the indignity. But he quickly conquered himself and forced himself to embrace the shame. However, on more mature thought he saw that if he were to be so flogged it would be impossible for him to be of any further good to the students, as he would be disgraced and therefore shunned by all. He went straight to the Rector, who had not as yet left his room, and told him frankly and briefly that, while willing as far as he himself was concerned to accept the ignominy, he feared lest it should be a hindrance to his future usefulness.

The Rector listened to him, and whether it was that he felt he had acted hastily and harshly, or that the very sincerity of Ignatius won his heart, he took him by the hand, and led him into the hall, and there before them all, knelt at his feet and begged his pardon, the good man's tears proving the sincerity of his regret. From that time Gouvea, Ortiz and Pena became the fast friends of Ignatius. He was looked up to and venerated by all, and one of the leading men of the University wished to have him made a Doctor of Divinity, though he was then only a student of philosophy.

One story must be told out of many of what Ignatius did for souls. A young man was carrying on a criminal intrigue, and our Saint knew that on his way the sinner used to cross a bridge over a branch of the lake of Gentilly. It was a bitter night, and Ignatius stood up to his neck in the icy water, and there awaited his coming. "Go," cried the Saint, as the youth passed by; "I will do penance here every evening till you amend." The sight touched the sinner's heart, and he turned home a penitent.

Ignatius finished his philosophy in 1534, when he took his degree of Master of Arts. He began at once his theological studies at the great Dominican College close by. Meantime he saw the hour had come to give some permanent shape to his work, and thus prevent the new band of followers from drifting away under any storm of difficulty that might arise. Five of the six companions had made the Exercises with extraordinary fervour under Ignatius. Xavier's duties as professor alone had debarred him from so doing; and to each our Saint commended his rules for the choice of a state of life. To none but Favre had he revealed his own design of going to work for God in the Holy Land. He invited each separately and under promise of secrecy to make up his mind by a certain time, and on that day to come to him with his decision. To their surprise the six friends when they met found that they were all of one mind, ready to go with St. Ignatius to the end in close following of Christ, their King and Captain.

Their resolve was to bind themselves by vow to perpetual poverty and chastity, and to visit the Holy Land; and if, as had happened to St. Ignatius, they could not remain there, or were even prevented from going, they would put themselves entirely at the disposal of the Pope.

On the slope of Montmartre, not far off the busy Boulevards, is now a convent of nuns of the Order of Reparation. In St. Ignatius' days, when this was a mile or so outside Paris, there stood here a quiet church, called the Martyrs, where tradition says that St. Denis and his companions gave their lives to God. It was a Priory dependant on the great Abbey of Benedictine Nuns, the Church of which is still standing near the votive Church now rising to the honour of the Sacred Heart. Beneath

the Church of the Martyrs was a crypt, and there at early dawn an Altar was prepared, and B. Peter Favre, the priest of the little band, said Mass. At the Communion he turned round with his Sacramental Lord in his hands, and St. Ignatius made his vows and received His Divine Master. He was followed by the others, Favre turning to the altar at the end and making his offering like the rest. This was on Mary's great feast of the Assumption, and the year was 1534, that of England's apostasy. The craven Convocation and Parliament had at the bidding of an adulterous tyrant rejected the authority of Christ's Vicar, and before the year was out they would choose that monster, instead of the Pope, as head of the Church of England. Joshua and his faithful few were called by Heaven in this hour of need.

The rest of that day was spent near St. Denis' fountain, which is not far off the Martyrs'. Their hearts were overflowing, and they could talk of nothing but of the days when they could give themselves up entirely to work for souls. Nor did they return home till the late summer sun set behind the spires of Paris.

Time passed on in study and prayer and penance. One of the pits which honeycomb Montmartre, and from which the well-known plaster of Paris was drawn, served Ignatius as a cave for hidden contemplation and austerity. His favourite church within the city wall was Notre Dame des Champs. But his health gave way so utterly that the doctors said there was no remedy for him but to give up his studies and try a change to his native air.

It was a bitter parting, between Ignatius and his followers, though it was arranged that at the end of 1536 they should all meet in Venice, there to take ship for Palestine. So in the spring of 1535, mounted on a sorry horse, which his companions had procured for him as he was too ill to walk, Ignatius set out for Spain. He had determined not to go to his old home, but to steal in unawares to the neighbouring town of Azpeitia. However, when two leagues from Loyola, he was recognized by an old friend who rode full speed to take the news to his brother's castle. As a precaution against any honours, Ignatius had left the high road and taken an out-of-the-way and dangerous mountain path; but all was of no avail, and, as he drew near, a procession of the clergy and a number of his relatives came forth from the town to meet him. But nothing would induce him to stay anywhere except at St. Mary Magdalen's hospice for the poor. Once, and once only, was he persuaded by the entreaties of his sister-in-law to pay a brief visit to his home. But his brother sent down to St. Mary Magdalen's a fine bed with silken hangings; and a basket of provisions came from the Castle every day. It was soon found out, in spite of his efforts to conceal the fact, that he slept on the hard floor; never did he touch the Castle fare, but went round the town begging for his food, and giving the best he obtained to others who were poor like himself.

The journey had already restored his health, and Ignatius not only resumed his terrible austerities, but devoted himself heart and soul, for the short time he spent in his native land, to work a great change in Azpeitia. Clergy and people alike were brought back to God. He used to preach from the entrance of the little chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, just opposite the poor-house; and crowds came to hear him. From the chapel porch a farmhouse across the stream can still be seen a long way off, to which, according to tradition, his voice reached.

It was with difficulty that he could get away from the good Basque folk, and from his relations. He went a long journey through Spain to settle the affairs of St. Francis Xavier and other of his companions, who were anxious to rid themselves of their property, in accordance with their vows. At length he reached Valencia on the Mediterranean, near to which he paid a visit to one of his

former companions, then a novice in the Charterhouse of Val de Cristo. To him he talked about the new Order he was about to found, and from him he asked counsel and the aid of his prayers.

From Valencia the Saint took ship to Genoa. A furious storm broke the rudder, snapped the rigging of the vessel, and threatened the crew with instant shipwreck; but amidst the cries and lamentations of all, St. Ignatius felt but one trouble—he had not been grateful enough for the marvellous favours he had received from God. The storm abated and they reached port. But winter had commenced, and the pilgrim had a fearful journey among the Apennines, where he lost his way and was forced to crawl on his hands and feet amidst the precipices of the mountains. He used to say in after life that never had he been in such peril. The year 1535 was closing, when at length Ignatius reached Venice and there awaited his companions. The following year was fruitful in good for that rich and gay city, and the zeal of St. Ignatius won to God many a noble soul, of whom more than one joined him in his life of devotion and zeal.

In the beginning of January, 1537, after a journey full of hardships, through hostile armies, through the snows and frost of the Alps, and through countries and towns full of hostile Protestants, the companions whom he had left in Paris came to forget all their sorrows in being once more with their father Ignatius. To him and to them it was an additional pleasure to see their little band increased by two fresh recruits from Paris, and others from Venice. The hospitals were their home, and the scene of their marvellous devotion and victory over self in the service of the sick and poor. When Lent arrived, St. Ignatius sent them all to Rome to spend the Holy Week there, and to get the Pope's blessing and the leave from him to receive Orders and to preach and hear confessions. He did not dare to go himself, for he feared to meet Dr. Ortiz, who was then at Rome as one of the agents of Charles V., pleading the cause of our brave Queen, Catherine of Aragon. Ortiz proved the very best friend of the pilgrims, for he presented them to the Pope, Paul III., who sent them back with all and more than they had dared to ask or hope for. On the Feast of St. John the Baptist, St. Ignatius and those of his companions who were not priests, were ordained priests at Venice, and then one and all retired into solitude to prepare for their apostolic work, and wherein the newly anointed might make ready for their first Mass. St. Ignatius, B. Peter Favre, and Father Lainez took up their abode in a ruined monastery outside the walls of Vicenza. There were neither doors nor window-frames in the building, and their food was the hard dry crusts which they begged. But the forty days in that desert were turned into Paradise by the glimpses of heavenly things which made all suffering forgotten. That period over, the Fathers went out into the streets of Vicenza to preach and to instruct, and though they knew but little Italian, their zeal, the sight of their wearied and wasted forms, and the power of their holiness wrought wonders among the people.

All the companions then gathered together at Vicenza; and there it was agreed that, as the way to the Holy Land was indefinitely closed by the war between the Catholic powers and the Turk, they should offer their services to the Pope. Accordingly, St. Ignatius, with B. Peter Favre and Lainez went on to Rome, to put themselves and their brethren entirely at the disposal of the Pope. As they drew near the city, close by the site of ancient Veii, in the broad Campagna which spreads around the capital of the Christian world, there is a wayside chapel at a place called La Storta. As St. Ignatius had journeyed along, the two Fathers who were with him had said Mass, and the Saint had approached Holy Communion each day. His heart was full of thoughts of love towards his Sacramental Lord. He entered the chapel to pray, and when he came out, it was evident that he had been deeply stirred. "I know not," he said, "what awaits us in Rome. Perhaps we shall be crucified there." In fact, as he went on to tell, Jesus had appeared to him bearing His Cross, and the Eternal

Father had commended Ignatius to the care of His Blessed Son with these words, "Receive this man as Thy servant." Then our Lord had turned to him and said, "I will be favourable to you in Rome."

It was in the November of 1537 that St. Ignatius arrived there with his two companions. Those whom he had left behind were busy gathering in the harvest of the souls in various cities of Italy, nor could St. Ignatius remain idle in face of so much to be done. Pope Paul III. received him and his companions with the greatest kindness. He appointed FF. Lainez and Favre as lecturers in the Roman university, while he left Ignatius free to exercise his zeal.

By the Easter of 1538 God's time had come for laying broad and deep the Constitutions of the new Order, and St. Ignatius in his wise humility summoned around him all his brethren, to aid him by their prayers and counsel in this most important work. By the orders of the Vicar of the Pope, Cardinal Carafa, the pulpits of various churches were assigned to them, and marvellous was the change wrought by their burning discourses and bright example.

But none had the power of St. Ignatius' words, simple and straightforward, without adornment, a soldier's speech, but irresistible because the expressions of deepest conviction and the fruit of perpetual prayer. He preached in his native tongue in the Spanish Church of Our Lady of Montserrat, hard by the English hospice, which is now the venerable English College. So engrossed were these apostolic men with their work, that it sometimes happened that night came upon them before they had had time to remember that they had not yet broken their fast.

But a sudden tempest arose. One of the many whom the moral corruption of the time and the widespread attacks against the faith had led astray, an Augustinian Friar from Piedmont, had come to preach in Rome, under the patronage of persons of high rank. The followers of St. Ignatius soon detected that his sermons contained, under a careful disguise, the errors of Calvin and Luther. They began at once to treat in their instructions, without any allusion to the preacher, upon various points on which the Piedmontese friar was leading the people astray. His defence was to retort upon St. Ignatius the accusation of heresy, and openly to assert that, over and over again, our Saint had been convicted of false doctrine. His assertions were supported by a group of men who came primed with false evidence. The accusations were destructive of all prospect of future good, and St. Ignatius, so willing to court contempt and ignominy when only himself was concerned, boldly demanded a public inquiry and a sentence in the public courts. God took the matter in hand; the four ecclesiastical judges before whom he had been tried were all, for one reason or other, in Rome just at that very time, and their evidence was conclusive. An attempt was made to hush up the affair in order to shelter some persons, high placed, who would have been compromised by an official sentence. But St. Ignatius was convinced that an authoritative recognition of his innocence and freedom from error was absolutely necessary to prevent the old accusation from continually reappearing. He went to the Pope, then at his country house at Frascati, and boldly laid the whole matter before him. A full and judicial sentence was published in due form in his favour. The friar escaped to Geneva, and there openly professed Lutheranism.

On Christmas night that same year, 1538, in the subterranean chapel of the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where the relic of the holy crib of Bethlehem was kept, St. Ignatius said his first Mass. He had not thought a year and a half too long a preparation!

Now that peace had been restored, it was time to settle definitely the form and shape of the Order. Ignatius recommended the others to seek in prayer and penance and at the Holy Sacrifice the light they required; and there is still existing a sort of diary in which he used to note down the thoughts

vouchsafed to himself at that time in prayer. There are, too, at Rome the minutes drawn up and signed by the Fathers during their careful and prolonged deliberations. Not to interrupt their labour for souls, they only met at nightfall, and then discussed at length the various subjects which were before them.

The resolutions of the Fathers were laid before Paul III. on September 3rd, 1539, by the fast friend of St. Ignatius, the great Cardinal Contarini,—who was also the friend of our Cardinal Pole. The Pope gladly gave a general approval. But St. Ignatius was desirous of a still more explicit recognition. The scheme was handed over to a commission of three Cardinals, of whom one especially was strongly opposed to the approbation of any fresh Religious Order in the Church. But the prayers and penances of our Saint won the day, and even Cardinal Guidiccioni, who had been most determined, owned that some irresistible impulse forced him to give a consent against his own wishes. Paul III. read over the scheme himself with great attention, and exclaimed on doing so: "The finger of God is here!" On the 27th of September, a bull of the Pontiff set the seal of Christ's Vicar on the work of St. Ignatius.

Already B. Peter Favre had been sent as the counsellor of Ortiz to the conference on religion at Worms, while at the suggestion of Gouvea, the old rector of St. Barbara's, John III. of Portugal had asked and obtained St. Francis Xavier and F. Rodriguez as missionaries for India. Four of the other Fathers had been called away to labour in various parts of Italy. It was absolutely necessary, before they were scattered over the world, at once to elect a Superior. The four were recalled to Rome, and in the Lent of 1541 they were all gathered into the narrow and poverty-stricken house beside the little Church of Santa Maria della Strada, which had been given to them. Three days were spent in prayer; no discussion was allowed; the result was to come from God. On the day fixed the votes of those present and of those who were absent were opened, and all, save the vote of the Saint himself, fell on Ignatius. He declared most positively that the sins of his present and past life totally unfitted him for such a post; and, spite of the protest of his brethren to the contrary, insisted that a new election should take place, after four days of fresh prayer and consideration. The second voting had the same result. Ignatius refused as absolutely as before; no persuasion could change his mind, till at length, as a compromise, he volunteered to lay bare all his defects and crimes to his confessor, a Franciscan Father, and abide by his decision. He never doubted what the result would be.

Accordingly he spent the last three days of Holy Week in the Franciscan house of St. Peter in Montorio, the traditional scene of St. Peter's crucifixion, which looks down from the Janiculan hill upon the domes and bell-towers of Rome. Ignatius spent the time in earnest effort to paint his own character in the blackest colours and so to prove his utter unworthiness for the office of General; and then on Easter day, he went triumphantly to his father confessor to hear his verdict. "By your refusal you are acting against the Holy Ghost," was the friar's only reply. Even then Ignatius begged him to reconsider his opinion, and when he had done so to write his answer to the Fathers. Then and then only did St. Ignatius bow his head, and in accepting the painful burden of Superior, his life henceforward was merged in the sorrows and successes of the Society.

On the Friday in Easter week St. Ignatius and his companions went on that touching pilgrimage, trodden by so many millions of Catholics, to the Seven Churches of Rome. It brought them at length to the solemn Basilica of St. Paul, so stately in its solitude, with its forest of marble pillars and its glittering mosaics. There at the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, before a picture of our Lady and Child, then at the left of the venerable high altar, St. Ignatius said Mass, and at the Communion, with the paten in one hand and the formula of vows in the other, he made his solemn profession,

sealing it with the reception of his King and Captain, and the five other Fathers then followed his example. After Mass, they went to visit each of the privileged altars of the basilica, and then meeting round the high altar, which is still standing, they gave each other the kiss of peace, their hearts full of gratitude that it had been given them to fulfil publicly and in face of the world at the shrine of the Apostle of the Gentiles, what had been begun in the secret vault of Montmartre.

The remaining sixteen years of his life were chequered with many clouds of trouble, consoled though they were by the steady progress of the Society in unwearied struggles with vice and with error. Ignatius himself never left Rome, save on two occasions, when he went as peacemaker to Tivoli, and once to a castle of the Colonnas in the territory of Naples. But he followed with the deepest interest the labours of St. Francis Xavier in India and Japan, of B. Peter Favre and his other Fathers in Italy, Germany, the Low Countries, in Savoy, in Spain, Portugal and elsewhere, cheering them with frequent letters. B. Peter he welcomed home when at length, after eight years' absence and hardship, obedience brought him back to Rome to die in his arms. St. Francis Borgia, Viceroy of Catalonia and Duke of Gandia, left his state and broad lands to fill the void caused by Favre's death. St. Ignatius made every son of his, however distant, in India or in Brazil, feel the warm beatings of a father's heart in those wonderful letters which tell better than anything its tenderness, its courage, its strength, and, when needs were, its sternness.

To far off Japan, to mysterious Abyssinia, to Ireland torn by heresy and faction, to Scotland tottering to its ruin, to the Congo, opened out long before the days of modern travel by the children of Ignatius, the General from his little room at Santa Maria della Strada, sent his brave sons on the message of peace. To England he would have sent them if his zeal had not been baffled by politicians. Then as ever his children had to suffer even from Catholic hands and in Catholic countries, and every sorrow of theirs found its echo in his soul, so jealous for the glory of God, and so sensitive to their sufferings, so indifferent to his own.

The walls of his humble rooms still exist, their holiness is still respected, and they could tell that the source and force of all he did was his constant union with God, a prayer which found its food in every creature of the Creator. For each flower, each star, each beautiful object in creation lifted his heart up to Heaven. He loved to step out at night on a balcony, which has been preserved, and to gaze upon the calm stillness of a southern starlit sky, as if lifting his eyes longingly towards his home, and he would sigh and say, "How vile the earth is when we look at heaven!" So constant grew this his habit of looking upwards that he was known familiarly to passers-by as the man whose eyes were ever heavenward. Such was his devotion at office that his tears flowed in such streams that there was peril of his losing his sight; and it was at length found necessary to obtain for him a dispensation from the Pope and a prohibition to say his breviary. At Mass his devotion got the better of him so completely that he often spent an hour at the altar, and was forced to celebrate in private, while the saying of two Masses on Christmas night threw him into a fever.

St. Ignatius was naturally very fond of the chants and services of the Church, but he sacrificed this pleasure and departed so far from the practice of former days as to lay no obligation of choir on his order. He felt the absolute need of devoting all their time to the active work of teaching, of preaching and administering the Sacraments, and he would leave to others that sublime duty of echoing on earth the perpetual service of the blessed before the Throne. Still he valued at its full the Liturgy, and when the ceremonies of Holy Week were to be gone through in his church, he was so anxious that they should be done as well as possible, that he used to send for those who were to take part in them, and make them rehearse them several times in his presence.

Much as the Saint valued prayer, much as he sought in it the light and grace which he needed for himself, and which he asked for others, yet he ever taught by his own practice how necessary it was to join to it self-conquest; for otherwise, as he remarked, persons given to prayer easily become too wedded to their own ideas. His constant prayer was, "Grant me, O God, humility and loving reverence." His lowly opinion of himself was shown, not only in his first refusal of the office of General, but in his effort to resign the post, even long before his health had so far incapacitated him that pity for his feebleness forced his children to accept the resignation. His plea was that it was easy to find one who would fill the post better or less ill than he. He even feared that others should take him for anything more than he was. His confessor had hinted that if he outlived the Saint he would have marvels to disclose. The Saint gave him a severe public penance; and when the Father died before his penitent, his friends suspected that this was in answer to the prayer of St. Ignatius.

The holiness of our Saint stood the test of the Apostle's saying, for never did he offend by the tongue. He was most careful not to exaggerate or to use superlatives, so common in southern speech. Never did he say a word against another nor use a harsh word of reproach, nor did he allow himself to express an unfavourable judgment of any one. He always preferred to get those who were in fault to acknowledge their error, so the more successfully to be able to correct them. What was perhaps most notable in him was the complete control which he had obtained over his naturally fiery temper. He was sweet and gentle, when sweetness and gentleness were needed, and yet could at the right time speak with such severity as to make the offender tremble before him, though the next moment he would return to his usual calm. He adjusted this severity to a nicety according to the virtue of the person with whom he had to deal, and while considerate and gentle with the weak, he might have appeared hard and exacting to a fault when dealing with men of tried virtue, like Lainez.

A proof of St. Ignatius' wise foresight and of his blindness, when needs be, to thoughtless faults, was best seen in his long suffering the freaks of the boy novice Ribadeneira, whose grateful pen was afterwards to give us the charming biography of the Saint. In one of his fits of juvenile waywardness the youth showed the power which Ignatius could exert over hearts, by walking all the way from Louvain to Rome in the midst of a cruel winter to seek comfort in his troubles in the sight of his friend and father. The sick had a special place in the heart of St. Ignatius. When he had ordered some extra comforts for the invalids and the bursar told him there was not money in the house even to buy food for the community, he bade him sell some of the very small supply of crockery and furniture which the house then possessed and get the delicacies for the sick.

His hidden life is told us in the more than human wisdom of his Exercises, of which it was ever the outward expression. Therein we can read the maxims which he carried out in every detail of his life. The secret of his success, the source of the courage which supported him, are to be found in his quiet trust in God. Yet he fully recognised how God demands that man should do his part. However stiff and decided he might be in carrying out his resolves when once he saw it was God's wish, his action was wisely slow, and he studied carefully and chose the best times and the seasons. At all other times he anxiously sought and readily followed the opinion of others.

He had also a Saint's discernment when to lay aside human prudence and cast his care on God. His hands were already well filled with pious works, beyond and above his care of the Society, and yet he undertook the whole responsibility of the refuge for fallen women at St. Martha, and braved the scoffs and vile insinuations of the wicked, and the worldly-wise criticisms of the good. No labour was too great, he urged, to prevent one single mortal sin, or to promote God's glory in any way; and

once, when that was at stake, he stayed fourteen hours waiting without food for an audience at a great man's door.

The reward came at last. Ignatius was now sixty-five. He was constantly prostrated by illness. Age had not bent his upright form, nor blanched his hair, his face was winning and full of a noble dignity. Yet the responsibilities of his world-wide work, and the heats of a more than usually hot Roman summer brought on a fever. But it did not seem serious. On the last day but one of July, 1556, he suggested to his vicar that it was time to go and beg for him the Papal blessing, as he was near his end. Neither the doctors nor the Fathers could believe this, and so the message was delayed; even the last Sacraments were not administered. Next morning was Friday, and at early dawn St. Ignatius was found actually dying, and before the holy oils could be brought, about an hour after sunrise, he expired with his watchword, "Jesus, Jesus," on his lips.

In 1622, Gregory XV. canonized our Saint. His relics lie in a sumptuous chapel, within the Church of the Gesu, which was built in the place of Santa Maria della Strada.

Notes

Words of his contemporary, F. Oliver Manare, who lived with him in Rome.
