

they have the appearance of nuns. This was little Bernadette Soubirous' costume until she received the habit of a religious at the convent of Nevers.

This year, in answer to an oft-repeated petition to Rome to take steps towards the canonisation of Bernadette, a committee was appointed. They visited Nevers, opened the coffin of Sister Marie Bernard, and found her body in a perfect state of preservation. The eyes were wide open, and still held an air of intelligence.

At the entrance of the crypt hangs a sign, 'Silence.' Beyond the arched passages of the peristyle nearest the river, again the admonition is repeated. Around a bend is the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, the spot beloved of Mary's children. It is the same sweet picture reproduced everywhere in church, chapels, and convent gardens; a picture upon which the sun of the Universal Church never sets.

The grotto is deep and broad and high, and before the apparition afforded shelter to shepherds when storms blew on the mountain tops. It is black with the smoke of the countless candles burning day and night for over fifty years.

On a high niche stands a white marble statue clothed as was the beautiful lady who said with ineffable sweetness, grace, and humility to her little peasant confidante, 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' Dark green vines cling lovingly around the sacred niche.

Rows of crutches hang within the grotto, and outside are hundreds more of these pathetic evidences of Mary's love and power; below them is the miraculous fountain. In the middle of the grotto is a tiny white altar where Mass is celebrated on special feasts.

Candles burn everywhere, some tall and thick as the trunk of a sturdy young tree. In front of the statue is a great pyramid-like stand, a gleaming bouquet. Against the hillside, in sight of the statue, is a rack for cut flowers, and always it blooms as a garden.

Along the river bank runs a walk shaded by beech and maples. If you follow some of the paths leading from it you will reach the road to Calvary. These Stations of the Cross are placed with marvellous realism. They are of bronze. In some groups there are six and seven figures. Christ before Pilate is a magnificent piece of sculpture.

But it is the devotion of the people of Lourdes and of pilgrims which is the shrine's greatest glory. It is surely a picture of what all Catholic France once was. Never are the churches empty, never is the grotto without its group of watchers. At every daily Mass the Communion rail is filled—men and women; at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which takes place each afternoon in the crypt, there is a large congregation, and few persons in Lourdes, and no visitors, but go to the grotto to say their beads and good-night to Our Lady; even the trainmen on their way to Tarbes make their engines whistle a salutation.

Here there is no unsympathetic unbeliever to restrain the shy from showing the childlike faith of Bernadette; only those who honor Mary find their way to her pretty little town in the Pyrenees.

THE IRISH PARTY AND THE VETO

In the course of his speech in the House of Commons in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, Mr. John Redmond said it was well that at the earliest moment in a new Parliament the fact should be emphasised that the Irish Nationalist members, although they had been freely included in the calculation of the Government's majority by the British press, in reality stood, as they had always stood, apart and independent, allied to no British party, and prepared to accept what they considered good measures for Ireland from any British party returned. Their only reason in coming to the House at all was to advance the cause which the Prime Minister had rightly called the cause of full self-government for Ireland in all purely Irish affairs. The Nationalist Party supported the Government heart and soul at the last election because the Home Rule pledge given by the Prime Minister was supplemented by a pledge which they regarded from their point of view as more important still—namely, the pledge which was given with reference to the Veto of the House of Lords. They regarded the abolition or limitation of the Veto of the House of Lords as tantamount to

The Granting of Home Rule

to Ireland. The Prime Minister definitely pledged himself not to hold or assume office until he had passed a Bill dealing with the question of the Veto. Speaking at the Albert Hall, he said the Government 'would not assume office until they could secure the safeguards which experience showed them to be necessary for the legislative utility and honor of the Party of Progress.' That pledge was repeated in substance by every other Minister on different platforms, and Mr. Asquith now explained that by safeguards he meant the passage of an Act of Parliament. The words used by the right hon. gentleman in the speech to which he referred are clear, and no attempt had been made to contradict the interpretation which had been freely placed upon his words during the recent election. Down to that moment it was the universal belief amongst all par-

ties in this country, and in Ireland, that the Government had given a pledge that they would ask for guarantees as to the use of the Royal prerogative, and that if they did not get these guarantees they would decline to hold office. It was on the value of that pledge, taken in conjunction with the Home Rule pledge that the Nationalist Party supported the Government at the last election. As to the value of that support there was not one man on the Ministerial side of the House who would have any question or doubt. The policy outlined by the Prime Minister was to reintroduce and pass into law the Budget before they were satisfied or had received any reasonable assurance whatever that a Bill dealing with the Veto could be passed into law this year or during the present Parliament. In his (Mr. Redmond's) judgment, that was

A Disastrous Policy.

It was throwing away and wasting the mandate of the country. The issue at the last election was the unconstitutional action of the Lords in rejecting the Budget. Now it was proposed to send the Budget back to the Lords and to ask them not as a right under a new scheme whereby they would be forced to pass it, but to pass it as a favor. In that way the Government would postpone any chance of forcing the Veto policy to success. In his judgment, if the Government passed the Budget and postponed their Veto Bill they would justify, in the minds of many people, the action of the House of Lords, because the Peers claimed merely to have referred the Budget to the electorate. Let the Prime Minister give them a reasonable assurance that he would be able to carry his Veto Bill into law this year, and the Nationalists would vote for the Budget. They were willing to pay that price, but they were not willing to pay that price for nothing or for an absolute uncertainty, which they believed would end in disaster and defeat. They were sincerely anxious to support the Government in their efforts to deal with the veto of the House of Lords. They were not seeking a quarrel or desiring any break, but they could not in this matter work blindfold. They could not be a party to a policy of ploughing the sands once more or to deliberately throwing away the great mandate which the Government had received from the electors by acquiescing in the passing of the Budget and the ending of the financial crisis without first obtaining guarantees as to the passage of the Veto Bill. Let the Prime Minister be prepared to go boldly to his countrymen on that issue of the House of Lords, and not want to be kicked out by the action of the Peers.

ANCIENT IRISH UNIVERSITIES

The foundation of the National University in 1909, and the stir that its opening has made in educational circles, naturally sets one thinking about the record of learning and about university life in the past in Ireland (says Mr. B. Norman in the *Irish Independent*). A proud and glorious record it is, and its forced decline has no more shameful parallel in the history of the world. All readers of Irish history know the passion for learning that has existed in Ireland from the earliest times, and the royal honors that were paid to the scholar by the Irish chiefs—in the old chronicles the latter were called 'The Sheltering Tree of the Learned.' But it is with early Christian Ireland, university life is associated.

The golden age of Irish learning was from the sixth to the ninth century, but even in the fifth century there were great schools of Irish learning, notably those at Emly, Armagh, Ardagh, and Sletty. The sixth century can boast of seven vast and remarkable universities as those of Clonmacnoise, Lismore, Clonard, and Bangor. The greatest of Ireland's scholars and saints went forth from these places.

Students, attracted by the reputation of the 'Island of Saints and Scholars,' flocked from all parts of Europe to these seats of learning, King Alfred of Northumbria among the rest. Indeed, the Saxon chroniclers, usually so churlish about giving praise to Ireland, write in the most exalted terms of praise about the learning of our country in these early times. Aldeim describes Ireland as 'Rich in the wealth of science, and as thickly set with learned men as the poles are with stars.' The Saxons should be particularly grateful to Ireland, as her universities taught the sons of England without fee or reward. The Emperor Charlemagne later showed his appreciation of Irish learning by appointing Claud Clemens and John Albin over the two universities which he founded at Paris and Pavia.

Clonard and Clonmacnoise were, perhaps, the most interesting of the old Irish universities, as their names are associated with men of such extraordinary holiness and learning as Colmcille, Ciernan, and Finnian. Finnian was called 'the teacher of the Saints of Ireland,' because so many boys who afterwards became saints were taught by him. The great Colmcille was his pupil, whose name is ever beloved in Ireland, and whose reputation is spread all over Europe.

Life in those early Irish schools was very different from our modern ideas about university life. Hard mental study, much prayer, and manual labor was expected from