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Full text of "The wonderful crucifix of Limpias, remarkable manifestations"

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^ONDERFUL
RUCIFIX of
IMPIAS

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THE MIRACULOUS CRUCIFIX

Frontispiece.

THE WONDERFUL
CRUCIFIX of LIMPIAS

REMARKABLE MANIFESTATIONS
By the REV. BARON VON KLEIST, S.T.D.
TRANSLATED BY E. F. REEVE * * j

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Die 22 Afaii, 1922.

PREFACE

THE extraordinary manifestations of the crucifix of Limpías have now already continued for two years and a half, and have caused a very great sensation all over the world. Since the 30th of March, 1919, nearly 400,000 people have visited the parish church of the little town on the north coast of Spain, which formerly was quite unknown, and thousands upon thousands of them have seen the apparitions. Their number cannot be fixed at all, for only the minority are wont to send in their written testimony. Nevertheless, there are now already 8,000 statements, of which 2,500 are accompanied by an affidavit.

A great many people have recovered their belief in God at Limpías, and have become fervent Christians. But also those visitors to the new place of pilgrimage who have not seen anything of the apparitions and these are by far the greater number return home for the most part deeply affected and convinced that in Limpías things are happening which a profound thinker cannot set aside with terms such as "herd-suggestion," delusion, and so on.

For two and a half years thousands of men with university training, and reasonable, thoughtful men of all classes of professions from Spain, from Europe, and even from America, have stood before that crucifix and have there sought for a natural explanation of these manifestations. For eighteen months highly esteemed professors of physics and psychology, who were appointed in the commission of enquiry, have made experiments of all kinds with untiring activity, in order to investigate the nature of these phenomena, without having as yet obtained any result. Theologians are exerting themselves to try and gain a little enlightenment as to these remarkable revelations, but up to the present they have only been able to advance a few hypotheses.

In the meantime, the veneration of this crucifix increases steadily. Enormous numbers of conversions, well over a thousand remarkable cures of disease, a vast blossoming forth of devotion to the suffering Saviour, and the impotent resentment of all enemies of Christ

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(c/. p. 20), are the sequel to those astounding occurrences. The Spanish Bishops are already so convinced of the value of the religious movement which is emanating from Limpías that they further the pilgrimages there in all kinds of ways, and take part in them personally, in order to stimulate the devotion of the people to the Santo Cristo. On the 19th of July, 1921, the Penitentiary Apostolic in

Rome was even induced to grant for seven years, to all who visit that parish church and its crucifix, a plenary indulgence, that may be gained on four days in the year.

The present book, which already has a French and a Dutch edition, has for its object to acquaint the reader in greater detail with this new centre of benediction, and the wording of the most important testimonies. Out of hundreds of statements the most serious, and those with the most significant contents, have been chosen. The accompanying attempt at an explanation was completed and remodelled in this edition on the authority of the results of the theological investigation. In substance it restricts itself to summing up as briefly as possible the various opinions of the Spanish theologians, who alone up till now have engaged in the scientific treatment of these manifestations.

With the exception of the Dominican Father, D. Rubio Cercas (c/. p. 153), they all decide more or less in favour of the supernatural character of the apparitions, without wishing by that to forestall the decrees of the Church in any way. The author of this book adopts the same point of view, and in so doing submits himself unreservedly to the authority of ecclesiastical judgment, and declares that the depositions quoted are only of value in proportion to the competence of the witnesses to form an opinion and to their credibility.

In general, it should be emphasised that in the act of judging apparitions of that kind one must guard against two extremes. People whose faith is weak, and those who are tainted with rationalistic scepticism, keep themselves aloof from everything supernatural almost as a matter of principle, and therefore, with timid superficiality, they readily treat with contempt the soul-stirring events at Limpías. Pious people, on the contrary, are inclined to accept all statements without reflection, and to declare such occurrences as evident miracles without further ceremony. The right standpoint is obviously midway between these namely, to test the credibility

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of the witnesses and their statements with cautious reserve, at the same time to acknowledge, with the gratitude of faith, the compassion of Almighty God, who manifestly wishes, as most often in hard times, so especially in our days, to point out in an unusual manner the way of salvation to mankind.

Should the Church, however, in virtue of the canonical process, have occasion to declare the apparitions in Limpías to be miraculous, the convinced Catholic will nevertheless be on his guard against thinking too highly of such happenings, as they play a subordinate part in comparison with the dogmatic theology and means of grace of the Church.

The illustrations with which the book is embellished were most kindly placed at my disposal by the photographer, D. Leoncio Marugan, of Limpías and Santander; and the warmest thanks are due to him, as well as to the priest at Limpías, the Very Reverend Archpriest D. Eduardo Miqueli, for the ready way in which he met me, and for many important communications. I owe special thanks to my sister, who, having spent nearly fifteen years in different provinces in Spain, with her thorough knowledge of Spanish conditions, has had a substantial share in the composition of this book. May it also meet with a friendly reception elsewhere.

THE AUTHOR.

BRESLAU,
October 21, 1921,

IN reply to a letter (given below) to the Holy Father Pope Benedict XV., the Archpriest of Limpías has received the appended communication from the Penitentiary Apostolic.

HOLY FATHER,

The Rector of the town of Limpías, in the diocese of

Santander, prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, begs humbly for the grant of a Plenary Indulgence, which may be gained by all the faithful at will, on four days in the year, if they visit the above-mentioned church and the sacred Figure of the Crucified One there, and say before it the prescribed prayers for the intentions of the Pope.

(Signed) D. EDUARDO MIQUELI.

ROME,
July 19, 1921.

The Holy Penitentiary Apostolic readily meets this request, and grants this favour for seven years. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

(Signed) B, COLOMBO, S. P. Reg.

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VUL

THE WONDERFUL CRUCIFIX
OF LIMPIAS

THE TOWN OF LIMPIAS AND ITS PARISH CHURCH.

THE little town of Limpias lies in the eastern part of the province of Santander, in the district of Laredo, and counts to-day about 1,300 inhabitants. It does not consist of connected streets and houses, as do the newer townships in the neighbourhood, but is composed of fifteen groups of houses, which are placed at varying distances from one another, with meadows and gardens between them. Fine, venerable-looking old buildings everywhere strike the eye of the visitor, as well as large modern country-houses that testify to the prosperity of the inhabitants and lend a pleasing and attractive appearance to the whole place. A fine belt of white houses in the newer part of the town is specially noticeable, by the side of a rivulet called the Limpias. To the north-east lies the beautiful wooded Otero hill; on its summit rises a square tower, with a famous clock, now unfortunately damaged by lightning, the chimes of which used to be heard for many miles round, as far as the neighbouring villages of Ampuero, Colindres, and Treto.

Limpias owes its prosperity and its beauty to its favourable position at the mouth of the River Ason, in the Bay of Biscay, but also to the diligence of its inhabitants, whose chief pursuits are agriculture, commerce, and various industries. Commerce in Limpias nowadays does not by any means attain the proportions mentioned in reports of bygone days. For instance, in the year 1831, 10,324 bushels of corn, and in 1845 no less than 52,000 bushels of maize-meal, were exported to England. Its excellent wines were also much liked in America.

From the beginning the inhabitants valued order, good breeding, and cleanliness highly, that they might be worthy of the beautiful name of their little town for Limpias means " The Pure/ The

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2 THE WONDERFUL CRUCIFIX OF LIMPIAS

archives of Limpias record many details which are still of importance in reviewing the population of the place. The old official lists of the parish committee show that from the earliest times it considered the welfare of the people as well as the care of the streets and public pleasure-grounds, and with very good results* The regulations for the maintenance of order and cleanliness entered into the minutest details. There were even rules for the erection of hen-houses, which might not be constructed on public squares or roadways; for the bringing up of children, the care of the sick, the treatment of animals; for the cleansing and repairing of roads, and so on. Every seven years a census had to be taken of the people in the place, in order to record who had left Limpias in the

meantime, or who had got married, " so that in the future particulars may be given about each one, and so that he may be remembered." Anyone who came to settle in Limpias had to prove, within six months, that he was of good and gentle birth, otherwise he had to leave the town again. Even anyone who completely fulfilled these conditions could only be admitted to public offices after having lived peaceably and honestly in Limpias for ten years. Whoever accepted such an office had to swear solemnly " to deal justly, and to carry out the duties of his position in a calm, disinterested, upright, and impartial manner."

Smuggling and the importation of contraband goods, to which the proximity of the ports of Laredo and Santona were a great inducement, were punished with incredible severity; anyone who could be proved guilty of such an offence was banished from the place for good. The rate of pay for public work was definitely fixed, both for the men and the women. One can well say that a Christian Socialism prevailed in Limpias, under the practical application of which the place flourished.

Although these regulations are naturally no longer observed as closely as they were formerly, nevertheless to this day the people of the place still feel the influence of the old spirit; so that the Social Democrats in that neighbourhood have not found nearly so many adherents as in other parts of the Iberian peninsula.

Since September, 1912, Limpias possesses a fine, roomy school-building, which satisfies all the modern requirements of hygiene, and even places hot and cold baths at the disposal of the children. A girls high-school, which, together with the boarding-school attached to it, was taken over by the " Daughters of the Cross " in the year 1861, is attended by about sixty pupils. In this estab-

LIMPIAS AND ITS PARISH CHURCH 3

lishment, which is also connected with an infant-school, twelve Sisters are teaching at the present time.

Limpias is renowned far and wide chiefly on account of the college of the Fathers of St. Vincent de Paul, who began their educational and teaching activities in 1893, and since then have also been much blessed in their work for the care of souls. The large, new building with its wide corridors and airy rooms, with its extensive gardens and playgrounds, lies in the centre of the town, on the fine Rucoba hill. Its mineralogical museum is remarkable, and so too are the collections of antiques, which have been splendidly arranged and equipped by the learned and indefatigable Fr. Sierra. The college enjoys the very best repute, and is closely connected with the technical and commercial schools of Santander.

In this Rucoba quarter of the town, the highest part of Limpias, lies also the large, old parish church, which, according to various opinions, was built in the fifteenth century. Fr. Thomas Echevarria concludes, however, from the general arrangement and style of the church, that it can only have been built first in the middle of the sixteenth century, especially as the oldest records of the parish archives do not go back farther than the year 1580. The church is surrounded by a broad square, planted with trees, and now occupied by numerous booths in which refreshments and devotional objects are sold very cheaply. The exterior of the church does not present any particular style ; it gives one the impression of an old, poverty-stricken place of worship. The stones, blackened in the course of centuries, the strong walls and pillars, overgrown with dried-up ivy, lend to the venerable pile a mysterious, alluring poesy which is enhanced by the quiet of the place and the soft background of the green heights.

The facade with the main door was only recently restored through out by the present parish priest, and makes a pleasing impression. In a niche over the entrance there is a seated figure of the holy Apostle Peter, to whom the church is dedicated. On either side stand figures of the holy martyrs Hemeterio and Celedonio. The interior of the church is built in Gothic style of the earliest Decorated period. The columns, arches, and side partitions are of stone, but unfortunately, like the rest of the interior, they have lost their former beauty under repeated layers of paint. Over the high

altar in the apse, under a canopy, stands a huge group of the Crucifixion, with the Cristo de la Agonia, now so renowned, which is to

4 THE WONDERFUL CRUCIFIX OF LIMPIAS

be described more particularly farther on* The high altar was originally of a different shape and was ornamented by a figure of St. Peter. When the Crucifixion group was to be erected in place of it the altar had to be suitably reconstructed; the figure of St. Peter was removed and the statue of the Prince of the Apostles, already mentioned, was put up over the main portal instead.

Besides the high altar there are, in the lower part of the church, nine other altars, of which four new ones are erected against the columns and the remaining ones by the walls. Near the entrance, on the Epistle side, one sees first of all an old altar, with an artistic carved crucifix, which is older than the Cristo de la Agonia at the high altar. Facing it, on the other side, stands an altar dedicated to the Queen of the Rosary. In front, near the pulpit, there are two chapels, the one, on the Epistle side, being consecrated to the holy Apostle James, and the other, on the Gospel side, to St. Jerome. Both chapels are adorned with magnificent sarcophagi of Carrara marble, with fine chiselled figures and coats of arms of distinguished nobles. Then, also, against the partition stands the altar of St. Nicholas of Bari. In the middle aisle, in the forepart of the chancel, one altar, on the Gospel side, is consecrated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the other, on the Epistle side, to the Immaculate Conception; against the two other columns in front of these stand the altars of St. Joseph and St. Isidore.

On entering the church the eye is at once attracted by a beautiful large canopy, under which the bitter sufferings and Death of Our Saviour are represented in statues; during Holy Week it serves for the erection of the Altar of Repose. The visitor's attention is also drawn to a large picture on the wall of the left nave, representing the Descent from the Cross, which was given by D. Diego de la Piedra in the year 1768.

The organ is quite new, and was first inaugurated on September 17, 1918.

The spacious old sacristy gives one the impression of something venerable. It is scantily lighted, as daylight can only come in through one narrow window. The furniture dates back to the earliest times of the church. Special mention must be made of an old table, which is said to have been used by Charles V. in October, 1556, during his stay in Limpias. Besides this there stands in the sacristy an altar with a picture of the Descent from the Cross, which dates from 1483, and in any case was brought there from another chapel.

THE CROSS WITH CHRIST

THE CROSS WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH-AGONY.

It goes without saying that our attention is chiefly claimed by the wonderful crucifix which is fastened to the wall above the Tabernacle. Under a broad canopy of red velvet, trimmed with gold lace, the great cross rises to a majestic height of nearly 8 feet. The light-brown coloured body, which is 6 feet high, shows some anatomical errors of proportion, particularly in the trunk and extremities, but the artist has, however, represented the neck and head in a masterly manner. The face, above all, is an excellent work of art, which moves the devout spectator to reverence. In the dying eyes and the impressive features the first shadows of death are seen struggling with the last expressions of human life. The breast heaves with a supreme effort to draw its last breath. After Our Lord had spoken His last words on the Cross, He gazed longingly up to Heaven, quite lost in the contemplation of God the Father. The pupils of the eyes, which are made of china according to the Spanish custom, are for that reason turned upwards, so that, for the most part, only the whites of the eyes are visible. The lower lip droops somewhat and has a bluish appearance, which

serves still more to deepen the impression that the sacred mouth is about to breathe out its last sigh. The index and middle fingers of the hands are stretched out as if to give a blessing, while the remaining fingers are painfully contracted round the heads of the nails. On either side, also larger than life-size, stand the Sorrowing Mother of God and the beloved disciple John.

Everyone who gazes at this impressive group, especially now after the sensational manifestations of this Christus, naturally asks who was the artist that carved the figure. Unfortunately, there is no authentic information to be obtained as to the origin and history of the cross. Tradition has it that in the sixteenth century this crucifix was venerated in the private chapel of Count San Isidro, in Cadiz. Once, when a storm-flood threatened to destroy the town, it was carried in a procession, whereupon the waters immediately receded. On account of this miracle the Cathedral Chapter expressed the wish that the crucifix should no longer remain in that lonely oratory, but should be set up somewhere for public veneration. Count San Isidro, who was a native of Limpias, thereupon presented the cross to the church of his birthplace, in order to give special pleasure to his fellow-countrymen.

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After laborious researches in various archives, the Spanish scholar Florencio Amador Carrandi has now asserted that it was not Count San Isidro who presented the crucifix to the church of Limpias, but a relation of his, Don Diego de la Piedra Secadura, born in this beautiful little town in the year 1716.

The inundation of Cadiz is proved to be an historical fact by a marble tablet put in the Caleta quarter of the town, with an inscription in verse which says that on November 1, 1755, "the earth was shaken by a violent earthquake. When the storm-tossed waves rose up against the walls of Cadiz they were a foretaste of the last judgment of mortal men, amid abject terror and all kinds of calamities/ A further document states that D. Diego de la Secadura was living in Cadiz when his cousin D. Jeronimo de Angulo Dehesa, Count of San Isidro, died in Lima, in 1771, the latter being a native of Limpias and residing in the capital of Peru.

As already mentioned, there is still to this day, in the left-hand nave of the parish church of Limpias, a large picture of the Descent from the Cross, which was given by D. Diego de la Piedra in 1768. It hangs on nails the heads of which are ornamented with shells. D. Diego was a member of the military Order of St. James, a reminiscence of which is the red cross of Santiago in his ancient house in Limpias, which stands opposite the college of the Pauline Fathers. As such he had a great devotion to this holy Apostle, who, as is well known, is recognisable from the shells on his cloak. In many places where St. James is specially honoured one finds houses, doors, furniture, and so forth, decorated with shells in symbolical memory of the holy Apostle. For instance, in Sala manca there is a house called "Conchas/ which means "shell-house," for the front of it is ornamented from top to bottom with innumerable mussel-shells.

The crucifix of Limpias is also held up by nails the heads of which are covered with shells, in the same way as the above-mentioned picture in the left aisle of the parish church, and this fact justifies the conclusion that this Christ of Limpias was presented by D. Diego de la Piedra, the devout knight of Santiago. Further proof of this is also to be found in the wording of a papal document of the year 1776, beginning with the following words: "Enumeration of the privileges conferred for all time by our Holy Father Pope Pius VI., present reigning Pontiff, upon the parish church of St. Peter, in Limpias, under the jurisdiction of the noble and trusty governor of Biscay, at the request of D. Diego de la Piedra, by

THE CROSS WITH CHRIST 7

profession Knight of the Royal Military Order of St. James, and a citizen of the town of Cadiz/

The altar to which these privileges are attached can be no other

than the high altar upon which the cross of the Cristo de la Agonia is placed; in style also it quite corresponds to the time when this crucifix was brought to Limpias. We come therefore to the following sequence of dates: The inundation of Cadiz was in the year 1755; the above-mentioned instruction of the Cathedral Chapter was carried out in 1768; the same date is also given on the picture hung in the left nave of the church in Limpias, and the privileges were granted when the high altar was finished i.e., in 1776.

The group of the Crucifixion was certainly not first erected at the instigation of D. Diego de la Piedra; it is considerably older. At all events, it originated in the convent of the Discalced Carmelites in Cadiz, which was already disorganised before the inundation, while its pictures passed into the possession of private persons. Thus our crucifix must next have come into the oratory of D. Diego, from whence it was presented to Limpias later on.

The style of the whole group corresponds to the conception of the realistic Spanish school, though in it the distinguishing characteristics of great mental excitement with which one usually seeks to arrest and stir up the attention of the populace are not prominent. The Christ of Limpias is carried out on rather gentle lines which are intended less to stimulate the senses than the mind.

The crucifix has been ascribed by some to the artist Berruguete; many have thought it was by Montanes. But the works of these two bear quite a different character; they represent the Saviour on their crucifixes as already dead as, for example, in the "Expiation" in Seville; also with the feet crossed, outstretched hands, and the loin-cloth tucked in. On the crucifix of Limpias the hands are shown as in the act of giving a blessing, the feet are laid one upon the other, and the loin-cloth is held in place by a cord. The shape of the limbs and of the whole body can give no determinative elucidation as to the artist, for the carving of those parts is of less value than that of the head, hands, and feet. On the contrary, one must admit that perhaps the latter were carved by the artist himself, whereas the rest of the body was done by a pupil of a great master, as often happened.

It has also been thought that Pedro Roldan and his daughter Luise were the artists, as their works bear some resemblance to the Christ of Limpias, especially as regards delicacy of form; besides

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that, Roldan also did work in Cadiz, where, among others of his carvings, the one of the patron saints Servando and German is preserved. Notwithstanding, all the characteristics of the Cristo de la Agonia and of both the other figures, of the Blessed Virgin and St. John, which are carried out in the same style, point to their coming from the hand of the artist Pedro de Mena (t 1693). The sobriety of the whole conception and the vigour, which are the distinguishing features of his work in individual figures, also stand out as characteristic qualities in the said group at Limpias. Above all there is the great resemblance between this Christ and the one in the parish church of St. Andrew in Madrid. On comparing the two figures there can be no doubt as to their being by the same artist.

THE WONDERFUL MANIFESTATIONS OF MARCH 30, 1919.

As, during the course of the last ten years, the greater part of the population of Limpias had settled along the river's bank, the distance from the parish church was too great for most of the faithful. They preferred to attend the church of the Pauline Fathers and one other chapel in the centre of the town. Besides this, unfortunately, not a few had already grown cold in their faith, so that they neither attended divine service nor received the Sacraments. For a long time past the priest and his sister, the altar server, and a few neighbours from the remote part of the town, had been the only frequenters of the parish church. Even the devotion to the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, formerly so zealously kept up, had gradually fallen into oblivion, so that the venerable old church became more and more forsaken. For the aged, ailing priest this was naturally very painful. Over and over again he had thought of closing the church altogether, and of asking the Bishop

to raise the aforesaid chapel in the centre of the little town to the dignity of parish church. On the other hand, it grieved him to deprive the old church of its dignity, for it had formerly been a collegiate church with a large number of clergy, as the stalls in the choir showed.

So he decided to try once more by means of a mission to arouse affection for the venerable parish church, and to make the frequenting of it a possibility again. For this reason he applied to the Capuchin monastery at Montehano, near Santander, which willingly

WONDERFUL MANIFESTATIONS 9

placed at his disposal for this purpose the two Friars Anselmo de Jalon and Agatangelo de San Miguel, who are known far and wide on account of their apostolic zeal and great success as missionaries, and who take the hearts of the people by storm everywhere they go. Fr. Agatangelo has besides a reputation for great piety, for he is a man of prayer and an eminent spiritual director, whose advice is sought even from the most distant parts of Spain.

When Fr. Jalon had begun the mission in Limpias, on March 22, he noticed, on the very first day, that the great chandelier in the middle aisle of the church hung down so low that it prevented the faithful from getting a clear view of the pulpit. He therefore asked the priest in charge to have the lustre hung somewhat higher, but the latter would not at first consent, as the help of several men would be required to do it, and consequently great expense would be incurred.

However, the parish priest finally gave in to the repeated urging of the monk. When the workmen called together got on to the roof of the church, they saw with horror that the beam to which the pulley of the heavy chandelier was fastened had given way considerably. The beam had very nearly broken in the centre. A grave catastrophe might have ensued if the chandelier had fallen during the sermons of the crowded mission, particularly as the greatest danger lay in the fact that through the breaking of the beam a large part of the arched roof would have been torn down with it. Fortunately, the work could be executed quickly enough for the mission to be carried on unhindered. Naturally this occurrence did not remain a secret. Universal thanks were given to the Capuchin Father, and above all to Almighty God, for their preservation from such a serious accident.

There was soon a fresh surprise. On the fifth day of the mission some boys were playing in the square in front of the church when suddenly, as the bells were ringing, the clapper of one of them became loosened and fell down from the tower at the feet of one of the boys. The child escaped being killed by a matter of about five or six inches. These two events heightened the impression made by the mission sermons, so that it is quite comprehensible that almost the entire population of Limpias was deeply affected and received the holy Sacraments. The missionaries themselves acknowledged that they had never held such a fruitful mission.

On Sunday morning, March 30, both priests were still zealously occupied in the confessional, while the Archpriest D. Eduardo

io THE WONDERFUL CRUCIFIX OF LIMPIAS

Miqueli was celebrating Mass, during which, to the greatest edification of the whole congregation, a large number of men received Holy Communion, Very many of them had not frequented the Sacraments for years. At the end of the elevating service Fr Agatangelo entered the pulpit, towards half-past eight, in order to say a few words of acknowledgment to the assembled people, who filled the church to the very last place, for their zealous co-operation in the mission, and to thank Almighty God for these days so full of grace.

In simple words that appealed to the heart the monk made a eucharistic exhortation in which he took as his subject the text: " My son, give me thy heart " (Prov. xxiii. 26). During this sermon a little girl, of about twelve years of age, went into the

confessional of Fr. Jalon in the chancel, and said to him timidly but decidedly: " Father Jalon ! Father Jalon ! do look, the Christ has His eyes shut !" The priest naturally took no notice of the child's words, for he thought her importunate and afflicted with too lively an imagination ; but sent her back to her place and ordered her to be quiet. Immediately afterwards other children came and, in great excitement, confirmed the statement of the little girl, at the same time adding that they could swear to it before the Bishop and the Pope. In the church everyone was listening to the words of the preacher; until then nobody else had noticed anything unusual about the crucifix. As Fr. Agatangelo, who had seen the passing to and fro of the children, was about to return to his confessional after the address, Fr. Jalon communicated to him their singular assertions, whereupon both went up to the cross, but could not perceive anything extraordinary. Presently a man in the crowd shouted out the marvel, which was at once confirmed by many other men and women, who saw the same thing as the little girl. In a few moments a great excitement had taken possession of the people. Fr. Jalon tried to calm them by making them comprehend the far-reaching significance of their assertions. " We saw it, we saw it ! We are ready to swear to it," they cried out to him in answer. The tumult became greater and greater. The simple country-folk began to weep, threw themselves on their knees, implored God to pardon their sins, and called out, " Pardon, O Lord !" " Mercy, my God I" and other ejaculatory prayers.

Fr. Jalon asked Fr. Agatangelo to say the " Estacion " (five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys) before the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and this the latter immediately began to do. However,

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he could only manage to say the first Hail Mary, for emotion stifled his voice. The parish priest was still in the sacristy all this time he was called without delay. He arrived in haste, heard briefly what had happened, threw himself down on his knees in the sanctuary, and began to pray aloud. He could not long control himself either, but suddenly had to stop praying. Some of the people declared that the Crucified One was perspiring, and in order to confirm this they asked Fr. Jalon to climb up to the crucifix. He tried to refuse on the pretext that there was no ladder handy. One was brought at once, so that there was nothing left for him to do but mount it. As he stood aloft, he was himself so struck with awe that he did not dare to touch the body. Fr. Agatangelo encouraged him, however, with the words : " You are in closer contact with Our Divine Lord every morning !" whereupon he touched the neck with the tips of his fingers. To his very great amazement he saw that the body was actually covered with sweat. In corroboration of the statements of the people he showed his fingers, which were still wet from touching it. Tremendous excitement and exaltation thrilled all present. Men and women cried out in their agitation; many wept with emotion over this extraordinary occurrence. It was a long time before the crowd quieted itself. Gradually the people left the church and related in the streets and houses of Limpias, with fear and wonder, all that they had seen.

Neither of the Fathers had noticed any movements of the eyes that day. It was only a long time afterwards that this grace was granted several times to Fr. Agatangelo, when he stayed alone to pray in the locked church at night. He has told Fr. Echevarria, the author of the book " Los prodigios de Limpias/ what he saw then, but only on condition that he would make no use of it for purposes of publicity. On April 2, 1919, the Archpriest D. Eduardo sent the Bishop of Santander the following report of these remarkable events, which appeared in the Boletin Eclesiastico of the diocese of Santander:

44 After the general communion on the last day of the mission I was putting up in the sacristy a list of the men who had fulfilled their Easter duties, when one of the Capuchin Fathers informed me that several children, women, and men, and not exactly the most devout, asserted that the Santo Cristo de la Agonia was opening and closing His eyes, turning His gaze from side to side, and was bathed in perspiration on the neck and breast all of which was

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making a deep impression on the people. This incident in itself is really extraordinary, and is rendered still more so by the consideration that it happened on the last day of a mission, the immediate results of which could not have been more brilliant. For not only the willing parishioners, but nearly all those who otherwise neglected the performance of their religious duties, were favoured with the divine graces. In this little town of 1,300 inhabitants, only five did not make their Easter duties. I hope that Our Lord will also convert these as well.

41 When I went back into the church the astounding event was already over, but men of all classes swore that they had seen it and even declared themselves ready to swear to it before the Sacred Host. I consider it my duty to inform Your Grace of all this. I inaugurated at once, with the recitation of the rosary, a seven days devotion in commemoration of the seven Words of Christ on the Cross, and shall each day give an address on one of them. Yesterday evening I explained the first Word of Christ, and had the pleasure of seeing that many devout listeners of all classes, gentlemen, ladies, and working men, attended the service. I have not expressed any further opinion as to the miracle, but have, however, not denied it, having only said that we must pray humbly so that Our Lord may enlighten us. Even if the wonderful event should have no other sequel, the consideration of the Words of Christ on the Cross would further feed the fire of love that was kindled in everyone through the holy mission. I believe the 4 Saint/ as Fr. Agatangelo is called, must have known something of it, for when a pious lady questioned him about the narratives of the people he answered: Something wonderful has happened here/ and he remained every day for hours kneeling before the holy Figure/

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With the rapidity of the wind the news of the wonderful manifestations of the Christ at Limpias, observed on the 30th of March, spread over the countryside. Little by little, great crowds came from the adjacent towns, brought to Limpias, of course, above all by curiosity. Many also doubted the reality of the apparitions and shook their heads incredulously over the attitude of those who, with the firmest conviction and religious fervour, described their observations of the crucifix. They did not suspect that the apparitions would be repeated and observed by so many folk, so frequently and in so many different ways.

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tions would be repeated and observed by so many folk, so frequently and in so many different ways.

The second apparition took place in the evening of Palm Sunday, on April 13th, 1919. There was only one woman in the church, who was busied with the decoration of an altar. Two gentlemen entered the church, of whom one was a highly cultured man of Limpias and the other a merchant from Ampuero. Both wanted to examine the matter thoroughly once and for all, for they considered that it was folly to believe in it. They went right up to the steps of the altar, gazed up at the crucifix, and spoke of hallucinations, delusions, and suggestion. Suddenly, startled, the merchant pointed and said to his companion that the eyes of the Christ were really moving. Without doubt this must have been the case, for the next moment the other man also fell on his knees with the greatest inward agitation, and called out in a loud voice : " My Jesus, mercy ! Do not punish me ! I did not believe but now I believe."

The third apparition occurred on Easter Sunday, the 20th of April, 1919, according to many of the inhabitants of Limpias. On the 30th of April the nuns known as the Daughters of the Cross, who conduct a girls school in Limpias, saw the movement of the eyes and lips of the Santo Cristo, after the devotions of the Rosary and catechism instruction, with many of their pupils and several men and women from the town. Several persons, among them the Coadjutors, informed the parish priest about it forthwith, in order to hear his opinion as to what could be the object of these apparitions. In the afternoon a few people saw the same miracle again, of which an eye-witness gives particulars in the periodical

called Paginas Dominicales of May aoth, 1919. Everywhere people were asking what was to be thought of these mysterious wonders, without, however, obtaining a satisfactory answer to the question. " We do not know either," added the editor of the magazine, " and we can give no opinion on the Divine Plans. Perhaps they are to announce some grave event; perhaps they are to be understood as a call of grace for the conversion of sinners, or as a reward for some good work. Who can tell ? Everything that one says about it is presumptuous and uncertain. Only one thing is clear, that the miracle of Limpias is an extraordinary revelation of the mercy of God and a fresh proof of the truth of the Catholic faith, just as much as other miracles that take place elsewhere, and which no one can reasonably deny, as, for example, the well-known miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples."

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It need hardly be said that after such events the inhabitants of Limpias and the neighbouring towns came more often to church in order to watch for further apparitions. The manifestations of Our Lord were repeated from the 24th of April almost daily, and in many totally different ways. Many said that the Saviour looked at them; at some in a kindly manner, and at others gravely, and at yet others with a penetrating and stern glance. Many of them saw tears in His eyes; others noticed that drops of blood ran down from the temples pierced by the crown of thorns; some saw froth on His lips and sweat on His body ; others again saw how He turned His eyes from side to side, and let His gaze pass over the whole assembly of people; or how, at the Benediction, He made a movement of the eyes as if giving the blessing; how at the same time He moved the thorn-crowned head from one side to the other. Others had the impression that a deep, submissive sigh was wrested from His breast, some believed they saw Him whisper in short, the most varied manifestations were observed on this crucifix.

The first public procession made to the Santo Cristo de la Agonia was held on Good Friday, the 18th of April, 1919, starting from the neighbouring town of Colindres, and in which the clergy and local authorities of that place took part. In Limpias the procession was solemnly received by the mayor, D. Augustino Rocamora, many members of the municipal council, and other important inhabitants of the town, and conducted to the parish church, where, after devotions in honour of the seven Words of Jesus on the Cross, Father Guardian, the Capuchin monk from Basarto (Biscay), preached a sermon, followed by a rendering of the impressive " Miserere " of Eslava, by the combined choirs of the churches of Limpias and of St. Vincent.

The second procession came from the episcopal town of Santander, on May the 4th, organised by a special diocesan committee. Over 1,500 people had notified their wish to take part in the pilgrimage, and were conveyed to Limpias in two special trains. To the sound of enthusiastic shouts of " All hail to the Cristo de la Agonia," and the pealing of all the church bells, the first train left the town of Santander. All the way, in every single township, it was greeted with jubilation. The nearer they drew to Limpias, the greater became the exaltation of the pilgrims. To the accompaniment of much rocket-firing and the acclamation of a huge crowd, " God speed the first procession of Santander," the train entered the station, where the pilgrims were solemnly welcomed

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by the Mayor of Limpias. Twenty minutes later the second train was received in the same way, bringing in it, from Santander to Limpias, chiefly the representatives of the various convents and the press. At the entrance to the town a grand triumphal arch was erected, by which the clergy of the town, under the leadership of the venerable Archpriest Don Eduardo Miqueli, awaited the pilgrims. Dozens of rockets soared into the air. To the sound of the bells of the parish church and of the several chapels of Limpias, the procession passed through the festively decorated streets of the town, joyfully greeted by a large number of people who formed a lane on either side.

After the entry into the parish church, the Rosary was said first of all, then followed a sermon, and the Estacion, during which several hymns were sung. At six o'clock in the afternoon the Way of the Cross was made, after which the pilgrims left the church. Many, however, remained in the church longer, in order to pray in devout contemplation before the sacred Figure. Suddenly, from the mouths of children and grown-ups, came the cry: " Now ! now ! " It was a moment of indescribable excitement for everyone, especially for those who had cried out, and in whose faces one could distinctly recognise a change. A priest, a lawyer, and other gentle men, as well as several ladies, affirmed that they saw the miracle. The excitement became greater and greater, until the leader of the procession, the much-esteemed priest, D. Jacinto Iglesias, com manded quiet, and declared that he had seen nothing. After the people had calmed down a little, this same priest proposed some points for consideration by which he was able to completely still the outward excitement of the people. Then they congratulated the favoured persons, in whom one could still perceive unmis takably the deep impression that the miracle had made on them. Already in the morning, before the meeting of the pilgrims, several other people had observed the wonder. The number of the eye witnesses, whose testimonies are worthy of credence, ran up to about twenty. They had clearly seen the movement of the eyes and the change of the countenance.

On the 5th of May, 1919, the newspaper La Gazeta del Norte published, in Bilbao, the following letter of a gentleman very well known there, D. Adolfo Arenaza, who was a witness of the miracle during that same pilgrimage:

44 Yesterday I was also in Limpias, in order to visit the crucifix on which so many people maintain that they have seen the miracle*

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After I had heard High Mass, I left the church convinced that those so-called miracles had obviously only taken place in the imagination of a few deluded persons; for, of the large number of people present at High Mass, not a single one had seen anything extraordinary.

44 It was about three o'clock when, at the urgent request of a few people who wished to see the crucifix, the priest in charge opened the church for a short time, for he had had it closed so as not to let anyone enter before the pilgrims from Santander. I went into the church too, and at once looked through my field-glasses at the Santo Cristo, and noticed the movement of His eyes which I took to be an illusion on my part, without troubling any further. But immediately afterwards other persons also saw the same thing. I looked away from the crucifix for a short time, glanced from one side of the church to the other, and then again at the crucifix, and three times the movement of the eyes was repeated. Could it be hallucination ? I think not. Still, it is very remarkable that among the many who assisted at Mass there was not a single person thus hallucinated, whereas now, of the few of us who were in the church, several perceived the miracle. It could not be an effect of the light either, for otherwise everyone would have seen it, and that was not so. Some saw it, others did not. Also one would not have been able to see the phenomenon from all parts of the church building, as was actually the case. Does Our Lord really move His eyes ? I do not share the opinion expressed by a gentleman in reply to my question in the course of conversation: * I saw the Christ move His eyes several times, but as a matter of fact He did not move them at all/ I am rather of opinion that He really does move them, for I have seen it myself/

Besides the signature of D. Adolfo Arenaza this document contains various other names, above all those of people of Limpias itself, who were also witnesses of the miracle. They added the following explanation : " As inhabitants of Limpias we were afraid at first that our testimony of the manifestations received might be considered partial. In view of the courageous statement made by D. Adolfo Arenaza, however, we consider it our duty, not only to pay tribute to this public declaration by our recognition of it, but also to corroborate it with our evidence, for everyone of us has observed the movement of the eyes of the Santo Cristo in the parish church of Limpias, on different days and from different positions.

Many of us have seen it more than once, and for us there exists

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no doubt as to the reality of these movements* Some of us who undersign this letter have even made an affidavit, after having tried to deny the extraordinary facts in the beginning. With D. Adolf o Arenaza we are convinced that the Christ of Limpías moves His eyes, because we have seen the movement/

A few days passed, and then more pilgrimages were made, from Carargo, Bilbao, and the more distant parts of the surrounding country, and brought hundreds, even thousands of people to Limpías. In many newspapers and periodicals detailed accounts of the wonderful crucifix appeared, and descriptions by those who had seen the apparitions, so that in a few weeks the Santo Cristo de la Agonia of Limpías was being talked about in the whole of Spain. The processions increased in number daily, and continue uninterrupted up to the present time. According to the reports of the Archpriest D. Eduardo Miqueli, about 3,000 to 4,000 persons appear daily in Limpías, and forty to fifty automobiles bring pilgrims from all parts of Spain, and even from Paris, Bayonne, and Biarritz. Pilgrims to Lourdes now like to combine their visit to the famous site of the apparition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary with a journey to Limpías. Up to the middle of November, 1919, sixty-six pilgrim trains brought on an average 1,000 pilgrims each to Limpías, the church being visited during the first year by about 110,000 persons, of whom many at any rate came as tourists and out of curiosity. In the second year about the same number of people came to the place, only with this difference, that the number of devout pilgrims among them increased considerably. Between the 26th and 30th of October, 1920, two foreign bands of pilgrims had already arrived in Limpías, one from America, under the leadership of the Bishop of Toledo, Joseph Schrembs, the other from Holland. It is true there were only about thirty persons in each one, but these announced that considerably larger pilgrimages were being organised for the next year. They asserted that interest in the occurrences at Limpías and the veneration of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia increased daily in their own country. They left Limpías highly satisfied, declaring that they were well rewarded for the sacrifice that the long journey had entailed. In the year 1921 the number of pilgrims increased to such an extent that foreign traffic in Limpías is already greater than in Lourdes. Since March 30th, 1919, well over 175 large troops of pilgrims have come to Limpías, and in its parish church, up to July, 1921, 131,000 Holy Communion were administered, and 26,000 Holy Masses were

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said. Two pilgrimages have already taken place from Holland, and during the second, in which twenty-four persons took part, sixteen of them saw the apparitions. Many people come from the United States of North America, from Mexico, Columbia, and the Argentine Republic, in order to visit the wonderful crucifix. Especially in July and August the number of pilgrims was unusually great. In one day 140 motor-cars were counted. The road from Santander to Limpías has assumed the appearance of an international trade route. The railway traffic has also increased extraordinarily, so much so that the staff on the trains has had to be considerably augmented. Whereas formerly at the ticket-office in Limpías 40 to 50 pesetas at most were taken in a day, now the daily receipts fluctuate between 1,500 and 12,000 pesetas (a peseta = about Q\$d.). There is to-day a constant service of vehicles from the station to the church. Even in the winter months there is no lack of visitors to this favoured spot; though, of course, their numbers are wont to fall considerably owing to unfavourable weather conditions, in comparison with the crowds of pilgrims that come in the warmer seasons. This fact also explains why the number

of eye-witnesses decreases in the winter, especially as the grace of vision is not by any means granted to all.

Very many members of the Spanish nobility, even King Alphonso XIII. and Queen Victoria Eugenie, with the young princes Don Carlos and Don Ferdinand, visited the hitherto completely unnoticed and rather poor church of Limpias. This year the King's sons have already sought out the pilgrimage town three times. Even the episcopacy, which, as always in the case of such extraordinary events, at first observed the greatest reticence, had finally to yield to the general agitation, which had arisen in Spain, through the miracles of Limpias. Up to October, 1921, the following dignitaries of the Church in Spain had appeared: the Cardinal Archbishop of Seville, the Archbishops of Valencia, Lima, Granada, and Valladolid, and seventeen Bishops from various other towns. From abroad there came to Limpias the Archbishops of Puebla de los Angeles (Mexico), Lima (Peru), and Manila, and the Bishops of Pinar del Rio (Cuba), Leon, Guayaquil, Riobamba, and Loja (Ecuador), Tonkin (French Indo-China), of the Marianne Islands and Oceania.

In the sacristy of the church of Limpias several albums were laid out one after the other, which already contain well over 8,000 testimonies of people of all classes, who have seen the wonderful

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apparitions. Of these, 2,500 were sworn on oath. It must at the same time be taken into consideration that only about a tenth of the total number of eye-witnesses give a written evidence. Many have found their way back to Almighty God in Limpias. Among these witnesses, who either made a sworn deposition at once, or declared themselves ready at any time, if the authorities should demand it, to support their testimony by an oath, there are many priests and members of religious orders, doctors, lawyers, professors, governors of universities, officers, merchants, and so on. There are 13 doctors who have either recorded their observations in detail in these albums or in newspapers and periodicals; also 5 lawyers, 3 officers, 4 professors and literary men, 2 engineers, and many others of various professions.

One result of the apparitions was that early during the first months after March the 30th, 1919, a confraternity in honour of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia was founded in Limpias, which has already been joined by a large number of members. Also in other towns in Spain similar guilds have originated, which set themselves the task of encouraging and spreading devotion to the bitter sufferings and Death of Our Blessed Lord, and especially the Way of the Cross. The Archpriest D. Eduardo Miqueli has composed meditations for a novena and a triduum in honour of the Santo Cristo, which on account of their appealing contents are already circulated in large numbers.

The Diario Montañes gives notice on the 15th of April, 1921, of one such confraternity, which was canonically inaugurated in the Church of the Holy Cross in Valladolid, and which has already done very good service for the uplifting of the religious life of the town and its environs. The Bishop of Coria, D. Pedro Segura, was also untiringly active in this respect. It is at his instigation that the solemn processions with the Cross pass along various thoroughfares of the capital from the Church of the Holy Cross. These processions are held on the Fridays in Lent, from ten to eleven o'clock at night, and for the most part only men walk in them then. They are carried out with the greatest earnestness and piety, and so have been accorded the special recognition of the Archbishop of Valladolid, Monsignor Gandasegui. This ecclesiastical prince has himself taken part in several of them, and has also already conducted them personally.

The Diario Montañes of the 15th of April, 1921, gives the following account of one of them : " The procession left the church at 8 p.m.

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At the head walked two rows of youths with lanterns followed by

four rows of young women. These were joined by a large number of men, who belonged chiefly to the confraternity for Nocturnal Adoration; then came a band with a strong choir of children from several schools, and behind them a large number of boys and girls, who carried the Instruments of the Passion and a great Cross on a special stand. These were followed by a canon from the Cathedral who read the prayers, then the Archbishop and a large number of the clergy, and lastly the mayor, with the members of the Guild of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia of Limpias. With prayer and singing the procession went through the streets of the town, while the devotions of the fourteen stations of the Way of the Cross were recited. An enormous crowd of people lined the streets every where, the houses were hung with decorations, some were beautifully illuminated, and in several places Bengal fires were burned. The return of the procession to the Church of the Holy Cross was impressive, when an innumerable crowd sang the Salve Regina very devoutly in front of the church; undoubtedly one of the most solemn acts of the Holy Week of this year in Valladolid."

In America as well, especially in Mexico, devotion to the Santo Cristo of Limpias has already become widely practised. A picture of it is already exposed for public honour in several churches. The newspapers in Mexico quite frequently publish remarkable answers to prayer. Even in Japan Catholics have welcomed the news of the apparitions of the Santo Cristo of Limpias with grateful joy, and have already had large pictures of it sent from Limpias over and over again, in order to set them up in their churches for the veneration of the people.

It is no wonder that latterly the sworn enemies of the Church have also turned their attention to the movement that emanates from Limpias. " For this reason it has become necessary/ writes the Archpriest D. Eduardo Miqueli in his letter of July 18th, 1921, " that the church and the Cross of the Santo Cristo in Limpias should be guarded day and night, in order to prevent terrible sacrilege and other crimes ori^ which two congresses in Mexico and Italy were determined. The ungodly in general mock and deride our Christ, and to them are united, without knowing it, not a few who more nearly approach Him. So it was with the Saviour at the time of His sojourn on earth, and on that account I am not surprised that He should suffer the same thing to-day in His holy image."

DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF EYE-WITNESSES 21

DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF EYE-WITNESSES. The First Remarkable Manifestation.

A long time before this mission, so rich in grace, and the wonderful apparitions of the Christ in Limpias on the 30th of March, 1919, a monk of the college of the Pauline Fathers there, Don Antonio Lopez, had already made a noteworthy observation of the crucifix, under quite unusual circumstances. At the desire of his Superiors, however, he had kept his discovery secret from outsiders. It was only after the remarkable events of the 30th of March, 1919, that the Pauline Fathers were induced to relate the experiences of this member of their order to a wider circle. D. Teofilo Martinez Antiquedad had addressed to the above-mentioned father a request for an exact account, which the latter placed at his disposal on the 16th of March, 1920. It is worded as follows:

" One day in the month of August, 1914, I went into the parish church of Limpias, by order of my friend D Gregorio Bringas, to fix the electric light over the high altar. In order to be able to work more comfortably I put two large cases on the altar, and on them a ladder, the ends of which I leaned against the wall that serves as a background to the Figure of the Crucified One.

" After I had worked for two hours, in order to rest myself a little I began to clean the figure so that it could be seen more clearly. My head was on a level with the Head of the Christ, and at a distance of only a couple of feet from it. It was a lovely day, and through the window in the sanctuary a flood of light streamed into the church and lit up the whole altar. As I was gazing at the crucifix with the closest attention, I noticed with astonishment that Our

Lord's eyes were gradually closing, and for five minutes I saw them quite closed.

44 Overwhelmed with fright at such an unexpected spectacle, I could still hardly quite believe what I saw, and was about to come down from the ladder. Notwithstanding, my bewilderment was so great that my strength suddenly failed me; I lost my balance, fainted, and fell from the ladder on to the edge of the altar itself and down the steps into the sanctuary.

" After I had somewhat recovered, I was convinced from where I lay that the eyes of the figure on the crucifix were still closed, I pulled myself together hastily and went out in order to relate

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what had happened at home, and also to be medically examined, for my whole body was in great pain from the fall.

44 A few minutes after I had left the church I met the sacristan, who was just going to ring the Angelus, as it was twelve o'clock noon. When he saw me so agitated and covered with dust he asked if anything had happened to me. I told him what had occurred, whereupon he said he was not surprised, as he had already heard that the Santo Cristo had closed His eyes on one other occasion, and that it was probably brought about by the working of some interior mechanism.

44 I asked him to collect the tools together and to put away the ladder, and generally to tidy up everything again. Then when I reached the college I told the Fathers the whole of the above incident. I was examined, but no wounds were found on my body, and no broken bones, only a few bruises of slight importance.

44 Thinking that the movement I had observed in the eyes of the figure was to be attributed in any case to a mechanism, I attached no further importance to the vision, but tried, however, to find out on what occasion this fact had already been observed, but without success, as no one could give me any information whatsoever about the matter.

44 Since then I have often cleaned the crucifix, and at the same time examined it minutely, and am convinced that there is neither a spring nor any other mechanism on it. What is more, the eyes were so firmly fixed that even by pressing hard with one's fingers they could not be made to move in the least, nor could they be turned in any direction, as I have proved myself again and again."

Report of the Bishop of Pinar del Rio.

The Bishop of Pinar del Rio, in Cuba, Don Manuel Ruiz y Rodriguez, studied at the University in Washington, spent six years in active parochial work in New York, and has the reputation of being a learned theologian and eminent philosopher, whose writings are frequently compared with the works of Balmes. His pastoral letters, above all, are in universal favour. On account of his zeal for souls he has been given the sobriquet of " Missionary to the Greater Antilles/

On the return journey from his third visit to Rome this important prince of the Church stayed in Santander for a time, and went one day to Limpias, in order to pray before the wonderful crucifix.

DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF EYE-WITNESSES 23

At both his visits, made to the crucifix in the morning and afternoon of August 1919, he was also a witness of the miraculous apparitions. He was the first prelate to whom this grace was granted. After his return home he composed a detailed pastoral letter to the members of his diocese, in which he first of all gave an account of his visit to the Holy Father, that had given him much consolation and pleasure. Then he devoted a large part of his letter to the description of his experiences in Limpias. After rendering heartfelt thanks to Almighty God, who in His infinite love and mercy had led him to that favoured spot, he continues :

" Jesus Christ makes use of extraordinary means because we are living at an extraordinarily serious epoch. As He appeared in the world when His time was come, in order to save us, so He manifests Himself now in order to convert us. It is true He does not come in human form as then, to save us, for Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more (Rom. vi, 9). His Love is inventive so as to touch our hearts and call us to repentance and conversion. In wonderful, supernatural, divine ways He reveals Himself, if not to all, yet still to many. Although the life of the Church is wonderful in itself, yet we have by now become so accustomed to it that extraordinary marvels are necessary to awaken us out of the sleep of death into which we had fallen. That is what is happening at Limpias: an invention of Our Blessed Lord to call us back to God through miracles that are out of the common."

After the Bishop has given a detailed account of Limpias and the crucifix, he continues: " Since March of the present year (1919) the crucifix there has been particularly honoured because of the miracles that have been performed in many different ways. Some people have seen how the Eyes moved, how their gaze was turned now towards the onlookers and then again in other directions. Others have seen blood flowing down from the Face; others how the Mouth was opened and closed again, or how the Head moved; some have seen the Body bathed in sweat, the Breast rising and falling as it does with anyone who is dying, and at the same time blood flowed out of the Mouth. There are numbers of witnesses to these marvels from all classes of society : doctors, lawyers, priests, members of religious communities, officers, women, children, countryfolk, workmen, believers and unbelievers, even positive atheists. The quiet and recollection in which one prays in that church is not infrequently interrupted by a groan of repentance or the cry: I believe, Lord, I believe/ from the mouth of some

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hardened sinner, who falls in a faint on the ground. Up to to-day more than 70,000 persons have visited Limpias; but strange to say, while some keep their eyes steadfastly fixed on the crucifix and even watch it through field-glasses and yet see absolutely nothing, others perceive the most varied manifestations on the Sacred Figure. Fraud of any kind is here out of the question. The eyes are of porcelain and yet move; the mouth is of wood and opens and shuts; the head also is of wood and moves; the sweat cannot be explained, still less the blood which has been seen flowing down from the face and welling up out of the mouth. The rise and fall of the wooden chest is naturally not to be accounted for. If it were a work of evil, how should some see the Christ move His Head, and others not ? How should this one see the movement of the eyes, that one the opening and shutting of the mouth, others the rise and fall of the breast, and yet others the blood running out of the mouth, and all at the same time ?

" It was in Barcelona that I heard for the first time how people worthy of credence were speaking of the wonderful crucifix of Limpias. As I only learnt that from hearsay, however, I attached no further importance to it, as, with such visions, one must set to work with the greatest caution, lest one fall a victim to fraud. I came to Santander, where I heard once more of the miracles of the crucifix. Although I was more inclined to believe than to discredit them, I reserved my opinion and resolved meanwhile to go to Limpias myself. It was not my wish to see the miracle for my own personal benefit; in this I agree with Father Gracian de la Madre de Dios, who says (in the Dialogues of St. Teresa): I do not desire any other vision than that of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which God is visible under the sacramental forms, nor any other revelation beyond that of the Gospel and the Holy Scriptures; this vision and this revelation must suffice for me. Never theless, I wished to be allowed to see the miracle in order to feel authorised to write about Jesus and His manifestation.

" I travelled, therefore, to Limpias on the 27th of August, where I reached the parish church punctually at half-past eleven. Owing to my weak state of health and the long journey I felt very unwell. At the same time a band of pilgrims arrived from Mena, and so I had the good fortune of being present at the Holy Mass that was said for the pilgrims. I knelt at a stall in the chancel on the Gospel

side, and remained in this position until the Gospel. After that I sat to listen to the sermon preached by a priest, who took Christ

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as his subject; then I knelt again. To the greater glory of Our Divine Lord I must acknowledge something which is a humiliation for myself, but I will gladly make this sacrifice out of love for my Saviour. Owing to the weariness that I felt, and the quiet of the sacred place, I did not exactly fall asleep, but found myself in the same condition as was the Apostle when Jesus went to him the second time during His last prayer in the Garden of Olives : Erant enim oculi eorum gravati (Matt. xxvi. 43; Mark xiv. 40). In short, I could not concentrate on anything, but was tired and sleepy/ as Fr. Gracian says. Two distinctly audible cries from the crowd startled me out of my half-slumber; I continued my interrupted consideration of the Crucified Saviour. After the Elevation I raised my head; I had only looked up at the crucifix now and then, for most of the time I had my head in my hands with my elbows on the book-rest. Now I saw distinctly how Our Lord opened and closed His Mouth; He shut it very slowly but opened it quickly. He did the same thing in the afternoon while I alone saw the miracle during ten minutes or even longer. Again I remarked that the closing of the Mouth was slow until one lip touched the other; at the same time, as I noticed in the afternoon, the darkness vanished from the half-open mouth, into which neither the light of the two hanging lamps that lit up the whole body, nor that which fell on it from six candles on the altar below, could penetrate. The movement of the mouth made no impression on me; I simply did not believe what I saw. Soon afterwards I looked up at Our Lord again, and saw quite plainly how He turned His Head from one side to the other. This movement took place quite gradually, as if the back of the head were fixed. The Face took on an expression of death-agony and the greatest suffering, as is the case with a dying person who is breathing forth his last sigh. At this moment I was struck by the wonderful beauty of the Head and Countenance, which I had not perceived so clearly on entering the church. This vision did not affect me either.

" After the Communion I looked up at the Christ again and recommended my diocese to the Saviour. I gazed on Him as before, but now paying greater attention than I had done before; then I saw the Eyes move from side to side. At the first sight of this movement my heart contracted convulsively; I could hardly breathe. My heart beat unusually quickly, my nerves were excited and for a long time I was as if beside myself. And why all this at the movement of the eyes which did not even look at me once ? Why was

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I not startled, why did my heart not palpitate and my nerves become excited before, when I had observed the opening and closing of the mouth and the movement of the head ? In all these apparitions one saw the death-struggle of a dying man who is exhaling his last breath, whose life is ebbing away, and thus one sees his greatest suffering, his uttermost death-agony. . . .

44 In the afternoon I saw again how Christ opened and shut His Mouth, and felt a keen desire to remain on my knees before the crucifix, which I had not experienced in the morning.

44 That is what I saw, and if I may make use of the words of the Holy Scriptures, I will say with St. John: And he that saw it hath given testimony; and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true that you also may believe (xix. 35). Or I will say with the same Apostle : That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you : that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that you may rejoice and your joy may be full " (i John i. 3-4). I was an eye-witness of these miracles, and communicate them to you only in honour of Jesus, the Crucified One, and for the salvation of your souls.

44 It is useless for the human understanding to endeavour to discover here natural causes to which such extraordinary facts could be

ascribed. God can and actually does do these things by means of the wonderful Figure of Christ in His Death-agony at Limpias. . . .

" We will not discuss theological questions. That which I saw in Limpias I only saw on that particular crucifix, when I gazed at it, and so long as I kept my eyes fixed on it. What do I care for learned theological investigations in this matter ? It will not be possible to explain the How. Whether these manifestations were accomplished according to the explanation of Fr. Alvarez de la Paz, or in some other way, need not occupy us here. I saw Our Divine Lord open and close His Mouth and move His Lips, and that suffices more than enough for me.

" Ye Government officials ! Recognise your Christ and adore Him, and thus be engulfed in the depths of His mercy, or Jesus must await you on the other side of the grave, where you will fall into the abyss of His flaming wrath !

" Ye philosophers ! Either know your Christ and worship Him, ye worldly-wise, and He will cover you with the mantle of His mercy, or beyond the grave the chasm will open in which your diabolical court-craft will burn for ever.

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" Ye voluptuous ones ! Mortify your flesh here, or it will burn in hell to all eternity !

44 Ye proud ! Humble yourselves to-day, or you will be humiliated by Jesus hereafter.

" Ye rich ! Give alms and live as Christians, or your riches will cause your everlasting destruction.

" Ye poor ! Tear out of your hearts your hatred of your brother the rich man, or you will have to renounce for ever the Love of Almighty God and of Jesus.

44 Ye persecutors of the Church ! Either become submissive sons of the 4 Immaculate Bride of the spotless Lamb/ or you will languish for ever in the prison of hell.

44 Old men and young ! Confess the Christ or He will deny you before His Heavenly Father !"

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Report of the Capuchin Monk Fr. Celestino Maria de Pozuelo.

44 On July 29th, 1919, I went to Limpias in order to assure myself of the truth of the accounts of the remarkable manifestations of the Cristo de la Agonia, which are by now being eagerly discussed everywhere. At the railway station there, I met a numerous band of pilgrims from the arch-presbytery of Conillas, which had just arrived by special train. I joined the pilgrims and heard in the church three Holy Masses in succession. Although I kept my eyes directed towards the Holy Figure, I could not perceive anything remarkable. Nevertheless, I did not give up hope. At two o'clock in the afternoon I again went into the church. My astonishment then was very great indeed at seeing the church filled with pilgrims who were deeply moved, and who, with many tears in their eyes, were beholding the miracle of which they had so often heard tell !

" To me also the appearance of the Crucifix was quite different from that of the morning. The Face presented a vivid expression of pain : the Body was a bluish colour, as if it had received cruel blows, and was bathed in perspiration. I can certify all this whilst not caring to disclose the feelings that filled my heart in those moments/

Report of three Priests, nine Sailors, and one Lady.

The priest Valentin Incio of Gijon came to Limpias for the first time on August 4th, 1919. He describes his experiences there in the following words: " It was about half-past seven in the evening

when I accompanied a gentleman to the church. We were already near the entrance of the church and were talking, when suddenly we heard loud cries of supplication and groans, which sounded above the fervent singing inside the church, and at the same time a scream that made my heart beat rapidly. I do not know who gave this cry, but only heard the words: * Now the miracle is working; now the Master is revealing Himself/

" I went at once up to the High Altar in the sanctuary, where I could see the crucifix well, and mingled with a group of some thirty to forty persons who were crying out in great excitement : Now He is opening His Mouth . . . now He is closing it ... now His Eyes are moving . . . now He is looking . . . The moment was truly stirring and impressive. At the back of the nave there was a group of ten sailors from the fishing steamer Our Lady of Guadalupe, of Fuenterrabia, of whom nine saw the miracle. Throwing themselves on their knees they began to sing impressive penitential hymns, and then sang a national air of St. Ignatius. Beside me stood two priests and a pious lady who wept continuously.

" During this memorable time I observed the sublime wonder as well. I saw Our Divine Lord open and close His Mouth many times in succession, while His Face was convulsed as if the very moment of the greatest death-agony had just come upon Him. Without reflecting that I am in the immediate presence of Our lowly Saviour, of the Holy of Holies, while He is manifesting to us His Love and Compassion, I also begin to say aloud, as do the others, what I see at each change, and with great surprise confirm the fact that all who see them make the same assertions.

44 As the electric light was not burning in the church, the miracle made a very solemn impression in the evening twilight and the faint glimmer of the candles on the altar. For an hour I could perceive the most varied manifestations on the Crucifix.

44 At first Our Lord seemed to be alive ; His Head then preserved its customary position and His Countenance the natural expression; but His Eyes were full of life, and looked about in different directions, now up, until the pupils almost entirely disappeared, now to one side or the other. Then His gaze was directed towards the centre, where the sailors stood, whom He contemplated for a time ; then He looked to the left towards the sacristy with a remarkably stern glance which He retained for some time. Now came the most touching moment of all. Jesus looked at all of us, but so gently and kindly, so expressively, so lovingly and divinely, that we fell on our knees and wept

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and adored Christ, who was showing His Mercy in such a way to us unworthy sinners, while we humbly implored His forgiveness and rendered heartfelt thanksgiving to Him. Then Our Lord continued to move His eyelids and eyes, which shone as if they were full of tears; then He moved His Lips gently as if He were saying something or praying. At the same time the above-mentioned lady, who was beside me, saw the Master trying to move His Arms and striving to get them loose from the Cross.

" We others, who undersign this testimony, could not make this observation. Finally He closed His Mouth, His whole Face became distorted, and took on the bluish and ashen-gray colour of a corpse. Immediately we involuntarily began to recite the Sorrowful Mysteries*

" I remained behind one of the last, but could not perceive any thing further/

Here follow the signatures of the three priests, nine sailors, and the lady, whereby they testify and swear that, without entertaining the slightest doubt, they saw all the above.

Second Testimony of the Priest D. Valentin Incio.

On the 1 5th of September, 1919, the same priest, Valentin Incio, made a second visit to the church in Limpias, and deposited the following report of it :

" The manifestations to-day took place at 545 p.m. An hour

earlier the Bishop of Riobamba in Ecuador had come into the church. The Way of the Cross was made. At the end of these devotions the Most Reverend Prelate gave an inspired allocution on the remarkable miracles that are continually accomplished on the venerated Figure of the Cristo de la Agonia. His speech made a great impression on the numerous listeners. Immediately after this the Very Reverend Bishop of Huesca, Fray Zacarias Martinez, came into the church. Thereupon prayers in honour of the Five Wounds were recited.

" During these prayers I saw clearly that Christ gradually lowered His Eyes and looked at the Bishop, then He raised His Eyes to Heaven again, and looked in different directions, sometimes at the Bishops and then again towards the sacristy, which is on His left; then at the people and also at us who were in the sanctuary. These last glances were directed to all those present in general.

44 What was particularly noticeable, however, and affected me very forcibly, was the sad and at the same time gentle expression

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of the look that He turned on us all. In His Countenance the keenest suffering was then to be read, as if he wanted to reveal by that all the bitterness and despair of His breaking Heart.

" Although at first I did not show anything and kept silent, at last I could no longer contain myself, and with me many others began to cry out excitedly and to communicate aloud what they were seeing, being fully convinced of the reality of all that they saw.

44 All those present, those who did not see as well as those who did, the Bishops, the priests, and the throng of people nearly the whole church was full began the verse : 4 Parce Domine, parce populo tuo/ Then we recited the Credo twice in a loud voice and with great devotion, alternately with this penitential hymn.

44 It was an impressive moment. The miracle still continued and persons of the most varied classes of society saw it, among them also a priest from Santander, who had to leave immediately after wards by train, but wished to send in his testimony; besides there was a priest from Valencia, D. Paulino Girbes, beneficiary and vicar of San Nicolas, a lady from Bilbao, cashier in a theatre, who had formerly not believed in this miracle, and her daughter, who also declared that she had seen it.

" I close this report with the same words which terminated my statement of the 4th of August : May this testimony serve the greater glory of Almighty God and lead to the greater knowledge and love of Jesus Christ/ "

Statement of D. Paulino Girbes, Coadjutor of St. Nicholas in Valencia.

44 Having arrived in Limpias on September 15th, 1919, I went with a well-known gentleman, D. Miguel Fenollera of Valencia, to the church of the Santo Cristo, which remains open day and night. It is constantly visited by devout people who go to pray on their knees before the magnificent figure of the Santo Cristo.

" D. Miguel, who had to go to Bilbao in the afternoon, went back to the church directly after lunch. As I was to spend the night in Limpias I lay down to rest for a while after the meal. When I came to the church again later, I met D. Miguel there in great excitement. He told me that he had seen the Santo Cristo distinctly turn His eyes first to one side and then to the other; He had also looked at him personally and at last had gently opened His mouth as if He wanted to say something. After about half an hour He had again returned to His natural condition. When D. Miguel

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had somewhat recovered himself he went into the sacristy and wrote his statement in the witness book, accompanied by an affidavit, " When he related his experience to me I could not hide my

astonishment, and thanked God that He had so revealed Himself to my friend, but was a little sad too, that this good fortune had not also fallen to my lot, though I considered myself unworthy of it. We also met the Baron of Santa Barbara and his wife, and they were delighted to see us there and to hear D. Miguel's account.

44 At 5 p.m. the latter departed. I went back into the church, which was now filled with people. In order to reach the altar more easily I went in through the sacristy. At the same time, first the Very Reverend Bishop of Huesca, and then another Bishop from Ecuador came into the church. A Passionist Father entered the pulpit and said the prayers for the Estacion and the Way of the Cross; then the Bishop of Ecuador preached an impressive sermon, in which he spoke with holy fervour of the wonderful revelations of the Santo Cristo, set forth their significance in these distressing times, and exhorted the faithful to steadfast belief and loyal adherence to Christian principles.

44 When the sermon was over, devotions were held in honour of the Five Wounds, whereupon one Passionist Father after another started several mission hymns, which were sung by the people. Meanwhile the Bishops and eighteen priests, to whom I also belonged, knelt before the Crucifix. We all saw the Face of the Santo Cristo become sadder, paler, and more bluish-looking. The mouth also was wider open than usual. The eyes gave a gentle glance now at the Bishops and then in the direction of the sacristy. The features at the same time took on the expression of a man who is in his death-struggle. That lasted a long time. I could not restrain my tears and began to weep; the others were similarly affected. A Passionist began to sing the Parce Domine, and then recited the Credo in a loud voice, and then, as the vision still continued, one heard only sobs, groans, and short prayers of repentance. What a moment that was, when I saw Jesus in His death-agony ! That look of the dying Saviour, so gentle and compassionate, will never fade from my memory. I give heartfelt thanks to Our Divine Lord, that He allowed me to partake of the joy of being led to this place and of seeing the miracle which He works very nearly every day. From Limpias the Master is calling men of all classes. Many come as unbelievers, but return home filled with faith and fervour. Praised be God !"

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Statement of the Capuchin Monk Fr. Antonio Maria de Torrelavega, from the monastery of Torrente, near Valencia.

" There are so many recognised testimonies of the miracle of the Santo Cristo that a further one is scarcely necessary. To the greater glory of God and as a proof of my gratitude to my Saviour I will nevertheless also describe the impressions I received on the days when I visited the holy crucifix.

44 On Saturday, the nth of September, 1919, I arrived in Limpias at ten o'clock in the morning, and thanks to the kindness of the chaplain, D. Gonzalo Lastra, I was already able to celebrate Holy Mass at the altar of the Santo Cristo about 11 a.m. For my Thanks giving I assisted at the following Mass, and left the church to take my midday meal about one o'clock, without having noticed anything unusual on the sacred figure. At two o'clock I re-entered the church, meditated until three o'clock on the Sufferings of Christ, then said my office and remained in the church until four o'clock. I then went out to breathe a little fresh air, without having seen anything extraordinary until then.

" When I was back in the church, about half-past five, I saw for the first time how the Santo Cristo turned His eyes in different directions, often looking towards the sacristy, and then again raising His eyes to heaven. I also saw a horizontal streak of blood near the left-hand corner of the mouth. Although I perceived this as clearly and distinctly close at hand as from various parts of the church, I refrained from forming any opinion, nor did I entirely believe my senses, because inwardly I was quite calm all the time. Supposing, too, that I were one of the many happy eye-witnesses, I ought to have felt the deepest emotion at the contemplation of the miracle. So I returned to the house belonging to members of my community in Laredo, not far away. I owed to them that I was full of doubt; for, whether or no I had seen anything, I could not

maintain it for certain, as I had remained so completely unmoved by it,

" The next day I again said Mass at the altar of the Santo Cristo at half-past nine, and then joined a group of pilgrims from Baracaldo, and observed anew, only still more frequently, the movement of the eyes, and saw, too, once more that blood was flowing down from the right-hand corner of the mouth. As I did not feel the slightest emotion this time I entirely withheld my assent to what I clearly and distinctly saw.

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" In the afternoon I sat in a seat in the chancel; on my left sat a tall gentleman whom I asked whether all who saw the miracle felt stirred by it for again and again I thought to see it and yet felt nothing. He replied that the impression made by the miracles was great, and so my uncertainty distressed me afresh. I then accompanied to Treto the Superior of the Salesian Fathers of Santander, D. Jose Pujol, who had also had the good fortune of seeing the miracle, and on the way I put the same question to him. He answered in the same way, and told me that he had felt involuntarily impelled to fall on his knees and to shed tears. This information increased still further my uncertainty and doubt. I was under the false impression that one must necessarily be touched and deeply moved at the sight of such miracles.

" On Monday afternoon as well I went to Limpías. I intended to spend the night in the church, in company with the members of the Guild of Nocturnal Adoration, from Navarra. After the latter had prayed before the Santo Cristo for a short time, they left the church again to take their evening meal; only a few of the faithful remained behind in the church. In order to say my Office I knelt on the lowest step of the sanctuary. Before I had recollected myself sufficiently to begin praying, I suddenly quite distinctly saw the Santo Cristo move His Eyes, gaze with a stern glance towards the sacristy, and then look up to heaven. Several times He also looked at me. Now I felt as if my whole being were shaken violently, I was afraid of falling, which would have been very disagreeable to me, for I did not want to attract the attention of the devout persons present. I stood up, therefore, and changed places three or four times, always observing, however, the same manifestations. They were repeated many times during the night, and at about two o'clock, as I was kneeling in one of the central benches, I saw the Santo Cristo gazing right at me again, and this so affected me that I had to hold on tight to the bench, as my strength was beginning to fail me.

* After these strong impressions my former doubts were dispelled. I was convinced that all I had seen the day before with my senses, without realising it with any soul-felt emotion, must have been as certain and as true as what I saw during the night. I found also that I was very much mistaken when I thought that one must always feel very deeply affected. Experience had taught me that it is possible to see these apparitions without interior emotion all the same, this too, is an exception.

" When the general communion began, I noticed that the counten-

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ance of the Santo Cristo changed colour and became bluish and sad. Many other persons who were kneeling round me also observed this. " The dismissal that the Santo Cristo gave to some hundred pilgrims from Navarra was noteworthy. The latter had remained longer in the church in order to touch the cross with rosaries, medals, and so forth. Just at the moment when they were about to do so, the electric light went out. Then the whites of the eyes showed up clearly against the dark face. Everyone saw almost at the same instant and distinctly that the Christ turned His Eyes this way and that, and opened His Mouth. One gentleman called out: Now I verify it; there is no doubt the Santo Cristo moves His Eyes. During my visit I saw the movement of the eyes about fifty times/

Statement of the Coadjutor Z). Jose Rubio Martinez.

In November, 1919, a large number of the inhabitants of Valladolid wished to make a pilgrimage to Limpias, for which they first of all prepared themselves by five days exercises in the Jesuit church there. At one of the addresses the suffragan of this diocese read the following letter from the Coadjutor of la Baneza (Leon), who had covered nearly 200 miles on foot from la Baneza to Limpias, as a pious act of penance :

" It was one o'clock in the afternoon, when, as a leave-taking, I was repeating my petitions once more in the church of Limpias, and recommending my intentions to Our Lord before going to the station. After a few moments, I see suddenly that the eyes of the Figure, of which until then I had only seen the whites, come to life, move, now to the right, now to the left, now gazing up to heaven. Then, as they look round in a wider circle, I pull myself together, so as not to be the victim of an illusion. I stand up, change places, rub my eyes, and ask the people near me whether they see anything. They reply in the negative. I look up again and see that the Figure is still moving its eyes as if it were alive. Full of misgiving and apprehension that I may be deceived, I question the bystanders once more, but receive the same negative answer again. In order to ensure against any self-deception, I ask my neighbour for a field-glass, use it repeatedly, and even get three others lent to me, and see always the same thing. So I come to the conclusion that what I see is no illusion, but the truth. Completely calmed down, I notice that the Saviour gazes now here, now there for a longer time to the left, and then again up to heaven. They were sad glances, those of one searching every where for something that will alleviate the pain that is pressing

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heavily on his heart. There were sometimes stern looks, as well, in which suppressed anger, grave reprimand, loathing, shame, and great grief, were expressed simultaneously.

" Three times in particular He looked with terrible severity towards the left side* Once He followed with His gaze something that seemed to be approaching Him and came right under the Cross, so that His Eyes looked down* almost vertically, and that I saw His Face nearly in profile, without knowing how He could move it thus, as I stood opposite to Him. When the object in question arrived under Him, He looked at it as if He would say: Oh, wicked one ! right under the Cross do you come to insult Me.* At the same time He showed the greatest repugnance, and now, suddenly, the Christ made a movement as if He wished to detach Himself from the cross, and as if He would say, * I can do no more/ When I saw this I very nearly gave a scream and wanted to throw myself on the object, whatever it was. But I kept quiet and did nothing, and did not even stir. I heard a few words in a tone of bitterest complaint, which I do not, to this day, feel disposed to publish. Nor can I say how I heard and understood these words.

44 Hereupon He turned His Eyes towards Heaven with an expression of the most intimate pleading. His expression was heart rending; His Eyes shone so full of tears that twice in particular He could no longer see and it seemed as if they would run over. Only once I saw Him look comforted, or it would be better to say that He gave a look of inward relief. Once He gazed forward over and past me towards a fixed point. It seemed to me at the time that someone whispered in my ear: The Hill of the Angels/ (I note that I do not know how the church is situated.) This view seemed for a short time to take away all the pain and bitterness which otherwise consumed Him, whereby perhaps He was thinking : 4 Thanks be to God who has so comforted Me/ Unfortunately this look was one of the shortest if not the very shortest of all. He did not look at me at all, at least I could not perceive that He did. When He cast those terrible glances round Him I begged Him not to look thus, either at me, or the people, but implored Him to direct towards us those comforting looks really efficaciously, for we have so great need of them.

" After I had watched all this and, in order to obviate any self-deception, had turned my eyes away many times, though I was more and more convinced of the truth and reality of it, and several times had been obliged to cry out: * My God, how wonderful it is ! I now observed that Our Lord moved His Lips and opened His

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Mouth twice as if He would breathe and unburden His Heart. At the same time He made a movement as if He wanted to say: I can bear no more/ became pale as death, and His Face altered completely, while something, I do not know what, came out of His Mouth and ran down on either side of it to the chin; then He breathed twice like a dying man, slowly, painfully, turned His Eyes towards Heaven, and died ! Yes, I saw Him die, and saw Him dead, with shocking ghastliness. . . .

" My interior feelings I will keep to myself. I have related to you what I saw. (And that really with my eyes and not merely with my imagination. I watched this touching and thrilling scene for about three-quarters of an hour, and that with entire control of myself. For the vision had not captivated me, had not diminished my interior freedom, of which I made use many times, by changing my place, closing my eyes when I wished to, looking about the church in various directions, speaking to several people, and so on, to convince myself that I had not become the victim of an illusion.) I have assisted at the denouement of an unprecedented drama, have seen the fight between justice and mercy, which ended in the Innocent One giving Himself up to death, because that was the only way in which justice could be conciliated and the guilty be rescued. I did not write my name in the witness book, but later on I sent in my sworn testimony, in which I stated in detail everything that I saw."

Statement of the Salesian Father, Tomas Nervi.

44 On the 5th of March, 1920, on the first Friday in the month, my good fortune or Providence procured me once again the opportunity of visiting the wonderful crucifix. Towards n a.m. I came into the church of Limpias, where a fair number of pilgrims were gathered. Again fourteen Holy Masses were said. I celebrated mine about one o clock. This day I considered to be a special day of grace, for it was the Friday of the Sacred Heart, and besides that it was in the month of March, during which the anniversary of the first wonderful apparition is kept. How could Almighty God with stand my pious desires on this day, although they were somewhat prejudiced by my culpable curiosity ? Notwithstanding, among the many pilgrims, as far as I could ascertain, only two persons saw the miracle; we others waited in vain for a gracious look from Jesus. . . .

" While I was saying Mass some people had evidently seen the miracle, for a young man, as it seemed to me a reporter, asked for my

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name and place of residence, in order to publish a report in the news paper El Debate. I do not know whether he did so or not. During my thanksgiving after Mass I begged Almighty God to grant me the grace of a look from Him. A little girl came up to me and whispered : * The Christ is looking at you with smiling eyes/ I felt a shudder of excitement, but who believes at such moments in the testimony of others, and a susceptible little girl at that, who may see visions everywhere ? I thought of my misdeeds, and finally declined to put any faith in the witness. I deemed it simply impossible that God should look at me, and that with a smiling glance, as He knows my sins. Like my namesake, the Apostle Thomas, I determined not to believe as long as I did not see it with my own eyes. Have I thus yielded to the temptation of unbelief ? May God forgive me if I have offended Him anew.

" It was about three o clock, without my having seen anything until then. I was also still fasting. Should an empty stomach not dispose one towards seeing visions ? I cannot assert that I saw anything on that day; I was in doubt all the time. My eyes seemed to see something, but not distinctly, and gradually it became clear to me that there was to be no miracle for me. How easy it would be for God to destroy all prejudice and also all the credulity of mankind so that a miracle would be ascribed only to His power, goodness, and mercy, and not to suggestion, hallucination, or auto suggestion, with which men like so well to try and deny everything

supernatural and divine.

" On the following day, Saturday, the 6th of March, I left Santander in order to return to Baracaldo, and from there to take advantage of the third occasion of visiting the holy place. I remained in Limpias from about 11 till 3 in the afternoon. I must admit that I was very much disenchanted and undeceived. I had given up all hope of seeing the miracle and did not really know, therefore, for what reason I was stopping in Limpias. So I made up my mind that this should be the last time that I would visit the wonderful crucifix. After I had said Mass I remained once more before the altar to say my thanksgiving, and looked up now and again, but without the least hope of seeing the miracle yes, by now almost without the wish to belong to the number of eye-witnesses. While I was there, a pious lady came up to me and said: * The Christ is looking at you/

44 Again ! said I to myself. 4 Yesterday a little girl and to-day a lady ! I might almost think that they had come to an under-

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standing between them. How is He looking at me ? I asked.
4 How should He look at you, seeing that He is hanging on the Cross ? she replied logically. * He is looking at you patiently and sadly/ Was that perhaps meant to be a reproach for my unbelief ? In spite of all this, I admit that I did not credit this pious lady either.

44 But see there ! a few moments later, when I was expecting it least oh ! divine goodness towards this sinner and unbelieving Thomas. All at once I see clearly and without the slightest doubt that the wonderful Christ is moving His Eyes and is turning them in all directions in the church. Then for a few moments His fatherly regard met my sinful and unbelieving eyes and if His was very stern, how well I had deserved that! as if He would say to me: 4 Come here, Thomas; look with your eyes into Mine and be not unbelieving before such numerous and authentic witnesses/

44 Anyone can well imagine what I felt like at such an unexpected manifestation. At the same time as myself four or five other people saw this, besides a girl of twelve years of age; some even noticed that Christ closed His Mouth and Eyes. One lady, on the contrary, saw nothing at all, not even the figure of the Christ. After the distinctly visible movement of the eyes, which lasted about ten minutes, I noticed that He shut His Mouth and then opened it again; the underlip and chin were somewhat twisted to the right side, as with a dying man who is drawing his last breath.

44 I affirm that all I have written here is true. I am prepared to swear to it, and if it were necessary, would sign it with my blood. I shall certainly not make it an obligation, nor shall I even try to persuade anyone to believe me; only let no one say that I have not seen the miracle ! All the learned men in the world will not prevail upon me to be silent or to retract what I have stated here. Only if our holy Mother the Church, which is infallible, in these cases should command it, would I keep silence, and declare this report null and void. . . . Anyhow, what could be said against it ? If, nowadays, men can produce pictures of historical events and personages out of every century, often to the destruction of many souls, how much more, then, could God, though He is now enthroned in Heaven, triumphant and incapable of suffering, represent on a crucifix in a far more impressive and natural way the painful scenes of His last Agony, in order to redeem souls that are given up to vice, and who are laying themselves open to everlasting destruction.

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Many of those who deny the miracle of Limpias would hold themselves aloof from Christ and His Godhead Himself if He came down to earth once again. I even know one man who declared:
4 I do not care to go to Limpias, for if I went there I should have to alter my way of living, and I intend to go on living as I have done until now/ "

Statement on December 24th, 1919, of D. Manuel Cubi, who has a considerable reputation as the father confessor of the church del Pilar, in Saragossa, and as an author and lecturer.

44 On entering the church I had a feeling of awe that bordered on fear, and forced me to remain on my knees during the whole of the Mass that had just begun. I made my preparation for the holy Mass that I was to say at eleven o'clock. I was fortunate enough to celebrate at the altar of the Santo Cristo, and another priest acted as server, to whom I owe the fact that I could say the Mass at all. For as I raised my eyes to the Santo Cristo after the Confiteor I was surprised by the most touching spectacle that I have ever seen. I saw Jesus in the pangs of death, saw Him move, open and close His Mouth; He drew a deep breath so that His Breast was lifted from the Cross, His Lips quivered and His Face became distorted. I could swear that He was covered in sweat and that the upper part of His Body was stretching upwards. I could follow no more. When I had gone up the steps, I held fast to the altar; I know that I did not look in the Missal at first. At length I began the votive Mass of the Holy Cross, but it was only thanks to the assistance of the other priest that I could go on reading. I suffered greatly, seeing how Jesus was suffering, and this death-agony lasted until the Gradual. When I arose from the genuflection at the words: Omne genu flectatur/ the Figure had changed. From now on I watched with the closest attention and interior emotion how the sacred Countenance was transfigured into startling beauty, almost joyful in expression, and this impression remained with me during the whole Mass. Afterwards, too, I saw Him thus until the time of my departure/

Farther on the same priest states: 44 From San Sebastian there came a married couple, Da. Elena Monzonis and D. Ignacio Monzonis, and a niece of the former, Da. Mercedes Abrisqueta Monzonis. They remained in Limpias two days, and were favoured with visions. The first saw Christ open and close His Mouth, while the Body became pink and alive; the other two remarked that Christ

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looked at them so lovingly that, as they asserted again and again, in the ecstasy which this look caused them they completely forgot their great troubles and also later on deemed them insignificant. The uncle and niece called out to each other as they saw the miracle, and observed it at the same moment and wept with emotion*

4 The look of the Saviour was very mild; then they saw Him lower His eyes, and Da. Mercedes even saw Him smile, which sight so impressed itself on her mind that afterwards she seemed always to have the look still before her very eyes.

" The two above-mentioned ladies, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Da. Mercedes, and I, visited the Cristo de la Agonia again later. The ladies received Holy Communion at my Mass, and felt nothing beyond great devotion and a strong desire to remain with Our Divine Lord as long as possible. After we had taken our midday meal we returned to the church at half-past one. As there were a number of strangers there, among them several nuns of the Congregation of the Handmaids of Mary, I went to a prie-dieu and said the prayers of the devotions to the Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross. Surrounded by some hundred persons, I made a meditation out loud over each one of these words, and at the end of each said an Our Father.

" During the first three Words we noticed nothing extraordinary, but at the fourth we again saw the death-agony as I had already observed it earlier. One had the impression that Our Lord was trying to loosen Himself from the Cross with violent convulsive movements; one thought to hear the death-rattle in His Throat. Then He raised His Head, turned His Eyes, and closed His Mouth. Now and then I saw His Tongue and Teeth, then again one could hardly see the Lips, so tightly were they closed. During the meditation I described what I saw and felt. Our Divine Saviour remained like that during the fourth and fifth Words. For nearly half an hour He showed us how much we had cost Him, and what He had suffered for us during His abandonment and thirst on the Cross ! What a forcible instruction Our Lord gave us from

the Cross ! Never shall I forget it.

44 Towards four o'clock we left the church, and returned accompanied by my friend D. David Pena, at five o'clock. At half-past six we were alone in the church namely, the two ladies Elena and Mercedes, the daughter of the latter, Merciditas, Da. Adoracion Lomban, and I. The child declared to her mother that Christ was moving His Eyes and looking towards the sacristy. We others

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saw Him still and peaceful, but the child insisted on her assertion. Then all five of us looked carefully at the crucifix and saw Our Lord smile and move His Lips. As if at a given signal, we all hurried to the altar and knelt on the top step and gazed with such rapture at that smiling, gentle look that we could not see it enough to satisfy us, nor tear ourselves away from the hallowed spot. One hour after another passed thus. At half-past eight we were obliged to leave the presence of the Saviour. The one thought predominant in all of us was : * If only we could stay here all night ! As we were taking holy water at the door we saw Christ once more turn on us a look so strong and yet so mild, so gentle and attractive, that we knelt down where we were, until He turned His gaze towards heaven again. On the following morning they all received Holy Communion at my Mass; then we went back to Bilbao, much comforted. We can all five bear witness to this. After having allowed a few days to elapse, in order to think over all this sufficiently, we have drawn up this report in common. Jesus Christ be praised for evermore !"

Statement of a Dutch priest, the Cistercian Monk Fr. Maria Gregorio Verhagen.

" On Sunday, June 6, 1920, I travelled to Limpas by way of Bilbao, and there met a band of pilgrims from Bilbao. When I visited the crucifix for the first time it appeared to me considerably larger than it really is. I attended High Mass and the sermon of a missionary of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The comparisons that the preacher made between Calvary and the altar of Limpas seemed to me exaggerated : 4 There, blasphemers stood under the Cross, and here there are unbelievers who declare the apparitions to be the visions of devotees/ There, one heard the blows of the hammers, and here one sees the painful movements of the limbs, the flowing down of the blood, and the sweat of the death-agony/

" These comparisons displeased me. I thought to myself that through such descriptions one was offering food for delusion to the common people,

" However, when the choir began the Credo I noticed that the Santo Cristo was actually moving His lips, and indeed as distinctly as if He were saying the words that the choir was singing. At first I was deeply moved, but then again I doubted what I saw; while I was reflecting on it the bystanders must have read my profound

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interior bewilderment in my face. Someone asked me what was the matter; I could only reply, 4 Look up there ! whereupon he looked up too, and answered in corroboration : Yes, His mouth is really moving/ Now I had full assurance of what I saw, and watched this manifestation during the whole of the Credo. After the Credo I saw nothing unusual. The Christ had resumed His natural aspect. After the Consecration, however, His whole body became bluish; He drew His head in as if He were choking with pain and anguish. But when the Benedictus was sung and that lasted some time I noticed that Christ smiled in transfigured supernatural ecstasy.

" In the afternoon, when I passed in front of the altar during the Way of the Cross, and looked fixedly at the crucifix, I saw quite clearly that Christ, without moving His head, slowly turned a look of satisfaction on me for a few seconds. At that I experienced an indescribable feeling of joy, which encouraged me with the blessed

confidence that I should be saved hereafter for all eternity. Until we reached the Sixth Station I still continued to look at the crucifix in order to watch the divine regard. To my confusion I now remarked that the attention of the people was attracted more to myself than to the cross, on which account, to my very great regret, I felt myself obliged to leave the church* As I approached the door someone offered me binoculars, with which I could not, however, perceive anything wonderful. Finally, I decided not to go away without apologising to the preacher for the judgment which I had inwardly passed on his words. Before these had appeared exaggerated to me; but now, after my vision, I owned myself that even they were much too feeble to represent what an eye-witness experiences inwardly. All my life long I shall constantly have vividly before my eyes all that I saw in Limpias, and I bless the decision and permission of my Superiors for having sent me to this holy place."

The Chaplain Alfons Buchel, of Wolleran in the Canton of Schwyz (Switzerland), sent the author of this book, on the 16th of December, 1920, the following statement of his experiences in Limpias.

44 From the burial place of St. Peter Canisius, on September 8th, 1920, I undertook my pilgrimage via Lourdes (10th to 11th September) to Limpias. On Monday, the 13th of September, I arrived at the church of Limpias, at half-past ten in the morning; heard

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several holy Masses and remained in the church until half-past twelve, captivated by the wonderful beauty of the holy crucifix so suggestive of thought.

44 I stayed nine days in Limpias, from the 13th to 22nd of September, and on the first six days said Mass at 5 a.m. at the high altar* Although the Masses began at five o'clock every morning, twice even at 4 a.m., and went on uninterruptedly until half-past twelve, many priests still had to celebrate at the side altars. From five in the morning until eight o'clock at night the church was visited daily by the faithful. Often six to eight automobiles and several carriages stood outside the church at the same time, though most of the pilgrims walked from the Angustina station of Limpias to the church (twenty to twenty-five minutes). Every Sunday large bands of pilgrims meet in Limpias, and not infrequently on week days also. On Thursday, September 16th, the Very Reverend Martin Rucker, ex-President of the Catholic University of Santiago in Chili, said Mass at the high altar at eight o'clock. His family is native of Hamburg; he himself speaks six languages. When the server rang the bell at the Sanctus, I looked at the priest and then at the Crucifix. Then I saw the Mouth of the Santo Cristo slowly close, open, and close again, as if Our Lord were praying to Heaven. During these movements of the lips He paused now and again, as if He were saying single sentences or pondering over them. It appeared to me as if the suffering Saviour on the Cross were taking the prayers of the faithful and of the priest at the altar upon His Divine Lips and were sending them up to His Heavenly Father. At first, I could not quite believe this speaking and praying motion of the lips, and therefore sharpened my observations. I asked myself questions: * How is the Mouth now ? 4 Now the Mouth is wide open. 4 And now ? * Now it is closing, now the underlip is quite touching the upper lip, now the lips are quite distinctly coming apart again, as when anyone is speaking, only very slowly/ Just then I heard the altar-bell and thought to myself: 4 Now I must pay attention to the holy transubstantiation, for in the Sacred Host the Presence of Our Divine Lord is more certain than in these miracles on the Cross. When I looked up, however, it was already at the Elevation of the Chalice; I had not heeded the Elevation of the Host.

14 The lips of the wooden crucifix, over 200 years old, continued to move until after the priest's communion, until after the Precious Blood was consumed. At first I had looked on quite calmly, but

somewhere about the Pater Noster such emotion seized me that I shed copious tears. I prayed more earnestly than ever before or since. It was not joy, but a deep-seated sense of consolation that streamed through and through me.

" Almost without interruption I remained in the church until mid day, and did not see a single movement of the lips any more after the eight o'clock Mass. At half-past ten the Very Reverend Bishop of Santander assisted at the Mass said by the Bishop of Cuba. This was the last time the Bishop of Santander was in Limpias, for on Sunday, September 19th, news came that he had died that morning. His last words to the priest in charge at Limpias were :
4 You can become a saint here/

" During the night of Saturday, 18th, to Sunday, 19th, of September, thirty-four men and youths and four priests watched in turn, six at a time, for an hour s Adoration. At half-past nine I knelt on the lowest step in the sanctuary to pray, at first alone, and later others joined me. Once more the lips of the Figure on the Crucifix moved as on Thursday. I made the same observation from twelve to three o'clock almost continuously. On Sunday, at half-past twelve noon, and therefore in broad daylight, when the electric light was extinguished and no holy Mass was being said, I stood with folded hands without praying, in the sanctuary on the Gospel side, quite close to the altar, and was contemplating the Head of Christ. Again I see the movement of the lips and ask myself the question : Is the mouth not opening and shutting three four five times ? While I was reflecting over this, there came a simple kind of man of about forty to fifty years of age, stalwart and somewhat stout, who pointed towards the cross and declared to some ten to fifteen people at the communion rails : 4 The Christ is opening and closing His Mouth/ and he even imitated with his own mouth the movements of the lips of the Christ. While he is pointing I see Our Lord s Lips move rapidly, but this time not in an upward direction, but down towards me on the Gospel side; they fell on me like a sharp reproof. I was startled and searched my conscience to find out what Christ Our Lord found to blame in me. If only He could say it in words !

41 On Wednesday morning, the 22nd of September, I was in the church from five to eight, and knelt by the foremost pillar on the (right) men s side, in the same place from whence I had seen the movements of the lips on Thursday. On the 22nd I saw not a single movement of the lips, but instead every two to three to five minutes,

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for about an hour and a half, movements of the eyes. It seemed to me that they kept on sinking from weariness, and that the Saviour repeatedly put forth all His strength in order to raise them towards heaven again. * What is Our Lord trying to tell me by that ? I asked myself. * Sursum corda ! Away from this earthly dust, think of Heaven ! These living glances from Christ had an uncommonly elevating effect on my soul. The Preface was my farewell prayer to Limpias. On the way home and often since, I have involuntarily looked into the eyes of many men and youths, but no others were ever as beautiful.

44 On four different days I had also noticed that the smooth wooden forehead changed into flesh, to soft, clear flesh, clear as I have never seen it on any other human forehead. Then in the centre, from the top down to the nose, a long fold formed itself (like a frown), and corresponding to it two shorter ones on the right and the left; these furrows moved and quivered a great deal. And yet the expression of the Face was gentle, though grieved.

" This was no case of suggestion, for I have never before thought of what I saw, and have never even desired it, and that which I wished to see on the Crucifix was not vouchsafed to me. Besides myself, during those days from the 13th to the 22nd of September, about twenty other people observed wonderful happenings on the Crucifix, but not the same as I did/

The Chaplain Joseph Eisenlohr, from Kirchberg in St. Gall, sent the following report of his experiences in Limpias to the author, on the 15th of June, 1921.

" On the 13th of April, 1921, I arrived in Limpias with three other Swiss men. On that and the following day I was not able to perceive anything extraordinary on the holy crucifix. On Friday morning I entered the sacred building at five o'clock. The electric light was not burning either by the Santo Cristo nor anywhere else in the church. Involuntarily I was drawn towards the communion rails. Hardly had I knelt there, when I saw that Christ was moving His Head, quietly and solemnly, now to the right, now to the left side, sometimes upwards and then down, and as He moved His Head so He turned His Eyes with a sad look, now to heaven, then again to earth, and sometimes He let His gaze go far out into the distance as if He were searching for something He wished to see* This vision must have lasted five to seven minutes. At half-past five I celebrated Mass at this privileged altar, but did not notice

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anything unusual meanwhile. After me a strange priest said Mass. I again saw nothing wonderful. After him the very aged priest D. Eduardo Miqueli went to the altar. At the Sanctus I involuntarily raised my eyes to the Santo Cristo and observed the same apparitions as in the morning. After He had moved His Head and Eyes for a certain time He began to pull at the shoulders, to writhe and to bend, as a man does when he is nailed alive to a cross. Everything was in motion, only the Hands and Feet remained nailed fast. In the end the whole Body relaxed as if exhausted, then took up its natural position again, with the Head and Eyes turned up in the direction of Heaven. This whole scene of the dying Saviour lasted from the Sanctus until after the priest's Communion. On the same day and on the following Saturday and Sunday I saw Our Divine Lord many times, but He moved His Head little and quietly, as if He wished to say, 4 Look, dear brother, see how much I must suffer here !

" On Monday morning after the holy Mass which I celebrated at six o'clock, I saw the same death-process of the Saviour during the Mass of another priest, and also again from the Sanctus until after the Holy Communion. It seemed to me that Almighty God wanted to set before my eyes clearly for once the bloodless renewal of the pontifical office on Calvary, the mystical death which He celebrates anew in every holy Mass. I solemnly declare all this to be the truth, in spite of all objections that will be raised to the effect that it is an optical delusion due to rays of light. That which the Christ of Limpias does is a miracle of compassion. I saw both visions of the dying Saviour distinctly and clearly without any light. Whosoever sees the miraculous manifestations can perceive them without light, and those who do not see them will not be able to do so any better with lights and telescopes. Cui voluerit, Deus revelavit !"

After Spain, of all countries in Europe, Switzerland has paid the greatest attention to the manifestations in Limpias. Pictures and medals of the Santo Cristo are circulated there already in thousands of copies. A comparatively large number of Swiss people have already made the pilgrimages to Limpias. On the 10th of July, 1921, two Swiss young men of twenty to twenty-five years of age made a pilgrimage on foot to Spain, and arrived at Limpias on the 30th of August, where they were received with great enthusiasm. Besides the two chaplains, Buchel and Eisenlohr, whose reports

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are given above, five other Helvetians have seen and testified to the apparitions of the crucifix.

Fraulein Maria Buchel, aged sixty-eight, declares as follows in her testimony, given in writing on the 15th of April, 1921 : " Immediately after our entry into the church of Limpias I saw the Santo Cristo in the most wonderful way. He was quite transfigured, as on Mount Tabor; full of love He rose on the place where the wooden cross stands, and which entirely disappeared. This wonderful vision lasted at least twenty minutes, and overcame me to such an extent that it was only with difficulty that I was able to raise myself. Also it is with joy that I can certify that later on I often saw Him open and close His Eyes and move His Lips as if He would speak

to us."

A detailed report by the married couple Hebling is published in the Schweizerischen Katholischen Sonntagsblatt (Swiss Catholic Sunday Newspaper, Nos. 17 and 18), the editor of which has recently brought out a special pamphlet on the manifestations at Limpias.

REPORTS OF DOCTORS.

I.

Among the testimonies from the medical side the following detailed report of the Consul of the Honduras, Dr. Antonio Gutierrez de Cossio, above all is worth mentioning:

" I swear by the eternal Truth so said the Count de Maistre a century ago * that science and faith never contradict one another ! And I, the undersigned of this writing, swear that I actually, and that repeatedly, have seen the miracle of the Christ of Limpias.

44 A short while ago I had announced in the periodical El Diario Montanes of Santander, I shall go to Limpias/ . . . The opportunity presented itself, and so I separated from several friends on the road from the station to the church, without advancing pretensions to a vision for myself, in order to think only of the leper of the Gospel and to repeat as he did the words, Jesus, Jesus, Son of David, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. Thus I entered the church free from any prejudice or particular notion.

" The church was over-full; I tried to get in by main force, but it seemed impossible. The pilgrims from Cudeyo filled the whole church, the crowding could not have been greater; the heat was

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unbearable, I took advantage of the occasion when a few people who were tired went out, and I succeeded in getting through the throng of good-natured and patient country-people. Without remonstrance they bore the want of consideration with which forced a passage for myself until I was about eight yards away from the steps of the sanctuary.

" At this moment a preacher, a Passionist Father, mounted the pulpit. The leaders of the band of pilgrims struck up the hymn 4 Perdon, O Dios mio ! (Pardon, O my God !) after the sermon. At the end of it they requested the people to go out through the sacristy door, which is on the left side of the crucifix. Those who were most fatigued hastened to get out.

" I am quite surrounded by simple and unknown people, in front of me mostly women, on my left and behind me men. Hardly do the pilgrims begin to go out when the whole group of women and men begins, almost simultaneously, to call out that the Christ is looking towards the side where the pilgrims are going out. This vision was quite distinct and visible everywhere; we all saw it, for we all reiterated it at the same time. The outgoing stream of people stops. Then our whole group notices clearly, and says aloud, that Christ has averted His gaze and from the side where the pilgrims had gone out He lets it pass over the whole church until it turns upwards and thereupon resumes its natural position. A few moments pass; another group of pilgrims comes forward to the chancel and begins to go out through the same door. In an instant, all that are in my group call out loudly as if at a given signal Christ is looking again towards the same side as before/ This vision was again so clear and distinct that, as before, one could perfectly well distinguish the reflection of the light on the sclerotic of the eye. The going-out of the people was again interrupted and once more Christ turned His Eyes away. As soon as the people began to go out, this miracle was performed afresh.

44 It was repeated more than ten times, and I affirm and swear with entire conviction that it really happened, as it was also observed and corroborated by all the folk who were round me. Only those who were crowding on my right side did not see it, most of them people of superior rank whom I did not know. When they heard us the]

gazed uninterruptedly at the Christ with opera-glasses, without however, being able to perceive anything. Later on, nevertheless they also saw at the same time as the others who remained near the movement of the Mouth of the expiring Christ, how it was half

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opened and then drawn together towards the left-hand corner. After that those who had seen it and were standing in front of us went out of the church, no doubt because they were already very tired.

" We others who had had the good fortune to see the miracle looked at each other, and went into the sacristy penetrated with the same feeling of duty, where we asked for the witness book in order to declare on oath what we had seen.

" A few moments afterwards the Chronicler of Limpias, my good friend D. Jose Maria Aguirre, the well-known Christian apologist, came and informed us of the arrival of the royal princes Don Carlo and Don Fernando and the Princess Luisa; whereupon we broke off our writing in the register until after the entrance of the princes into the church.

"After their Royal Highnesses had left the church I went in again in order to obtain a place for myself on the lowest step of the sanctuary. Meanwhile the church had filled up still more. Oppressive heat and troublesome flies disturbed one's interior recollection. After a short address from the pulpit a priest began to recite the Way of the Cross; all the people who surrounded me tried to kneel down, although there was hardly room to stand. In the throng, that made one uneasy, one was kicked on all sides, so that it was impossible to pray or remain recollected. At the end of the prayers, after the Fourth Station, a few priests began the hymn, Perdon, O Dios mio. I was already in great anxiety lest I should miss the train to Santander; I kept on looking at the time more and more often. There was not a trace of devotion left in me. During the last third of the Way of the Cross I raised my eyes again to Christ and noticed forthwith clear, distinct, and actual changes in the countenance. From the time before the Agony, in which the figure is represented, it passes through the Agony itself with all the typical appearances of the Hippocratic Face; the nose becomes more pointed, the lips are drawn together and become blue, and then gradually come open; the cheeks appear paler, the cheek-bones project more and more and become more blue. The whole sight affected me as greatly as if I had never seen anyone die. In the whole of my medical practice nothing has ever made such a deep impression on me, not even the sight of the first corpse which I saw as a young student lying in the operating theatre on the table, with shaved head and cut eye-lashes.

" I admit and swear that I observed these changes on the coun-

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tenance of Christ without the least doubt, during the last Stations of the Way of the Cross, therefore during a long time, in spite of the fact that my thoughts were diverted owing to the perpetual disturbances, and because it was getting late and I was anxious as to whether I should be able to get from the church to the station in fifteen minutes. At last I had to make up my mind to depart, and tried to push my way through the sanctuary, with a lively regret at having to leave the wonderful Christ and the church. The leave-taking grieved me greatly. One would have to do violence to one's reason and have a very great desire to reject my opinion before one could believe, after all I have said, that I, who have nothing to do with psychopathy, should have been subject to suggestion in order to see what I was not expecting. Moreover, I was not less favoured than the other people, whose number amounted to about 100 on that day. Among them there was also a doctor from Pravia who watched, with a field-glass in his hand, the moving of the lips, as if Christ were speaking, and also the movement of the Head and the drops of blood running down, which

were quite clearly to be seen near the ear."

It would likewise be foolish and childish to think, in connection with this and other similar testimonies, of the attempts at explanation by suggestion, long since subdued.

II.

When D. Jesus Mogro del Hoyo, the doctor at the hospital of the mountaineers in Saltocabello, near Castro Urdiales, had read the letter in which his friend Arenaza asserted that he had been present at the miracle of Limpias, he wrote back to him saying how ridiculous he was making himself in the eyes of the cultured world by corroborating such folly and deception with his signature. When the two friends met soon afterwards they of course argued about it, while each one, however, held his view to be correct. Naturally the sceptical sneer of the doctor vexed Arenaza, but only served to strengthen his conviction, so that at last he challenged del Hoyo to go himself some time with him to Limpias, in order to assure himself of the facts.

Although the latter at first refused the invitation, he finally did go with him to Limpias on the 18th of May, 1919. In the morning he watched the crucifix for more than an hour, but saw nothing, whereby his scepticism was all the more confirmed. During the midday meal he began again to discuss the matter with Arenaza.

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In the afternoon he went to the church again . * . and saw the miracle* In the witness book that lies in the sacristy he wrote and signed the following noteworthy declaration :

44 I declare (after having disbelieved those who assured me of it just beforehand) that I saw Christ open and close His Mouth, as if He were saying a word of one syllable, and look steadfastly at me, and His Face alter, becoming distorted and showing wrinkles* That was no optical delusion, for this morning I observed it for an hour with the field-glasses from various parts of the church. Now I have seen it and that without physical fatigue of the eyes, for in the morning I had contemplated it (the Crucifix) attentively during the whole of the service, but could not get the Christ to look at me and also without psychical influence, for I was calm, before and at my entry into the church, and above all because I did not want to believe. JESUS DEL HOYO.

" May 18th, 1919."

III.

A further report of the physician Dr. D. Maximiliano Orts, who has been practising in Pravia since 1878, and holds the office of a Subdelegado de la Medicina (Subdelegate of Medicine), is published by the newspaper El Diario Montañés, of the 3rd of August, 1919 :

44 At the pressing request of the Archpriest of Pravia and urged by my family, with whom I was visiting the watering-place of Lierganes, I joined a group of pilgrims that went from this village to Limpias on the 13th of this month. I did not in the least like doing so, as I invariably feel an irresistible aversion to taking part in any such public arrangements, whether they are of a religious or secular nature.

44 On entering the church, which was the aim of our journey, I found it crowded to excess, which came to me as a first disappointment. First of all I spent a whole tedious hour waiting, which the pilgrims filled up with their prayers.

" When the church had emptied itself somewhat I went in, and with the help of opera-glasses studied the general impression of the crucifix, especially noticing the * breakers * which man's art of observation must avoid in order not to fall into error. I found myself, however, in such a throng of people and was so pushed and annoyed that I left the church by way of the sacristy, in order to breathe a little fresh air outside. I protested to the conductor

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of the pilgrims from our watering-place against this lack of order, and declared to him that it was my irrevocable design not to go back into the church again, ... As with so many things in life this resolution, however, was not carried out either.

44 My wife, too, found it impossible to say her prayers, and intended to repeat them later, before we left. So that we should not be separated from one another in the crowd, she begged me to accompany her on her visit to the church, and it is only thanks to this circumstance that I also saw the miracle.

44 In the church I took up a position this time in the centre of the nave, about six yards in front of the chancel. ... In order to satisfy my curiosity, I wished to make an anatomical study of the neck. As I was considering the musculus sterno-cleido-mastoideus, I saw, to my astonishment, a red drop of blood behind the right ear, that wormed its way down, exactly like the little trickle of blood that a leech sucks out when placed for therapeutical reasons in the regio mastoidea; this stream of blood spread itself out until it reached the lock of hair which the artist has put in that place, and there it was dispersed. When the blood had disappeared, the skin that it had moistened became clean once more. The surprise that I felt at this observation was followed at once by a feeling of inward vexation, for I feared to have been guilty of hallucination, which is unpardonable at my age and after my long medical practice. I am a good Catholic, but no fanatic. Fatigued by the anomaly of what I had seen, I rested, and reflected, and again looked up in the hope that the phenomenon would now have vanished; but it was not so. The blood shone and flowed afresh; I compared it with the blood that welled out of the wound in the left hand, and then with that which flowed down from the right side of the breast. The comparison showed me that this blood was black and painted, whereas the other was red and mobile.

" Although my mind was much exercised by the strange apparition, I still did not wish to acknowledge the reality of it, but tried to tranquillise myself with the assumption that it was the reflection from a streak of red paint which the artist had put on the inner part of the lock of hair, although I could not confirm this. In order to divert my attention I turned my eyes away from the neck, and directed them to the temples, where I saw grey hair glistening with copious sweat. A few moments later there appears round the hair, in a circle about an inch wide, a dark shadow which covers the whole breadth of the forehead and becomes dark blue; presently this

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colour gets brighter, then turns red and changes itself into red blood, which begins to move, and in the same way as on the neck it is soaked up by the hair, that after this proceeding remains grey and glossy.

" This second vision, which was repeated and took me unawares, made a much deeper impression on me. However, as my reason struggled against such a mysterious phenomenon, and had never yet been influenced by auto-suggestion, I determined to account for this singular occurrence, in order to bring the truth to light. I went into a side-chapel from whence I should see the above-mentioned lock of hair in a vertical position. If the line of red paint, which I suspected, was on the front edge of it, it was 4 physically impossible for me to see the blood on the neck, and if this was still the case, then the grounds for the acceptance of an optical illusion were destroyed.

" But the riddle was not solved : the phenomenon on the neck, as well as on the temples, was repeated, as often as I looked up and in an identical manner, so that I was convinced, and involuntarily, though quite naturally, I cried out: Here there is no possible doubt; it is blood !

" At this cry my faithful companion Leopoldo Mateo and various ladies hastened towards me, and to them I related what had happened to me, and as I was attracting general attention to myself I separated from them, and mingled with other groups which were standing apart; but from all sides, wherever I looked from, the apparition renewed itself.

" Then I went out of the church and waited for my wife, and began to think once more over everything, but to every objection that I raised, I had to give myself the same peremptory answer. Gradually I calmed down, and after a lengthy resistance could not avoid conviction any longer.

44 I will not prolong this extensive description any further, as it should be unnecessary for educated and unprejudiced folk, if they take note of the strictly analytical method which I have followed in order to establish the truth. For such as explain everything incomprehensible by * suggestion/ it is to no purpose anyhow. For sceptics it is entirely superfluous, for they do not value honesty in others.

44 I am a Christian, and as such I swear that the foregoing relation adheres strictly to the truth, and that the careful tests to which I subjected my observations have procured me the firm and unalterable

conviction of their reality.

MAXIMILIAN ORTS,

" PRAVIA, " Municipal Physician of Pravia since 1878,

44 July aStfz, 1919." and Subdelegate of Medicine.

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IV.

The doctor D. Antonio Gutierrez of Villalon de Campos entered the following testimony in the witness book in the sacristy of Limpias on August 16th, 1919:

44 As I contemplated the Santo Cristo to-day, the 16th of August, 1919, in the sanctuary of the church of Limpias, at a quarter to one, I had the good fortune and indescribable joy of seeing, from the left side of the sanctuary, for about five minutes, how the Figure first lowered its gaze in my direction, and then in two or three seconds raised it again. One saw then only the pale sclera of the eye-ball, which was of a yellowish-white colour, while the pupils quite disappeared under the upper eyelids. Then Christ moved His Lips, in fact closed His Mouth, which was more opened when He moved His Eyes. The first look that He turned upon me felt to me like one of pity, as if He wished to tell me that I should one day be good, but in order to attain that, I must improve now. I saw this apparition with indescribable joy; I do not know at all how to describe the feelings that governed me from that moment. May God grant to many the grace of seeing this as I did, so that they may also confess it publicly. How shall I explain what I saw ? I can find no words either to tell of it or to describe it; one feels such infinite joy that one only thinks and judges through faith."

V.

Dr. med. Sr. Fernandez de Alcalde reports his visit to Limpias at the end of August, 1919, in the Correspondencia de Espana as follows :

44 I was just about to leave my place in front of the first rows of the faithful, without my wish to see something having been fulfilled. For the last time I looked up at the Figure of the Santo Cristo with its slightly squinting eyes, and the mouth that in the greatest pain will say the words: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? Suddenly I saw the Eyes as if obscured by blood, and at both corners of the Mouth I recognised the same red colour. Persuaded that I was free from any psychical influence, but thinking that my observation was perhaps to be ascribed to my relative distance from the crucifix, I procured a field-glass in order to set aside any possible delusion by using it. But the exact opposite was the case ! Now I could not only recognise the above-mentioned reddish colour

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clearly, but saw also that the eye-balls, especially the one on the

right-hand, brightly lighted side, made a rotatory movement upwards on its horizontal axis, whereby the white colour of the thin, hard sclera could be seen distinctly.

44 This observation, from which suggestion was entirely excluded, was made by many other people with me, both before and after me. Others declared that Christ was not looking up to heaven but was gazing fixedly into their faces, to their amazement.

" In the eyes of many who were standing round me I saw an expression of fear, emotion, and astonishment, as they watched the climax of the Suffering of the Redeemer, which, after the lapse of nearly 2,000 years, was being repeated here so publicly. From some one heard words of the greatest rapture, and from others, on the contrary, words of the most profound regret ; among them mingled the complaints of those who, in spite of their ardent desire, were denied a vision of the miracle.

" I was an eye-witness to everything that I have stated here, with all the accompanying details, and reproduce it as I saw it. I will take good care not to say a word too much with regard to the views of opponents. I am firmly convinced that we are dealing here with things which originate with God, the nature of which remains completely hidden from mankind/

VI.

Statement of the doctor D. Eduardo Perez y Perez of Villarin de Campos (Zamora), on the 19th of October, 1919, taken from the witness book in the sacristy of Limpias :

" Shortly after Mass I saw that a cloud covered the feet of the sacred Figure, and gradually rose until it enveloped the whole body. At this moment the Countenance of the Redeemer shone and remained visible in bright light for several minutes. Then the cloud receded until the sacred Body was again entirely to be seen in its natural condition."

In the afternoon of this day the same doctor had another vision which he reported in a letter, on the 31st of October, 1919, published in the paper El Correo de Zamora :

44 For the simple reason that I am a doctor, though possibly the most incompetent of all, everyone has the right to require me to express my opinion. Imagine what a position I am in, if I am to make a declaration about the mystery of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia in Limpias, because I am one of those whom the Physician of

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all physicians has specially favoured. In order to obviate any erroneous or even blasphemous interpretation of my statement, which I would like to make to my patients, fellow-citizens, relatives, friends, and others desirous of knowledge, I prefer to make my assertions in writing, with the request that it be borne in mind that I am neither a sculptor nor a theologian*

" On the 6th of October, 1919, as I was praying in the parish church of Limpias before the crucifix of the Santo Cristo, He looked at me lovingly for nearly a minute. During this time I could quite calmly discover the thoughts that I was to understand in the mimic speech of this animated face. I had the impression that this look was meant to say to me, How little you can do, how little you are worth; you must make every sacrifice with determination, and so on." At this the animated Figure slowly withdrew His gaze from me as if to show me and to say: 4 This is how the sacrifice is to be made/ At the same moment Christ raised His Head, which then remained in quite a peaceful attitude. The muscles of the neck relaxed . . . the eyes were at the same time wide open and turned upwards . . . there ensued a violent inhalation with straining of the muscles of the neck, whereby the musculus cleido-mastoideus especially stood out, and furthermore the muscoli pectorales, the scalenus anterior, and the accessory respiratory muscles, with a considerable dilatation of the intercostal spaces, as is the case, for example, at the last struggle after mortal wounds. . . . For a moment He appeared on the point of death . . . then He resumed His customary expression, as the artist has given it to the figure.

44 The proceedings that went on in my inner self were evoked by the changes which I actually witnessed on the crucifix. I flatly deny any hallucination, illusion, suggestion, or auto-suggestion, or any other secret power in nature that could be cited. The coming to life that I saw in the figure could only have been brought about by a miracle of God's Mercy, which was vouchsafed to me in my wretchedness. I must add that during the whole of that afternoon I saw the figure a reddish colour. The following day it was a yellowish or lead colour, as with a dying person. The next day two groups of pilgrims arrived in Limpías, one from Cáceres, the other from the province of Santander. Among the participators there were again a few who saw the miracle. I myself saw nothing in particular on that day."

Here follows a description of the crucifix, after which Dr. Perez continues:

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" What can I say in explanation of these wonderful events ? What doctor to-day, in the twentieth century, can explain the instantaneous cure of paralysed lepers, especially as leprosy is still incurable to this day, and above all in the paralytic stage of this disease, when the channels of the spinal marrow and the parts of the brain that are the motive centres of the paralysed muscles are already attacked ? Let us assume that our organism were capable of being repaired, like, for instance, a machine or a cart, of which a wheel or axle-tree is broken. These parts of the cart could also not be repaired in a moment ; one would first have to prepare a wheel or an axle in exchange for the worn-out one, and afterwards to fix these pieces, for which time, wood, and so forth, would be needed. How much more then would time and spare parts be necessary for human organs ? Once these are used up, God alone can repair them, as, for example, when He raised the body of Lazarus, that was already in decomposition. The simplest and most correct answer to this query as to the explanation of these happenings is summed up in the Latin word : Nescio ! * I do not know !

" The more I might endeavour with our concrete cases to find a satisfactory elucidation of the miracle which I was privileged by God to witness, the less should I content my readers with my long-winded, inadequate expositions. If the miracles that the eye witnesses in Limpías see are performed on the sculpture as such, why are they not seen by all who look at the crucifix ?

" If, however, the appearances mentioned are brought about on the figure in such a way that in a moment the vision before the eyes of the spectators vanishes and is replaced by another living one, then we should have to account for two other miracles besides the preceding one. . . *

44 In order to avoid these difficulties I prefer not to venture on the solution of a problem which cannot be explained from a human standpoint."

VII.

At the same time as Dr. Perez, D. Jose Nunez y Soto, physician and surgeon, general practitioner in Trujillo, was also in Limpías and had joined the pilgrimage from Cáceres. He also asserts in the witness book, on October 27th, 1919, that he saw that the Santo Cristo had completely closed His mouth, so that the lips were touching, and that after some minutes they resumed their natural position.

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VIII.

Statement of the Portuguese doctor D. Francisco Maria Namorado of Vigo, in the witness book at Limpías.

" I did not need to see in order to believe, as for many years I have prayed to Christ as the only begotten Son of God, Who came upon this earth. At 10 a.m. I saw the mouth of the holy Figure open

itself; at 10.30, at the Elevation of the Sacred Host, at that very moment when I was making an interior act of consecration to the Redeemer, I felt in my whole being a violent, inexplicable, and unforgettable sensation that established the conviction I had reached during the apparition at ten o'clock. During High Mass at twelve o'clock I saw the eyes of the Figure turn in the direction of where I stood. All known attempts at a natural explanation are of no avail to evoke in me the slightest doubt as to what I saw. I am quite certain that it was not auto-suggestion."

DC.

Testimony of D. Armando Penamaria Alvarez, physician to the municipal hospital in Fonsagrada (Lugo).

On May 4th, 1920, he wrote in the witness book of the church of Limpias as follows :

" This morning I saw clearly, distinctly, and positively, without any doubt, and without there being any question of auto-suggestion or optical delusion, that the eyes of Our Lord moved in various directions, and were turned upon me for some time. I saw how the mouth opened and closed, how it was twisted to the right and the left, how the chest raised itself in the act of breathing, the colour of the body changed until it was the colour of lead; I saw the mouth fill with blood, which flowed over the under-lip in short, a death-agony with all the symptoms of approaching dissolution.

44 As an extraordinary observation I ought to add that my inner self, in spite of this vision, was aware of deep, painful emotion only at the very moment when Our Lord expired, that during the whole of the remaining considerable length of time, however, I experienced indescribable interior peace. But at the moment I mention, the pain was so intense that I cannot compare it with any other that I have ever endured in my life.

44 As I intend to study and describe all my observations more in detail, I will end my testimony here in the meantime. I can answer

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for the truth of it and swear to it on my honour as a man and by my faith as a Catholic/

In the course of the same day the editor of the Diario Montañés had repeated opportunities of speaking more particularly to this doctor, who was always surrounded by numerous people. He had to relate his impressions of the wonderful manifestations to everyone. In the afternoon the editor asked him if he wished perhaps to alter or correct anything in the evidence that he had undersigned in the morning.

" * On the contrary/ he answered; I endorse it all, and could, indeed, amplify it. In La Montaña, a fortnightly paper that appears in Fonsagrada, and of which I edit the scientific portion, I shall publish a detailed account/

To prove to us that he was free from any auto-suggestion, D. Armando Penamaria owned with the greatest frankness that on entering the church of Limpias he had at first been very much disappointed. He thought to find in the church magnificent interior display, and in reality he saw everywhere only comfortless poverty. In the seventeen years of his practice he had seen many men lying in the pangs of death, but never had anything made such a painful impression on him as the death-agony and the death that he could watch so plainly on the Santo Cristo of Limpias.

" Even the death of the most beloved member of my family did not cause me such grief. There was one instant when I begged the Crucified One with my whole heart to spare me the awful sight of His sufferings, for nothing further was necessary to make me believe in His miracles. I turned my eyes away from the sacred Figure. When I again directed them to the Crucified One without wishing to see any more, He continued to unfold before me the whole course of His uttermost death-agony/

Later on he declared: " I call your attention editors draw their conclusions from everything to the fact that in political matters I am inclined to be a Liberal-Democrat. My political views are, however, incompatible with my religious opinions. If, however, anyone, though I hope they will not do so, should wish to oblige me to make a decision, I should without hesitation vote for my Catholic, apostolic, and Roman faith, which from to-day has become still more firmly rooted in me. In order to vouch for what I have seen to-day in Limpias, I am prepared to dissolve partnership with the greatest atheists, even if I knew that it would cost me my

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life. After my return home I will complete my evidence on the miracle of Limpias, and invite the Free Thinkers to a conference, which I should like to hold publicly, possibly in one of the larger towns. From now on you shall find in me a collaborator who will propagate in Lugo knowledge of the miracles of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia; perhaps I shall organise a pilgrimage to Limpias."

44 I do not need to say/ the editor adds to his newspaper report, 44 with what a hearty handshake I took leave of this determined advocate of the miracle of the Santo Cristo. We express to him in these lines once again our sincerest good wishes. The physician of Fonsagrada was the hero of the day in Limpias yesterday/

In May, 1920, Dr. Penamaria published in the paper La Montana in Fonsagrada (Lugo) the following statement:

" I admit first of all that never before has a pen so quivered in my hand as to-day, never have I so desired to possess the talent of an author as at this hour. I should like effectively to awaken in the souls of my readers an accurate and complete impression of what I have observed on the venerated crucifix of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, so that even the slightest uncertainty should be excluded. I wish that you could experience with me the sublime feeling that thrilled me at the wonderful revelation and the glorious sight of the miraculous manifestation. Oh, if only I could convince you of the truly supernatural, the really overpowering marvel that the Master in His infinite mercy showed me at Limpias. I do not fail to appreciate that the realisation of this wish is far beyond human powers. But on that account to keep secret the grace received, not to give any public testimony of it, not to recount the miracle seen, with all the means at my command, I should consider un pardonable ingratitude and abominable cowardice, which I should never cease to regret.

" So I will try, then, to reproduce my thoughts as they come into my mind, without rhetorical embellishment and without expressing myself in an extravagant style. Of course, I am quite aware that I cannot describe it exactly as it really was. All the same, I shall endeavour to describe, with all sincerity and humility, what went on in my innermost self, with the one desire to contribute towards the greater glory of Christ, Our Lord.

" Limpias ! . . . Who has not heard over and over again lately of this picturesque little town in the province of Santander ? For-

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gotten and unknown until the end of March last year, its name is pronounced to-day with interest and veneration. The place itself I cannot describe to you, although I stayed there long enough, nor its parish church now become so famous, which, in the Rucoba quarter, keeps guard, in sublime earnest, over the image of the crucified Saviour. For, of my whole journey, only the remembrance of the experience I am going to describe to you thrusts itself continually into the foreground. Everything else that I saw and noticed, just as much on the incomparably lovely coast of Asturias as in the famous Covadonga, so rich in elevating memories of events in those times when religion and the nation were celebrating their most brilliant victories; in Gijon with its successful industries; in Oviedo the fashionable as in hospitable and beautiful Santander

in short, everything recedes behind the impressive, miraculous spectacle that God Himself in His compassion offered to an unworthy and miserable sinner, in order to draw him to Himself through the sight of His painful death-agony, to stimulate him to repentance while promising him forgiveness.

" I had often heard this miracle mentioned, and without denying its possibility I naturally received the reports about it with reserve, I might almost say with an indulgent smile at those who, in matters of religion, take the most unlikely and fantastic things for granted. There has been, in the last ten years, in this connection, so much fraud and deception, of which one read and heard, and which with wise care was invariably disclosed and refuted by the Church so that it could do no further harm.

44 About Limpias, however, the Very Rev. Bishop of Pinar del Rio expressed his opinion, and corroborated the miracle, of which he informed his diocesans in a most feeling and sublimely written pastoral letter. Other prominent prelates, priests, officers, doctors, sailors, lawyers, and engineers in short, men of all kinds, believers, sceptics, and the ungodly have published their opinions about Limpias. These witnesses are already to be counted by thousands, and on that account nowadays one must either contest the possibility of the miracle, whereby one would be denying and destroying the omnipotence of God and at the same time would be disputing the integrity and sound common sense of so many eye-witnesses, or one must unreservedly admit that the miracle is an actual fact.

44 I believed, therefore, without doubting or wavering, and went with the second pilgrimage from Gijon to Limpias, not indeed to see in order to believe I declare once again that I had no need of

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that but to throw myself on my knees before the God of Mercy and Love and why should I not admit it, as it is true ? in order to take a holiday trip, which I had well earned by my extensive work. I wanted to get to know the whole of the Cantabrian coast : Gijon, Santander, Bilbao, San Sebastian, and so on. I confess all this quite openly, for although I am a man full of faith, yet I am no fanatic who will swallow at once everything that is put before him. On the contrary, I am inclined rather to judicious doubting than to credulity, so that even to-day I subject many of the things that are considered as miracles at Lourdes and Limpias to a severe examination, and if I find for any one of them any natural explanation possible for human power, I reject it forthwith.

44 Meanwhile I went to Limpias in a strong, clear frame of mind, not suspecting that I should see what I did. What is more, I was convinced that I should see nothing and also wished to see nothing. My friends can certify this, to whom I had often repeated this wish, perhaps because I was afraid of aggravating the heart trouble from which I have suffered for some time, by the impression that a manifestation might make on me. With complete peace of mind and quite master of my brains, my nerves, and my inner self, therefore, I entered the parish church of Limpias on May 4th, towards 9 a.m., when there were barely a hundred people still in the church.

" The first impression that I received was one of grievous disappointment, for neither the inside of the church nor its decoration nor lighting corresponded to those I had hoped to find there. From what I had read, and from postcards I had seen, I had formed quite a different idea of it. More out of curiosity than religious fervour, in great suspense but quite calm, I turned my eyes towards the famous crucifix of the Santo Cristo. I gazed at the high altar on which, in front of a quaint altar-piece dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, that represents the town of Jerusalem in bas-relief, the Cross rises majestically with the wonderful carving of the Santo Cristo, while on either side the sorrowful Mother and St. John stand in the attitude of prayer. Already now the miracle was beginning to be revealed to me. The figure of the Santo Cristo, that I knew from various photographs, has the eyes open and turned up towards heaven. The figure that I saw here, however, had its eyes quite closed. I thought at once that that might well be an optical delusion, perhaps owing to my position in relation to the electric light that illumined its face. For that reason I went

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more to the right side of the altar, then I betook myself to the left side, then to the back of the church, but the figure of the Master, seen from such different points, invariably retained its closed eyes. Finally, I began to doubt whether this was really the wonderful crucifix, and was about to ask a pious man who was praying near me with the greatest devotion, but hesitated, as I did not want to disturb him in his contemplation. Then I determined to compare the crucifix with a picture postcard that I kept in my letter-case. When I had looked at the photograph and turned to look at the altar again, to my greatest amazement, I noticed that now the Santo Cristo had opened His Eyes and was looking fixedly towards the right. I went at once to this side and tried to place myself so that His look fell on me. And actually, as if Christ wanted to put an end to my unbelief, He gazed at me steadily with a bright, clear, and expressive look, which, however, was still not sufficient to convince me. I still feared that all this might be a passing hallucination, and so changed my place several times. Although I altered my viewpoint continually the gaze of the Saviour still always followed me. Then I knelt in the centre of the church to pray, ashamed and humbled. But I could not, or rather I had better say I did not know how I ought to pray. For that peaceful, gentle, quiet, and serene regard, in which not grave reprimand but love was reflected, intoxicated me in such a way and caused me such unaccustomed bliss, that at this moment I deemed even prayer impracticable. All my strength and senses were arrested by His look.

" I believe this revelation would have sufficed; for me at least it was sufficient to convince me that I had seen something miraculous on that crucifix. In spite of that I wanted to have my belief strengthened, my conviction corroborated, and so I begged Our Lord earnestly for a still greater, clearer, and more distinctive proof, for something quite extraordinary, that would leave no scope to further doubt, and would give me positive grounds for His miracle, so that I might also proclaim it to all and sundry, and defend it against every opponent, even at the risk of losing my life.

" This request seemed pleasing to Our Lord. ... A moment later His Mouth was twisted sharply to the left, His glassy, pain-filled Eyes gazed up to Heaven with the sad expression of those eyes that look and yet do not see. His lead-coloured Lips appeared to tremble; the muscles of the neck and breast were contracted and made breathing forced and laboured. His truly Hippocratic

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features showed the keenest pangs of death. His Arms seemed to be trying to get loose from the cross with convulsive backward and forward movements, and showed clearly the piercing agony that the nails caused in His Hands at each movement. Then followed the indrawing of a breath, then a second ... a third ... I do not know how many . . . always with painful oppression; then a frightful spasm, as with someone who is suffocating and struggling for air, at which the Mouth and Nose were opened wide. Now follows an outpouring of blood, fluid, frothing, that runs over the under-lip, and which the Saviour sucks up with His bluish, quivering tongue, that He slowly and gently passes two or three times in succession over the lower lip; then an instant of slight repose, another slow breath . . . now the Nose becomes pointed, the Lips are drawn together rhythmically, and then extend, the bluish cheek-bones project, the chest expands and contracts violently, after which His Head sinks limply on His breast, so that the back of the Head can be seen distinctly. Then ... He expires ! . . .

44 A maddening pain shot through my soul at this moment. How shall I describe it ? There is no other pain to which I can compare it. It is not natural grief at all, which could be relieved by tears or calmed by being communicated to others; it is a violent, stifling, psychical pain that I cannot describe. It penetrates into one's inner self, makes one's very soul contract convulsively, and paralyses one's nerves.

44 I have unfortunately, or perhaps it is fortunately, seen those who were dearest to me die in my arms, but I have never experienced grief like that which I felt at this sad spectacle. And what an inexplicable contradiction! Whereas the affliction that the death of a loved one causes leaves for a long time in the heart a wound that bleeds and smarts, here there remains an interior feeling of rapture, of peace of mind and sweet repose, that might be compared to the awakening out of a heavy, oppressive dream into the reality of a happy release.

44 I have tried to describe in outline what I saw and felt before the crucifix of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, during more than two hours. I saw more than this. By word of mouth I might perhaps be able to portray it, because I could accompany my words by gestures which often speak a more eloquent language. For me to reproduce it in writing is quite impossible. What I saw I proclaim openly, and uphold it without foolish boasting but with the inspiration of one who is convinced.

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" Explanations ? Commentaries ? Ah, how easily one demands them, and how hard they are to give ! Who can explain the supernatural, that only finds a solution in the light of faith, when there are still so many physical, chemical, and biological facts to investigate and to elucidate ? Who can penetrate the plans of the Almighty ?

" One thing is clear, certain, and incontestable : that the figure of wood moves its eyes, mouth, head, and arms; that it breathes, sweats, bleeds, changes colour in short, comes to life. For such a fact there are only one . . . two , . three words: Miracle ! Miracle ! Miracle !

" I know very well that in this world of pseudo-philosophers and unbelievers there is talk of psychoneurosis and suggestion in their various forms. But could 15,000 people be influenced by suggestion ? No; I not only do not agree to that, but deny it emphatically. There are enough scientific arguments put forward to crush to death that is the right expression anyone who would try to uphold such an assertion. But at present I will not go any further into the matter, although I do not refuse to, should anyone press me to do so. To-day I only wanted to speak of myself, and affirm solemnly that I did not suffer from hallucination nor suggestion of any sort I am quite sure of that to this day."

X.

Report of the experiences of the physician, D. Pedro Cuesta, of Paradinas de San Juan:

" In August, 1920, the married couple D. Emilio Pescador Zurita and Da. Amalia Cuesta, of Aldeaseca de la Frontera, in the province of Salamanca, undertook a long journey. The brother of the wife, D. Pedro Cuesta, a physician who has his practice in Paradinas de San Juan, in the district of Penaranda, accompanied them. On Monday, August 23rd, they arrived in Sardinero. As they wanted to go on through the Cantabrian mountains, Da. Amalia proposed that they should make a day's excursion to Limpias, where she wanted to have Mass said for a particular intention at the altar of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia. It was not the wish to see the miracle, but only the fulfilment of this pious intention that decided the matter, and they very readily agreed to her proposal. On Wednesday, August 25th, they arrived in Limpias, where the Father Prior of the Capuchin monastery of Montehano, Fr. Benito

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Maria de Ojedo, celebrated the desired holy Mass on the very same day. The above-mentioned doctor also joined the excursion and the visit to the Mass. Contrary to all expectation the husband and wife saw a wonderful manifestation at the crucifix during the Mass, which the husband afterwards testified in the witness book

as follows : 4 We arrived at half-past ten in the morning and made the promised visit. At eleven o'clock I noticed the beginning of the changes on the body of the Santo Cristo. First I saw a dark colour like that of mortification on the breast, neck, and face, and then the whole body took on a yellowish, corpse-like colour. Finally it became deep red, while the face showed a serene expression, whereas before, with the two other colours, it had looked very sad. When, later, at half-past twelve, the Father was saying the holy Mass, I saw, from the Consecration to the Communion, that Christ looked many times straight ahead and then towards the left side. Many times the pupils of the eyes disappeared entirely, and twice I saw the chin with a natural beard. I noticed all that clearly, just as well by the light of the burning arc-lamps as by ordinary day light/

" During the holy Mass the doctor also contemplated the crucifix from various parts of the church. He saw in it nothing unusual, and at last, after long, attentive observation, came to the conclusion that the miracles of which so much was said could not be possible. With people who testified to such manifestations this could only be attributed to auto-suggestion, by which he intentionally but unsuccessfully tried to influence himself. This opinion soon settled itself in his mind so that he considered the statements of the alleged eye-witnesses as to miracles to be quite absurd fancies. According to his conviction such miracles were quite exceptional.

44 As he noticed that his sister had also come under the, to him, incontestable hallucination, he tried to free her from it by gestures and short indignant utterances. Even the sacredness of the place did not prevent him from expressing his displeasure in this way. When they left the church later the married couple took great pains to persuade him of the reality of their observations. In vain, alas ! Their assurances only confirmed his own point of view and made him candidly obstinate. He poured out on them all his irony that amounted to overt derision. Finally, he appealed to their conscience, and alluded to the gravity with which one should treat such matters. The argument even lasted during the midday meal which they took at the nearest hotel, where the Superior of Monte-

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hano, the chaplain of the church of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, and a canon from Canarias, also dined.

" Dr. Cuesta kept on maintaining his opinion with such determination that the remaining customers at the other tables also became attentive. In particular, the doctor showed his annoyance at the fact that his relatives had confirmed their testimony in the witness book by an oath. He said they had made themselves ridiculous by that, and had also drawn him into it as well because he had been so weak as to accept their invitation and to accompany them. Then, when he turned to his sister and was about to attack her testimony, her husband answered for her and announced to his brother-in-law: I have undersigned it, will you doubt my evidence too ? * You are hen-pecked/ retorted Dr. Cuesta, and it is enough if your wife asserts something for you to trump it without considering the results, as I do/

" As the doctor continued to declare that all who spoke of miracles here exposed themselves to the most ignominious ridicule, another customer joined in the discussion who likewise felt taken aback by this utterance. The argument became more and more lively. The Father Prior of Montehano, the canon from Canarias, and the chaplain of the parish church of the Santo Cristo, D. Gonzalo Lastra, also took part in it. Especially with the latter the doctor seemed to be quite angry. In order not to let things come to extremities he went out of the dining-room and turned his steps towards the church square. The husband and his wife remained behind in the hotel, quite ashamed of the general annoyance that their brother had caused. They tried to excuse him, but expressed also their deep regret at his blindness. Painfully agitated, the sister cried out: * Santo Cristo de la Agonia, I have come to beg a favour of You; oh, grant me the grace that my brother may believe !

44 A short time afterwards someone brought her a message in the hotel that her brother was standing outside the church door and

was feeling unwell. This information disquieted the married pair; the lady in particular was very much astonished, because her brother had never suffered the slightest indisposition.

" When the doctor, indeed, had left the hotel and was going past the church door he suddenly felt himself impelled to go into the church again, in order to examine the artistic worth of the crucifix, so that at the same time he could look at it attentively for a good long time; and he gave in to this strange impulse. When

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he entered the church a few devout persons were praying before the crucifix* He thought to himself: These poor women are now also under the influence of a contemplative ecstasy, out of which a hallucination will then naturally result, as with my sister. Quite certainly the greater number of them will finally see the miracle/ After he had surveyed them all with a contemptuous look, he directed his eyes to the crucifix, and noticed that the mouth of the figure of Christ was drawn awry as with a dying man, and that the eyes moved with an expression of the greatest agony. He turned his eyes away from the figure and fixed them again on the pious women. He was surprised that none of them betrayed any excitement at all. Then his eyes met those of another near relation of his who had followed his steps. The latter now remarked a certain agitation in him, and asked him by signs if he saw anything. The doctor answered with an indignant negative shake of the head and went to another place. Again he looked up at the crucifix, on which, to his greatest astonishment, the same manifestations as before were repeated. The same dumb-show ensued between the two relatives again the doctor expressed his categorical denial. Rather be a martyr than confess ! he thought to himself, and began, for the first time in his life, to feel unwell, and that as a result of the sensation that these observations of the crucifix evoked in him.

" As he himself acknowledged later, he thought further: 4 I will not bend. After the row that I began in the hotel and after the general notice that I attracted to my relations, I will not start a Credo now. They shall never find out what I now see. In any case I will not give the monk and those priests and, above all, the chaplain, the satisfaction of seeing my defeat. How could I tear down the theories that I have advocated whilst referring to my authority as a physician ? Why, I should lower my position/ 4 In the morning/ so he owned later, I had given myself over to auto-suggestion without experiencing its influence; in the afternoon I was aware of it and refused to allow myself to succumb to it. What I saw was no auto-suggestion and could not be, for I saw on the crucifix revelations of which I had never heard anything. As I am assured in Limpias, my observations put in the shade every thing that has been seen hitherto/

" We asked him: What, then, are these new revelations ? and he readily stated the following : * When I fixed my gaze for the third or fourth time on the figure I noticed that the fleshy parts entirely disappeared, so that only the skin still remained, a skeleton on

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which I could have made anatomical studies. The head was completely dried up, until it, like the skin that I had seen, totally vanished. After I had not seen the figure at all for some time it reappeared, but as if mummified, until later on it was also restored by degrees in its fleshy parts. Yes, I observed clearly the formation of a hypertrophy (enlargement) of the head, which then also extended to the remaining parts of the body. Each of these apparitions was repeated twice. At the last stage of the second development I could no longer control myself, but cried out in terror and fled out of the church. A cowardly fear had taken possession of me, whereas I had never before known fear let my description not be set down to exaggeration I felt fear that was intensified until it was the greatest terror. I, who was never ill, thought I should die on the spot. The instinct of self-preservation drove me out of the church, I should have had to be carried out as a corpse. So I stumbled out of the church and confessed with my whole heart to the people standing outside : " By my reputation as a physician and on my

word of honour, I take my oath to what I state herewith, and which I will also certify in the book, and am prepared to ratify with my blood namely, what you have just heard." I felt the necessity of taking some restorative, so, at the church door, I asked a girl from the little town where there was a chemist. I was highly astonished to hear from her that there was no chemist's shop in the place. " But is that possible, that there is as yet no chemist here, not even a botica ?" I asked again, whereupon the little girl answered naively, " There is a botica/ but there is not here what you named first. Look, there is D. Emilio just coming." " Who is D. Emilio ?" " Why, he is the boticario !" replied the child, quite surprised that I did not know D. Emilio. A gentleman who had listened to this dialogue, and had come in a motor-car to Limpias, invited me to get into his car and to take the medicine I wanted out of his travelling medicine-chest. I gladly accepted the invitation, and in a short time I felt well again. Tormented by remorse because of my behaviour in the morning, and on account of my conscious lies, when I obstinately denied what I was beginning to see, in the afternoon, I felt the irresistible need to clear my conscience, and now related to all who wished to listen what I had seen on the holy crucifix. If at this moment anyone had come up to me and had contradicted me on this point I should have been capable of shooting him down. (He spoke these words with such excitement that his face glowed like fire.)

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1 At first I could not make up my mind to go back into the church, for an agonising fear still governed me persistently. In the sea of divine grace in which I now floated I calmed down, nevertheless, by degrees, and considered that I need not now be afraid any longer to enter the church, above all, if I went in the company of the above-mentioned exemplary religious. So, with the latter, I re-entered the church, into which I should never have gone again otherwise, not even if a regiment of armed soldiers had accompanied me, especially not in those first minutes after I had fled out of the church/ "

The chronicler of Limpias, J. M. Aguirre Gutierrez, adds to this statement the following note : " Only yesterday I had the opportunity of conversing with Dr. Cuesta in the hotel in Sardinero, where he is lodging at the moment. All the other visitors in the hotel stood round us and listened attentively to this important report of the doctor. I came back from Limpias, he declared in conclusion, without having been able up to now to throw off the effects of the deep impression I received there. I could not eat in the evening, as these fellow-boarders of mine can aver. To-day, too, I am under the spell of the same feelings, that urge me to go to-morrow to Limpias once more and to repeat my visit to the Santo Cristo de la Agonia/ Thereupon I took my leave. After his second return to Limpias I again had the pleasure of speaking to this felicitous doctor. He told us that on his second visit he had observed nothing unusual on the wonderful crucifix; with his conviction of all that he had seen on the preceding Wednesday, this could only strengthen him. What I have told you about my experiences in Limpias/ he added at the leave-taking, you can publish with my name, profession, and place of residence; for at any time, and before all the world, I am prepared to ratify it with my blood/ "

XL

Among the pilgrims who visited the Santo Cristo from Palencia there was also a doctor, named D. Celestino Rojo, titular physician of Pinel de Arriba. He enjoys a great reputation among his colleagues, and has already published various scientific treatises in several medical journals. His evidence, which is deposited with the manager of the Diario Montanes in the following letter from Valladolid, on October 1st, 1920, deserves greater notice on that account :

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" DEAR SIR,

44 At the instigation of my dear friend, D. Eugenic Madrigal, I am writing you the following lines, in order to acquaint you with the wonderful facts of the change of colour of the Santo Cristo, which was observed at the same time as myself by many pilgrims from Palencia, in the following manner: While the priest, D. Juan Martin, of Palencia, was preaching with inspiration, and was severely criticising the dreadful and abundant sins of the present time, especially the terrible blasphemies, the violation of the sanctification of the Sabbath, luxury, and the shamelessness of women's attire, the light colour of the sacred figure changed to dark grey. Just at the moment when the speaker was uttering the sentence well known in Spain: Only half an inch deeper in the neck, and only half an inch shorter in the skirt, would result in the intervention of the police, the colour of the Christ became almost black. The strange thing was that just then the electric light was cut off from the main supply, so that both the arc-lamps near the Santo Cristo went out, while the candles went on burning on the altar. In this scanty illumination the Eyes, which before were so gentle and humble, shone with sombre fire. Their glance became stern and wrathful, so that many people begged for pardon in an impressive way, with pious ejaculations, and uttered resolutions of amendment. As at a given signal they fell on their knees. The dark colour and the stern look lasted a few minutes, until the light colouring and the mild and submissive look slowly returned. I can certify that it was a supernatural, a miraculous apparition, no optical delusion which might perhaps have been evoked by weariness of the eyes of the spectators. It came slowly and also disappeared slowly again. The fact that a material and lifeless substance changes colour so visibly, and that the eyes of a carving come to life, surpasses all natural laws, and extends into the domain of the miraculous. These revelations, in which the faithful and, perhaps with still greater effect, unbelievers and the ungodly shared, are beyond all doubt. I authorise you, sir, to make of this communication the use that seems good to you, in honour of the Saviour and for the propagation of devotion to the Santo Cristo."

XII.

Also, a medical student, D. Heriberto de la Villa, of Ribadesella, was induced to write an account of his visit to Limpias, which was published in the paper Del Pueblo Astur on July 8th, 1919. He says :

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" I do not intend to describe the magnificent Asturian pilgrimage; for cleverer pens than mine have already done so. I only wish to respond to the invitation which has been tendered to me from many sides, to make known in public the miracle that I have seen. I comply with it gladly out of gratitude for the great favour that I received from the Santo Cristo of Limpias.

" I will describe in simple words what I saw as a witness, but first declare energetically that with me any auto-suggestion is quite out of the question. For I did not believe in the miracle when I went. During the holy Mass the Very Reverend Fr. Vazquez preached a sermon. As he was saying the most impressive sentences, some ladies called out that they saw the wonderful apparition. At that I doubted still more, and established myself in my assurance that here there was suggestion or hallucination of nervous and susceptible persons, and firmly convinced of it, I went out of the church. While we were taking our midday meal my brother affirmed that he had seen the Christ move His Eyes. As I would not believe him, he invited me to go with him at once to the church, as only a few people were there. To please him I went with him, accompanied by a friend who was with us as well. As soon as I entered the church, I looked up at the Christ. I saw Him moving His Mouth as if He were speaking, and that perfectly naturally, without any artificiality. I pay greater attention, and see how He looks from one side to the other. I place myself on the right side of the church by the sacristy, and see again how He looks towards His right that is, towards the opposite side to that on which I am. Then He fixes on me a terrible look full of anger, which makes me shudder, and I cannot help but bow my head. As soon as I have overcome this impression I look up again and see how He is looking to the right, bowing His Head, and turns it further, in order to see to the right, so that I can see the Crown of Thorns from behind. Then He inclines His Head again and takes up the

position that the figure usually shows. Once again, then, He turns on me the same angry look as before, which makes such a deep impression upon me that I see myself obliged to leave the church. All this was the work of some four minutes. My interior agitation was so great that I could not possibly go back to the church again before five o'clock. Now I place myself again near the altar, look up and see that little by little the Breast and Face become dark blue, the Eyes move to the right and left, upwards and down, the Mouth opens somewhat, as if He were breathing with difficulty.

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This I saw for fifteen to twenty minutes, and noticed at the same time that, when He looked to the left, His gaze remained fixed for a longer time; then He looked up again, and when He cast His Eyes down, the eyelids gradually drooped and completely closed. At the same time the Mouth closed with an expression full of pain and resignation, which made a deep impression on me. I also noticed that above the left Eyebrow a wound formed, out of which a drop of blood flowed over the eyebrows, and remained stationary by the eyelids. After that I saw another drop of blood fall from the Crown of Thorns, and flow over the Face. I could distinctly discern it, for it was very red and contrasted with the dark blue colour of the face. Then I saw a quantity of blood drip from the Crown of Thorns on to the shoulder, but without touching the face. He opened His Mouth wide, out of which a white matter like froth welled. At this moment a Dominican Father mounted the pulpit, whereupon Christ gazed steadily at him for five or six minutes, then the Eyes and the Mouth closed, and so remained during the whole time that the Father was speaking. When the preacher ended with the words : And now, Santo Cristo, give us Thy blessing/ Christ opened His Eyes and Mouth, smiling, and bowed His Head, as if He wished to give the benediction in reality. At this precious moment someone who was standing near me asked me if I would venture to swear on oath to what I saw; at the first instant I was about to answer affirmatively, for I still saw it continuously, then, however, I restrained myself while I reflected whether it would be wise or not. Then I recognised that Christ wanted to prove to me the truth of what I saw; He opened His mouth again, out of which froth and blood streamed in great quantity, and flowed out of the corners of the mouth quite distinctly, at the same time the chin became very pale. After that He looked up, made as it were a last effort and raised His Eyes still more, so that one only saw the whites as if He had expired.

" Thereafter I believed that it was now my duty to swear upon oath to what I had seen, and I did so in the sacristy of the church/

XIII.

The medical student Rodolfo Cebeiros Lopez stated on July the 21st, 1919:

" I joined the pilgrimage from Muslera-Villacarriedo to Limpias. There were, indeed, many who took part in it, but it was not so

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favoured as the preceding one, for of the 214 persons who came from Castaneda, only four saw the apparitions.

" During the address that a priest made at the Mass, I directed my gaze to the magnificent crucifix, the beauty of which I cannot describe with words. I saw the head move towards the right side, and gaze for some time in that direction ; then it turned away to the left side, and fixed an anxious and at the same time gentle look on me. A shudder went through my whole body, I was compelled to lower my eyes. When I looked up again the head maintained the same attitude, then, however, turned to the middle of the church, directed its eyes to the preacher, and closed them at the moment that the latter begged the forgiveness of God in the name of the pilgrims of Muslera and Villacarriedo. Then the eyes opened again, and the head took up its natural position. I do not know what came over me then. Only this much can I say, that I fell down on my knees and why should I not confess it ? that I shed hot tears. During the

course of the remainder of the holy Mass, I saw nothing further; when it was finished, which seemed to me very quickly, I went out. We went to our midday meal, at which I related my experiences to my companions at table. With the greatest suspense, but also with sad mien, they listened to my account. They tried to console themselves with the hope of receiving the grace, at least in the afternoon, of seeing the apparitions. Besides myself one other young man, D. Angel Bustillo, had the privilege of seeing the miracle, only in a different fashion.

" In the afternoon, at the recital of the Rosary, I saw nothing noteworthy. During the sermon I could, however, perceive three times that the Santo Cristo bowed His Head forward and gazed at me with the same look as in the morning. Then He turned His Eyes from right to left so slowly and quietly that I could convince myself in detail of all that I saw. What went on inside me I again did not know; I was as if in ecstasy, so that I could not answer those who spoke to me. The last change of the Santo Cristo did not cease at all; when I left the church it was still lasting. I went into the sacristy at the request of the rector of Castanedo, D. Ernesto Gonzalez, in order to enter my statement in the witness book, but on account of my inner agitation, however, could not write. There I met the already mentioned D. Angel Bustillo, who, in the afternoon, was fortunate in so far that he could perceive even movements of the mouth of the Santo Cristo."

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XIV.

Things went remarkably with another medical student. Con ceited and convinced that everything the people of Limpías relate is founded on self-deception or fraud, he approached the church and said to D. Justo, an elderly gentleman from Logrono, who usually spends a month in the summer at Limpías, and at that time was just standing at the church door: " I have come to study diseases of the nerves in Limpías/ D. Justo showed him a list of doctors and students who also thought thus and had nevertheless given in. He counted out a number of names, and added the remark that those who came here like himself generally went away quite changed, and led the student inside the church. After five minutes the latter came out to him again with an altered face and declared: 41 See here, now I am also a prey to suggestion ! I will smoke a cigarette in the open air so as to come quite to myself again/ After some time the same scene was repeated. The young student now smoked three cigarettes and lengthened his walk. Then he went in for the third time and declared that now he was completely master of himself. Hardly had he chosen his place in the church than he broke down suddenly at the feet of the Santo Cristo. D. Justo hastened to his assistance, supported him, smiling, as he stood up, and now accompanied him at his request to the sacristy. The student now no longer sought an explanation in science, but put his name in the witness book.

XV.

The Marquis of Ugena reports of another student in the Diario Montanes :

44 I had joined a pilgrim band which went to Limpías by special train. As we passed Orense, on the journey from Monteforte to Santander, a lady who sat beside me asked a young student who was travelling with us if he was also looking forward to being able to see and honour the Santo Cristo. * No, madam/ he replied, 4 for that I would not have put my foot outside the door ; I have only come with you because at the last moment my sister had no one who could have accompanied her/ This indifferent, passionless man entered the church with us and took a place there. Already a few moments after this he changed colour and became as white as chalk. He affirmed that the Crucified One was looking fixedly at him. Shortly afterwards he lost consciousness, so that he had to

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be carried out of the church. He came to himself again. Without

saying a word he returned into the church, fell on his knees, prayed, and expressed a wish to be able to confess. On our return journey he again sat with us in the same compartment of the carriage, and all the time spoke only of his former folly, and added that he had not been able to sleep all night because of the deep impression he had received in the church/

FURTHER IMPORTANT TESTIMONIES.

I.

Statement of the barrister, D. Vincente Gil Delgado, on April 4th, 1920:

The barrister, D. Vincente Delgado, assessor to the Council of State in Madrid, spent Holy Week in Limpias in company with other colleagues. On Wednesday, March 31st, 1920, between 12.15 and 1 o'clock, as he was kneeling before the crucifix of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, and meditating on the sufferings and death of Christ, he saw the following apparition, which he certified on oath without any doubt whatsoever:

44 The eyes of the sacred figure moved from one side to the other, looked up to heaven, and then towards the left side with a piercing, terrible glance which inspired the witnesses with great fear. After that he saw the death-agony of Our Lord : the cheeks were sunken, the mouth was pulled out of shape, and on the left side of it a red spot appeared, like clotted blood, while in the right corner of the mouth white froth was visible. This manifestation was repeated several times in the same way. Only the expression of the countenance changed, and once showed a more friendly appearance; on two other occasions Christ turned His eyes on our witnesses with a gentle look that betrayed, however, the feeling of bitter and unusual pain. All these extraordinary and inexplicable apparitions were observed by the witnesses for three-quarters of an hour, with inner calm and without fatigue of the eyes/

II.

Statement of a notary :

The notary of Huelva, D. Juan Cadiz, who, according to the assertion of the Diario Montanes, is defined as a Catholic faithful to his convictions, and an esteemed lawyer, and as a serious man, moreover, who is quite incapable of deceiving others or of telling

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an untruth, observed the wonderful manifestations in Limpias with their deeply affecting impressions, and describes them in his simple way as follows :

" I was perfectly conscious, and was happy enough to live through such a consoling actuality; my eyes were not tired from looking and the greatest peace ruled in my mind. Every time, when I lowered my eyes and then turned them again to the Santo Cristo, I saw His sacred body in quite a different way. Now I saw that He opened His eyes, then that He closed them; now He looked at me, then He had His eyes raised to Heaven; now His mouth was opened as if He wished to utter mild complaints, then it was shut again. With that Christ took up a position as if He were about to take leave of His Mother. A short time afterwards I saw His breast completely crushed in and pressed together, which differs entirely from the actual representation of the figure; then I noticed how He breathed as it were His last sigh, whereby the face became longer. So He maintained for a long time a completely calm and peaceful repose. Then He gazed with a penetrating look deep down into my inner self, as if He wished to convince me that I was not dreaming, but was quite wide awake.

" Thus a considerable time passed. At length I had to tear myself away from this paradise on earth. Suddenly I see Him move and slip down from the cross quite slowly, until His feet touch the bottom of the crucifix. Then He raises Himself equally slowly again until He reaches the natural crucifixion position. Finally, He frees His left arm for a moment from the cross, passes it over His

heart, and touches His knee, after which He again takes up the crucified position.

" The miracle was accomplished entirely in my inner self. I did not express myself either by a cry, nor had I any particular bodily sensation. Only a soft sigh was wrested from my breast, which, however, no one could hear, neither the people in my vicinity nor my daughter, who was praying for her family opposite to me."

III.

Statement of a diplomatist :

The Spanish ambassador, D. Francisco Zea-Bermudez y Ziburn, who stayed for some time in Limpas in August, 1920, observed likewise wonderful happenings on the crucifix of Limpas, about which he published the following in Diario Montanes on August 22nd, 1920:

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" This month I have visited the Santo Cristo de la Agonia seven times. Each time I viewed the exquisite sculpture from near by and from a distance, from various sides, and for a long time. On the 2nd, 3rd, 14th, and 21st of August I could not perceive anything extraordinary. On the other hand, on August 14th, as I stood below, on the right, before the high altar, from whence one can observe clearly each change in the look, I saw quite distinctly five times, during a period of twenty minutes, the movement of the left eye of the Saviour (from my position I could only see this one). At the fourth time this eye was swimming in tears. A deep emotion seized my soul; my eyes were dimmed, and for a few minutes I saw nothing. None of our ladies, who were all in an attitude instinct with devotion, nor anyone among the remaining people present, women and children, saw the least thing. Only we three young men who were together, and of whom one did not even kneel down, saw this change.

44 On August 14th, at six o'clock, as we stood closely crowded in the sanctuary and on the steps, about fifty people noticed with me the movement of the eyes of the dying Saviour, which looked round, now mildly, now inexpressibly, now energetically, according as they turned upwards, straight in front, or towards our side, on the right. The change in the eyes was quite sharply impressed, lively, and very abrupt. We stood in close proximity; the electric light was not burning, for the sunshine lit up the sacred countenance fully. The scene was extremely impressive. Supplications, weeping, exclamations, prayers, and so forth succeeded one another. A priest was obliged to call for quiet and order/

IV.

Statement of the engineer, Baron von Beorlegui, from Pamplona, on the 28th of October, 1920:

44 Since my return from Limpas many days have already elapsed, but the remembrance of my experiences there can never be effaced from my heart. I have wrapped the experiences of those days in silence, not because my tongue or my pen have been opposed to making known before the whole world what my own eyes have seen, but because the majesty of what happened was so overwhelming that my poor head was not able to describe, either with my lips or with the pen, the impressions received.

44 Only one letter, only one single one, did I write shortly after

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my return from Limpas, and that was to my dear parents, to whom I owe the greatest of all benefits of having been brought up by them in the Christian religion, and for their having taught me to see my Redeemer in the Crucified One. To them, naturally, my first lines were of value also. Surprised by the news that not long ago one of my fellow-pilgrims, D. Manuel Saralegui, had referred to me as a witness of the miracle seen by both of us, I decided that

if the Saviour had vouchsafed to give me a look, it was now also my duty to make known in public what I saw, and to give evidence of it in a befitting manner.

" As a matter of fact, I had not even dreamed of seeing the miracle, but did so. I saw the death-agony of Jesus on the Cross, and that so clearly that I did not hesitate to put my testimony in the book which is kept in the parish church of Limpias for this purpose.

" The first time we joined the procession in the church. I was so gripped and agitated that I could give no credence to what my eyes saw. I had the impression that Jesus breathed on the cross and looked at us all with an expression of meekness and kindness as a reward for our faith, which had led us from Navarra to Limpias.

" After I had prayed for a time with downcast eyes, I looked at Him again. As He now appeared as He is represented in pictures, I suppressed my notions. Everything that I had observed I now considered more than ever as illusion, for no one of those who were round about me had noticed even the slightest alteration in the figure.

" After the evening meal, towards 10 p.m., I went into the church again, sat on the lowest step of the pulpit stairs, and remained there a long time without perceiving anything. I reflected and came to the conclusion that I was not worthy, being a great sinner, to receive a revelation from Our Lord.

" During the sermon of a priest I contemplated the figure of the Crucified One, and noticed a slow movement of His mouth, which gradually closed, then opened again, and remained in its original position. The eyes of the figure were fixed on one point.

" This time, too, I doubted, in spite of the lucidity with which I saw. I attributed everything to the fatigue of my eyes, weary through gazing, and to the effect that the unusually strong lighting might have on my eyes.

44 After the sermon I left the church and conducted my wife to a poor family's house, so that she could go to bed there. Soon afterwards I also took a daughter of D. Luis Ibarguen to the same

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house. By this means, too, my eyes naturally were rested, and my head became clear through the freshness of the night air. As I had come to Limpias in order to see something, I turned back to the church after some reflection as to what I should do. I told myself that I should certainly see little or nothing at all if I did not offer a small sacrifice for love of God. So I entered the church with the project of staying there the whole night, and of watching the Saviour, and I did so too.

" Towards 2 a.m. I was praying more earnestly, and that to our ever-blessed Lady of Mount Carmel, that she might obtain for me the grace of seeing some sort of manifestation from her Divine Son.

" Suddenly I saw the metamorphosis of Our Lord; the body on the crucifix was altered in my sight, and took on the aspect of a living, suffering human being. I saw distinctly that Christ opened and closed His mouth several times, I saw the movement of His grief-stricken eyes in the death-agony, with the expression of one dying. I noticed clearly the respiration of the chest, saw how the body changed colour, until it became wax-colour as with a dead person when he has closed his eyes.

" At the same time and near me, young D. Manuel Saralegui made exactly the same observations, and also another gentleman from Lecaroz, named Jimenez, who wrote in the witness book as well, after he had seen the opening and closing of the eyes.

" When I saw the miracle I was deeply moved, and at the same time ashamed at the remembrance of my sins, whereupon my soul was filled with great consolation. My eyes filled with tears at the thought that through my fault I had more than once contributed towards renewing that scene of pain and sadness.

" The changes in the Christ did not last long; quite soon He resumed His customary aspect and remained thus. When I had calmed down, I betook myself to the sacristy in order to give evidence of the apparition in writing. Then I sought out my travelling companions and related to them what had happened. In the morning I went into the church again, where I took the eucharistic Saviour into my heart, at the altar of the wonderful crucifix.

" When we went into the church once more, towards half-past seven, in the last hour before our departure, in order to bid farewell to the holy place, we observed with amazement that the miracle was working again, in that the eyes of the Christ moved quickly from left to right and finally His head distinctly turned with a very great effort to the right side, so as to return to its former posture.

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" Among the other persons who observed the same thing were D. Francisco Siguenza, Commandant of Artillery, and his wife, the daughter of D, Luis Ibarguen, and a certain Fraulein Baleztena.

" I testify to all this to the greater glory of God and for the salvation of those who believe human testimonies rather than what the Catholic Church teaches us. May they acknowledge through it that there exists a supernatural life of the soul, and that God is manifesting Himself here in order to lead our hearts to piety.

" The testimonies which I read in the witness book in the sacristy are not utterances of credulous women, but the statements of men who, as I do, lead a professional life and have studied physics and natural science. With them I can affirm that what one sees in Limpias can be no natural appearances, but is to be attributed to the intervention of God alone. The fact that these manifestations are seen by some, by others not, cannot be explained by the laws that are prescribed for nature.

" Who can cause these apparitions to appear ? Only God, who gave laws to the visible world and alters them as it pleases Him, who can also influence our senses so that they perceive what He wishes to reveal.

" We must bow our heads and acknowledge that we must not be proud, but owe everything to God, and that we can do nothing without His Will, and are worth nothing in spite of all the science that we think we possess,"

V.

Statement of the engineer, D. Cesar Sanz of Saragossa, on May yth, 1920:

44 Towards 3 a.m. I entered the church of Limpias with pilgrims from Guipuzcoa, with the most fervent desire that the Saviour would bless me also with a ray of His divine Light, who makes known His mercy and love in such rich measure. In order to obviate the danger of every illusion I had been to bed beforehand. With all who were in the church one saw that they enjoyed perfect peace of conscience there. All were praying with fervour. Many hundreds partook of Holy Communion. In the morning services and lengthy pauses alternated. Finally, the lights were extinguished, nearly everybody went away, only about a dozen persons remained in the church, who knelt motionless at the communion rails, in order to gaze at the crucifix at close range and to pray to Jesus. Towards noon I saw Christ begin to move His dark eyes; He

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looked now to the left, now downwards, now towards us; this lasted some time, then again to the right, then upwards, where upon He remained at rest. These movements were repeated slowly. Sometimes especially, when He looked fixedly up to heaven, I remarked a passing brightness through which the wonderful expression of those eyes stood out most impressively. Just as I noticed that a gentleman from Navarra on my left side asked me: Do you not see ? The gentleman on my right agreed with him, and behind me as well I heard distinct exclamations.

44 During this miracle tears rolled down the cheeks of us men folk. For who could bear without the deepest emotion the sublime expression of those sad, beautiful, and inexpressibly divine eyes, in which love, melancholy, and pain were united ! They were the eyes of Jesus.

" Those tears streamed from strong hearts, that had shown themselves full of strength in tragic hours of human life. I do not know whether they were tears of remorse or of love, perhaps they were both together, at the vision of Him who, in my opinion, was the Divine Master Himself."

VI.

Part of the statement of the authoress, Maria de Echarri :

" With the deepest emotion, that everyone who loves the Crucified One can comprehend, I take my pen to-day in order to fulfil a promise, and to extol the infinite compassion that the crucified Master has bestowed upon me. . . .

" At half-past seven we, thirty in number, left Torrelevega in automobiles. The beauty of the road drew from us continual exclamations of delight; we travelled quickly and comfortably. As we approached the now already famous little town of Limpias, we began to sing sundry hymns in praise of the Santo Cristo, and repeated with heart and mouth : * We love Thee with all our hearts/ and sang until the motors stopped in front of the church at eleven o'clock.

44 It was now raining hard, but in spite of that the church was packed. * I will draw all men unto Me/ said Jesus. Can one well deny the supernatural character of this endless flocking hither of multitudes, where in Limpias there is otherwise nothing at all to be found that could attract people ?

44 On entering the church my longing eyes fell first upon the

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sacred figure. . . . Shall I describe it to you ? Many others have already done so. . . . I can only tell you that there one feels the nearness of God so keenly, and sees in that countenance such a divine expression, that one cannot detach oneself from it, that one does not care to think of anything else except of Him alone, that, like Peter on Mount Tabor, one has the strong desire to beg the Crucified One that He may allow us to build a tabernacle there, in order to sojourn at His feet, Who died out of love for us men, so as to be able to await the moment of death there, and there to be united to God for evermore.

" In the afternoon I saw Him ! Why shall I not say so ? Does not the Bishop of Pinar del Rio advise us to confess it openly to the greater glory of God ? . . . I saw Christ open and close His eyes; I saw Him distinctly look around, although His gaze was not turned directly on me. I saw Him open His mouth wide as a dying man does. . . . The expression of His face was sometimes very gentle ... at times ... I do not know how to express it, and that made the strongest impression on me ... for I saw Him again in such unspeakable affliction, that a burning desire filled my heart to console the Master. . . .

44 What I saw ... no one can prove me to be in error ... I was not alone in seeing on that afternoon . . . Our Lord showed

Himself merciful beyond measure. A grief-stricken look of the Crucified ! If all could see Thee, surely none would want ever again to offend the Master Who suffered so much on the cross. . . While we were making the Way of the Cross together, with a fervour that can appear strange to no one, I looked attentively at the crucifix. . . .

"When the priest spoke of human respect that makes us so cowardly ... the Master's face seemed to me to look sterner; when he begged forgiveness for the sins of the flesh the appearance of Jesus was more pained. . . ."

VII.

Similarly the authoress Clementa states in the Diario de la Rioja :

" The groans were indescribable . . . affecting . . . some sobbed, others beat their breasts vehemently and begged for forgiveness. The people who saw nothing of the apparitions and there were many of them wept inconsolably and prayed fervently for the

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grace to be allowed to see the miracle too. ... All were astonished at the coinciding cries of the onlookers, who simultaneously gave an account of the wonderful visions they were seeing continuously.

" A priest succeeded in silencing the crowd, which had quite forgotten where it was. In a loud voice he recited the Credo, which the crowd repeated with touching expression. Meanwhile I received a pair of binoculars, ... I do not know from whom . . . and looked attentively at the cross. I cannot possibly reproduce what my eyes saw there. Human speech is inadequate to portray the supernatural. . . . With face the colour of a corpse and an expression of infinite agony the divine Redeemer moved His eyes slowly, painfully, towards all sides, then raised them to Heaven with impressive, touching sadness, with such an expression of anguish that one could read in it, as in a book, the significant drama of Calvary, when Jesus offered the tremendous, unending sacrifice of His Life to the eternal Father for the redemption of mankind.

44 I do not know how long the miracle lasted; it is said longer than an hour. I took no reckoning of time; again and again I had to interrupt my contemplation, as I could not control my feelings any more, but always, every time I looked up, the same scene was repeated . . . until finally Our Lord's eyelids slowly closed, the mouth which had moved during the miracle as if He were uttering bitter sighs remained motionless.

" My interior emotion, a mixture of sadness, joy, and pain, was so great, so inexpressible, and so persistent, that it was directly answerable for my becoming insensible.

44 After I had come to myself again and looked up once more the figure had resumed the position that the artist had given it."

VIII.

The same authoress also gives an account of the following experience which the Archpriest of Limpias himself had related to her :

44 A little while ago eighteen to twenty seamstresses from Santander came to Limpias under the superintendence of a certain lady. A priest did not accompany them. They were very unruly and showed no vestige of piety. They considered their journey to Limpias as a pleasure trip, and hoped to see their curiosity also satisfied by a miracle, so as to be able to return home then and tell their comrades about it. In their high spirits and their superficiality

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they even asked for a barrel-organ in order to set it up on the square in front of the church and then to be able to dance there in the

open space after taking a meal. But the Saviour had decided otherwise, however.

" In the peaceful stillness of the church square their boisterous joy evoked universal indignation. Attempts were made to bring them to order, but in vain. At length they had to have recourse to the rector, and he succeeded with great trouble in moving them to enter the church, whereupon he mounted the pulpit. In order to get them to be silent and to arouse feelings of devotion in them he began an impressive sermon. Already, after a few sentences, he was interrupted by loud groans : fourteen of those frivolous girls had fainted on the floor at the look of the Santo Cristo. * Good/ said the rector, * now the Santo Cristo de la Agonia is preaching for me/ On descending from the pulpit he found one of the most wanton ones lying insensible on the pulpit stairs.

44 What could they have understood from the regard of the Redeemer that changed their whole conduct so suddenly ? When they came to themselves again they cried out, permeated by the most intimate emotion, with tears in their eyes and with signs of the most sincere repentance : * Lord, we won t sin any more ! Until to-day we did not know Thee/ . . . All day long they would not go out of the church, which they finally had to leave, with heavy hearts, in order to return home/

IX.

Statement of the instructor D. Rubustiano Carrera, of Be jo (Santander) :

44 I confess openly that I believe very little in such miracles of especial piety in which the imagination can too easily gain the upper hand.

44 I approached the altar and gazed at the grand work of art, of which the majestic forehead, the mouth, and the nose, struck me in all their beauty. The left eye was covered with blood, the whole countenance was godlike. I kept on looking up at it, but perceived no movement. Then I went into the sacristy, where I addressed a priest. I expressed myself on the sculpture, which is worthy of admiration, but could very well easily give occasion to illusions, whereupon he told me his opinion. I returned to the altar and was about to leave the church. Then, to my amazement, it struck

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me that on the left gory eye, which before had appeared to be coming out of its socket, there was no longer any blood to be seen. It was quite clean. The blood which I had thought natural and permanent had vanished out of the dying eyes. I changed my position repeatedly in order to assure myself of my observation, finally fell on my knees and prayed aloud and with fervour: No me mueve, mi Dios, para que rerte . . / (a well-known Spanish prayer of contrition).

44 A few moments later a young girl of fifteen years of age, Francisca Castillo, began to cry audibly and declared she had seen the Saviour direct His gaze upon me. She had to be taken home. I myself perceived no movement in the Christ, either in the eyes or the mouth; but I affirm and swear that I saw blood in the left eye, which had disappeared when I looked at the Cristo de la Agonia on my return out of the sacristy/

X,

On July 1 5th, 1919, Teodoro Diaz, of Santander, published the following statement:

44 On Sunday, July 6th, 1919, I went to Limpias in order to visit the Santo Cristo de la Agonia there. Lying was always odious to me, chiefly when it deals with such matters as move me to the writing of these lines. I must acknowledge that I went to Limpias without believing in the miracles that are attributed to the Santo Cristo.

44 It was four o clock in the afternoon when I entered the church. Immediately I fixed my eyes on the holy cross, and forthwith I saw the miracle, but in quite a different way from what I had been told.

" I had first of all the impression that the body detached itself from the cross. Then a peculiar, violent sensation came over me that I cannot possibly describe. I can only say that I shut my eyes, not indeed from fear, but because I felt myself forced to do so by a supernatural power. When I opened them again the Christ remained motionless, but I could make certain that His face looked different from before.

44 On the same day I went several times more into the church without, however, seeing the miracle again. On taking leave I promised the Saviour to return soon. Last Sunday I kept my promise with the conviction that I should see the miracle again.

" I stayed in the church the whole morning, but could not see the miracle a single time.

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" At i p.m. I went there again. At this time there were some fifty persons before the Santo Cristo. Repeatedly I saw Him move His Eyes in all directions, turn His head from right to left, and make a wry mouth. Then His chest expanded, while He breathed with the greatest difficulty, like a sick man who is breathing his last.

"For about twenty-five minutes I watched the miracle, then it ceased for me. Many other devout people, however, asserted that they had seen it longer. I am prepared willingly to swear to all this on oath if it should be desired/

XL

The statement of a certain Manuel Fernandez contains note worthy communications which Fr. Echevarria publishes in his book:

44 As I noticed among some of those who went to Limpias with me a certain dejectedness and despondency, I betook myself to the Saviour on entering the church, with the following short but fervent prayer : Not for my own sake, O Lord, for I believe firmly that Thou art the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, but on account of some who are here, do I implore Thee humbly to kindle in their hearts the flame of faith and give them strength also to confess this faith openly/

" Ten minutes later, as one of the Fathers was saying prayers from the pulpit, I felt in my face a fairly strong puff of wind, so that for a moment I could not see. Then followed an extremely agreeable perfume, quite different from all the scents that I have ever noticed in my life. Then I heard a lady call out: Lord, do not look at me thus. Pardon I Thoughtlessly I turned round, and at that instant the perfume ceased, that I had never before experienced.

" Immediately after the Consecration I began with outstretched arms to say the five Our Fathers (in honour of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar), and noticed that a dead white haze enveloped the figure of Christ; only His face remained free, and looked more beautiful than I had ever seen it. Christ inclined His Head; I saw that He was looking at me ; His Eyes emitted light like the blue of the sky. At this instant I thought of repeating the Estacion (that is, the five Our Fathers), so that this vision should not cease. Then I noticed a smile on His Lips, on account of which I had to smile too at the same time, without averting my eyes from Him.

44 When the first Estacion was finished and I began the second

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the haze that enveloped Him began to disappear, and the figure remained just as it was when I entered the church.

" I am ready to swear that a hundred times over if I were to be torn in pieces, I should not withdraw anything from it, and sign it

on July lyth, 1919."

XII.

Statement of D. Goni Barrondo, editor of the Diario de Navarra in October, 1919:

" Already very early, after Lauds, towards half-past one in the morning, six participants in the pilgrimage from Pamplona distinctly saw the miracle, and ratified by an affidavit their evidence in the witness book that is laid out in the sacristy. After breakfast when many pilgrims re-entered the church in order to pray before the Christ, the number of those who saw it was considerably greater. The impressions which they received thereby they could themselves often not describe at all; some were quite incapable of giving an account of all that they saw on the crucifix, and continually burst into loud weeping."

The editor himself also belonged to the many who saw the miracle, and he states further about it: " With the greatest distinctness I saw that Christ moved His eyes from right to left, and then towards the centre ; that He glanced down so as to look at the faithful, and then resumed the natural direction. Another time I noticed that the position of the under-lip was not natural, as it was very much twisted towards the right side. A short time afterwards it was again in a normal position.

" The face of the Crucified One assumed sometimes a loving, sometimes a pained expression. When the miracle reached its climax, a priest began the Estacion, in which the pilgrims answered with the greatest devotion."

Many witnessed to their observations in the album, others could not do so at the moment on account of their agitation of mind. Of those who wrote their evidence, we may mention that there were three priests, one physician, one officer, one lady, three gentlemen, and many others besides.

XIII.

Statement of the schoolmistress Mariana Ruiz Vallecilla :

" Since my visit to Limpas several days have already elapsed, but that magnificent figure of the Santo Cristo, which I was able to honour there, still always stands vividly before my eyes. With

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many other persons we arrived in the morning by train from Bilbao. Before we went into the church I had to go in quest of the apothecary of the place in order to have my foot bandaged, which, in consequence of a heavy fall that I had suffered the same morning in Bilbao, was very painful and swollen. Somewhat distracted by this incident, I only thought occasionally and without particular longing of the holy image. When I entered the church, the first thing that struck me was the wonderful representation of the Santo Cristo* This figure evoked a deep impression in me, which nevertheless quickly passed. I said the psalm " Miserere " according to the injunction of our Venerable Mother Teresa, then a prayer to the Precious Blood and a few other prayers. I believe steadfastly in the miracles, even without seeing one, and therefore did not at all count upon the Master showing me the favour of being able to see such a thing.

44 A professor of the University of Salamanca, who had travelled with us, went at once to the high altar and considered the Santo Cristo attentively from various parts of the church. Then I saw that people were giving rosaries, images, and so on, in order to have them touched by the figure. I wanted to do the same, went up the steps of the altar for that purpose, so that I could contemplate the crucifix in close proximity, and handed over my rosary, medals, and so forth. Meanwhile I placed myself on the side of St. John, looked at the crucifix from the side, and thought then: 4 The body is not well painted, for one can hardly recognise the wounds of the Flagellation/ In the same instant I see that, beginning from the back, the colour of the left side is gradually becoming lighter, until a broad weal shows over the hip, then two

others, smaller, on the same side, that are all suffused with blood. I could scarcely credit what I saw. I fell down on my knees, took a field-glass that the Baroness of Santa Barbara most graciously offered me, and now I could watch the marvel with it in all its details. In spite of my confusion, I had the courage to look into the face of the Santo Cristo. It seemed to me as if the eyelids became more bluish, and I saw clearly that the eyes were filled with tears. I looked, therefore, at the cheeks, in the expectation that the tears would run down over them; but that was not the case; instead, the eyes became dry again. That was repeated once more, as if I was meant to convince myself well of it. A little while afterwards we left the church, after I had recommended to the Santo Cristo everything temporal and eternal, and had assured Him of

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my entire confidence, with the firm conviction that He would grant me everything that I asked Him for, and that was not a little.

" In the afternoon we went into the church for the second time. There was no electric light burning, nor any candles. I took a place in the middle of the church, without looking at the Santo Cristo, for a certain fear governed me. When I threw a fleeting glance at Him, I saw clearly how the breast was coloured; particularly the lower ribs became bluish and looked blood-stained. I thought again that it was an illusion, so I used the field-glass again and persuaded myself anew that it was all a dreadful reality. I also saw that the drops of blood that are painted on both sides of the breast assumed the colour of fresh blood, as if they had only just fallen there. I still had the courage to look at the face. Although I was not just observing the mouth I could perceive the two movements of the jawbone, as if He were saying two syllables with His Lips. I shut my eyes quite tight, and asked myself: What will He have said ? The answer was not long in coming, for in my innermost self I clearly heard the significant and blessed words, Love Me ! I cannot express my feelings, for through that they would perhaps lose the slight worth they might have had. With remorseful and humbled heart I thought that God would not despise me, in spite of my great ingratitude. I looked again at the sacred figure and could observe besides how it was transfigured, assumed a heavenly brightness and contrasted wonderfully with the darkness. More I could not see; I closed my eyes for a short time; when I opened them again everything was over. * Truly, this was the Son of God ! so might all modern Jews say. What a number of conversions God does bring about here through His mercy !

44 I beg all who read this to believe it as I do. May they praise God and love Him, the everlasting Love, as He wishes to be loved. Oh ! if only I could do it myself adequately !"

XIV.

A society lady entered the church of Limpias, but soon afterwards collapsed, affected by the wrathful look of the Santo Cristo. The same thing happened to her at the second visit. When she entered the church for the third time her eyes fell on a notice that the rector had had posted up on the church door : 44 On account of the deep reverence which the infinite majesty of the thrice-holy God demands, any person who appears with a low neck or in transparent clothing

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will be turned out without consideration/ Conscience-stricken and startled, the lady reads these few words, becomes red with shame, understands now the righteous anger of that majestic look, covers her nakedness with a cloak, and throws herself, remorsefully weeping, down before the crucifix* The eyes of the Santo Cristo now look at her forgivingly and pityingly, , . *

XV,

On December yth, 1920, a reporter, D. Jesus Juan, writes in the Diario Montahes :

44 A little while ago I was travelling in a railway train with two

gentlemen from Mondonedo and a police sergeant from Ferrol. In our compartment sat, besides, a young woman from Los Corrales, whose mother had died, an apparently dumb married couple, and a gentleman of my acquaintance from Reinosa,

" At Boo another young married couple got in. The husband wore the fine uniform of the mounted police, while I noticed a brooch with a picture of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia worn by his wife. The sergeant took out of his little trunk a few pious souvenirs that he had brought with him from his journey to Limpias, and showed them to us with joyful enthusiasm. The gentleman from Mondonedo had also visited the Santo Cristo, and so discussed with the sergeant all the events of recent times of which they had been told in Limpias. They themselves had seen nothing there. They were evidently quite convinced of the wonderful manifestations and so declared themselves very well satisfied with their visit. We others were listening to them very much astonished, when suddenly the young guardsman turned to us. His name was Jose Florez Carnero, and his wife s Encarnacion Castillo Martinez. They lived at Maganese de Lampreana (Zamora). He asked me: Do you doubt, perhaps, sir, the occurrences which are being spoken of here ? I myself was a witness of a few. Listen !

44 4 When my wife was very ill we promised solemnly to visit the Santo Cristo if she should recover. It was not long before she was better, and soon she was completely restored. Now we kept our promise too, and reached Limpias on November 24th, 1920, by the first train from Santander. Immediately on entering the holy place my wife threw herself down on her knees and slid thus, as she had promised, with a candle in her hand, up to the high altar. I went along beside her and often looked up at the

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Santo Cristo. I noticed something in the figure, but said nothing, because I was afraid it might be delusion. Then a priest spoke to me and asked me : " Do you not see that the Santo Cristo has closed His mouth ?" " No, He has it open," I replied. " No, He has it shut !" rejoined the priest, and so we went on speaking for a time, until the people s attention was attracted by us. Then I changed places several times and saw the Santo Cristo become black and bluish. He resembled a dying man, His mouth opened and closed often, and I also saw some other manifestations on the holy image. My interior agitation was very great, but the desire to watch those occurrences was still greater. For that reason I visited the church many times more, and could clearly observe the same marvels on six different occasions. If it should be necessary I am ready to swear to these statements, for I am as sure of them as that I am now telling you of them.

44 4 Up to now/ so the young guardsman continued, I was one of those who do not take their religious duties seriously. I did go to Mass, but also did not mind very much if I missed it sometimes; but from to-day onwards, I assure you, I shall go to holy Mass every day, and shall carry out my remaining religious duties as well like a good Catholic; for those are the resolutions that I have taken with me from my visit to Limpias. I am so filled with enthusiasm over the Santo Cristo, that I shall publish His miracle everywhere and openly stand up for it/

The guardsman s young wife told us, in addition: 4 When, according to my vow, in thanksgiving for restored health, I had gone through the church on my knees, I prayed kneeling before the Santo Cristo, and saw several times a movement in His eyes. I noticed, too, that His mouth opened and closed as a dying person s does, and could quite distinctly see the upper row of the beautiful teeth. Believe me, quite a peculiar sensation passed through my whole body, over which I meditated for a long time. But I am very grateful and happy; I am in raptures with the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, to whom I shall always have a great devotion. My mother, too, who accompanied us on our visit, saw the miracle. This made such an impression on her that she, who had not been to confession for quite sixteen years, made a penitent confession on the very same day, and was very contented and happy. When she hears the Santo Cristo spoken of now she always gets quite excited at the thought of all that she saw on that memorable day. "

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XVI.

Letter from one D. Antonio Litourmant to D. Mariano Garcia in Laredo (Santander) :

" MY DEAR DON MARIANO,

" I promised you, if you should ever write about the miracle of Limpias, which I had the joy of seeing, that I would then place my material at your disposal. From many sides people have already come to me with requests on this account, and constantly I declared that I was ready to make known openly, to give evidence, and even to swear to what I saw with my eyes. As a matter of fact I have never refused to give verbal accounts as often as I had the opportunity of doing so. But written statements, said I, I would not submit, and should I do so at any time I would only give the subject-matter to you. Now I will gladly carry out what I have promised.

44 Towards the end of April or beginning of May, through news papers and friends I received information of the miracle of the Santo Cristo in Limpias. As for me, I am certainly no unbeliever, but that this Christus moves His eyes as people say, frankly speaking, I did not believe that. I supposed, and declared too, it was obviously a question of attempts by priests and monks to reanimate the faith in modern times. To tell the truth, however, I believed besides rather that such means were being seized so as to make a business of it. When people said to me : * You may as well believe it, this one and that one have seen it too/ then I replied that they should only first let me see it myself, just once, they should only let me climb up to touch the figure, then we should see that that kind of apparition and movements were brought about by wires or strings or some other apparatus. Every day we talked of this matter, until at last we decided on the journey to Limpias.

* The day before I went for a walk with D. Victor Barcena, a medical man and eye specialist, and told him a dream that I had had: * Do you know, Victor, I dreamed last night that we went to Limpias and while I was looking at the Christ He cast a glance towards me and at the same time said: " Oh, thou of little faith, thou art like the Jews, thou seest and dost not believe/ On May 1 6th we started the journey, Victor Barcena and his wife, Da. Encarnacion Colomer, my wife and I. On Saturday, the 11th, in the afternoon, we made our first visit to the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, in company with the Barcena family, who likewise live in Laredo.

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" I entered, conducted by a gentleman who told me he had seen the miracle. We went through the small door on the right of the outer door of the church. Hardly had I entered and had come to the holy water stoup when I also already saw the miracle. I said to my companion, D. Andres Barcena, I see it already/ No, no/ said he, come along further forward and you will see it still better/ For all that I continued to gaze and saw it all the time in the same way. After that I left the church, took a walk and went in again, this time, however, through the door opposite the crucifix, and placed myself in the middle of the church. I heard some ladies ask D. Andres if he saw it. He replied to them: Yes, I see it. Now, he said, * He is moving His eyes to the right, now to the left, now He is looking at me/ and everything that he said I saw as well. Now I fetched my wife, Victor and his wife, and told them that I had likewise already seen it. No sooner had I said that than they all rose up against me. For they thought I was making fun of it, and in a certain sense they were not wrong there. For as I had persistently denied the miracle hitherto, they retorted: 4 We do not need to see it, if only you see it we should be very well satisfied/ As they related I must have replied to them, Were it only to satisfy you I should say " I have seen it !" Yes, I should say so, but I must admit that I have never liked such mockery. As mentioned I went in the company of my wife and the others named into the church. On reaching the holy water stoup I said to them: Look, it is already to be seen/ We see nothing/ they

answered. Pull yourselves together! Look, He is lowering His eyes, is looking towards the centre, now to the right, now to the left, now He is looking at us/ We see nothing/ they all rejoined. Then I thought they wanted to ridicule me; surely they had eyes to see with, and yet saw nothing? I left them, went out, and walked up and down a few times and came back into the church once more. Immediately on entering, while I was still standing by the holy water stoup, I saw the same thing again. Christ looked up to heaven, then lowered His eyes, looked in the centre, then to the right, to the left, as if He was searching for someone in the church, then He looked at us, while He threw a look at me that I could not unriddle; for to tell the truth when I saw Him look anywhere else His expression was not like that. I had a feeling like when one is in a perspiration and gets into a draught. I observed that five times in succession, and from various places in the church. I can affirm that every time I came into the church I made the same observations.

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" After I had assured myself through minute observations that the movement of the eyes of the Christ was to be seen everywhere, I went up into the choir, where a few lady vocalists, the choirmaster, and the organist were. I think his name is Arrieta. The singers asked me if I had seen the miracle. I answered: * Yes, I have seen it ; but they did not believe me. When D. Arrieta heard my reply, he came over to me quite excited and said : * You have not seen it/ whereupon I retorted: * Listen; I have made observations of the eyes of the Christ, but pray do not believe that it is a miracle as men assert/ 4 You happy man, if you have seen it; I have not seen it. Nevertheless I must maintain that here a miracle is performed; still, as I tell you, I have not seen it/ * And yet/ I replied, there is no miracle here, only if one stares for a long time the eyes at length become tired and what one sees then does not happen in reality. I have seen everything that I have said ; it is not the Christ Himself that does it, however, but our eyes see this phenomenon by gazing at Him. It is just the same as when one draws some circles on paper and then turns these round; one then has the impression that they are turning in circles, although in reality they do not turn. What we see here is similar to that. Do not let us, therefore, attribute it to a miracle where none exists, especially nowadays, when instead of invigorating faith, it might cause the opposite/ I repeat, the miracle happens; whether the Christ moves His eyes or not, that I do not know, but I know very well that He moves the legs and above all the hearts of many/ That is something quite different/ said I. We could not finish our discussion, for the rector came up and said we were to be so good as to stop talking, for with the noise we were making he could not hear confessions. I therefore came down from the choir again, accompanied by Victor Barcena, and met my wife downstairs, who informed me that she had been to confession to the rector. The latter asked us if we were from Gijon, whereupon I replied to him : We do certainly live in Gijon, but are natives of Catalonia/

44 On the following day, Sunday, May 18th, the pilgrimage of the Maria de los Sagrarios arrived, that came from Santander in order to visit the Santo Cristo. Da. Luisa de Artesan, Victor Barcena's mother-in-law, had the urgent desire to be in the church with the pilgrims. As she is blind, however, I pacified her and told her I would speak to the rector, so that he might assign her a place where she could assist at the service unmolested. As it was already too late to attend Mass in Laredo, we decided to hear it in the church of

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the Santo Cristo. Accompanied by Victor and his nephew, Thomas, we went in the car to the church of Limpias, where I met the rector and at once explained my wish to him. He showed himself decidedly reticent at first, for on the preceding Sunday a priest from Bilbao had brought a blind gentleman with him, who, when the throng in the church was very great, and some said they saw the miracle, began to shout out aloud, whereby a great tumult arose; that must not occur again. I urged him now pressingly to let the lady in, all the same, and begged him to assist her, which he finally agreed to do. " Soon after our entrance into the church, I asked Victor if he saw that the Christ was moving His eyes. He answered in the

negative and rejoined : If it is certain that you see the eyes of the Christ, and that He looks at you, as you say, then you must also be able to recognise the colour of the eyes/ When I reaffirmed my observation he asked me first to shut one eye and then to look, then to shut the open eye and to look with the other. I did so and saw the same thing both times. Then he said I should shut both eyes, and of course I saw nothing. I could not define the colour of the eyes of the Christ, but compared them to those of his wife. Now the Mass began, to which I do not know why I paid great attention. The church was so filled that we went up into the choir, so as to see better. As we were making the sign of the Cross at the Gospel, and heard the priest say the words : *Sequentia s. Evangelii*/ etc., I noticed that Christ had two distinct, terrible wounds on the knees. They so claimed my attention that during the whole Mass I meditated over them, and thought to myself: How these wounds must have hurt Him ! I had fallen once myself and had injured myself; still that was nothing at all in comparison with the wounds that I saw before me here. I thought how cruel the Jews were, to make this poor Man suffer so, Who after all had only showed goodness to them. Also I was astonished that the Catholic Church only speaks of five wounds, whereas I saw seven. I thought, therefore, that the Catholic Church was in error in that. While I was meditating on all this, I admired the artistic reproduction of these wounds, and made up my mind to look at them more closely as soon as the Mass was over. For they looked so natural that they can have been no different in reality. If I had not known that they were on a statue of Christ, I should have been able to swear that they were actual wounds. When Mass was over, it suddenly occurred to me to let the mother-in-law know the permission of the rector as quickly as possible. For this reason I rode at once with the others in the

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motor-car back to Laredo, without looking beforehand at the wounds which had so riveted my attention*

" In the afternoon, after lunch, we walked back to Limpias. On entering the church the first thing that suggested itself to me was to go up to the altar and look at the wounds that had so occupied me in the morning during Mass. I could not get over my amazement when I saw that these wounds, which I had seen so clearly in the morning, and which had so occupied my attention and my thoughts, were now no longer to be seen on the Christ, consequently did not really exist at all. As I had seen them, however, quite certainly, I went up into the choir again, looked, but did not see them from there any more either, so that I thought to myself: How singular ! I could not get over my astonishment. Victor Barcena had an urgent desire for me to look at the Christ through field-glasses, which I also did. I saw then the lips, which were of a yellowish-green colour, become red. At the same time Christ looked at me with an expression of infinite pain, and then raised His eyes. I saw these all injected with blood, and the mouth was quite full of blood as well ; I saw the tongue and the five upper teeth; the features were distorted in such a way that led one to the conclusion that there was terribly acute suffering. I could not look any longer, gave the field-glass to my wife, and went out of the church. My wife asked me what was the matter with me, whereupon I answered bluntly : * Nothing, nothing !

" Outside I took a seat in the open air, and looking at a thousand things, tried to divert my imagination from what I had seen until Victor came and told me a doctor from Bilbao had given evidence in writing that he had seen the Christ move His lips, as if He were saying a monosyllable. He invited me to come and read it, * No," I replied, leave me alone/ whereupon he went away again.

" Soon I went back into the church. Victor's wife had very good opera-glasses. I asked her to lend them to me. Then I went as near as possible to the cross namely, up to the desk on the high altar looked up at the Christ, and saw the same as I had seen before. I rubbed my eyes, looked without the glasses and saw it just the same. I made the experiment that Dr. Barcena had shown me, and still saw always the same. I suffered morally at the same time when I saw Christ hanging on the Cross and suffering so grievously, His mouth full of blood, as if He wanted to vomit it and the vomiting choked Him; the eyes as before full of blood, the chest heaving and contracting again. With that He made the greatest efforts to breathe, while the wings of the nostrils were dilated as if He were in want of

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air. On the left temple a thorn from the crown of thorns pierced the skin; a little drop of blood oozed out, which ran down slowly from the temple and remained stationary on the cheek. Soon a second drop of blood came and followed the track of the first, but flowed down more quickly, and as it joined the one that had remained at a standstill, I saw something different in addition. If I had not remembered the words of the rector, I should have shouted aloud in the church, without reflecting how disrespectful it would have been.

44 I went out of the church. Victor, however, did not leave me alone, and indeed, as I heard afterwards, because his mother-in-law had said to him : * Look after Antonio, it seems to me that he is not feeling well/ I sat down outside and lit myself a cigarette, at which I drew twice; I threw it away, lit myself another, which I likewise threw away. Come/ said I, 4 let us read the testimony that the doctor from Bilbao has written. I believe/ I said to Victor.

" We returned into the church and betook ourselves to the sacristy, where we met you, D. Mariano. I greeted you and put the question to you: * If I had said to the Christ: " My God, suffer not so !" should I have sinned ? You responded thereupon by asking me why I had not said it to Him, and promised me to do so in my name. I remember your comforting words when we came to speak above all of Balmes, whom Providence had favoured in a special way in order to enlighten me as well. The rest you know. I have now fulfilled my promise to you. I confer on you all rights to make use of it as far as you consider it apt for the greater glory of God. I swear to have told the truth in everything, and do not object to confirming it over and over again, and to certify it on oath." Here follows the end of the letter with greetings and the signature : Antonio Letourmant.

XVII.

On November 28, 1920, the Marquis of San Juan de Piedras Alba came to Limpias and wrote his experiences in the following original statement:

" I came to Limpias in order to accompany my daughter, who wanted to fulfil a vow. I myself had firmly intended not to look at the Santo Cristo; to-day I depart with the resolve never again to enter this church. I stationed myself in the church immediately beside the entrance door, behind the first pillar. Persuaded that at this distance I should not be able to see the eyes of the sacred figure, I determined to look once casually. Then I saw Our Lord

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incline His head to the left side. Challenged by my nephew, I soon looked again, and now saw that Christ was bending His head towards the right side. As I have no more time I desist from communicating the remaining manifestations/

After the Marquis had signed this testimony he stayed with his relation a while longer in the sacristy, in order to speak to the chaplain, Lastra. When he had taken leave of the latter he involuntarily joined his people, who were about to go out of the sacristy into the church, and into the left middle nave. Suddenly the Marquis stood still on the threshold, turned back quickly to the chaplain in visible agitation, to ask him: " Are we going back into the church again now ?" " Certainly, Marquis/ answered the chaplain, smiling. " No, I am not going in there any more I" objected the Marquis, hurried to the door that leads out of the sacristy into the open air, and there bade the chaplain farewell once again, with the words: " We shall be able to see one another again in some other place, but not here. I do not want again to live through such moments as I have experienced in the church. I did not want to look at the Christ, but His image drew my eyes to itself with a force that overcame the firmness of my will, and allowed me to see what I ought never to have seen, and what I do not care to see again, because then I should succumb to it."

XVIII.

H. W. A. van Heeswijk, political representative of the provincial states of Brabant and mayor of Udenhout, in Holland, sent the author the following detailed account on June 26th, 1921 :

" I comply with pleasure with the friendly entreaty which you sent to me on the 31st of May, to give you my opinion of the occurrences in Limpias. I add besides many communications from various people, of whom some are very well known to me, whose names I give, and who, like myself, are prepared to swear to their statements on oath.

" We were a company of thirty-three Dutchmen (the first Netherlands pilgrimage to Limpias), that arrived in Limpias on Friday, September 10th, 1920, in the afternoon, and left Limpias again on Saturday, the 11th of September, in the morning at ten o'clock. The majority of us had observed something wonderful on the well-known crucifix of Limpias. Christ looked at some with an indescribably gentle expression, while His head was surrounded by a glorious halo; another noticed that the body of the Christ became

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blue and was in the death-struggle ; another saw blood in the mouth, in the eyes and ears of the figure of Christ; and yet another, who had taken it into his head that he must perceive the heaving of the chest, did not indeed see these expected risings of the breast, but saw, on the other hand, when he raised his eyes involuntarily, that Christ looked at him gravely twice.

" Herr Jan Groos and Frau Jeannette van de Ven, both resident in the parish of Bortel, in the province of N. Brabant, who directly after their arrival that is, on Friday afternoon betook themselves to the church, and inspected the crucifix at close quarters, saw simultaneously, several times in succession, that Christ moved His mouth, opened and shut it rapidly. Herr Mathieu van der Wee, municipal secretary in Kaatsheuvel, province N. Brabant, was already in the church early on Saturday morning, September 11th, and was present there at three holy Masses in succession. He was of opinion that he had not observed anything extraordinary, but spoke with great enthusiasm on the return journey of the artistic value of the magnificent crucifix. Above all, the knees had aroused his particular attention, and had moved him to deep devotion; they looked like real human knees, but were blue and so wounded, as if they had been struck with a hammer or some other hard tool. During the three Masses following one another, he had not seen the knees any otherwise at all, and was therefore speechless with astonishment when all the listeners assured him that both legs of the statue of Christ in question were quite intact. Now for the first time Herr van der Wee was conscious that he had seen something miraculous !

" As for myself, on Saturday, September 11th, I remained in the church for two holy Masses in succession. I stood in the forepart of the church, by the first pillar on the right, near the communion bench, therefore not far from the beautiful crucifix, that rises immediately behind the tabernacle, and appears to grow out of it. I was inwardly very calm, almost indifferent, I might say. I do not belong to those who easily believe in miracles, quite the contrary ! Also I did not survey the figure at once, and was not in the least eager to see anything miraculous. At first, on the contrary, I prayed, on which the thought first came to me gradually to look closely at the wonderful crucifix, about which so much is said and written, and that, moreover, in the way that one looks at and criticises a work of art. First of all I looked at the feet, and then passed my eyes gradually further upwards, considered the legs, the trunk, and the breast, until I came to the head, which all at once

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roused my particular reverence* I saw the eyes of the figure of Christ move straight up and down. Now! thought I, what is that ? I was astonished, but remained perfectly calm. For first of all I became conscious that I was evidently a witness of one of the mira

culous movements of the image of Christ. I watched with reverence and they went on in the same way continuously. I came to a firm resolution to obtain for myself complete assurance over these movements. * I am not a child any longer/ I thought to myself, * and if miraculous things are really happening here, then I will also convince myself of them absolutely, for sure, and procure for myself the certainty that I do as a matter of fact see what I see, that I am therefore neither deluded nor hallucinated, nor anything else besides, in a word I wanted to convince myself of it in such a way that I should be prepared to swear on oath to what I see. Then I conferred with various ones of my travelling companions about it during the service, and placed myself now in this, now in that position in the church. Whether I found myself now on the right or left side or in the centre of the church, everywhere and always in the same manner I corroborated the movements of the eyes above described, while my travelling companions saw nothing of them. I was perfectly calm and master of myself. After I had completely convinced myself that I was not mistaken in my observations I posted myself, towards the end of the second holy Mass, at the same place in which I had originally stood. Every time when I looked at the holy figure I saw the movements of the eyes already described, nothing else. Before I left the church, at the end of this Mass, and surveyed the crucifix once more, the thought arose in my mind as to whether there might not be a possible fraud here, whether some sort of mechanism might not bring about this uniform up-and-down motion of the eyes. Why was there invariably the same movement of the eyes up and down ? I thought to myself; why, for instance, not also a glance into the church for a change ? I should like very much to inspect the head once in close proximity. It was therefore my intention to step up quite close to it, when involuntarily I looked at the crucifix once more. Now I was startled, for what I now saw I shall never forget. The left eye stood still, was broken and directed straight ahead, while the right eye, in a normal condition, stared at me fixedly, but very angrily. As if put out of sorts I sat down, prayed for a moment, and begged for forgiveness in case I should have erred. I hardly dared to look up any more. At length I took courage while I reflected as follows: Before I had

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intended to convince myself of everything so firmly that I should be able to swear to my observations on oath. Now, too, I wanted to acquire the same certainty. So I stood up again, leaned against the pillar and looked at the crucifix. Again the same very sharp look met mine, from the same eye a real human eye that looked me right in the face, while the left eye, dead and diverging, remained motionless, as I have just described. This time I did myself violence and looked steadfastly up, while I firmly convinced myself and observed well as long as I could. At last the regard became too powerful for me, and I had to avert my eyes. Then I left the church so as to take some refreshment, for it was time to go to the station. I could not restrain myself, however, and went into the church again. I placed myself again by the pillar where I had usually stood, and looked at the figure. To my very great astonishment I now saw nothing peculiar any longer; not a single movement did I perceive. The figure of Christ remained motionless as it is in reality, the eyes turned upwards. I quickly said a decade of my rosary, more sincerely than I have ever prayed, in the hope not to have to leave before I should be allowed once more, as a farewell, to see some thing miraculous, so much the more because this had been granted to me for such a long time before. But in vain ! The figure remained immovable and I had to go away. I am firmly convinced that in Limpias unnatural things are happening. What I noticed and have described herewith I saw distinctly, and it is the downright truth. I had projected absolutely no imaginative picture of what I have seen. Illusion of the intellect or suggestion I consider out of the question. I am, on the contrary, as already said, prepared to make an affidavit for my observations described here. What has made the deepest impression on me is the fact that the doubting thoughts, which rose only for an instant in me, one of the millions of men on earth, were so manifestly taken up immediately by the Omniscient One, as was proved by the reaction which at once followed upon them. It goes without saying that I feel myself very much strengthened in my faith through this, and it will now be easier than before for me to recite the Credo."

XIX.

Second pilgrimage from Galicia, in May, 1921:

Already, in October, 1919, a great procession had come to Limpias from the Spanish province of Galicia, about the experiences of which Fr. Serapio Gonzalez Gallego forthwith published a special

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book* As very many pilgrims had seen the apparitions, and all had gone home highly pleased with this pilgrimage, a fresh pilgrim band was prepared for May, 1921. The Cardinal Archbishop of Santiago and the Bishop of Orense sanctioned this decision and repeatedly urged people to take an active part in it. The residents of Limpias also awaited the pilgrimage of the Galicians with interest, for, since September, 1920, the manifestations on the crucifix had become more rare. As the Galicians had been so favoured on the first visit, especially numerous demonstrations of grace were hoped for again. For this reason many persons from other provinces as well begged to be allowed to join this procession.

The departure was fixed for the 6th of May. From all parts of Galicia some 600 pilgrims streamed together, and met in Montforte, from whence a special train was to bring them to Santander. To their great surprise, Bishop Placidus of Lugo met them at the station in Montforte, in order to greet and to bestow the episcopal blessing upon them in their pilgrimage. He stayed with them two hours, until the train left at 5 p.m. After a tiring eighteen hours journey the train arrived in Santander at n a.m. on May yth, where the pilgrims were solemnly received by the capitular vicar, D. Jacinto Iglesias, the Cathedral Chapter, the mayor and many other people of secular profession, and the clergy. The procession of the pilgrims was organised at once and joined by the inhabitants of Santander in a mass, visited the beautifully decorated church of St. Francis, in which a service of thanksgiving and intercession was held. After having inspected the town, many took the very next train to Limpias, in order to profit by the brief duration of the stay there as much as possible. The majority, however, only went there the next morning.

After a journey of three hours they reached the station of Limpias, where they were welcomed by the rector, the mayor, and an enormous crowd of people. After a brief greeting the procession was organised, which, according to the Spanish custom, made its entry into the church of Limpias at ten o'clock to the accompaniment of rocket-firing and the exploding of many bombs.

A short time afterwards the Mass of general communion began. During the first Gospel a little group of persons of both sexes, which was some ten feet distant from the reporter, whispered to one another that they saw the miracle. Immediately they informed each other reciprocally of their observations. " Now He is looking here . . . now up ... now down . . . now to the right . . , . now

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to the left side/ After the holy Mass had progressed as far as Holy Communion without special interruption, all at once a great disturbance ensued, while several pilgrims with more or less audible speech expressed the feelings that the sight of the manifestations awoke in them.

The most exciting scenes were to be enacted, however, during the High Mass that took place an hour later. At that also the miracle was already seen by many during the Gospel, which, to judge from the excitement of the pilgrims, must have evoked a very deep impression on them.

After the Gospel a sermon was preached, during which great emotion again took possession of the attentive people. All eyes were turned to the cross, as if impelled by a mysterious force; the favoured ones followed the movements of the Crucified One hither and thither, many of them even threw themselves down on their knees. The speaker did not take any notice, raised his voice, and endeavoured to draw the attention of his audience to himself with divers pithy expressions. He succeeded, too, for a short time.

Then, however, the agitation got stronger and stronger, spread further and further, and finally made the continuation of the sermon impossible. Great nervous tension governed all those present, and every moment one expected a general outbreak of the feelings that they could only still master with difficulty. Suddenly the crowd is seized with overwhelming, indescribable excitement. Some 200 persons all at once burst out into loud shouts and raise their folded hands on high. " My God, what a frightful death-struggle !" shout some; " Jesus, it is enough !" cry others, " My God, what dost Thou want of me ? Tell me, I will do it, even if it should cost me my blood and my life/ one man was heard groaning. " Oh, Lord, let them all see it !" cry yet others. Some are pressed forwards, others again backwards, so that at length nobody can leave his place. Many fall on their knees, deeply contrite, having fallen with a crash. It is impossible to repeat the ejaculatory prayers and groans that were sent up to the Crucified One, and to describe the gesticulations and expressions besides that the manifestations on the crucifix called forth.

The preacher interrupts his discourse for a time, in order then to try again and continue his sermon. After a few moments, however, he also falls on his knees and leaves the pulpit deeply affected. To him also grace was granted to see the miracle. With him many priests saw it besides, who were near me in the choir,

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likewise the celebrating priests, who sat on the sedilia greatly shaken.

And what was the cause of this indescribable emotion ? It was the great changes in the figure of Christ which were noticed by the spectators just at this time. The sacred body seemed to them to come to life, and to go afresh through all the pain, the whole suffering of Calvary. They saw distinctly that His colour changed, became blue-black, quite black, the head inclined first forward, then to the side; others saw a stream of blood well up out of the mouth, and the head struck against the cross with such a fearful blow that the latter trembled. They saw blood flow down the body in thin streams, and the Crucified One open His mouth as dying people do on drawing their last breath; saw shining rays of light emanating from the right hand, and movements of the whole body, as if He wanted to detach Himself from the cross; saw how He contracted again and collapsed under the magnitude of the pain yes, they even heard the Santo Cristo utter incomprehensible sounds. . . .

From 3 p.m. on several services in succession took place; the church was again crowded to excess. A solemn service with the Way of the Cross was held, at which the people sang with great enthusiasm and deep contrition the hymn, " Perdon, O Dios mio ! . . . Amante Jesus mio !" among others.

At six o'clock a greater part of the pilgrims went back to Santander, only to return to Limpias the next morning, after the unforgettable impressions of this day. Others succeeded in finding lodgings in Limpias. Many, who had intended, on this pilgrimage, to visit other towns and holy places in that neighbourhood as well, gladly renounced this, so as to stay the whole time in Limpias with the Santo Cristo, for they did not get tired of gazing at the sacred figure for hours together.

The next day, too, many saw the miraculous changes, which, however, this time did not call forth outward excitement as on the day before. After the Way of the Cross in the afternoon the rector of Limpias mounted the pulpit, thanked the pilgrims for their visit and the magnificent chalice that they had presented to the church, and for the edifying example of their spirit of repentance.

When the hour of farewell struck, many of the pilgrims could not part from the crucifix, they would have liked to spend their whole lives there, so completely had the Santo Cristo captivated their hearts. Again and again they had to be reminded of the departure,

for otherwise they would have missed the train, which was to take them back to Santander at six o'clock.

The number of eye-witnesses on this pilgrimage cannot be estimated at all. The detailed account of this pilgrimage in the newspaper El Eco Franciscano contains over twenty-five testimonies of priests and the laity, who endorse the above descriptions.

XX.

The State-appointed professor, D. Pedro Vallelado, of Barrio-Palacio, sent in the following statement on July 9th, 1921, which was published in the Diario Montañas of July 14th, 1921 :

" On June 9th, 1921, I travelled with my wife to Limpias, in order to visit the crucifix of the Santo Cristo, of which I had already heard so much said. Soon after our arrival we went into the church to say our prayers of thanksgiving before the image of the Crucified One, as I had been delivered from an illness from which otherwise I should still be suffering to-day. We should certainly have carried out our desire at once, but a large band of pilgrims from Catalonia, that filled the whole church, hindered us. Hence we waited for a more favourable time for our visit, until the church had somewhat emptied itself. Meanwhile, I took rather a long walk with my wife in the environs of Limpias, so as to see the beautiful scenery, after which we partook of a little refreshment. During this we heard that now there were no longer many people in the church. I therefore went there at once, and asked a priest to hear my confession, which he did willingly. Then, as I was saying my penance, I looked up at the crucifix over and over again. Hardly had I finished the penance than I looked up once more at the Santo Cristo, whereupon He cast a menacing look at me. I drew my hands across my eyes. But it was of no avail, He continued to look at me as strangely. Needless to say, I had never believed in such visions as others were said to have seen. So I asked myself repeatedly, Is it then a sin if one does not believe in these miracles ? While I was pondering over this, suddenly I saw the Santo Cristo detach Himself from the cross and come towards me in a threatening attitude. From that moment I did not know rightly any more what happened to me. Cold perspiration covered my whole body, and a nervous trembling would not let me keep still. Finally, I could not bear it any longer, and then felt a blow as if a house had collapsed on top of me. Later, I learned that I had fainted. When I had come to my senses again, though not completely, I asked the

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rector to be allowed to write down with my own hand what I had seen, and I did so. Then two pilgrims accompanied me to the Palace Hotel, where my wife was waiting for me. On the following day, early in the morning, I went to the church again to communicate. After Holy Communion I saw the miracle again, but not so intensely as on the day before. I changed my place several times, took my spectacles off as well, but saw the same thing notwithstanding. Sometimes I observed that the Santo Cristo looked steadfastly at me, then again that He looked uninterruptedly at the entrance door. When the Holy Mass was over and the time of departure approached, I took leave of Him and promised to come again soon. Then I could see with astonishment that those eyes were gazing at me steadfastly, and that they were shedding many tears.

" I cannot but write these short lines about it, especially for those who are incredulous, so that they may learn to believe in the revelations of the Santo Cristo. For I did not want to hear of them formerly; but to-day I will unburden my conscience and boast that God has chosen me out to see the miracles of Limpias. I have learned the fear of God here, and have made up my mind zealously to use the means of grace that are prescribed by the church. I swear to my statement in its full extent, before God and before men I"

XXI.

Friday, the 14th of October, 1921, was one of the most memorable days, for on it, of the comparatively few visitors to the church, a strikingly large number saw the manifestations of the Santo Cristo.

The official reporter of the events in Limpias relates the following about it, in the Diario Montanes of October 16th, 1921:

44 Already in the morning, during holy Mass, sixty pilgrims from Los Corrales, who were receiving Holy Communion at the hands of their rector, D. Felipe Canas, saw the first manifestations of the Santo Cristo. The first to see the miracle was an engineer, D. Carlos Cortes, on whom it made such a deep impression that he left the church, accompanied by a young man, D. Felipe Bustamante Quijano. D. Cortes was very much astonished when his companion, who had sat next to him in the church, assured him he had seen nothing, for he himself had quite distinctly noticed a remarkable movement of one arm of the Santo Cristo. He must have seen more too, for he refused obstinately to go back into the church again. Only at the request of his rector and the Dominican

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Father Maximino did he repeat his visit, escorted by the latter, and saw the miracle again, although he did not want to see it/ While I was discussing this new case at the church door with the two other gentlemen, several more gentlemen and ladies came out of the church quite shaken, and asserted likewise that they had seen the apparition. Even a little boy of five years of age, Ignacio San Miguel, from Villaverde de Trucios, had been a witness, for he did in front of us exactly everything that he had observed on the holy figure, and it entirely corresponded with the accounts that the gentlemen mentioned had rendered shortly before.

44 All these visions took place when the crucifix was still illumined by the electric arc-lamps, a circumstance to which one must pay special attention. Here let it be mentioned that, besides this, for some time past, a large electric globe has been put up, which throws its whole light on the face of the Crucified One, so that this can be seen perfectly clearly, and every shadow had disappeared from it. This reflector was fixed up with a view to facilitating experiments, and above all to obviate any optical delusion.

44 A few minutes after twelve o'clock noon we went into the church again, where there were about sixty devout persons who were saying their prayers to themselves, in silence. A group was kneeling on the steps of the sanctuary. In the benches of the middle nave and the side naves, from whence one can see the altar of the Santo Cristo well, the rest of the faithful were praying. At this time no electric light was burning at the altar. Suddenly, from those groups simultaneously exclamations become audible. A few devout people approach the altar and place themselves closely crowded on the steps up to it; others appear to flee, and leave the church in great haste. They spread the news of this among the people who are outside the church, and soon it is also known in the restaurants. Workmen, coachmen, and waiters rush curiously into the church. Also, out of the restaurants, many guests hurry who were just at dinner, in order to see what is happening in the church. In a few minutes more than 200 persons are assembled there. The outcries become universal. By far the greater number see the miracle, which evokes quite different impressions in them. In some it arouses fear, in others satisfaction, but in all surprise and amazement, which becomes all the greater when some seriously affirm that they see nothing extraordinary about the crucifix. Those who saw nothing were greatly in the minority, and among these also were some ladies, who showed themselves quite disappointed

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and downcast in consequence, and drew general attention to themselves. A man who visits the crucifix nearly every Friday tried to console them by referring to the words of the Saviour : * Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed/ The Dominican Father Maximino and two other priests besides saw nothing either. The favoured ones, however, saw the manifestations of the death-agony of the Crucified One. One of the spectators whom it affected most was a distinguished gentleman from Granada; he burst into tears. " Besides a large number of pilgrims, many other people who had come to Limpias by chance, also had the joy of seeing the manifestations. Even a whole number of the inhabitants of the

town, who since the beginning of the visions, in March, 1919, had never seen anything more, were permitted to be witnesses of the appearances this time. Three chauffeurs came into the church as well and observed the movements on the crucifix. The aged conductor of the motor omnibus from the Hotel Royal, Mateo Maza Canales, who has already lived in Limpias for fourteen years, testified the miracle to us this time. He was permitted to see it that day for the first time, although he had already visited the crucifix so often. Deeply moved, he declared that now to his great joy he had been able to convince himself at last personally of the facts which he had still always doubted, because he had never been able to perceive them on his former innumerable visits. Likewise two waiters, one from the Hotel Palacio, the other from the inn La Tierruca, bore witness for the first time of their observations of the miraculous figure. The policeman, Francisco Santisteban, who came into the parish church out of curiosity, at the unaccustomed hurrying there of the faithful, was a witness of the apparitions. We cannot recollect that at any time such a large number of the residents of Limpias has seen the visions as on that particular Friday, whereby I will call special attention to the fact that none of the men mentioned can be accused of credulity.

" J. M. AGUIRRE GUTIERREZ."

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Many children were also favoured with visions, of whom, among others, the eleven-year-old pupil of the College of the Immaculate Conception in Gijon, Francisco Jaureguizar, expressed himself, in September, 1919, somewhat in the following manner:

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44 At five minutes past two I left Santander, and arrived in Limpias at ten minutes past four. From the station to the church it takes nearly half an hour to walk and a quarter of an hour in a carriage. We walked, for as we wanted to see the Christ we made this little sacrifice for Him. First of all, we went into the church in order to see the miraculous Cristo de la Agonia, who works so many miracles and astonishes unbelievers through conversions.

" We prayed for a time. Then I placed myself in the sanctuary so as to look at the Christ and to watch if I should see anything, but saw nothing. We began a triduum, then went to the station and took the train home at a quarter-past seven.

" The next day, the 1st of August, the first Friday in the month, we left Santander at 8.15 a.m. in order to communicate in Limpias. At eleven o'clock I went to Holy Communion, wearing the ribbon of the Congregation, for as I had not the one of the Heart of Jesus with me, it occurred to me to put on that of the Mother of God; and heard holy Mass. Then we had dinner; as one sees the miracles mostly from one to three in the afternoon, I went into the church at 2.15. I said a few Our Fathers and went into the sanctuary. There I remained standing, looked at the Christ, and saw suddenly that He turned His gaze to the left side and looked over at the sacristy, but not with a gentle expression with which He looks up to Heaven, but with an angry one as if He wanted to scold. I saw that several times. I began to move, to rub my eyes, and to look with only one eye, so that people should not be able to tell me that I had imagined it. One of my aunts, who saw that I was moving so much, came to ask me what was the matter with me, and I told her everything; we took the field-glass. She looked through it, and I told her when the Christ was directing His eyes towards Heaven and when to the sacristy; she saw nothing. After that I saw Him open His mouth and draw His body in as if He were breathing. This I only saw once. Then I saw the movement of the eyes again and I saw everything, indeed, without electric light and without candles burning on the altar.

44 We said the prayers of the triduum, and then went to the station. On the following day I came back in the afternoon, but saw nothing.

" On the third Friday in August we went to communicate in the

morning, and stayed for the holy Mass. After dinner I went into the church and placed myself so as to see the Christus. Then I saw that He turned His eyes towards the sacristy indignantly, as

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on the first Friday. I saw this until three o'clock; sometimes He looked up to Heaven, then towards the sacristy again.

" After tea I went to the church, to take leave of the Christ, and I saw again how He moved His eyes towards the sacristy, up to Heaven, to the sacristy, and so on.

44 This I watched for an hour, for I liked seeing it so much : it is like a magnet that attracts. Then we went to the station in order to go home.

44 Some people have told me that it only appears to me as if the Christ moves His eyes, because I like seeing it so much, but that cannot be, for then I should have seen it on the first day too, when I had such a great longing for it. Unbelievers say it is the effect of the light, but if that were so everybody would see it."

II.

With regard to observations by the children Bernardino Marcos and Juan Maria Gutierrez, eight and six years old, the priest many times mentioned, D. Valentin Incio of Gijon, writes the following:

" On September 18th, 1919, towards six o'clock in the evening, the miracle again took place. There were many people in the church. When it began I saw nothing particular, but soon afterwards I noticed distinctly that Christ was turning His eyes in various directions, and that for some time. At length His countenance shone, He moved His sacred head and inclined it now to one, now to the other side. This apparition excited me very much, although I let nothing be noticed.

" What touched me most was the amazement of some children who were in front of me. A boy of eight years, named Bernardino Marco Bellido, of La Velles, in the province of Salamanca, continually described, through signs as well as loud cries, the various movements of the head and the direction of the eyes of the Christ. The child at last showed himself so excited, alarmed, and over-awed that I had to encourage and quieten him; but he insisted on leaving the church because he might have succumbed to these impressions.

44 Another child of six years, named Juan Maria Gutierrez, of Oviedo, a son of Da. Mercedes Gonzalez del Valle, said, childlike, that he saw Our Lord throwing up white froth and much blood. As I saw nothing of flowing blood, I asked where the blood was, and the child answered quite naively : * See here (at that he pointed

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to the left side of his chest), here much blood is coming out, ever so much. , . . The mother of the child also saw the movement of the eyes, as she herself declared."

III.

The Marquis of Ugena, of Sarria, near Lugo, in Galicia, wrote the following account of his visit to the church of Limpias, on the 26th of October, 1919:

" The first pilgrimage from Galicia, which returned home yesterday from Santander, was very much favoured by clear observation of the miracles of the Christus of Limpias. More than 250 persons were witnesses of the manifestations of the greatest affliction, and the death-agony of the Santo Cristo, also of a touching conversion which occurred in the church on this occasion. The unbelief of some and the indifference of many concerning the repeated miracles which happen daily in Limpias, incite me to the publication of the following occurrence at which my wife and my children were also

present.

" Some 500 pilgrims visited the church with us. A short time after we had entered my children told their mother that they saw the Saviour smiling. My wife saw nothing; as the children insisted on it, however, and as, besides, during the holy Mass one could continually hear cries for forgiveness and mercy from such as saw the miracles, she also became persuaded that the children were telling the truth.

" A short time afterwards it seemed to her herself as if the Christ was moving His head. She looked attentively, for she suspected that it might be a delusion. In order not to fall a victim to suggestion she then asked our children what they saw. Both looked up at the Saviour and said simultaneously : * He is turning His head from one side to the other/

" Towards the end of the afternoon, together with a numerous group of persons of both sexes, we recited the Rosary at the feet of the Crucified One, in front of the steps to the high altar, which the miraculous figure overlooks.

" When we had finished the prayers my daughter, Rosa Maria, who is eight years old, told me that during the devotions she had seen the Saviour move His eyes, and likewise His head from behind forwards, and how He opened and closed His divine mouth. We looked at one another amazed.

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HEAD OF THE CHRISTUS (FULL FACE

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" A lady referred to the foolishness of those who tried to ascribe so very many miracles to suggestion. The age of our child and the simplicity with which it related everything that it had just seen excluded all mistrust. In spite of this I came to an understanding with some of those present. We told the child it must now look carefully at Our Lord, as He was just moving again at that moment. We all said, too, in a loud voice, that we saw it, in order to test for once whether it was possible to exercise influence over the child. The child at once looked up, then turned its head towards our group and said calmly: Now I do not see it/ "

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Besides the miraculous appearances that have been observed on the figure of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, and confirmed by a great number of witnesses from all classes of society, the Diario Montañes in particular has already reported many wonderful cures. It is to be regretted that these publications are wanting very much in accuracy, so that it is difficult to form an opinion as to the value of these cures. In the Diario Montañes of the 22nd of July, 1921, the number of cures of disease, which was acknowledged in part by celebrated doctors as unusual, was estimated at over 1,000. Comparatively few of these happened in Limpias, most of them were brought about elsewhere through contact with objects which were touched by the crucifix. As it is a question of sensible facts, in the interest of their evidential and apologetic value, it is urgently to be desired that herein should be observed especially what Pohle demands for Lourdes : " The scientific researches should be carried on with every desirable strictness and exactitude. The more rigorously and carefully the record office is conducted, the more impartially it is composed, with the assistance of unbelieving and atheistic scholars as well, the greater the chances

will be of proving the historical evidential value of the miracle practically, by living examples. Let it be explicitly remarked that the monographic treatment of isolated cases, if they are carried out according to all the rules of historical, philosophical, and theological criticism, renders greater service to science and religion than the more or less uncritical compilation of cures, the antecedents, accompanying circumstances, and durability of which are not investigated with criticism of the smallest details. Here there remains still much to be retrieved/

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All the more is the fact to be welcomed that this new edition at least can submit a detailed scientific statement by a distinguished physician, of the first miraculous cure in Limpias, which shows that professional men in Spain are seriously at work, and do not shrink from any trouble to satisfy the demands of science as, for instance, Isenkrahe has advanced them in his well-known " Experimental Theology."*

However noteworthy and welcome the statements submitted to us may be, we do not need to ascribe to them an importance that will decide the issue of the critical examination of the wonderful manifestations, which are testified on oath by thousands.

If these cures really did take place, however, and were attributable to the instrumentality of the Christus of Limpias, which a Christian rejoicing in the faith will not doubt, then we should have in them, to be sure, a fresh proof, strengthening our conviction that those numerous manifestations also are to be traced back to a miraculous intervention of Christ.

I.

The first case deals with the priest, D. Vicente Rodriguez Miranda, who is active coadjutor of the church of S. Maria in Castro-Urdiales, and is sixty-seven years of age. The doctor who attended him was the chief physician in Castro-Urdiales, D. Jose Naveda del Campo, who stands in high repute in the whole province. Among his colleagues he counts as the highest authority, and has as such attended the ex-minister Alba as well, when the latter, coming from San Sebastian in the year 1918, was the victim of a motor accident in the neighbourhood of Castro-Urdiales.

The testimony of this famous doctor, which is reproduced in the Diario Montañes of September 26th, 1919, is worded as follows:

" Last Sunday, 21st inst., I was called in all haste to the priest D. Vicente Rodriguez, who, according to the report that I received at 6.30 a.m., had been in the sacristy of the parish church and had become paralysed. As quickly as possible I betook myself to him. He was reclining in a half-bent position on a bench. The rector, D. Cesar de Haro, was with him. He had paralysis of the left side. The arm and the leg were completely paralysed on this side, without feeling and without movement. The face was also paralysed. The corner of the mouth was twisted towards the right side, and for this reason his speech was also somewhat slow. His mind was clear, only in the first moments after the attack slight
* Dr. C. Isenkrahe/ Experimental- Theologie.

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unconsciousness had occurred. When the sick man became aware of the paralysis that little clouding of the intellect was already over.

" What had gone before this condition ?

" That morning, as always, he had risen very early, then heard confessions in the church of San Jose y San Francisco, after which he went to the parish church accompanied by the rector, in order to hear confessions there as well. Beforehand he sat down on a bench that was in front of the confessional, and began to prepare a meditation on the five Wounds of Jesus. Soon afterwards the paralysis set in. A few of the faithful noticed the accident, sent

news of it to D. Cesar, and took the sick man into the sacristy.

" The preceding night the latter had slept well, only feeling some chilliness down the left side. In sleeping he lay as usual on the right side. I let him drive home and go to bed; and ordered an aperient and gentle friction.

" It is not to be wondered at that D. Vicente, a man of firm Catholic faith, turned to God in fervent prayer on this occasion, when he believed that his end was near. He told me he had taken a picture or a photograph of the Santo Cristo of Limpias, laid it in his lifeless hand and on his thigh, and said, full of remorse and contrition:
 * O God, for over forty years I have contemplated Thy holy Wounds and all the sorrows of Mary Thy holy Mother and mine, and during all this time I have daily said a psalter of fifteen strophes. Remember, O Lord, that I am Thy servant/ In the same way he said other ejaculatory prayers besides, as : Leave me not helpless in my old age ; Yet Thy Will be done and not mine ! After he had prayed thus he slept for five to ten minutes, and woke up quite well. The paralysis of the arm, the leg, and the face, had entirely disappeared.
 " When I visited him in the afternoon, I could confirm this surprising occurrence namely, the complete cure of the sick man, and the extraordinary manner in which it had happened.

" In my long medical activity, which has now lasted without interruption for forty-nine years, I have seen a great number of paralytics of all kinds. Never, however, have I seen a hemiplegia, which in all probability originates in an effusion of blood in the brain, nor any paralysis of any other kind, that was cured so suddenly. I know very well that there is curable and incurable paralysis, which I do not need to classify in this short article, that is intended for general publication. What I can certify is this, that hitherto I have never heard or read anything of such a sudden cure of paralysis, nor have I ever observed one myself.

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" A complete left-sided paralysis in a man with arterio-sclerosis, which originates in effusion of blood in the brain, and which recovers during a sleep of five minutes without leaving a trace behind, is a fact that borders on the miraculous and must make one pensive. Here only supernatural Might comes into consideration, at the disposition of which stand all the powers and remedies in nature, in order to work miracles which are denied to human science to

Msd ^- "D. JOSE NAVEDA,

" Titulary and justiciary physician
 of Castro-Urdiales."

Fully comprehending the significance of the case in question and his medical opinion, D. J. Jose Naveda was not satisfied with this report, but submitted this remarkable cure to still more detailed study, the result of which he set down in two further circumstantial treatises, which Trenor has appraised in his oft-mentioned book
 " Que pasa en Limpias," pp. 284-290. As both documents repeat themselves in many ways, they are shortly summed up in the following, with all the essential ideas brought into prominence :

" In my report of September 26th, 1919, in the Diario Montañes, I called the cure of D. Vicente, coadjutor of the parish church of S. Maria de Castro, a miraculous one. At that time I gave as a plausible diagnosis of the sudden illness an effusion of blood in the brain, an apoplexia sanguinea. I was led to think this by the swiftness of the attack, the instantaneousness of the illness, the lack of symptoms which allowed one to surmise the previous beginning of a derangement in the contents of that patient's skull. For up to that time he was physically and morally fit for any corporal and spiritual occupation.

" The only doubt that made me waver in my judgment was the rapidity with which the paralysis of the left arm and the left leg was removed again, in the exceedingly short period of five to ten minutes, after the patient had laid the picture of the Santo Cristo on the hand and muscle of the paralysed side, and at the same time prayed fervently to God that He would not let him remain a cripple.

44 All witnesses of this fact were astounded, first of all the surgeon, D. Antonio Zamora, who had rubbed the paralysed limbs for him, and could in so doing verify with certainty the weakness and paralysis of the same, as a doctor is qualified to do after more than forty years practice; then the priests, including D. Cesar de Haro, who was one of the first to notice the attack, and took the sick man to the

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sacristy; finally the undersigned himself, who a short time after the confirmation of a complete hemiplegia of the left side of the body (paralysis of one side of the body) had to acknowledge this surprising and extraordinary cure.

44 The paralysis of the left half of the face has continued to exist, or has only changed immaterially, but does not prevent the zealous priest in any way from fulfilling the duties of his calling to this day. Otherwise this kind of paralysis is either incurable or the recovery takes a long time and even then still remains incomplete. I thought in this connection of other paralytic strokes, especially hysterical ones, with which rapid recovery sometimes occurs, if they are restricted to a small zone, and do not include half of the body, as was the case here. On account of the importance of the case, I considered it my duty to undertake special studies of it.

" I believe in miracles, I also believe that there is a supernatural world and a higher power that rules the invisible, and the visible world in which we live. The concrete fact which presented itself to me could therefore only be an occurrence which is to be explained fully either by natural forces or else is to be ascribed to the intervention of God, for which the sick man prayed so eagerly; in short, the question is : Is the cure purely a natural fact or a miracle ? I myself have as yet met no case where similar paralysis was cured so quickly, and have never yet read or heard anything of one in my long and uninterrupted practice, so that with such a remarkable cure of a virtuous priest there remains nothing else for me but to cry out :
4 Here is the Finger of God/

" I consulted one of the best known and most important neurologists, Charcot, who has set down his knowledge in a voluminous work: 4 Obras completas de J. M. Charcot. Lecciones sobre las enfermedades del sistema nervioso (Complete works of J. M. Charcot. Lectures on the diseases of the nervous system). In the first volume, p. 351, the author says: * Keep in view, gentlemen, with hysterical hemiplegia, the absence of paralysis of the face and deflection of the tongue when it hangs out of the mouth. You know that, on the contrary, with hemiplegia, this symptom otherwise always exists to a certain degree, because something is injured in the interior of the brain/ Then he adds the remark: According to Hasse we must thank Althaus for the proof of the absence of paralysis of the face, and twisting of the mouth, and deflection of the tongue in hysterical hemiplegia/ Now, however, our invalid has still preserved his paralysis of the face, and a considerable deflection of

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the outstretched tongue, towards the left (towards the paralysed side), a sure proof that his hemiplegia was not hysterical, but was evoked by an effusion of blood in the brain. D. Vicente is very susceptible to this disease. He is sixty-seven years old, suffers from calcination of the arteries, the progress of which one also recognises in his eyes, and frequent nose-bleeding. On the other hand there are no signs of hysteria obvious in him, nor anything that could make one think such was the case. Consequently we come to the conclusion supported by my poor opinion, but above all by the highly determinative and decisive views of Charcot, that this hemiplegia had not a hysterical character, but was caused by effusion of blood in the brain. This diagnosis also obtrudes itself for the reason that with other kinds of paralysis not the slightest research can be undertaken; here, however, it completely satisfies our minds, which decided for it already a priori, before the unexpected cure, now also can only come a posteriori to this conclusion, in consideration of the reasons stated.

44 We can even assert the spot where the effusion of blood took

place. It could not possibly have happened on the surface of the brain, over the large brain sheath, where the * neurons (ganglion cells) are situated, which govern or influence the functions of the mind and the will. Had the blood poured itself over this surface of the brain, then, through that, those delicate cells would have been injured by pressure, or torn; in consequence also the functioning of the intellect would have been altered or encroached upon. This, however, remained perfectly intact; only in the first moments the sick man suffered from a slight clouding of the intellect. The effusion of blood took place, on the contrary, in the interior of the brain, where the nerve paths cross, that go from the centre to the periphery and from there to the centre. This place can be no other than the region of the bump of vision (talamos opticos), and of the striped projection (cuerpos estriados). There, as a matter of fact, in most cases (7 :8) the effusions of blood in the brain occur. At this point the nerves lightly touch each other which carry messages from without to that throne of intelligence, the seat of the mind, and in these noble elevations the nerves of motion receive the commands of the mind in order to carry them outwards.

44 That is the result of the physical-pathological analysis (examination) of the case of D, Vicente. This exposition also quite excludes a diagnosis of paralysis a frigore, with which such extensive paralysis does not occur. Besides, even the most circumscribed strokes

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in this form of paralysis are of no such short duration, as was the case with our patient. We will not dwell on other palsies, as, for example, with tumours of the brain, which come on slowly and announce themselves beforehand. Then there is also a total hemiplegia with paralysis of the face which only occurs in exceptional cases with softening of the brain, or in periencephalitis diffusa. Fortunately we find in our D. Vicente no indications at all of these terrible diseases.

" God forbid that I should have the presumption to state so exactly the position of the apoplectic centre out of pure caprice or from pedantry. But in this case we must do so. The scientific explanation of a pronounced hemiplegia, in which the patient retains his intelligence during and after the stroke of paralysis, demands the greatest diagnostic exactitude, in order to settle the doubts that might arise on all sides*

" A colleague of mine, a highly respectable doctor, who saw the cured patient two days after his recovery and agreed with my diagnosis, asked me, quite astonished and sceptical: * Is it then possible that the patient had a pronounced attack of hemiplegia ? He even ventured to ask me : Did you actually see that his arm and his leg were paralysed ? Yes/ I said, I saw and felt it. The arm and the leg were lifeless. The left side of the face was like wise paralysed, when he put his tongue out the point of it was quite considerably deflected to the left/ Thereupon my colleague answered : This paralysis of the face still exists, everything else has disappeared/ The rest/ said I, * was seen by my colleague Zamora, the rector, and a crowd of people who were in the church, and also the sick man himself. Why should these witnesses not count ? They are quite indubitable/ But I do not understand it, cried my colleague, more and more astonished, then we must burn the books ! 4 Oh, no/ I answered him, the books do not contain the whole of science, and still less the science of God/ "

II.

El Diano Montanes reports another miraculous cure on October 12th, 1919, as follows:

44 Among the members of the Confraternity of Nocturnal Adoration which was to keep a solemn vigil in the church of Limpias, in which the members of other guilds were interested, one priest in particular, who wore the colours of Irun on the way to the church, aroused the pity of all the onlookers. One noticed with what

difficulty he climbed the eminence of Rucoba, for he could not conceal the fact that he was paralysed in one leg. On one of our employes the sacrifice of that zealous priest made such an impression that he was tempted several times to offer him his help on the hard ascent. During the entire vigil and the eucharistic procession, our official did not once lose sight of the paralysed priest, so that he impressed upon himself exactly his face and his whole personality.

44 Last Thursday morning he was in the printing office, occupied in packing the copies of our paper that were destined for the post to Bilbao. In the course of this work a priest came in, which was all the more remarkable as at such an early hour the business offices of our management are not yet opened; he wanted to subscribe to our paper.

44 OUT official at once thought to recognise in the new subscriber that priest of the Confraternity of Irun, whose infirmity had made such a deep impression on him. He invited him to come into another room to write down his address. He noticed in so doing that this priest was not paralysed, so that he began to doubt whether he really had that priest before him who had been so universally commiserated at the vigil in Limpias. The priest also soon perceived with what attention he was observed by our employe, and when the latter saw himself detected he said, to justify his behaviour, It is so remarkable to me, that you so very much . . . resemble your brother, the other priest, who is rector of Irun/

44 The man addressed replied, smiling: No, what strikes you to-day in me is that I no longer limp like the last time, when you saw me in Irun. No, sir, it was in Limpias for the first and last time.

4 With all the more joy then/ answered the priest, * will I now explain to you what interests you so comprehensibly.

" The day after the Nocturnal Adoration I had the good fortune to observe the miracle on the crucifix of the Cristo de la Agonia, but without being delivered from my five-year-old " hobbling." In all these years I had exhausted all the remedies of science so as to acquire the movement of my leg again, and to put an end to the severe pain which daily caused me tormenting suffering. In vain I am now overjoyed at my cure, which the Master granted to me in Limpias.

" * A few days ago a good soul came to me in the presbytery of Irun. She had lately been in Limpias, and there had bought some pictures of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, and touched the cross with them. She wanted to make a fervent novena before one of these pictures ;

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for the alleviation of my chronic suffering. At the same time she presented me with a picture, so that I should also honour it* During the days of the novena I felt no relief at all, things were going with me as badly at the end of it as at the beginning. However, when I left my bed the next day imagine my astonishment I noticed that I could walk perfectly and without any pain in my leg, that had caused me daily such great and frequent pain. . . / "

This priest, named D. Francisco Aguirre, is very well known in Guipuzcoa. He came on the day mentioned (October 12th) to Santander, as he had visited Limpias in order to thank the Cristo de la Agonia for the miraculous cure.

III.

D. Florencio Ahumada, rector of Broano, in the diocese of Burgos, had been paralysed in one leg for a long time; for this reason walking was very difficult for him, and without the help of others he could not go either up or down stairs. Saying Mass caused him great trouble, as he always had to hold tight to the altar, so as not to fall, and, besides, could make no genuflections. So he betook himself to Limpias with the ardent desire to be allowed to say Mass at the altar of the Santo Cristo; he asked for this and it was granted to him at once.

Let us now hear how the chronicler of the Catholic paper El Diario Montañés describes the wonderful event, on October 12th, 1919:

44 The crowd that stood round the altar at which the rector of Broano was celebrating holy Mass was sorry for him, because he could not make the genuflections, and instead of them bowed his whole body towards the altar, to which he had also to hold fast when he went from the centre to the Missal.

14 The faithful who had noticed the great exertion required by the movements of the celebrant, remarked already at the Consecration that he could move more freely and even make a genuflection which must have amazed him above all as they observed by his manner.

44 When, at the end of the holy Mass, the three Hail Marys were said, the priest could kneel down, which he was quite incapable of doing before. After the prayers he walked hurriedly to the sacristy, where a scene was enacted that deeply moved all who were a witness of it.

44 The priest took off his Mass vestments, then went to and fro in

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the sacristy, and repeatedly interrupted his steps to stamp heavily with the foot of the leg that had been stiff before the celebration.

" The cured priest at first thought he was dreaming. When he had convinced himself of his sudden recovery he went into the sanctuary for his thanksgiving, saying ejaculatory prayers, and threw himself down in front of the crucifix. There he prayed long and fervently in thanksgiving for the immense benefit the Santo Cristo de la Agonia had bestowed upon him, while hot tears of gratitude rolled down his cheeks/

IV.

Of late times a report may be mentioned that treats of the unusual recovery of the justiciary physician of Noya (Province of La Coruna), who had fallen ill with suppurating pleurisy (pleuresia purulenta). The Diario Montañes, on September 15th, 1920, gave the following preliminary communication about it:

44 There is question of a doctor who, on account of his scientific activity and practical experience, stands in the best repute, esteemed by his colleagues as an authority on account of his powers of diagnosis, and proposed by them in preference for consultation in difficult cases. It was therefore natural that now, on his serious illness, the best doctors should strive for the maintenance of his life. The sick man himself was well aware of his critical condition, also his colleagues who were treating him did not conceal their anxiety. In order to meet the danger as much as lay in their power, they proposed an operation to him. A specialist from Santander was called in consultation, who abundantly confirmed the opinion of the doctors. As the inflammation had spread to the other side, the invalid himself lost all hope that he still cherished of being able to get over this grave illness. He gave his consent to the operation, certainly, but desired that it should be put off until the next day. In the early hours of the morning his wife came into his room to give him some medicine. As soon as it is day/ said the sick man to her, 4 you must do everything you can in order to procure me a picture of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, of which so many miracles are reported from Limpias. The invalid meant by that the miraculous apparitions on the crucifix, for of cures of disease he had until then heard nothing. He thought, however, that finally Christ might extend His power also to that which he wished for himself.

" The wife knew of a lady who had returned from a journey to

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Limpias on the previous evening. She sought her out, to ask her if she had perchance bought a picture of the wonderful crucifix in Limpias* And how strange ! this lady, who was a patient of the sick doctor s, had already intended that same morning to

bring him the picture that she had bought for him in Limpias.
4 When I heard/ she said, that my doctor was seriously ill, it occurred to me to buy him this picture in case it might succeed in helping him; it was touched by the cross of the Santo Cristo in my presence/

" The sick man now laid the picture on both lungs and thereby noticed, deeply moved, that the inflammation immediately receded. . . . The picture of the crucifix was set up at the head of the invalid s bed, and an amelioration quickly resulted, so that the operation was no longer necessary, as the other doctors also declared*

" After his convalescence the cured doctor travelled to Limpias and received the holy Sacraments from the chaplain of the church of the Santo Cristo. The latter induced him also to confirm his remarkable cure in writing, and to give it publicity, which was done, as mentioned above, in the Diario Montanes of September 15th, 1920."

A WONDERFUL ESCAPE DUE TO A PICTURE OF THE CHRISTUS OF LIMPIAS.

In one of the larger fortresses of Spain, which has a numerous garrison, several officers and troopers were one day gathered together; a few civilians were also present* There arose among the company an unpleasant discussion which came to such a point that two of the wranglers flew at one another and came to blows.

As some of the witnesses feared the quarrel might easily lead to a catastrophe, they set themselves in their midst and separated the two from one another by force* One of these, a choleric man, at once drew his revolver, took aim, and shot at his opponent at the very moment when one of the peacemakers was covering him with his body, and the latter received the shot in the chest. . . .

It was an instant of indescribable confusion for all. The spot where the bullet had struck appeared perforated and scorched. The mediator who had received the shot was aware of a heavy blow, and it is easy to think how startled he was. In order to render him first aid they unbuttoned his coat, examined the place where he was singed and the shot had gone through, and to the

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general astonishment established that the waistcoat had remained intact*

In the inner coat pocket there was a leather letter-case which was now drawn out. Only the one cover was perforated and as they searched through the contents they found a picture of the Santo Cristo of Limpias among some papers, slightly damaged by the shot, that had not, however, pierced the cardboard of the picture ; only on the picture side did one see traces of burning. . . . Also the cards and letters in the case between the cover shot through and the picture were scorched, while the others that lay behind the blessed picture had remained uninjured.

All those present were at first speechless with astonishment; no more was thought of the disagreeable quarrel that had been the cause of this remarkable occurrence.

The peacemaker now related that he had put in the picture of the Cristo de la Agonia in order to present it to a pious lady in his family who had solicited one such for herself. All who assisted at the dramatic incident ascribed to this picture the remarkable escape of the man hit.

Shortly afterwards the gentleman mentioned came to Limpias to thank the Santo Cristo de la Agonia for the miraculous saving of his life. Then he came to Santander, where he related the case and expressed his intention of setting it down in a document in the church of the Santo Cristo at Limpias or at the episcopal secretary s office, undersigned by all who had assisted at the event in the fortress.

CONVERSION OF A GERMAN PROTESTANT.

At the end of December, 1919, a young German named Karl August Glaser received in the church of Limpías the holy Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and Holy Eucharist. This convert is a merchant in Bilbao. Only a little while ago, in Barcelona, he refused absolutely the invitation of a German Jesuit Father to enter into the study of Catholic doctrine, with the argument that his business left him no time to occupy himself with such things.

One morning, in Bilbao, he noticed a numerous group of persons who were about to set out for Santander, and wore special badges. He enquired as to the purpose of this remarkable travelling party and learned that they were going to Limpías. He was also told the reason of the pilgrimage. The account of the miracles that

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were ascribed to the Santo Cristo excited in the highest degree the curiosity of the young German, so that he asked permission to be allowed to take part in the pilgrimage. His wish was granted, and so he too came to Limpías. In the church he watched the crucifix attentively during the service, without, however, noticing anything extraordinary about it. In the afternoon he repeated his visit to the church, looked through the witness book in the sacristy, but did not believe in the possibility of the miracles in spite of it, because he had not observed them himself, and also, with his Protestant ideas, could not take them in. Back in the church he surveyed the crucifix afresh, and admired above all its artistic worth. Suddenly a visible change took place in his whole conduct; deeply affected, he fell down on his knees at the feet of the figure, On leaving the church he only gave the remarkable explanation that the crucifix had made a deep impression on him.

From that time on he gave himself up with great zeal to the study of our holy religion, under the guidance of the rector of San Vicente, D. Domingo Abona, who is master of the German language. After the termination of the instruction he returned to Limpías, where, on the 21st of December, 1919, he received Holy Baptism through the rector of Limpías, D. Eduardo Miqueli. With the greatest devotion he assisted at the holy Mass and went to Holy Communion with a reverence that touched and edified all present.

CONVERSION OF A BLASPHEMER.

On August 18th, 1920, the newspaper El Diario Montañés of Santander published the following sensational account of the conversion of a pianist :

" This man, besides his profession as a wandering piano player, pursued the singular sport of raising religious questions at every opportunity, in order to make a parade of his unbelief and to utter the most terrible blasphemies. His boldness went so far in this that he gloried in the lowest vices, and found an excuse for every thing. The presence of a priest, especially of a monk, provoked him to the most profane utterances. His hatred of everything religious was kindled particularly when he saw pictures of saints, above all those of the crucified Saviour,

" One can imagine the temper of this unbeliever when he heard of the wonderful manifestations of the Santo Cristo de la Agonía of Limpías. On his professional journey through the province of

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Santander he came to a small market town that was not far distant from Limpías. This opportunity seemed very welcome to him. Now my hour has come/ thought he, and set out for Limpías. 4 Let us be silent over his ungodly intentions/ writes the reporter of the Diario Montañés, * out of consideration for our readers/ Arrived in Limpías, he chose an hour at which, according to his assumption, the church could be but little visited. In front of the church door a gentleman was walking to and fro, while in the church there were only four to six devout women. Suddenly they were disturbed in their devotions by an exceedingly coarse shout from

him. The pianist had posted himself in front of the crucifix in the middle aisle of the church, with a provocative bearing. The terror of the women increased still more when he hurled himself furiously towards the altar. Suddenly, at the steps of the communion rails, he stopped, and with a loud tumbling noise, immediately fell down them to the floor. Some of the women hurried into the sacristy, others called in the gentleman who was standing outside the church door. The latter, a doctor, aided by the chaplain, Lastra, and other persons as well, carried the unconscious man out of the church into the open air, where the necessary attempts to restore life were at once made. The fit was repeated three times. At length, after much trouble, the doctor succeeded in getting the unconscious man out of his faint, and he then related the cause of the whole incident. I wanted to advance up to the altar where the effigy stands. I saw the head bowed. When I had reached the steps the head of the figure raised itself and gazed at me with a look that I can never describe, and which suddenly held me back/ He explained, too, that the lips moved and that he saw the Christ detach Himself from the cross and come towards him. At this moment he had lost consciousness.

44 The former priest-hater did not leave Limpias without making a penitent and humble confession, and receiving Holy Communion the next morning with touching reverence, when he could not conceal his tears. When he left Limpias he declared that never in his life had he felt such peace of mind as now. Since this event a whole month has elapsed; the pardoned sinner continues his wandering life, goes on giving concerts in various towns, but makes no secret of his conversion in Limpias, and of his good resolutions. Some think it is a case of hypocrisy and cant with him, of which, however, there can be no question, for his avowal brings him no material advantage. Also the doctor who attended him during his faint

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rejects positively such an assumption, and declares that this virtuoso could not possibly have feigned such a condition without endangering his life; he had examined him closely, and confirmed thereby that he possessed a thoroughly healthy and strong constitution, and his sudden sinking down in the church could only be explained by the extraordinary impression of the crucifix."

THE ATTITUDE OF UNBELIEF: TESTIMONY OF AN OPPONENT.

The religious movement which the miracles of the Christus of Limpias produced naturally also called the opponents of Christendom into the arena, and gave them a motive for pouring out their ridicule and scorn on the Catholics who were so stupid and behind the times as to believe in such folly. Father Echevarria reports first of all on those who in their unbelief absolutely deny the miraculous events of Limpias, and also cannot admit them at all because they will not hear of either the reality or the possibility of a supernatural order. They are so blind that there is for them no remedy except the compassion of that same Redeemer who has already overwhelmed many of them with the treasures of His infinite love, so that they too saw the marvel in Limpias, fell on their knees, confessed, and promised amendment. . . .

It is just these wonderful results that have exasperated other unbelievers in the highest degree, so they attacked the Christus of Limpias like wild bulls in mad rage. To these belong those who, for instance, in Santander, had the impudence to turn Christ into ridicule through couplets and satirical songs, or who, like the paper *El Liberal* of Bilbao, published articles the coarseness of which aroused disgust and indignation even in their readers, or those in the *Mercantil Valenciano* who stormed against the Redeemer with a shamelessness and insolence that exceeded all limits. ... In order to unmask the intentions of such journalists, the esteemed editor of the *Correo Español*, D. Tomas Arteaga Larramendi, reports a characteristic experience :

" Chance ordained/ he writes, " that a little while ago I could converse with the editor of a liberal paper. From his words I gathered that he also wanted to take part in a pilgrimage to Limpias, not in order to venerate the holy crucifix but to seek for subject matter to fill up a few columns of his paper.

" Nine days had passed when I met our * friend again but

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pensive. He had just returned from Limpias; I therefore questioned this pilgrim and learned with great astonishment the following statement from his own lips:

4 I went to Limpias, where nobody could suspect the true reason of my journey. Although my presence in the church was not necessary for the fulfilment of my design, yet my curiosity led me one morning into the house of God. There were many people there. From a somewhat hidden position I wanted to survey the crucifix, the countenance of which made a deep impression on me from the first moment. I wanted to avert my eyes from the figure, but could not. Trembling with excitement, I noticed soon afterwards that the eyes of the Christ were looking at me fixedly and long. I thought I must be hallucinated and tried to escape out of the church. As I left my seat I met a young officer with a lady, and heard the latter say to me: " What is the matter with you, sir ? Are you ill ?" I must indeed have looked very pale. So as not to attract attention to myself any more, I stayed in the church until the Mass was ended, but did not dare to raise my eyes again. On going out I unintentionally turned my eyes again towards the altar and experienced anew the effect of that terrible look of the Christ, who turned His eyes always in the same direction, just where I was. I pulled myself together once more, looked away and went out/

" This radical editor, who had been a witness of the miracle, left Limpias on the very same day.

44 * Did you not write an article about it in your paper ? I asked him.

44 4 Yes/ he answered drily, 4 I sent in a short report/

44 A few hours later I bought a copy of that paper at a newspaper stall. My surprise and indignation were boundless. That journalist whom God had vouchsafed to be a witness of His Divine Might, in his report indulged in ridiculous digressions and blasphemous stupidities, with which he related his impressions of the journey to Limpias. In the afternoon I sought out this cynical man, in order to extort from him once more, before witnesses, the touching description of his experiences that he had given me in the morning and which differed so greatly from the lies that were in his paper.

44 Unfortunately, I did not succeed ; I found him in a cafe in the company of several gentlemen. When he saw me coming, however, with the copy of his journal, I noticed an embarrassed smile on his lips, and without waiting for my query, he whispered in my ear:

4 What can I do ? ... The accursed peseta ! . . / "

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THE GAZE OF CHRIST.

An editor describes the impression of the gaze of Christ, which he himself has seen, in a striking manner, as follows :

" In comparison with the overpowering character of the look of Christ, everything that men have written about it hitherto seems cold, insignificant, and colourless. When His eyes turn their profound, penetrating regard wrathfully upon a man, he will hardly be able to bear the keen glance which Christ darts at him. Like a shaft of fire He pierces the heart and lights up its most hidden secrets throughout. At times of holy anger, these eyes are terrible, their look overwhelming everything. As for me, I could recognise in it the fiery glance of the judge, which will some day penetrate into souls at the particular judgment, while He weighs and judges their whole life. All my wretchedness, all my sins, stand in a moment before my soul as accusers, to humble me, and to make me acknowledge with awful reality my ingratitude toward the Blood that Christ has shed for me.

" In marvellous contrast to this, afterwards, out of the same eyes a look shone full of mildness and goodness that captivates hearts when it is turned irresistibly on unhappy, sick, and penitent sinners. Beams of grace and compassion, of pity and encouragement, then proceed from His eyes and spread a charm that nothing can resist. The look of the Master then illumines and warms everything, dispenses light to the understanding, faith to the soul, and love to the heart. We view earthly life from above; it presents itself to us quite differently. The horizon of eternal hope rises resplendent, and the toil and cares of the pilgrimage of life appear transitory and despicable to us. The look of Christ becomes fatherly and friendly, we read in it our own woes; His eyes full of sadness and apprehension remind us of His sufferings, reproach us for our forgetfulness, and console us at the same time. Vanquished by Truth and Love, the soul at last gives itself up to its Redeemer, in the consciousness of its entire impotence, renounces its own will and all human vanity. I saw His gaze extend over us, until it completely enveloped us as when the sun sheds the fulness of its light over us. In this ocean of dazzling light the soul flutters upwards, as it were freed from the burden of the flesh, timorous and cramped, finally folds its languid wings together and tries in vain to hide its misery. Nevertheless I did not feel myself blinded by the fulness of the light, nor did I

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die of terror and remorse, in face of my sinfulness, for at the same time the compassion of God came gently and pityingly between, as when a mother covers the nakedness of her child with white linen. I could not take myself away, my whole being plunged with violent thirst, with irresistible desire, with superhuman, passionate longing into this unique love, that satisfies and never fills, into this sweetest Love of all loves, which is everlasting. When the miracle ceases at length, one has an indescribable feeling, as when one is looking at a landscape in a dream, in which the forms and colours, without dispersing, run into one another and change into a transparent haze. Bewildered and disconcerted, one comes back ultimately to the reality, after one has thought oneself for a whole hour carried back in imagination to Gospel times, in which Jesus wandered through the Galilean villages, healed all diseases, and took pity on everyone in distress.

44 It is not to be wondered at that everyone of any ability who has actually seen the look of the Saviour should feel compelled to communicate this experience to others, to relieve one's own mind, and also to awaken and foster in fellow-creatures comprehension of the love of the Saviour. This we understand especially from a statement which was published in the paper *El Sol* by a convinced Catholic:

44 4 On my first visit to Limpias the Bishop of Pinar del Rio happened to be present. When the Mass for the pilgrims of Mena was ended, many of us noticed in the face of the venerable prelate unmistakable signs of profound emotion. In the afternoon, after the Way of the Cross, we made the same observation. He has certainly seen it, we all thought; but the virtuous Bishop maintained a prudent reserve.

44 4 When I had seen the miracle myself, on my second visit, and felt myself irresistibly impelled to corroborate it in the presence of others, I was talking to two distinguished gentlemen, and said to them : " The Bishop of Pinar del Rio has also seen the miracle and will surely not hesitate to make it public. I am persuaded that he cannot possibly resist doing so/ Thereupon one of them replied to me: 4t The Bishop of Pinar del Rio is such a prominent and sagacious prelate that he will no doubt beware of giving publicity to an assertion, because he is conscious of his responsibility when he speaks of this case, as a bishop." I retorted : " And I assure you from my own experience that he will not be able to abstain from doing so." Both my friends smiled sceptically. The following day I showed them, triumphantly, the copies of *La Atalaja*

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and of the *Diario Montañas* that reported the pilgrimage and the

feast of the patroness of la Montana. On this occasion the Bishop of Pinar del Rio had preached and had spoken particularly of the gaze of Christ, when he made allusions to Limpias, and by his splendid words made a deep impression on the devout auditors. 44 But here he does not exactly say that he has seen the miracle/ objected one of the gentlemen again. 44 All right/ I answered with enthusiasm, " he will say so clearly enough and that shortly." And actually, only a few days afterwards one of the two gentlemen, while he smilingly declared himself vanquished, handed me over a copy of the beautiful and fervent pastoral letter of the Bishop of Pinar del Rio !

44 Everyone who has occupied himself even only a little with psychology must be struck by the calm assurance and unshakable conviction with which all the eye-witnesses make their assertions and which they confirm again and again.

" We have seen it, we would swear to it before the Bishop and the Pope ! So spoke the children who had first seen the movement of the eyes. 4 We have seen it and are prepared to swear to it/ asserted decided men soon afterwards. 4 You may be able to declare that you do not believe, but never can or ought you to say that we have not seen it/ so the residents of Limpias replied to their unbelieving opponents. * We have seen it. Like them thousands of pilgrims have repeated it in the vestibules of the house of God in Limpias, thousands have sworn in the witness book.

" One explains to them that even if one does not doubt the reality of their observations, yet these can only be subjective sensations, obvious alterations in their eyesight and they answer all the more positively that the facts remain steadfast.

44 One assails the veracity of the advocates of the * splendid fraud/ but without hesitation they bear insults of all kinds patiently, One derides the beholders as pathological enthusiasts, and they put up with this abusive want of appreciation calmly. Science denies their assertions, scorn turns them into ridicule, unbelief dishonours them; they see cautious people shaking their heads doubtingly, enemies scoffing, bystanders sneering undaunted and unwavering they declare over and over again : 4 We have seen it ! They are told that they are victims of morbid illusions, hallucinations, involuntary erroneous ideas, deceptions due to the light and suggestion . . . and they respond with the words of Galileo, And still, He does move ! "

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THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CANONICAL PROCESS.

On July 1 8th, 1920, at the Bishop s palace in Santander, a preliminary gathering took place, through which the canonical process of investigation into the events at Limpias was introduced. The Official Ecclesiastical Bulletin (Boletin Oficial Edesiastico) brought out the following detailed report of it in No. 21 of November i2th, 1920:

44 The assembly was presided over by the Bishop of Santander, Mgr. Sanchez de Castro. There were present: 5 military officers, 5 public dignitaries, n members of the clergy, 14 representatives of various religious communities, 3 professors, and 3 journalists. Five absentees belonging to various of the above professions had apologised for their absence, as they were unavoidably prevented from attending. As secretary of the assembly D. Jacinto Iglesias Garcia, a member of the episcopal official staff, was nominated.

" The Bishop, Mgr. Sanchez de Castro, opened the session first of all with thanks to God that it was possible for him, owing to his recovery from a serious illness, to introduce this solemn act. After further thanks to those assembled, for their numerous attendance, he described in short periods the events which had come to pass in Limpias since the 30th of March, 1919, and alluded to the deeply religious movement which since that date had daily led hundreds of pilgrims to that holy place, hitherto quite unknown. With great satisfaction he had observed this approach of the faithful to the crucified Saviour, but had also followed up the development of the fact from the beginning with the keenest attention, so as in no way to offend against the wise reticence of the Church and the

canonical instructions. Should the faith of my diocesans/ declared the Bishop, have become endangered in any way, had this continuous homage of Christian piety to the Santo Cristo de la Agonia in Limpias compromised morals or dogma, I should at once have raised my voice and have brought my authority to bear as shepherd of my flock. As, however, the faithful sought solely Jesus, the Crucified, through whom alone our life, our salvation, and our redemption are to be found, I gladly allowed it to come to pass that they should have recourse to Him, and render thanks to Him, especially as so many sinners found the way back to God once more in front of His august image, and penitently acknowledged their sins. For all that I did not hesitate, when I considered the

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moment come for official intervention, to make preparations for the canonical process, whilst I obtained the advice of the sacred Cathedral chapter, in October of last year. Already beforehand I had, of course, reported to the Nuncio and had applied to the Holy See, in order to obtain the necessary directions from there. . . /

" * You know how it fared with me then/ continued the -Bishop; the Master tried me with a long illness, so that I had to let every thing rest. Now that I am better, although I am still not completely restored, I have the greatest wish that the first public act in which I take part should be this canonical process, and for that reason I have to-day called you together here. My strength does not, however, allow me to speak much. In my name, therefore, the Provost and Vicar-General, Dr. D. Manuel Lopez Arana, will read out a report which has found my full consent. In it he will also demonstrate to you how this canonical process is to be evolved/

" After these impressive circumstantial utterances of the Bishop, the Provost alluded next to the fact that extensive districts at home and abroad were taking the greatest notice of the occurrences at Limpias; he called special attention to the discreet procedure of the diocesan Bishop, and said : To-day, when, after careful deliberation with the Cathedral Chapter and recognised Spanish theologians, and upon the receipt of official communications regarding the wishes of the Holy See, our chief Pastor deemed official proceedings by ecclesiastical authority to be indicated in this important affair, he considered it proper, in order to provide the ecclesiastical decision with as sure a basis as possible, to convene this company of distinguished and learned men, to put before them the report which was already drafted in October of the preceding year, and to beg all the assembly urgently always to hand in their written opinion of the ensuing meetings/

" Further, the Provost declared that at the very beginning of the official assumption of spiritual authority, before everything the choice of persons came into consideration, of whom the Court of Justice should be composed. The result of the election was to be published in the Official Ecclesiastical Bulletin. After the swearing-in of the Court of Justice, the Promotores fidei, the medical and physical experts, the notary and his deputy would have to take the oath, that they would accomplish their task conscientiously, would preserve the secrecy of office until the publication of the proceedings, and would accept no gifts of any kind. Although the Bishop might not function as judge he would also take the oath

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to preserve secrecy. In like manner the secretary and the usher of the court would have to be sworn.

44 During the proceedings themselves the following rules of conduct were to be heeded : The facts must be tested with the same care and with the same severity as prevails in other judicial proceedings, as is also prescribed in the Can. 2019 of the Corpus Juris Canonici. The proofs must be absolutely complete, and only trustworthy, attested, and written evidence may be accepted/

44 For the confirmation of the events in Limpias a local enquiry must first of all be held, and with the inclusion of the experts, a judicial declaration be made, so as to arrive at absolute certainty

over the fact that the movements on the Santo Cristo de la Agonia cannot be called forth either through mechanical implements or through optical illusion. Scientific opinion must also express itself as to whether the church of Limpías is a place which is particularly adapted to suggestion and hallucination. The further work of the Court of Justice will consist in collecting together, arranging, and selecting the whole of the data, and in testing their reliability. As experienced assistants to the Court of Justice in this, the rector of the diocese, and especially the rector of Limpías, come into account. In the classification of the evidence in verbal and written testimonies it will be settled to arrange the former in the following manner: (1) Witnesses who aver that they saw the miracle on March 30, 1919. (2) Witnesses who have assisted at heterogeneous manifestations in order to differentiate between their assertions, according to the * diversity of the observations/ (3) Witnesses who have seen the manifestations 4 alone as well as coincidentally with other pilgrims/ All these formalities are very worthy of notice. At the hearing of witnesses attention must be paid with all possible conscientiousness, with individual persons, to the condition of their eyes, their physical constitution, and their moral character.

" Should it be part of God's designs that the investigation itself should be furthered through miracles in moral, physical, or physiological respect, then the Court of Justice would have to take heed to what the code prescribes in Can. 2117-2120, with regard to the judgment of miracles in specie.

44 The work of the Court of Justice will accordingly be very difficult and laborious, and will certainly take a long time. The examination of the Court of Justice into the occurrences at Lourdes lasted four years in its time, till the judicial sentence could be passed (c/. Appendix I.).

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" This report met with the general adoption of the assembly, whereupon the protocol of all present was signed.

44 In addition to this meeting the Bishop of Santander drew up a decree, which was printed on September 18, 1920, and should have been published on September 21. Then, on the morning of September 19, God, the Master, called to Himself in eternity, at the age of eighty, the saintly chief Pastor, who had governed the diocese of Santander for thirty-six years. The work for the canonical process was thereupon discontinued for some months, until the Capitular Vicar, Licentiate Jacinto Iglesias Garcia, published the above-mentioned decree in the Official Ecclesiastical Bulletin, on November 12, 1920. It is worded as follows:

44 4 We, Dr. D. Vicente Santiago Sanchez de Castro, by the grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Santander, to the clergy and the faithful of our diocese :

44 4 Since the 30th of March, 1919, in the parish church of Limpías sensational events happen repeatedly before the Santo Cristo de la Agonia, which is revered there, that attract to themselves the attention not only of our diocesans, but of Spain and of the whole world, as if they had supernatural characteristics.

44 4 Very many witnesses of both sexes, of every class and every profession, affirm, among other things, that they have seen that the figure of the Santo Cristo was bathed in perspiration or blood, and moved its eyes and head as if alive, varied its look, in most cases assumed a very pained but also sometimes a thoroughly contented expression.

44 4 As the church of Limpías belongs to the province of our episcopal jurisdiction, we have conscientiously and from the very beginning given our whole attention to the facts mentioned, as also to everything else that was reported and which is relevant to this subject.

44 4 Until a few days ago we have restricted ourselves to blessing the pious pilgrimages which came from the entire diocese and many other parts of Spain, and threw themselves down at the feet of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia. For we were convinced that from these pilgrimages considerable spiritual benefit proceeded, as much for

the faithful as for the unbelievers.

* As regards the judging of those events, we have observed a cautious reserve and, according to the custom of the Church, have waited in the hope that time would come to our aid.

44 4 While clerical and secular, home and foreign writers undertook

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and published historical and critical studies of the events at Limpias, we sent a private report about this to the Holy See, and now await the favourable moment of the inauguration of the canonical proceedings, in order to review and examine thoroughly those occurrences, and, if it should be necessary, so as to give an opinion of their nature, after the confirmation of their authenticity.

44 * With regard to the opening of the canonical process we commissioned our Provost and Vicar-General, in the very first days of October last year, with the elaboration of a report, which was already submitted on October 22, and treats chiefly of the following points :

44 4 i. The right and duty of the Bishop to interfere with regard to the events at Limpias.

44 4 2. The facts submitted, which must be taken into consideration hereby.

44 4 3. Formation of a Court of Justice for the carrying through of the canonical process.

44 4 4. Legal proceedings of the appointed Court of Justice.

44 4 In order to satisfy all prescriptions according to the spirit of the Church, and particularly so as to proceed with the greatest certainty in the case in question, wherein one cannot be circumspect enough, we found ourselves induced to convene a meeting, which took place on July 18 of the current year, at our palace. The invitation of co-operation was conformed to by the most distinguished authorities, our worthy Cathedral Chapter, the representatives of the episcopal university in Comillas, and our priests seminary, and all those other clerical and secular persons who could give us precious information through their scientific opinion on the individual points of the report mentioned.

44 Afterwards, now that sufficient time has elapsed and full satisfaction is afforded to the demands of patient waiting, with our worthy Cathedral Chapter and other prominent theologians in consultation, and after searching study of various Papal decrees, and of the works of recognised writers on fundamental, dogmatic, and mystic theology, after the invocation of the holy Name of God, to His greater glory and for the salvation of souls, we have decided to inaugurate the canonical proceedings with regard to the events in Limpias.

44 4 The prescriptions ordained accordingly may be summarised as follows :

4 i. The origin of the visions, whether natural or supernatural and divine, to be examined by a college of judges.

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44 4 2. The Court to act with the minute exactness of criminal jurisdiction,

444 3. The opinion of experts in physics, natural science, and medicine to be sought,

" 4. The physical and moral attributes of witnesses to be taken into consideration.

" 5. All diocesan rectors to assist in the formalities.

" * 6. Details of the composition of the Court of Justice.

44 4 7. Nomination of the Judge and other members of the court.

44 4 8. Nomination of the President and Vice-President.

44 4 9. The oath to be taken by those in office.

" * Given and signed by us in Santander, in our Episcopal Palace, and countersigned by our private secretary, on the feast-day of the holy martyrs Emeterio and Celedonio, patrons of our

diocese, August 30, 1920.

V. SANTIAGO,

44 4 Bishop of Santander.

44 JACINTO IGLESIAS GARCIA,

" Archdeacon, Secretary

44 On Sunday, January 9, 1921, the first local investigation took place in the church at Limpias, behind closed doors. The Commission consisted of fourteen members namely, professors of theology, canon law, physics, and natural science, and three doctors of medicine. Over the result the profoundest silence is observed."

ATTITUDE OF THE ROMAN CURIA AND UTTERANCES OF THE BISHOPS.

Since the inauguration of the Canonical Process over a year has passed. Although the members of the commission are under taking their responsible task with all zeal, up to now they have established through their manifold investigations nothing that might have been able to induce the highly competent Bishop of Santander to effect a retrenchment of the processions to Limpias, to suppress further statements about the extraordinary appearances, or to impose a check in any other way on the veneration of the wonderful Christus. On the contrary, in the full consciousness of its great responsibility, the episcopate of Spain promotes and supports in every way all arrangements that are occasioned by the extraordinary manifestations of the Santo Cristo.

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The results up to now of the investigations of that commission in Santander have above all led to this, that in reply to a letter to the Holy Father, the Apostolic Penitentiary sent a rescript on July 19, 1921, by which a plenary indulgence was granted provisionally for a period of seven years, and which can be gained on any four days in the year, to all the faithful who go in pilgrimage to Limpias, in order to visit the parish church there and to venerate the crucifix. It is especially to be noticed that the Holy Father has in so doing not awaited the final valid decision of the Canonical process at all. To him it is evidently a pressing, heartfelt need in our hard times, when the whole world has to suffer so endlessly as a result of unbelief, immorality, and universal confusion, to show humanity the way to that One with whom alone deliverance is still to be sought and to be found, to Christ, and Him Crucified, who desires with such compassionate love to draw to Himself men in need of redemption. Is the granting of four plenary indulgences not to be considered as the express invitation to all Christians to go in pilgrimage to Limpias with humble, childlike faith, in order to do penance at the feet of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia and to begin a new life in the true Christian spirit ?

On September 10, 1921, the Papal Nuncio, Mgr. Tedeschini, also came quite unexpectedly from Madrid to Limpias to visit the holy place. He prayed a long while before the crucifix, inspected it carefully from different positions in the church, and had a detailed account rendered to him by the Archpriest D. Eduardo Miqueli. He declared that it would be hard to find in the world a carving that represented the suffering of the Saviour more impressively than this figure, and that it had also made the deepest impression on him. He could only express again and again his great delight at his visit to Limpias, and

he sincerely regretted that it was not permissible for him to stay there longer. Before he left Limpias he congratulated the clergy and the population of Limpias with impressive words: " Because they were chosen, that the Master should reveal Himself in such a wonder working image en tan prodigiosa imagen in their church." The reporter in the Diario Montanes of September 1 1 adds this sentence besides: " These weighty words from the lips of such an influential personage were received by the inhabitants of Limpias with grateful pleasure."

We have already become acquainted with the impressive words of the late Bishop of Santander at the inauguration of the canonical process, and the most important paragraphs out of the pastoral

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letter of the Bishop of Pinar del Rio, The cardinals of Santiago and Valladolid were gladly prepared to bless the pilgrimage of their diocesans to Limpias and to further them in every way. The cardinal of Valladolid even allowed himself to be represented by his suffragan Bishop, D. Pedro Segura, titular Bishop of Apollonia, whereby this pilgrimage formed a mighty demonstration of the faith of all the participants in the mysterious revelations of the Santo Cristo in Limpias*

After their arrival in Santander, towards 10 a.m., the pilgrims arranged themselves in ranks, and, to the edification of the inhabitants, went with their Bishop to the church of the Sacred Heart, where they communicated towards noon, after they had travelled a wearisome distance on one of the most inclement of autumn days. The Bishop made one inspired address during the holy Mass, another at the solemn afternoon service, and a third touching oration at the visit of the Bishop of Santander, at which all the pilgrims took part. In spite of the difficulty of the journey and the fatiguing day in Santander, the pilgrims started the next morning already at six o'clock. Arrived at Limpias, they went in a procession from the station to the church. The Bishop joined the troop, clad in the pontifical vestments, then said holy Mass in the church, and administered Holy Communion to the majority of the pilgrims.

In the afternoon solemn devotions took place before the Santo Cristo de la Agonia. All the pilgrims threw themselves down on their knees, while the Bishop, attired in the red cope, deeply moved, with fervent prayer, offered his homage to the Santo Cristo: " Thou art a King, Lord, in that Thou madest the Cross to be Thy Throne. So that all might look upon it as a throne and not a gallows, Thou didst desire that a King's title should be engraved above it, which Thou, in Thy most extreme humility, wouldst not renounce, even when Thy enemies wanted to take it from Thee. Stripped of Thy garments Thou didst wish to retain as sole distinctive mark of Thy true kingdom, this Crown which girds Thy temples, a crown that cannot, like the crowns of earthly kings, be easily put on and taken off again, but that is beaten into Thy Head hard and fast, to testify that Thou art an everlasting King, whose reign shall have no end."

The Bishop of Olimpo, without having seen the apparitions personally, is firmly convinced that these are founded on truth, and ascribes the greatest importance to them when he declares :

" When persons who had seen the manifestations in Limpias told me of the anguished look that the Santo Cristo turned from one

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side to the other, and downwards, when they described to me the laborious heaving of the breast and the opening of the mouth, as if He would fain utter a painful groan, then I had to think forcibly of the Saviour in the forsaken tabernacles, where He waits in expectancy in the long hours of the day and the night, to see whether anyone will still come to him or not. The animated countenance of the Christ appears directly like a divine photograph of that of the Redeemer hidden under the sacramental forms. ... All who observed the expression of this animated countenance declared that its look and its mien were not menacing but plaintive, not stern but sad, not commanding but entreating. He does not seek to evoke

fear and dread in our hearts, but repentance and pity. . . .

44 How the thought wrings my heart that these complaints, these groans, these entreaties, descend from the heights of Calvary upon the tabernacle, and that the figure of the crucified Redeemer must show itself so full of pain in order to obtain by begging just a little pity for the eucharistic Saviour/

At the beginning of October, 1920, the Bishop of Leon led his diocesans in a magnificent procession to Limpias, to the altar of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia.

The first Bishop who preached in Limpias was the Bishop of Loja in Ecuador. He then made no secret of his persuasion of the truth of the manifestations of the Santo Cristo. In simple words he congratulated the faithful in Limpias on their piety and zealous devotion to the crucifix, which he described in captivating terms. Then he spoke of the necessity for a living faith that Spaniards must not lose, since they had received such extraordinary favours from Heaven.

ATTEMPT AT AN EXPLANATION OF THE WONDERFUL MANIFESTATIONS.

" It is not necessary to work miracles. But that we should seek God, and that God should come into our heart, that is essential. All contemplation that does not lead to the greater knowledge and love of God, to contrition, is nothing. What we need is the knowledge and love of the Crucified, the practice of Christian charity for His sake, and that we should co-operate with grace through prayer and through imitation of the Life of Christ. The true way to God is not the way of miracles, but the way of the Cross. The knowledge of God and of oneself leads to perfection, one recognises whether

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one is in a state of grace or not, by the fact that one does not boast of any favour from God." With these beautiful words, Bl. Angela of Foligno shows upon what the Saints depend above all things. We must adhere to that too, with regard to the miracles of Limpias. " Faith can never deceive us; marvels, prophecies, and visions have deceived many. The infallible word of God that is laid down in the Church offers the highest security and guarantee for the truth that is possible. The extraordinary may be ever so well accredited, yet it does not approach the certainty of dogmatic theology." Therefore we will not put down as sceptics those who will not believe in the prodigies of Limpias, nor venture even only to cast a doubt at their loyal Catholic standpoint. If a Catholic should refuse belief in the events at Limpias because he is of opinion that he is not bound by obligation to believe in them, and wishes, therefore, to reserve to himself the whole strength of his faith for the mysteries of our holy religion that are revealed by God and recognised by ecclesiastical authority, he is absolutely not to be condemned on that account.

Likewise, if anyone should doubt the wonderful manifestations in Limpias in consideration of the divers superstitions, errors, self-deception, which so easily connect themselves with a false piety, and should express before others their doubts about them, from apprehension that this might be a question of a similar case . . . could one blame or condemn such behaviour ? Certainly not. Everyone could take the point of view: In all matters of faith the authority of the Church is the standard for me. She, however, has not yet expressed herself over the occurrences in Limpias, consequently I am not bound by duty to believe in these events, particularly before the Church has spoken on the subject.

On the other hand, it would be wrong vehemently to reject the extraordinary events in Limpias, and to represent them as unworthy of belief. Certainly we must believe the miracles that the Holy Scriptures relate to us, but the Church never puts before us as dogma the wonders that happen in the course of history, but leaves their adoption to our thoughtful judgment. Also everyone is entirely free to believe in private revelations or not, however positively worthy of belief they may be. The Vatican Council has rejected the standpoint, however, of denying or asserting the possibility

of the miracle as a matter of course, a miracle never being recognisable as trustworthy. " The Catholic Faith acknowledges that God is a God of order and lawfulness, and only breaks through the natural course of things in rare cases for serious reasons . The Church

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is therefore not credulous as concerns miracles and heavenly apparitions. Should things of that kind be reported anywhere she observes in general a painful reserve and demands severe criticism. She knows too well how easily frauds are possible. Particularly in places of pilgrimage, as, for instance, at Lourdes, the ecclesiastical authorities, before the examination of the events was settled, imposed upon themselves a manifold reserve which appeared incomprehensible and scandalous to the enthusiasm of the people." The Church watches with care lest superstition, fraud, and deception should creep in. She examines, likewise, with the utmost severity, the miracles that are needful for canonisation, and even when she has recognised these as such, she does not bind the faithful by obligation to believe in them. For all that, it will not be hard for any convinced Catholic; he will, on the contrary, consider it logical to believe in such miracles when cogent reasons speak for them.

When 2,500 important witnesses from the most varied classes assert honestly, indeed, on oath, that they have seen the miraculous appearances not a few of them have even been converted by the impression of what they saw one would surely greatly insult them if one were to deny them their belief, on principle. " The higher criticism is entitled to stretch its claims over just such extraordinary facts, the more scrupulously has one to guard against amalgamating the question of facts with the question of essentials. Both questions are rather to be kept strictly apart and examined separately, for personal prejudice over the essentials could easily influence unfavourably the leading question of historical actuality, push it on to a wrong track, and so falsify it at once. The problem as to whether the wonderful fact admits of a natural explanation after all, or not, still remains unsolved. The trustworthiness of the witnesses must not be doubted, for the simple reason that they possess no professional knowledge of the nature of the attested incident. A simple artisan often shows a greater gift of observation, penetration, and sound common-sense than many an educated person."

Certainly the value of the thousands of testimonies of the manifestations in Limpas are in no way analogous. Many reports that were published in the newspaper merit no credence. For undoubtedly there have been also in Limpas persons enough who were deluded, still many more such who, in their vanity, did not want to be inferior to the really favoured ones, and therefore falsely stated that they also belonged to the number of the eye witnesses. But between these and those there is a great dissimilarity,

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however. When one thinks logically one must also let that pass with the events at Limpas, which is acknowledged without further ado with other facts, and one ought not to reject the testimonies of thousands of the faithful who lead a pure life and are claimed to be honourable folk, of bishops, religious, and priests, of so many scientists, of engineers, doctors, lawyers, and politicians, who confirm the statements of their experiences in Limpas with their affidavit. Furthermore, it is to be remarked that among the eye-witnesses there are a striking number of unbelievers, who visit the parish church of Limpas out of curiosity or for other less worthy reasons, and who return home completely changed at heart. Strangely enough, those also who go there and see nothing return for the most part with the conviction that in Limpas quite extraordinary things are happening. How curious, on the contrary, is the conduct of so many, who have not yet been in Limpas, but who, with a superior air, with headstrong presumption and appealing to their learning, pronounce all the witnesses of these wonderful manifestations to be deluded, and the contents of their reports a " swindle " !

If we now turn to the contents of the testimonies, surely everyone is free to examine these with all care, in order to form an opinion for himself as to the motive and nature of those manifestations.

Quite certainly the question will no doubt intrude itself on the majority first of all as to whether the witnesses, whose veracity is not to be doubted, have somehow fallen victims to self-deception in their observations. It is, however, a well-known fact that the bulk of the people allows itself to be led more by the moment and by violent emotion than by reason, whereby the charm of the novelty besides, perhaps also personal interest, can play a part. Does this perhaps happen with the inhabitants of Limpias, and with the first witnesses whose statements are submitted here ?

We do not wish to speak at all of Fr. Lopez, who, at the installation of the electric switch, was very far from thinking that anything extraordinary could happen to him, who was certainly quite free from mystical sentiment during this employment.

Likewise the Capuchin Fathers who held the mission in March, 1919, did not in the slightest way count upon the possibility of such extraordinary revelations on the crucifix, much less did they in their sermons or through their method of acting in other respects, make the people disposed for demonstrations of that sort, nor did they promote these by hasty assent. Needless to say, antagonistic news papers very soon tried to raise such accusations against the Fathers.

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So immediately, during the first days of the mission, a newspaper reporter approached Fr. Agatangelo with the assertion: "But you must have known something of it already during the mission !" whereupon the Father in his discreet manner replied: " No, I speak quite frankly to you, neither on the first days when the miracle was observed nor for a long time afterwards could I, although I multiplied my visits, perceive anything unusual about the Christus."

To Fr. Echevarria, who visited him, accompanied by the photographer, D. Roman Labarga, in his monastery at Montehano, in order to confirm the circumstances exactly, Fr. Agatangelo expressed himself emphatically: " The matter surprised us all, us missionaries still more than the people; for in our mission addresses we had only spoken of the crucifix inasmuch as to point to it at the end of the sermon, instead of showing the congregation our own crucifix, which we generally take in our hand in order to induce an awakening of repentance."

Again, the parishioners of Limpias, who assisted at the closing service on March 30, 1919, certainly did not think in the least that such remarkable apparitions on the crucifix of their parish church could be granted to them, however affected they might be by the sermons and the splendid results of the mission. When they received Holy Communion on the morning of this day their thoughts were self-evidently directed to the Saviour whom they bore in their hearts. Not one thought meantime in a particular way of the cross on the high altar, to the sight of which they were quite accustomed besides. Only when they ceased to carry the eucharistic species in themselves and their recollection passed its zenith, did the children first of all notice the changes in the Santo Cristo de la Agonia. Then when both Fathers stepped in front of the altar and looked up at the cross without seeing anything peculiar, a movement began among the people, for some, full of astonishment, perceived the movement of the eyes of the Christus and communicated their surprise through audible groans in prayer and excited exclamations, to the rest of the faithful. Now all looked up at the cross, but only to comparatively few was the manifestation granted. Neither the children nor the adults who saw the apparitions were prepared beforehand for them, from which it follows that between the miracle and the crowd no intrinsic connection existed at all, therefore it was impossible that the crowd in their exaltation had in any way conjured up the manifestations through suggestion.

On Saturday, April 10, 1920, at half-past twelve in the afternoon,

HEAD OF THE CHR1STUS (SIDE FACE)

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nearly all the persons who were in the church of Limpías were so surprised by the manifestations at the crucifix that they simultaneously gave expression to their interior excitement through loud prayers and cries. The folk who were conversing outside in the church square hastened out of natural curiosity into the church, where they at once became witnesses of the changes. They, too, began forthwith to shout aloud, so that the sound penetrated farther and farther. Workmen who were occupied in the vicinity of the church and had noticed the incidents, now left their work as well and went into the house of God. The same thing happened to them. They did not need first to ask the cause of the general tumult, for the greater number of them saw the same apparitions. So as to be able to follow these better, the crowd pushed forward to the steps of the altar, and soon the whole sanctuary was filled with people. The manifestations offered themselves to the gaze of the spectators quite distinctly and unmistakably in the most varied, consecutive revelations. With that it is especially to be noted that many of the eye-witnesses were residents of Limpías. Who knows how often they had tarried before the crucifix in the course of the last year of grace, but had never observed anything? They had heard many beautiful and touching sermons in this time, and noticed very many things in such numerous favoured pilgrims, but in spite of that had hitherto seen no manifestation. Now they stepped, quite unprepared, from their work places into the church, and saw, entirely without mediation, the changes on the crucifix, through which, for already over a year, the church of their native town had become a place of pilgrimage, that has already become famous in all the countries in the world.

When the multitudes came to Limpías from all parts of Spain it the news of the miraculous appearances, in order to see the crucifix, the fulfilment of their wish to see the remarkable changes was denied to the majority. In doing so they had, however, the lame spiritual disposition as the others whose desire was satisfied, and yet they saw nothing striking. When the crowd finds itself disappointed, moreover, it does not restrain its indignation, its scorn and derision, but rather turns very easily in anger against those who assert that they are privileged. Such a thing has never been observed in Limpías, although many came there out of pure curiosity, very many were sceptical, and also went away again unbelieving. Never has the crowd shown itself unsatisfied hitherto, however often they have had to leave Limpías, after a long journey

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and many sacrifices, without having seen the apparitions. By far the greater number returned home more full of faith and religiously stimulated, with the project of coming again if possible, so as perhaps to be vouchsafed a revelation then. Until now the mass of visitors has always met the visionaries with great respect, and was pleased and grateful to listen to their statements, to be edified at the assertions of their impressions and to come into closer intercourse with them.

Still more foolish would be the thought that base commercial interests might have tempted the inhabitants of Limpías or the province of Santander to vaunt things of no importance, or even to invent wonderful manifestations. Lies are short-lived; very soon people would have come on the track of the fraud and would have disclosed it before all the world. No, witnesses from all parts of the country in the Iberian Peninsula and also people belonging to other nations have established the miraculous apparitions and convinced themselves of the truth of the published reports. People of all possible professions, believers and sceptics, the educated and the unlettered classes, old men and children in large numbers, have seen the visions in Limpías and have confirmed them verbally as well as in writing. People who came to Limpías with the intention of investigating with the keenest criticism, not only the cross, the altar, and its whole surroundings, but also the

manifestations, together with all the accompanying circumstances, and of going to the bottom of the reports of miracles, have been obliged to withdraw unreservedly before the force of the facts. They have not only expressed their own observations by word of mouth, but have put them down in writing, after due deliberation, and in the consciousness of their entire responsibility they swore, partly, or at least declared themselves ready to confirm their testimonies by an oath, as soon as the spiritual authorities should consider it requisite. That all these thousands, for the greater part highly estimable persons priests, religious, doctors, lawyers, scholars, officers, governors, and masters of the universities and so forth had the intention of deceiving the world is impossible. What reasons could incite them to do so ? Pride, perchance, or vanity ? How foolish ! Nowadays, the avowal that one has seen the vision in Limpias suffices for one to be judged in wide circles of cultured and uneducated people as an eccentric person.

One might, perhaps, further assert that with the manifestations at Limpias it is a question of fraud, as the physician, Dr. Litourmant,

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also at first took for granted, according to his report. " I supposed and declared it was a question of attempts by priests and monks to reanimate the faith in modern times. To tell the truth, however, I believed, besides, rather that such means were being seized so as to make a commercial affair of it."

On the figure of the Saviour is there perhaps some sort of mechanical contrivance fixed or put in operation, through which the movement of the eyes or the head is evoked ? Or is there a like mechanism in the back, or concealed anywhere else in the wall, from whence the phenomenon is produced by wires or strings ? Or could these appearances be called forth by any sort of mirage ? Fr. Echevarria states in his work about a communication in the Diario Montanes that two doctors had applied to the chaplain of the church in Limpias, who asked for the key of the church in order to be able quite alone, locked into the church, to make a minute examination, according to their own opinion, of the carving of the altar and the figure and round about the altar. Right gladly was this wish granted them, and the consequence was that Christ looked at one of them so plainly and with such efficaciousness that he came back at once and expressed a request to make his confession. The following day he communicated with great reverence and went away without giving his name, nor that of the place whence he came and to which he was returning, but out of a doubter in this case also grew an apostle of the miracle of Limpias. As to these two men, so also to every other, perfect freedom was accorded to examine the crucifixion group and the church in addition. No suspicious observation whatsoever that might have allowed a fraud to be implied was ever made or expressed until now. With that the crucifix itself is so clearly to be seen and to be inspected in close proximity from the altar steps; the lighting conditions are so favourable that even the very smallest and most delicate machinery could at once be perceived. When, on March 30, 1919, the first appearances were observed, the lighting conditions in the church were certainly not yet so favourable as now. The electric light which Fr. Lopez had installed at the instigation of one of his friends, in the year 1914, had soon to be removed again, as the church was too poor. Most of the faithful preferred to go to the church of the Pauline Fathers, so that the parish church had hardly any revenue at all. It could scarcely satisfy the most necessary requirements for church ceremonies, much less allow itself the luxury of electric light. When, however, after March 30, 1919, those wonder-

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ful manifestations began, many residents of Limpias who did not see the miracle themselves declared: " Our church is much too dark; stronger illumination by electric light must be provided for; then the miracles will stop of their own accord/ Consequently, on April 25, 1919, a gentleman of Limpias, D. Saturnine Chavarri, had the present installation carried out at his own expense, so that since then the crucifix is illumined day and night with few interruptions. In spite of this, immediately after, on April 26, the

same apparitions were observed by several witnesses as had been seen previously by daylight.

If the appearances were evoked by some kind of mechanical contrivance, then they would have been noticed by all those present in the church. They would furthermore always last the same length of time, and occur under definite conditions that would always be the same, or would repeat themselves from time to time. The apparitions in Limpias, however, do not present themselves thus by any means, but show themselves as a cessation of the natural order of things, do not follow fixed rules, but reveal the influence of a power that is above nature. For this reason, too, the Bishop of Pinar del Rio says in his pastoral letter already mentioned: "Who, then, is the originator of this marvel? Human operation is out of the question here. As a matter of course I declare myself decidedly against any possibility of fraudulent interference from the human side. One does not so easily deceive many thousands of people. Moreover, there are no grounds at all to suspect a fraud, and finally, there is nothing to be remarked in the crucifix which admits of even the slightest suspicion of deception by any scoundrel. Thoroughly sufficient investigations have been made/

In the afternoon of August 10, 1920, an elderly gentleman was among the visitors to the church, who was evidently suffering with his eyes, and for that reason wore dark spectacles. He stood at the back of the church. In spite of that he saw the miraculous appearances, which were observed later by two ladies and a child namely, movements of the eyes and changes in the countenance through the formation of wrinkles and so on. Many young people were standing in front of the old gentleman, even right forward up to the high altar, and could perceive nothing for all that.

Already in the year 1914, as mentioned before (c/. pp. 21-22), the Pauline Father D. Antonio Lopez had carefully examined the eyes of the crucifix, and in so doing had established repeatedly "that neither a spring nor any other mechanism was on it. The eyes were,

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on the contrary, so fixed that they did not allow of being moved in the least even by firm pressure with the fingers, nor could they be pushed in any direction/

In order to prove any suspicion of a fraud unjustified, the Bishop of Pinar del Rio also applied to the sculptor D. Jose Garros, who had repaired and renovated the crucifix several years previously, with the request to submit to him a report of this work and an opinion of the possibility of deceit. The artist replied thereupon that among the various repairs which he had undertaken in the years 1895-1898 in the parish church of Limpias the restoration of the crucifix had taken place in the year 1898. On the body of the Christ there had arisen various cracks that had to be obliterated; some pieces were also broken off, which he had to restore. He renewed the coat of paint which had suffered badly, while he carefully bore in mind the antique character of the figure. One of the eyes had fallen out, so that he had to replace it by a new one; the other had become loose. For the setting in of the eyes he opened the cheek-bone, as is usually done, and drilled for each eye a passage in the interior as far as the top of the eyelid* After the setting in of the eyes he put in a mixture of white lead, strong glue and resin; with this paste first of all stuck a small piece of canvas behind the eyes, so as to guard against any loosening of the same, and finally filled the passage bored out with this mixture. That a spring or any other mechanical device could be fixed to the crucifix he considered entirely out of the question. He deposited the same declaration in Limpias also on May 18, 1919, in an official document that was signed by him, by the rector D. Eduardo Miqueli, and the assistant priest D. Rafael Povuelta.

Now, would it not be possible that those who saw the apparitions should have deceived themselves? If it was only a question of nervous persons one might well suspect that. But with the great number of men of the most varied professions, especially from academic, cultured circles, it is really very difficult to believe in general self-deception. Thousands of witnesses among whom very many who refused belief in the possibility of the miraculous manifestations, and over 2,500 swore to their testimony on oath,

observed the crucifix carefully from a few yards distance and deposited their avowal in writing. Where should we get to if we tried to put down so many people as deceived ? And how numerous the conversions are ! The Diario Montanes wrote on July 22, 1921 :
44 Can one still place doubt in these large numbers of witnesses, of

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whom many are prepared to seal their utterances with their blood ? Can one still doubt when one sees how many young people have given up their dissolute and worldly lives to enter a convent and there to expiate their errors ? Can one still doubt those who assure us personally that, after a sinful and unworthy life of many years, they were converted through the miracles of Limpias, have forsaken the path of life they had hitherto followed, and now lead an exemplary life ? Can one, finally, leave unheeded the testimony of so many who from sceptical opponents and declared enemies of the Church have become to-day true apostles of the Santo Cristo de la Agonia ?"

But let us suppose, in spite of this, that there could be no question of miraculous apparitions, then the query next comes into consideration as to whether with those persons it can be a case of hallucination.

Hallucinations are illusive representations of the intellect, or subjective mind-pictures, which are regarded as objective. Such mind representations are experienced with the clearness and force of direct perceptions of the intellect, although nothing exterior responds to them. They belong usually to the senses of sight and hearing, and declare themselves either in that the nerves of sense are irritated by internal proceedings in the organism, or that through great mental excitement the imagination is so stirred up that its creations, as it were, assume flesh and blood. Such hallucinations do not only occur in diseased, but also in sound minds, but are different according to predisposition and practice.

Now, will all who have had the manifestations in Limpias have been hallucinated ? There came, indeed, whole pilgrim bands of women to Limpias, among whom were hundreds of devout persons that cherished a strong desire to see the appearances on the crucifix, but only a few had their wish fulfilled. Hysterical and nervous persons, who are susceptible to all kinds of intellectual deceptions, for the most part perceived not the slightest alteration in the cross, not even under the impression of frequently loud and touching descriptions from actual eye-witnesses. How was it then with the men ? Proportionately few priests have seen the apparitions, and of the men who visited the crucifix besides about 80 per cent, could observe nothing extraordinary. But officers and peasants, lawyers and doctors, boys and middle-aged men, workmen and sailors, believers and sceptics, of whom quite the greater number purposely defended themselves against hallucination, and did everything to protect themselves from any self-deception, saw the animation of the

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figure. Soldiers who have looked death in the face, seamen who have courageously braved all the storms of the sea, strong men who are able to suppress their tears in the most grievous afflictions in their domestic circle, weep in Limpias like children, are overcome by the manifestations and believe in them like any guileless, devout novice.

The Spanish Ambassador, D. Francisco Zea-Bermudez, who stayed in Limpias in August, 1920, for some time, in order to study the events at that place, states that on August 4, of forty persons less than twelve, on August 14, of twenty-five only three, and on August 19, of ninety only some thirty persons observed the apparitions, and not a single woman belonged to these eye-witnesses, although among these pilgrims there were always a larger number of women, who prayed with the greatest devotion. In the pilgrimage of Castaneda in July, 1919, 214 persons took part, and of these only four saw the appearances, including two medical students (c/. p. 74). If the visionaries were really hallucinated, why have they not already observed the same or similar manifestations on other crosses ? The Ambassador mentioned relates that on September 3, 1920, in the

morning, he had admired the highly gifted creation of the artist Juan Martinez Montanes, the "Christus of Vergara," a splendid work that represents so vividly the pain and suffering of Christ. If there is a carving that operates affectingly of itself then it is this one of the famous Cristo de Guipuzcoa. It is, moreover, in a dark chapel, so that usually candles have to be lighted in order to illumine this picture, whereby the impression is rather more strengthened. He was not affected by the sight of this figure. In the afternoon of the same day he knelt before the crucifix of Limpías, the eyes of which, turned towards Heaven, give the countenance an expression of inexpressible gentleness and tender compassion. Moreover this figure is almost constantly lighted up, so as to obviate illusions, and in spite of that he saw that manifestation in the evening.

In the periodical El Sol, under the title of "El Cristo que mueve los ojos" (The Christus that moves its eyes), the impressions were given of two witnesses, of whom one was a very devout man, and the other an unbelieving doctor from Saragossa. The first relates everything with imperturbable strength of conviction. "The miracle/ he says, " makes on all who see it such a lasting impression that they can never doubt it. With those who begin their descriptions with the words: * It seems to me as if . . / one can safely take it for granted that they have not seen the miracle. For him

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to whom Christ has revealed Himself, there is no doubt, not the slightest vestige of vacillation any more. The fact is real, categorical, indubitable, incontestable. . . ." After this introduction this man full of faith relates what he has seen in Limpías.

After him in that paper the unbeliever speaks. He must confess: 44 I cannot but declare that something or other extraordinary is taking place on this crucifix which does not happen with others. If I had faith I should call it a miracle from heaven, and enter my avowal in the witness book. As I have no faith, however, it only remains for me to wait until science explains that which men term divine miracle. In a few years, I hope, what the imagination seeks to represent as a supernatural production will be explained by physics."

At the words of this man, who saw the wonderful apparition with his bodily eyes, but for all that kept the eyes of his soul closed, one thinks involuntarily of the complaint of Jesus: 44 Woe to thee, Corozain ! Woe to thee, Bethsaida ! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes " (Matt. xi. 21). In spite of that, his testimony is more precious to us than the evidence of many others who devoutly and readily thank God for the favour bestowed upon them. His avowal cannot hinder, but only strengthen us in the persuasion that there can be no question of self-deception with the eye-witnesses. For with this unbelieving doctor one can think as little of suggestion as of hallucination, as with him there was not the least aptitude for it present. His assertion is not the evidence of a man who wishes to see, but of one such who against his will, and without having given up his disposition to religious enmity, has actually seen. It acquires thus an incomparably high, apologetic value.

However, if hallucination appears out of the question, is perhaps illusion possible with the visionaries ? Illusion is deception of the intellect that is to say, a misconstruction of exterior objects to which we are led in error most frequently by the faculty of vision. We often deceive ourselves over the size, shape, distance, and motion of things* and so succumb to optical illusions. With them imagination chiefly plays only a subordinate part. The atmosphere, the lighting conditions, the diminution of light, the distance of the observer, smaller or greater defects in the object, are above all the cause of illusion. It is on just such accompanying circumstances, which in many ways seem non-essential, that such apparitions depend, and also in Limpías careful attention must be paid to them. Canon

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D. Pedro Camporredondo of Santander on his frequent visits to Limpías has made just these circumstances his especial object,

and says of them: " When I was in Limpias I paid careful attention to the lighting conditions that surrounded the altar and the crucifix* I established that there cannot easily be a question of optical illusion there. Intense and bright light; between the source of light and the cross no object that could diminish the light; possibility of observation in close proximity, whereby all inequalities of the figure and the sharp cut of the lines can be seen in the minutest detail; no clouds of steam that could dim the abundance of the light in short, nothing is to be established in Limpias that could prejudice clear and accurate observation. I therefore declare that if anyone should have an optical illusion while in the act of looking at this figure this should be imputed only to personal organic defects, but never to exterior circumstances. Of myself I can firmly assert that I should not have seen the miracle if it had not actually taken place, and as I say that, so do also many others, who went out without having seen the miracle. Among the witnesses whom we know from the press and out of the book that is laid out in the sacristy, there are a great number that plainly demonstrate to us that the apparitions and their attendant conditions exclude any optical illusion/

The Spanish Dominican Father, D. Manuel Rubio Cercas, has just recently published an essay in the paper La Ciencia Tomista, which caused a transitory, warranted sensation just in this respect. In his detailed exposition he ascribes the alterations which are observed on the crucifix above all to the influence of the electric light that is fixed up under the red curtain, in order to illumine the figure sufficiently. Through the variation in the strength of the current changes on it would be easily brought about. If the figure of the Santo Cristo is brightly illumined, therefore absolutely clearly to be seen, it seems to draw nearer to us ; on the other hand, diminish the strength of the current, as so often happens with electric light, then this will cause a change in the colouring, and the disappearance of the deep shadows will produce an impression as if the body of the Christ were receding from us. From that may be explained why so many think they perceive a rise and fall of the breast or breathing of the Santo Cristo.

Also the red velvet hangings that are fixed over the whole group of the Crucifixion co-operate in the production of certain manifestations. As the upper surface of the figure is not dull, but is smoothly polished, though not perfectly, it reflects back the red colour of the

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curtain. Always when the strength of the current increases, one notices that the upper surface of the carving becomes softly shaded with a faintly reddish and violet hue, so that the impression is evoked that one has a living body before one. On the contrary, diminish the force of the current and the reflection of the red hangings dwindles, and the reddish tint changes to the yellowish colour that one is wont to observe in a dying person. By this all changes of colour noticed, as well as the flowing of blood on the body and the expectoration of blood from the mouth, may be explained. Fr. Rubio Cercas therefore demands that the cross be taken down from the altar and brought to the open daylight; then all these reddish shadings would vanish and each one could easily convince himself that all those inexplicable observations were to be explained in a natural way.

As concerns these remarks, it must first of all be emphasised that in the first times of the apparitions the electric light was not yet there at all, and yet people had seen them by daylight; it was only installed later, and, as is particularly brought into prominence in the report of October 14, 1921 (c/. p. 108), was afterwards substantially strengthened for the express purpose of lighting up the cross as brightly as possible, and so obviating any optical illusion. Now adays, too, the electric light does not burn uninterruptedly, but is switched off at noon; so that then the figure of the Santo Cristo is only to be seen by daylight. As the reports show and the rector of Limpias explicitly points out in a letter of the 18th June, 1921, just at this hour very many appearances are observed, in which the breathing and the flowing of blood show themselves in the same way as at the times when the electric light is burning. It must certainly not be denied that with the variation of the force of the current the depth of the colouring and the shadows alters. But in order to observe uniform breathing in the rising and sinking of the chest, regular and continuous changes would have to occur in the

strength of the light, which would surely be very striking and would be objected to at once by the numerous doctors and other persons somewhat competent to pass a judgment.

If the manifestations in Limpias should take place in that natural, explicable fashion, why then are they not perceived by everyone ? To this difficult question, Fr. Rubio Cercas further gives the answer: Many people suffer from achromatopsia (colour-blindness) i.e., from derangements of the power of vision in the clear and distinct discrimination of colours. According to the results of the researches

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of physicists and psychologists the strength of vision usually fades in the order: violet, green, blue, yellow, and red. Now, if the reflections of red on the upper surface of the carving of the Santo Cristo were the more perfect, then certainly by far the greater number, if not all, would recognise the colour as red. As, however, the surface of the figure is not a perfectly smooth one, the reflection does not attain the red tinge for very many people, but only the violet, so that they, as colour-blind, do not perceive anything of that phenomenon which would be seen by others whose eyes possess clear and distinct visual power. If the same persons recognise the colouring at one time as red and another time not, then this is traceable to a transitory pathological condition or to an organic fatigue of the eyes.

Fr. Ugarte de Ercilla, who according to Dr. Froberger's communication in the Kolnische Volkszeitung of March 29, 1921 (No. 231), "is esteemed as a prominent psychologist, has studied for long years in Leipzig, in the famous seminary of Wundt, and so knows the modern implements in psychological methods of investigation, and approaches the whole question with extraordinary capability," denies the attempt at explanation by Fr. Rubio Cercas. He considers his expositions as intelligent enough, but as singular and corresponding very little to the truth. "Can there then really be so many people, and would they be by far the majority in Limpias, whose eyes are affected with achromatopsia, and only, forsooth, when they gaze at the crucifix at Limpias, but not under other conditions and elsewhere ? And can this colour-blindness be so peculiar that the same persons see those apparitions at one time and not at another, even when the same conditions are given ? How can one account for that if one wants to explain the phenomenon as natural, when the natural conditions are identical ? And if the solution is so simple, how then is it that the beholders experience such great and varied impressions of terror, consolation, and so forth, and that not continuously but intermittently ?"

With regard to the wish of Fr. Rubio Cercas that the cross should be taken down from the altar and set up in another position, so as to be able to watch it then constantly in broad daylight, the query is justified indeed as to whether then also, in a different place, those manifestations must coincide, and whether God, supposing they are evoked by Him, would be obliged to grant that desire and also to perform the miracles there. In this, as in many other respects,

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the report of the extraordinary changes in the thorn in Andria, dated July, 1910 (c/. p. 182), is very instructive. There, too, people thought they ought to bring the thorn into a more favourable lighted place for the scientific confirmation of the miracle, but the changes did not occur there. But when they exposed the thorn the next day to general veneration in the accustomed place on the altar of St. Richard, the miracle came to pass afresh to the delight of the faithful people, and indeed so strikingly that it was then also acknowledged with grateful frankness and adequately authorised by the scientific committee of investigation.

Finally, let it not remain unmentioned that the committee for the enquiry into the manifestations of Limpias, to which distinguished professional men belong, and to whom also the proposition of Fr. Rubio Cercas is not unknown, would certainly have already taken the crucifix down from the altar and set it in the daylight if they

should consider it necessary.

This attempt at a natural explanation does not suffice, therefore, to prove that those diverse apparitions in Limpias are to be traced to illusion or similar causes. But are there, perhaps, yet other grounds which allow those many actually observed changes in the Santo Cristo to be judged in a satisfactory manner as purely natural? Since the first manifestation on March 30, 1919, two and a half years have now elapsed. A great number of physicists and psychologists, doctors and chemists, have seen the crucifix in Limpias; many of them have observed the apparitions themselves, examined all local conditions in any way relevant to the question, and until to-day not a single one of them has come forward with serious objections to these inexplicable manifestations.

Also, the lately deceased and well-known scholar, Professor Dr. Isenkrahe, to whose opinion of such extraordinary things many people attach particular importance, in his correspondence with the author, did not in any way take up an adverse standpoint in relation to the appearances at Limpias, although he called special attention to several desires relative to the examination of these remarkable events, which are to be published in the second edition of his "Experimental Theology," appearing shortly. "You will, of course, find," he wrote on April 18, 1921, "that I, as a professional physicist, cannot trouble myself particularly with medical, psychological, and theological problems that come into consideration in the Limpias question, but only just with the physical ones, and of those there are indeed a quantity which, in my opinion, are not

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satisfactorily settled/* To his keen regret at his discussion about Limpias, he had only the first still quite incomplete edition of this book before him* Of the amplifications in the following edition and other personal communications he could hardly yet make any use, as the manuscript of the second edition of the said book was already in the press. Dr. Isenkrahe terminates his letter of May 7, 1921, with the noteworthy words : "It often seems to me as if not secular science but rather certain modern apologists suffer from being 4 miracle-shy/ not theoretically to be sure, but practically/

If with the apparitions in Limpias it is a question of purely natural occurrences, then it would be important above all to find the law of Nature by which it allows itself to be explained, that some see something at these manifestations, and others, on the contrary, nothing; that some observe this and others that phenomenon simultaneously, and that to those who have seen the appearances once this joy is refused another time, while to others it is granted again and again. And if there is really question of a natural law here, who can offer us any reasonable explanation for the fact that that law has the power to represent on that cross all the details of the suffering and death of Christ ? Undoubtedly there are secret forces, of a physical and psychical nature of which we have not yet cognisance. But still there are in these domains limits also, which common-sense must acknowledge unconditionally. We certainly know the positive boundaries of the natural forces only quite imperfectly and shall never be able to fathom them completely either. Nevertheless, we know irrefragable negative boundaries, and can therefore quite well say to where these limits do not extend. If one mixes oxygen and hydrogen together one will never obtain chlorine; if one sows corn one will never reap roses, and so a human word will never suffice to still storms or to awaken the dead. Numerous and extensive experiences in all possible spheres since the world exists convince us that such events are absolutely impossible with mere natural forces. If Nature had the power to generate such occurrences, then she would surely have already produced them. Now, natural manifestations repeat themselves mechanically and regularly, for nature is subject to the law of nature, and by that to invariableness and uniformity. The apparitions on the Christus of Limpias, however, are not represented like that at all, but show quite an arbitrary, irregular cessation of the natural order of things, and therefore lead one to conclude with urgency of thought in the touch of a higher power, that stands above the laws of nature, and is not dependent on them.

Who, then, can be the author of the extraordinary occurrences on that crucifix ?

The Bishop of Pinar del Rio (Cuba) in his pastoral letter answers this question as follows: "We have six signs, as Fr. Gracian states, in order to recognise whether a vision comes from God or from the devil, (1) First of all, here, comes into consideration whether according to their purport they treat of things that reveal to us faith and the Holy Scriptures, or that we are able to understand with the help of science, experience, and clear discernment. But this does not yet suffice, for the devil also, in the form of an angel of light, can quote truths out of the Gospels, in order to induce a soul to obey its own genius, to believe and trust in it, and so to fall into a snare and give itself up to reprehensible things. (2) If faith, confidence, truth, love, obedience, purity and the other virtues are promoted by it, that is a distinct sign that the vision comes from God, for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit/ nor the reverse, says the Saviour. (3) Furthermore, the circumstances come into consideration which accompany the revelation : divine revelations elicit peace and tranquillity of mind; the diabolical ones, on the other hand, produce disquietude. (4) The soul does not hide the revelations coming from God, from superiors and father confessor; it is also not tempted to lock away in itself the substance of them, and to give credence to them without wishing to talk them over with someone. (5) If the vision or revelation is for the welfare and advantage of everyone, the party concerned as well as other persons, as also the whole Church, and causes harm or prejudice to nobody, then it is from God. (6) If the revelations are rare, and relate to important matters, then they come from God. Those are the signs from which we can judge without running the danger of going astray in these difficult affairs.

" The visions and manifestations of the Christus of Limpias fulfil all these conditions. Our holy faith and also the Holy Scriptures inform us of the affliction of the crucified Saviour, and this the figure of Christ in Limpias exhibits in His dying countenance, in His eyes growing dim, and in the mouth that closes itself slowly and opens itself again quickly. Through all these expressions, the Master seems to wish to bring before us the anguish of His painful and infamous death. As a matter of fact, faith was strengthened in all who saw it. We certainly do not wish to deny that many, even after they had seen the miracle, may have gone out of the church again just as indifferent as they had come in. We do not

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know that, but what we do know quite well is this, that sinners have been converted, and that good men have become better. Through sincere conversion and repentant confession many souls in Limpias who had become obdurate in sin were purified. * An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit/ Now, the devil certainly urges no man to go to confession; that is quite an unquestionable fact. These manifestations may well have excited the nervous system too, but we have not yet learned that they have robbed anyone of peace. On the contrary, we know from experience that these visions attract more and more to Christ and tranquillise the mind. Who ever has seen them is also far from concealing them, but, on the contrary, devotes himself to communicating them to others, so that all the world may receive news of them, and through that the glory of God and the salvation of souls may be furthered. I know a case of someone who felt troubled and restless, could neither eat nor sleep until he had published his vision; he only regained his normal condition when he had deposed his testimony before others. As a matter of fact, such a manifestation contributes towards the salvation of everyone, for it awakens love for Christ and kindles hearts, the just rejoice and exult over it, while the wicked are angry and fume because God is glorified and Christ is acknowledged and loved.

44 Now, do those six signs really suffice to build up an entirely sure judgment ? Certainly not alone, for firm belief is also required, but as far as our reason extends we can at least assert that the work does not spring from the devil but from God. For, apart from the good fruits that these wonderful manifestations produce and which cannot in any way be ascribed to the devil, a cross is the dread of Satan, before which this angel of darkness flees terrified, and there

fore is no appropriate means that the devil might make use of for deception. God also would never permit it in such a universal way as it actually happens. Let us now acknowledge it quite frankly, unreservedly and without timidity, to the glory of God, to the shame of Satan, to the praise of Christ, to the consolation of the virtuous and to the hope of sinners: The miracles which take place on the figure of the Christ of the Death-agony in Limpas are the work of God."

So says the Bishop of Pinar del Rio, with whose statement every one will no doubt agree in the main, that in Limpas there can be no question of the work of the devil.

If we now try to get at the explanation of those miraculous mani-

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festations in Limpas, we will certainly not occupy ourselves here with this difficult theological question more in detail than universal interest requires. For over two years Spanish theologians have investigated the events with cool sobriety and evenly balanced reserve, in order to acquire clearness of judgment as far as possible. One of the most prominent scholars in the domain of asceticism and mysticism, the Capuchin Friar Francisco Naval, whose work 44 *Curso de Teologia Ascetica y Mistica*, "also translated into Latin, stands in a high position in modern professional literature, on being questioned gave the explanation, as early as September 2, 1919: 44 At once I take for granted that these manifestations themselves, as well as their supernatural character, are founded on truth; for although I have not had the joy of observing them myself, I consider it a matter of course that one ought not to oppose oneself to the testimony of so many people who have seen them, for I cannot admit that all this depends on illusion with them. If one knows the tree by its fruit, however, then this one must be quite excellent, heavenly indeed, as it brings forth such exquisite and plentiful fruits of everlasting life. As regards the explanation of this phenomenon I am somewhat perplexed, because it is the first time that manifestations in this form have been submitted to my judgment, and because mystics have hitherto expressed themselves but little concerning supernatural revelations on actual statues, and to persons who were not contemplatives." With this conception of Fr. Francisco Naval all Spanish theologians agree, with the exception of the Dominican Father Rubio Cercas,

However, in order here also to come to a somewhat satisfactory result, we will first of all entrust ourselves to the guidance of the venerable Fr. Ludwig de Ponte, S.J., who, in his well-known work 44 *Guide to the Inner Life*, "in chapter viii. of the third volume, speaks of three extraordinary modes of contemplation in which God communicates His secrets to men.

His statements offer us a valuable finger-post for the way that we have to enter upon in the explanation. He says there as follows: 44 It is not enough for God, the Master, to reveal Himself as in a mirror and in ordinary ways; occasionally He also does this by extraordinary means, in that He gives those who love Him fresh occasions in which they are able to behold His most gracious countenance and His holy secrets. St. Augustine and other holy fathers reduce these ways to three principal ones. The first way takes place through statues, pictures, or exterior signs, which one observes

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with completely alert senses. God avails Himself of these corporal images as tools, as it were, to enlighten the mind, so that it learns to understand what they demonstrate. They are like mirrors in which the soul sees the divine mysteries which God is revealing to its inner consciousness. Thus did God manifest Himself to Moses, "where the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt " (Exodus iii. 2). Thus did St. John the Baptist see "a dove from Heaven descending and remaining upon Jesus after he was baptised " (John i. 32). In that John recognised the fulness of the divine spirit that rested on Christ. "Also over the Apostles the Holy Ghost came as a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind coming . . .

and parted tongues as it were of fire and it sat upon every one of them . . . (Acts ii. 3). The second method of contemplation takes place through interior pictures in the lower part of the mind, which we name imagination. There are here inner senses through which God is wont to manifest Himself and to disclose His secrets. This happens, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, in a two fold manner, whereby, namely, God so adjusts and arranges the images and ideas that were formerly in the mind, that they represent what He wishes to make known to the soul; or perhaps He creates new pictures in the mind in order to enlighten the understanding through them, so that it can take cognisance of them and can penetrate the meaning that they present. Thus did God often act with the prophets of the Old and the New Testament, from whom He took away their exterior senses so that during the period of such a revelation they could no longer make use of them; this occurred, therefore, so that the operation of the exterior senses should not stand in the way of the gaze of the inner perception. For that reason such revelations frequently came over them when they were asleep, for then the outward senses are, of course, released from all activity. Most often, however, this happened to them in a waking condition when they were engaged in prayer with God. Then He transported them out of themselves through the images and light of the view that He imparted to them. Of this kind were the revelations that St. John the Evangelist received on the Island of Patmos and wrote down in the Apocalypse. So it was too with St. Peter, when in an ecstasy he saw the great sheet wherein were all manner of beasts. . . . The third mode of contemplation with which many Saints were favoured is quite spiritual, in the higher regions of the mind, without these pictures and figures perceptible to

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the senses. This method is, as St. Thomas says, more excellent in itself and resembles more closely the contemplation of the Angels and Saints, who in the radiance of their halos see the uncreated Light of the Godhead in themselves, and read in the Book of the Divine Being His infinite perfection, without viewing it by means of any mirror or created image."

The manifestations in Limpias are, according to this, undoubtedly to be counted among the visions of the first kind, as the beholders perceive in the figure of the Christus, as in a mirror, the appearances and expressions of psychical feelings, of the pain and death-struggle of the Crucified, in such a surprising and impressive fashion. It is a question, therefore, of so-called corporal visions and of supernatural revelations under the form, perceptible to the senses, of an object that lies outside the eyes of the spectators.

These corporal visions can once again be evoked in a fourfold manner: either the body of that person actually appears, as, for example, Christ appeared to the Apostles after His Resurrection (objective vision); or the person in question appears in an assumed body e.g., a statue or figure, when such an object is changed through the intervention of a higher power, so that the beholders are able to perceive these changes with their senses (likewise objective vision); or the object is not altered, but used by God or an Angel as a tool in order, for instance, to influence the natural rays of light that proceed from it in a definite manner, to convey them thus to the eyes of the beholders and to occasion in them through this the apparition intended (subjective-objective vision); or God or an Angel evokes miraculous appearances of corporal things in the eyes of the beholders, quite independently of an exterior visible object (subjective vision).

Now, which of these ways lies before us at Limpias ? As to this the most varied opinion exists among the Spanish theologians. Some (Fr. Urbano, Fr. Lamanie de Chirac, Santamaria, Pena) assert that the apparitions are purely subjective, and are realised only in the eyes of the beholders, without any objectivity. For if they were objective ie., if changes actually took place on the crucifix then, in the given case, these would have to be observed by all visitors to the parish church of Limpias. Against this, however, is to be objected that everyone would and could certainly see the changes if they were purely natural, but not if they are supernatural. They would then only be seen by those whose power of vision was increased or perfected through an act of grace. Was perhaps

the appearance of Jesus to St. Paul on his journey to Damascus

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not objective ? All instances that are given of this in the Holy Scriptures (Luke ix. 7; Acts i. 9 and 22; Cor. ix. i and xv. 5-8) speak for the objectivity and reality of these occurrences. Notwithstanding, the soldiers who accompanied the Apostles did not see the Saviour (Acts ix. 7). Just as clearly, perhaps more clearly in its details, is the apparition of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Lourdes reported. Bernadette did not indeed only observe in her a movement of the eyes or of the head, or see the Mother of God in a single, momentary apparition, or on one day, or only a part of her body. On the contrary, she beheld the whole figure with all the details of her dress, and indeed always in the same place above the rose-bush. Mary also appointed to meet her there again and again, and awaited her there. The conversations frequently lasted a long time, sometimes a whole hour. In point of fact, all these circumstances justify us in considering the manifestations in Lourdes as objective, although the other people who came to the grotto and watched and desired to see, saw nothing of these apparitions. In any case there are no conclusive reasons submitted why they should have been purely subjective, wherewith it must not be asserted as a matter of course that they could not have been subjective. The same thing applies, in any case, also to the apparitions in Limpias, especially when it is a question of the numerous collective visions which were seen by many people simultaneously and in the same way, and then, according to the opinion of most of the mystics, are to be judged as objective. The same is obviously true, however, also of the apparitions that were only granted to individuals. For if one wanted to trace these visions to interior influence on the retina, then personal presence before the Santo Cristo would not be necessary, for the immediate production of such images on the retina can also take place without any outward appearance, and does occur. Therefore Fr. Ugarte says : " I consider it more probable that all those phenomena allow of an explanation through the outward influence of the rays of light which emanate from the figure of the Santo Cristo. These meet in different ways the eyes of the persons who look at the figure/*

A second group of theologians holds the opinion that the apparitions in Limpias are purely objective i.e., the changes are realised on the figure. It goes without saying that that is not meant in the sense that lifeless, wooden eyes move naturally, or look around at all with the eyesight of a living being* Such an assumption would be absurd. All would then be obliged to see that, and it could also.

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without further ado, be recorded through a photographic apparatus. But the figure can very well represent the act of seeing i.e., open and shut the eyes in such a way, and direct looks on the spectators so that in the latter the impression is occasioned that the figure may have living eyes. A natural movement of the eyes through a mechanism is quite out of the question (cf. p. 148), also self-deception of the beholders through suggestion, hallucination, or illusion, is not admissible with the large number of irreproachable witnesses. Therefore only the explanation remains that in Limpias it is a case of supernatural events, in which a higher power influences and changes the rays of light that proceed from the figure, so that the beholders then observe those remarkable apparitions on the crucifix. 44 It is self-evident that these supernatural changes as such could only be seen by favoured ones, also, without the consent of that higher power, by no photographic apparatus, however ingenious, could they be taken, because for them the natural laws of optics do not exist " (Fr. Ugarte).

In the Antoniusboten (Messenger of St. Anthony), the well-known monthly publication of the Franciscan Mission (No. 5, September to October, 1921), such a photograph was certainly published recently, with distinct changes in the face of the Christus of Limpias, which was referred to emphatically also in the Kblnische Volkszeitung and other daily papers. That photograph dated from the year 1919 already, and was also sent to the author of this book forthwith at that time. As, however, it was not contained in otherwise copiously

illustrated Spanish books that dealt seriously with the explanation of the manifestations in Limpias, he enquired in Limpias itself, and obtained from two authoritative sources the accurate information that this photograph had been considerably touched up and circulated by the photographer in question for purposes of advertisement. It is strange that just the very papers which lay such stress on their scientific critical standpoint respecting the appearances in Limpias, and insist on cautious reserve, should here, without reflection, direct the particular interest of their readers to the two photographs reproduced in the *Antoniusbotten*, by which they had tried to record the changes on the famous crucifix.

If the manifestations in Limpias come under the order of the said supernatural means, they would, nevertheless, still be objective, 44 Many people think that the apparitions are only objective if Christ appears in person, and so mistake the personal apparition for the objective. To be sure, every personal apparition is objective,

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but an objective one does not in the least need for that reason to be personal. For the objective vision it suffices that the being, in visible in itself, should appear externally to the visionary in an ethereal or fanciful form, and represent actually for the beholder the personality in question, with its features, deportment, and so on " (Fr. Ugarte).

Meanwhile, in this hypothesis the difficulty arises above all that the manifestations were not infrequently observed by the favoured ones at exactly the same time in quite different form, and therefore often evoked in them quite contrary feelings. This cannot be adequately explained by the variety of positions from which the apparitions are seen. It would, of course, not be impossible that one and the same change in the figure could produce different impressions on different people. Even under natural conditions the same picture not infrequently awakens, in several spectators, quite different sensations, and often enough, even in the same person, according to his frame of mind, directly opposite feelings.

Supposing that God Himself brings about the apparitions on the cross, who would wish to doubt that God, by a single act, could evoke in the eye-witnesses the most varied observations, even contrary feelings, as grief and joy, reproaches and consolations ? When the Saviour had announced His approaching suffering, the Voice of God resounded from Heaven so clear and distinct that not only Our Saviour, but also the Apostles and the people heard it, but understood and interpreted it in quite different ways (John xii. 28)

However, the subjective vision and perception with regard to this simultaneous heterogeneousness plays such an important part that yet other theologians (Fr. Naval, Fr. Echevarria) explain the apparitions in Limpias rather as objective-subjective visions. They are objective in their opinion in as far as the changes are executed actually on the crucifix in Limpias, and the latter is necessary as a tool for their accomplishment. They are objective, furthermore, inasmuch as it is a question of collective visions which are observed simultaneously by many people, and in the same manner. They consider the apparitions subjective, especially when an individual sees them, or when several visionaries observe them simultaneously in quite a different form, whereby the changes in any case are evoked not on the crucifix itself, but immediately upon the retina of the spectator.

This much, however, is established, that in this we human beings are only instructed by surmises, and can reach no certain judgment

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over it, as to which of these hypotheses is the right one. Much more important for us is the further question: What, then, is that Higher Power that calls forth those transformations, be it on the crucifix, or be it on the retina of the visionaries ? On this point also three hypotheses have hitherto been drawn up, which likewise shall only be discussed in brief.

Undoubtedly the comprehension of Canon Camporredondo goes farthest, that the transfigured Christ comes down Himself on the altar at Limpias and produces the changes on the crucifix. At the moment of the vision the wooden figure of Christ disappears from the sight of the beholders and Christ then takes its place in His glorified Body, and operates in a miraculous way on the senses of the favoured ones. It is easy to comprehend that this assumption has under gone manifold contradiction, in that it was above all emphasised that the glorified Christ is incapable of suffering, and therefore could not possibly once more realise in His Body His bitter suffering and death. Fr. Ugarte points out in reply to this objection that Canon Camporredondo is speaking, not of a repetition, but only of a figurative representation of the bitter sufferings and death. One will, however, rather follow the opinion of Pope Benedict XIV., that Christ after His Ascension, in His glorified Body, appeared only to St. Paul on the road to Damascus, and perhaps to St. Peter as well, when the Saviour met the latter at the gates of Rome, and at his query: " Lord, where goest Thou ?" gave the answer: " I am come to let Myself be crucified anew/

Others incline to the assumption that in the manifestations at Limpias Christ is indeed actually present, but assumes the body of that wooden crucifix, operates on the latter in a supernatural fashion, and allows the favoured ones to see in Him everything that He wishes to reveal to them. In this way the beholders contemplate the Saviour in a positive presence on the cross and enter into personal relations with Him. Thus, for example, was St. Thomas of Aquinas favoured with a vision of the Saviour in the chapel of St. Nicholas. As he was praying before the figure of the Crucified One, the latter became animated and Christ spoke to him the words: 44 Thou hast written well about Me; what reward wilt thou have ?" whereupon Thomas gave the answer: "Lord, none other but Thyself !" Certainly it is quite possible that the Saviour also appears in this form to the eye-witnesses in Limpias, but it is not necessary.

Others again advocate the opinion that Christ in those apparitions

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is only morally present, as indeed a king is present when the ambassador represents him. The visions would then be evoked by an Angel, who influences the rays of light proceeding from the cross so that the body of Christ then appears animated. Starting from the principle that one ought not to put down as supernatural anything that allows itself to be explained as natural, and that there where a miracle of lesser degree suffices one should not assume a miracle of higher degree, the majority of theologians even pronounce that the assumption of this third kind is quite sufficient. When the beholders, then, venerate this representative presence of Christ, this does not apply to the figure as such, but to the Person of Christ. Surely this explanation also is absolutely satisfying and suffices. Let it here be emphasised once more that in all these hypotheses the question is not being treated as to how Christ appears in Limpias in reality, but what possibilities exist for the explanation of those actual visions.

With that we come to the last question: Are the apparitions in Limpias, if they are evoked by Angels, still to be defined as miracles and as supernatural ? For Angels are creatures of God just as we men are. As such they have certainly greater power than we; but what they produce with their natural forces still does not seem to exceed the limits of the natural order.

Dr. Froberger writes on March 29, 1921, in the Kolnische Volkszeitung, that, according to the opinion of Fr. Ugarte, " the apparitions in Limpias cannot be designated as miracles in the theological sense, because they do not appear to extend beyond the scope of the operation of natural forces," and adds as his own opinion the words : Until now the apparitions are only inexplicable, but they are by no means miracles on that account.

As hereby misunderstandings may easily creep in, it must above all be clearly stated what is to be understood by a miracle in the theological sense. Dogmatic theology names miracles in the strict sense extraordinary manifestations affecting the mind, which surpass the productive power of creatures or the forces of nature, and therefore suppose only God Himself as the real author of them.

Of course God can make use of His creatures thereby, so that he works miracles through them as chosen tools, but is and remains Himself always their main cause. In the strict theological sense the power of miracles thus belongs only to God. Such exploits of God are called absolute miracles, which astonish not only human beings, but also the Angels and demons, and are incomprehensible to any created intelligence.

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Besides these absolute miracles, however, theology takes cognisance of relative miracles, which can be worked by Angels and demons. As created beings, these pure spiritual beings possess powers that far surpass what we denote as natural from our human point of view. So we are quite well able to encounter manifestations in the material world which are the original production of these invisible spirits and have not God Himself as their author. Although in itself no deed of God, and consequently no miracle in the strict sense, nevertheless such a performance would appear to us men as a miracle, as, for example, the flight through the air of the prophet Habacuc (Dan. xiv. 35), and of the deacon Philip (Acts viii. 39), just as much as the deliverance of the three striplings out of the fiery furnace (Dan. iii. 39) among others.

But, however far one may stretch the natural powers of such bodiless spirits, still they, as created beings, in their outward activity, remain totally under the direct control of God, and can interfere in the course of nature, changing and disturbing only in as far as either the decision or the permission of God extends.

Fr. Ugarte also shares the opinion of the last-named theologians, that the influence on the rays of light that proceed from the crucifix, just as much as the operation on the retina of the visionaries, lies entirely in the sphere of the power of Angels. Dr. Froberger is right accordingly where he declares that Fr. Ugarte does not define those manifestations as absolute miracles in the theological sense, because they do not seem to extend beyond the range of the operation of natural forces i.e. of also of the created Angels.

When, however, Dr. Froberger further says, quite generally, that the apparitions hitherto are indeed inexplicable, but on that account are far from being miracles, this conception does not coincide at all with the declarations of the Spanish theologians, above all not with the expositions of Fr. Ugarte either, from whom the idea is quite remote of explaining the apparitions of Limpas in any way like the Dominican Father Rubio Cercas, as natural. For angelic marvels, although in themselves relative miracles, hold in apologetics the value of a divine testimony, because according to Christian comprehension the holy Angels may only interfere in the course of things there where they remain under the command and approbation of God, and therefore fulfil the Will of God in every respect. For that reason the relative miracle was also always acknowledged as adequate by the Church in processes of canonisation.

Who will say finally, however, with certainty, that the wonderful

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manifestations in Limpas are not evoked by God Himself, but only by Angels ? " The last assumption is surely not necessary/ says Fr. Ugarte, " for God is present Himself in the figure at Limpas and there also is adored especially* Therefore, also, He can call forth those apparitions Himself, and does not need to leave this to the Angels. When a favour is bestowed on the part of the throne on a subject, at his request, who will be able to tell him whether this was awarded to him through the minister or directly by the king ?"

Should it perhaps appear strange that such apparitions, rich in grace, should also be granted to sinners, even to unbelievers, this thought is based on the erroneous idea that such visions can only be considered in the case of saintly persons. Nevertheless, St. Paul also was still Saul, a sinner and enemy of Christ, when the Saviour appeared to him to convert him; and how many Saints became holy through a manifestation of that kind through which God raised them out of the dust and from nothingness, or rescued them out of

the mire of sensuality into which they had sunk.

But is it then conceivable at all that God chooses such a strange way of operating upon human beings ? Not infrequently cultured Catholics especially have raised this objection to the apparitions in Limpias, and in so doing expressed almost the same thoughts as Fr. Hacker has just published in his essay on Limpias, in the " Deutschen Merkur." " I cannot get over the fact that it seems to me unworthy of God to make such a theatrical performance. If God needs such things and employs such means, then He is depreciated in my eyes, and made like man with his limitations. I do not believe in the miracles of Limpias, because I believe in God." Such utterances and many others show again what false conceptions not a few have of God. They do not know that God goes by quite different ways from the world, about which St. Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians wrote so expressly: " For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For, seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined " (i Cor. i. 25, 21; ii. 14).

As 1900 years ago the Redeemer degraded by the death of the Cross was a scandal to the Jews, because they were looking for a Messiah with temporal power and magnificence, and as He seemed folly to

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the Gentiles because a crucified God-Man was something preposterous to them, so to-day also the Saviour is quite misunderstood, even by Christians. As in those times, so still to-day His Plans and Ways are in opposition to the spirit of the world. The whole plan of salvation in the work of redemption, begun by the Incarnation of the Son of God up to His bitter Sufferings and Death on the pillory of the Cross on Golgotha, shows that Christ has always avoided the path of external splendour and glory. By preference " the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise " (i Cor. i. 27), and answered all the scruples of men, moreover, with the exhortation: "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in me " (Matt. xi. 6). The life of the most profound abasement that Christ once led here on earth, He now continues after His Ascension in a mysterious way in the Tabernacle, in order to draw men to Him in infinite compassion. Whoever has reflected, however little, over the depths of this mystery, will not be scandalised at the working of Christ in Limpias. As of old, Christ to-day will not make faith and eternal bliss dependent on signs from heaven (Matt. xii. 38), as the Pharisees wanted to, nor upon ingenious demonstrative philosophical discourses, as the Gentiles wished. The most insignificant-looking means, as those He now employs in Limpias, suffice completely for the attainment of His aim. Obstinate sinners and proud scholars break down there, in front of that cross, overwhelmed by His look, humbly beg forgiveness and return penitently to God. Tens of thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands, with ardent desire go in pilgrimage from various countries to Limpias, that hitherto quite unknown little town, the fame of which already fills the whole world, in consequence of those extraordinary events, and astonishes it.

Yes, in everything that happens there in Limpias we have evidently to acknowledge a fresh act of the infinite compassion of Jesus Christ, who in His love does not shrink from any means to draw sinners to Himself. If, according to His revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, He is prepared to go through His sufferings once more, and to go to death in order to redeem one soul, how much more then will He be ready to work miracles in order to save and to comfort souls, and to strengthen us and all devout Catholics in the Faith.

Fr. Agatangelo also, during whose sermon on March 30, 1919, the miracle was observed for the first time, declared to several priests who questioned him as to the purport and object of the visions: " In the beginning I feared it was the prelude of a dreadful

judgment of God for the crimes of mankind, analogous to that of Martinique a few years ago, the destruction of which was also prophesied by the mouth of a statue, but now I am convinced that everything proceeds from the compassion of God, which is so immense that it is not yet exhausted in spite of so many sins and will extract the world from its blindness at any price/

That Christ has already in many ways attained this object of the wonderful manifestations in Limpias is proved above all by the testimonies of so many people who, under the deeply affecting impression of that vision, have found the way to God again, and have published a statement of the manifestations and favours received either in the album in the sacristy of the parish church at Limpias, or in some magazine or newspaper. What a number of these were formerly candidly irreligious and have reacquired faith through the wonderful apparitions ! What a number were indifferent and even hostile towards the Church, and now, after penitent reception of the holy Sacraments have become enthusiastic and faithful children of the Church ! What a number of tepid souls have raised themselves to the most sensitive cordiality and the most zealous striving after perfection !

How powerfully these manifestations are able to affect the natural man is testified to by a professor of medicine, who, according to the statement of Fr. Echevarria, expresses himself as follows : " I have carried on my medical practice for nearly twenty years; I have seen an endless number of people die. My three sons died in my arms, I was present at the death-struggle of my beloved wife. I have lived through thousands of other expressions of pain and joy, but I can certainly assert that, if it were possible to unite all these impressions and to experience them, all at one time, in that way still not a shadow of the impression produced would be attained which the sight of the death-struggle of the Saviour on that cross aroused in me."

Thus did the Bishop of Pinar del Rio also speak in his splendid pastoral letter: " As pain and love are so intimately connected with each other, Christ in His love shows Himself to us so afflicted. Is the measure of divine wrath full ? Do the fumes of all flesh * that has corrupted its way mount up to God ? Is the earth corrupted before God, and filled with iniquity? (Gen. vi. n). Who knows ? Christ takes pains to call us. Christ shows Himself to us dying, so that we may behold His afflictions and His death-agony. Christ is the beauty of Heaven; His name is sweeter than

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honey, His Countenance the desire of the kingdom of the people/ His Heart a furnace of love. Christ died for us and we despise Him while the world persecutes Him. Christ desires love, He will destroy sin, annihilate the kingdom of Satan, and rescue from him the souls that the infernal thief ravished from Him. Christ wishes for repentance and faith, love, purity, and mortification, humility and meekness. Christ will have us follow Him burdened with the cross; Christ demands atonement. We, who have sinned so greatly let us improve ! Let us beg pardon of God, let us acknowledge our guilt and let us unite ourselves with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist ! With St. Paul we cry to you: The hour is come to awake from sleep/ Now that Jesus works this miracle, let us awake from the sleep of death !"

ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS FORMER MANIFESTATIONS.

The astonishing occurrences in Limpias quite of themselves compel the question whether apparitions of the kind have perchance occurred previously, and what attitude the Church took towards them. As a matter of fact, such appearances do not in any way belong to rarities and we do not need to go far back in history. Comparatively speaking, most frequently they have taken place on statues of the Madonna. Still out of the numerous cases of the last centuries let only a few be mentioned briefly.

In the year 1896, in Rome, a committee was formed with the consent of the Cardinal Vicar of Leo XIII., of Cardinal Parrochi, and under the protectorate of Cardinal Vincent Vanutelli, to which

the task was set of preparing, in a special way, the centenary celebration of the feast of the "Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Over the origin of this feast the following is reported :

When, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French pushed forward victorious everywhere in Northern Italy, and devastated the Ecclesiastical States, and the whole of Europe passed through all the horrors of a war of many years standing, extraordinary manifestations were observed especially in the period from July, 1796, until January, 1797, on quite a number of pictures of the Mother of God. The ecclesiastical authorities were immediately afterwards minded to examine these remarkable facts in detail, in order to obviate all superstition and other errors, but had finally to acknowledge the truth of the numerous statements of

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witnesses. In commemoration of these astonishing events, a new festival was introduced by the Church in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the title: Festum prodigiorum Beats Marias Virginis, which, since then, is celebrated in the diocese of Rome on July 9th. In the Roman calendar there are no fewer than twenty-six such miraculous pictures counted, and among these not only pictures in churches and private chapels, but also such as are set up in public places and streets and in private houses.

The picture of the Assumption of Mary in the Oratory church in Rome, in which the relics of St. Philip Neri are preserved, deserves special mention. It is a large, magnificent painting that represents the Blessed Virgin in wonderful beauty; clothed in glory, she is carried up to heaven by Angels, whither her large beautiful eyes are directed. On July 9, 1796, for the first time, one noticed in this painting that the Blessed Virgin moved her eyes like a living person; now she looked up to Heaven, then again down to earth. Until August 15, this miracle was seen by an enormous number of pilgrims, who streamed hither day and night from all parts of the country. Altogether thirty-three large pilgrim bands were counted. In some of the same, even the Cardinal Vicar, Cardinal Valenti, and a considerable number of distinguished personages of Rome took part. The duration of the apparitions, the numerous testimonies, even of unbelievers, and the radical examinations of the Church, prevent the rise of a doubt as to the supernatural character of these facts.

Another miraculous statue of the Madonna is in Rimini, that on May 9, 1850, moved its eyes for the first time. The face changed its appearance and expressed various feelings. These apparitions lasted for several months, and were witnessed by thousands. With the greatest reserve and care the Bishop of Rimini set up a searching enquiry, with capable professional men taken into consultation as to whether these changes were to be acknowledged as a matter of fact, or to be traced to hallucination, illusion, or other kinds of self-deception, and inaugurated a canonical process. After the testimony was examined of more than a hundred selected witnesses, who were all accepted as worthy of credence, he issued a decree, on January 9, 1851, that established the motion of the eyes as an irrefutable fact. Pope Pius IX., at the request of the Bishop, allowed the statue to be solemnly crowned.

It would lead us too far to count up here yet other miraculous apparitions examined and recognised by the Church, on pictures

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and figures of the Blessed Virgin. D. Verrino has written a whole book about the changes observed in the picture of the sorrowful Mother of Campocavallo, in the province of Ancona, in which he also writes about a large number of other manifestations of that kind.

How cautiously the Church goes to work in the examination of such occurrences is shown by the determination with which she rejects, on the other hand, whatever cannot be adequately authenticated. Thus, for instance, Pope Benedict XIV., in his famous work on the "Beatification and Canonisation of the Servants of God" mentions five decrees of the Congregation of Rites through

which ecclesiastical recognition of manifestations of the sort was refused. The first, of April 4, 1626, relates to a picture of the Madonna in a nunnery in the diocese of Artois, which is said to have perspired several times. The second, of February 26, 1628, commands the Bishop of Pistoia to withdraw from public veneration a statue of the Saviour, which according to the testimony of several persons is said to have shed tears. The third, of September 10, 1630, condemns a supposed miracle in Spoleto, where on a figure of the suffering Saviour of the Crown of Thorns drops of blood are said to have flowed down. The fourth, of July 9, 1633, commands that an image of the Blessed Virgin which was considered miraculous should be covered with a veil. The fifth, of November 22, 1687, denies evidence that blood may have flowed out of a figure of St. Francis.

The Church is very far from seeking after fresh miracles in order to make her teaching valid. Her divine mission and the truth and sublimity of her teaching are sufficiently proved by the history of her origin, of her evolution, and her success. Whoever thinks that the Church is inclined to consider as miraculous everything extra ordinary, the cause of which is not known in the meantime, does not know that also to her experimental psychology is not unknown, and that in her decisions concerning extraordinary occurrences, she always takes into consideration the results of the researches of the various sciences.

WHY IN SPAIN ? WHY NOT IN OUR COUNTRY ?

When we, as German Catholics, read of these miraculous and astounding demonstrations of favour of the beloved Saviour towards the Spanish people, no doubt quite of itself, with profound regret, the question will intrude upon many : Why is not our now so greatly

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afflicted people, that in its need and all its misery is sighing for deliverance, favoured by the Saviour in a similar way ? What a powerful spurring on that would be for thousands of Catholics, to kindle afresh the old love for the Saviour in their hearts, and to give back to the religious life that profound fervour which distinguished our German people in former centuries ! How many thousands of holders of other beliefs would perhaps also find the way back to the Catholic Church by this means, and with it attain the peace of mind for which they longed so greatly ? Who would be able to answer this question objectively ? Let us rather ask the other question: Why has the Saviour chosen Spain, to show this country in the wonderful manifestations at Limpias a favour which every nation might envy it ? We shall not go far wrong if we reply to this mysterious question that Spain, above all the countries in the world, is to be designated as the land of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and of the Blessed Virgin. Catholic thought and feeling pervades the whole public life, as last year, almost at one and the same time, the unique consecration of the entire nation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus has shown. The solemn consecration of families to the Sacred Heart, which for several years, at the express wish of the Apostolic See, has been made known in all countries in the world, has not surged so prodigiously over any country, nor taken such a pronounced social character in any kingdom, as in Spain.

The number of families that have taken up this consecration cannot at all be estimated. The chief secretary's office in Madrid counts, in the years 1914-1917, not less than 40,000 notifications of families in the capital alone. Besides the central secretariat there are some eighty other secretaries' offices at work, among which the one at Barcelona in the year 1914 already records no fewer than 10,235 families, 20 mayoralties, 44 schools, 46 colleges, 23 factories, 5 hospitals, and 2 courts of justice, in which the enthronement of the Sacred Heart was undertaken. The secretariat of Tarragona could up to now estimate in its register 6,600 individual families, 37 villages, 54 schools, 20 colleges, 5 courts of justice, 4 barracks, and so on, What characterises the whole movement in Spain particularly is, according to this, the fact that the consecration also takes place in many public buildings. In addition to the schools, courts of justice, and barracks mentioned, there are a whole list of municipal palaces, council and town halls, so that in the year 1917 no fewer than 122 public buildings were consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Not

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infrequently it is the Bishop that accomplishes the act of consecration on such occasions. The act of enthronement in Guipuzcoa even made itself spoken of in Parliament. When, namely, a short time after this festival, a Freemason ventured to revile the profession of faith of the authorities of Guipuzcoa, during a parliamentary session, the delegate of this town rose with the words : " Gentlemen, I congratulate our provinces that they have the courage to acknowledge publicly their faith in Christ, and that they gave their God and King this proof of love in consecrating themselves to His Most Sacred Heart. I speak these words with the reverence that the holy and glorious Name of Jesus deserves; I shall also have said them as an expiation and satisfaction for the reprehensible blasphemy that we have just been obliged to hear."

The most splendid proof of the deep, almost universal veneration in which the Sacred Heart is held in Spain was given in those very days when the Saviour, in thoughtful love, sought through His wonderful revelations in Limpias to win the hearts also of indifferent Catholics and those standing aloof, even of heretics and unbelievers, for His kingdom of Love. Foi at that time the entire Spanish realm, above all the royal household, was preparing for the unique act of allegiance to the enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus over all the districts and provinces of the Spanish kingdom. On the hill Los Angeles, outside the gates of Madrid, therefore in the heart of Spain, in those days the monumental statue of the Sacred Heart was set up, which, not less than 72 feet high and 36 feet broad, overlooks the outskirts of the capital for miles around. Out of the alms of the rich and the poor of all Spain not less than 360,000 pesetas were collected for this work of art, which was unveiled with the greatest solemnity on May 30, 1919. The consecration of the monument was carried out with a pomp such as Spain otherwise can only have seen in the time of full bloom at the Courts of its greatest kings. All the Bishops in Spain had drawn attention to the social importance of this festival through special pastoral letters, and summoned the faithful to prayer and the reception of the holy Sacraments. On this day decoration with flags was arranged for the whole of Spain. In one of the largest churches of Madrid Fr. Mateo, the well-known apostle of the solemn consecration of families, preached, with overwhelming results, a preparatory tridium, which was closed on May 30 by a solemn Te Deum in all the churches. At the hour of the consecration, on the high plateau of Los Angeles, an innumerable crowd of people had assembled from

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all parts of Spain. Special trains and automobiles kept on bringing fresh torrents that rolled up to the top of the hill. The arrival of the King and Queen, accompanied by all the dignitaries of the Court, the highest government officials and representatives of the Army and the Navy, and also the arrival of the Papal Nuncio, of the Cardinal Primate of Spain, and no fewer than twenty-two Archbishops and Bishops, together with representatives of all the religious communities, brought the multitude in front of the monument and on the steps like the rising tide. The ceremony of consecration began at 11.30. The Papal Nuncio undertook the consecration of the statue. After a roaring cheer to the Sacred Heart, the Bishop of Madrid celebrated holy Mass on the altar at the foot of the statue. When this was finished, King Alphonso XIII. came down the altar steps and, while the people knelt down in devout silence, read out with a far-resounding voice the following act of the consecration of Spain to the Sacred Heart of Jesus :

" Heart of Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament, Heart of the God-Man, Redeemer of the world, King of kings and Lord of all lords ! Spain, the people of Thy inheritance, chosen by Thee, throws itself down to-day reverentially before this throne of Thy goodness, which is set up for Thee in the centre of our peninsula. All the races that inhabit it, all the provinces that belong to it, in the course of the centuries through common afflictions and through mutual fidelity, have confirmed and strengthened our great Spanish fatherland in love for religion, and in its adherence to the monarchy.

44 Penetrated with the Catholic tradition of the Spanish realm and joyfully determined to hold fast to its faith and its devotion to Thy Divine Person, we acknowledge that Thou earnest down to earth in order to restore the Kingdom of God and peace in souls, which Thou hast redeemed through Thy Blood, and to assure the happiness of the nations that conform to Thy holy laws ! We acknowledge that Thy Divinity is a surety to the princes of the earth of a participation in Thy power, and that from Thee all just laws obtain their strength and inspiration, the loyal observance of which guarantees the order and peace of the kingdom. Thou art the sure Way that leads to the possession of eternal life, the inextinguishable light that illumines the understanding so that it may know the truth, the source of all life and of all authorised social progress ! From Thee, from the powerful and conquering influence of Thy grace, depend all virtue and all heroic valour which raises and ennobles the soul.

" Thy holy kingdom therefore comes to us as a realm of justice and

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love. Rule in the hearts of the people, in the bosoms of families, in the minds of the philosophers, in the lecture-rooms of Science, in our laws and in all arrangements of our native land !

" We thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast so mercifully spared us from the distress of the War that bled so many nations ; continue in us the work of Thy loving providence.

* From these heights, which we chose for Thee, as a symbol of the desire that animates us, that Thou shouldst encourage us and guide all our undertakings, bless the poor and the workers and the whole nation, so that in the peaceful living together of all classes of society justice and love may rule, which make life more bearable and work easier. Bless also the armed forces of the country, our Army and our Fleet, so that in loyalty, discipline, and bravery they may always serve with their weapons as the bulwark of the nation and for the defence of right. Bless us all, who here, united in heartfelt, holy love for religion and our native land, consecrate our lives to Thee with the entreaty to be allowed, as a reward for it, to die in the certainty of Thy love, and in the precious Wound of Thy Most Sacred, Adorable Heart."

The crowd who followed the consecration prayer of its sovereign with emotion, again after the prayer broke into cheers to the Sacred Heart, that would not cease.

After the performance of the act of consecration, the King knelt down and received with the whole throng the Papal Benediction which the Bishop of Madrid bestowed as delegate of the Holy Father. After this the Blessed Sacrament was carried in solemn procession to the neighbouring church of the hermits. The Cardinal Primate bore the monstrance which was placed at disposal out of the royal court church. The Infante Don Carlos, the War Minister, besides two other grandees of Spain, carried the baldacchino. The Bishops and prelates went in front of the Blessed Sacrament, while the King and the Queen, the royal princes, as well as the court-state and the representatives of the government followed the Holy of Holies. The troops there presented arms, while the closely packed crowd of the people sang motets and hymns on both sides of the road.

When one reads this touching report of a national religious festival, which, indeed, stands unique of its kind, but in Spain does not in any way belong to rarities, one will understand why the Saviour has chosen out this people for His demonstration of grace. Of all the nations in Europe, Spain is certainly the country in which the old, religious and chivalrous ideals have most proved their invincible

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power to be true, right up to our own times, in which the bulk of the people up to the highest stations of life still holds fast with unchangeable fidelity to the Catholic faith and to the great traditions of the past. With it, therefore, Christ still evidently finds soonest

belief and comprehension for the feelings of His Sacred Heart.

Spain is also the nation whose hands, in this dreadful international struggle, remained unstained by the blood of so many millions, who in the most profound conviction entered into the fight for the just interests of their native land, and as heroes looking up to God sacrificed health and life. Spain remained the only great power in the world which, owing to its unyielding neutrality, has kept the sympathy also of our poor, heavily afflicted German people. From the hands of this nation we, as also the other peoples of Europe, will prefer to receive the blessings of the Saviour, which are able above all, at least among the children of our Church, to break a way for an inner reconciliation, through which the outward peace first gains security and strength.

We also will draw near in childlike trust, however, to the Divine Saviour, who in the wonderful manifestations at Limpias expresses not only to the Spanish nation, but to the nations of Europe, to the whole world, His infinite grief over unbelief and sin as the sources of all adversity. To Him, the Prince of Peace and sole Redeemer of mankind enslaved again by Satan, be praise and thanksgiving for this fresh proof of His Divine Love so often greatly desired.

APPENDIX

EXAMINATION AND RECOGNITION OF THE APPARITIONS AT LOURDES.

The first apparition in Lourdes was on February n, 1858, the eighteenth and last on June 16, 1858. The Bishop of Tarbes, Mgr. Laurence, appointed a Committee of Investigation on July 28, 1858, which was composed of nine members of the Cathedral Chapter, the Rector of Lourdes, and the professors of dogma, moral philosophy, physics, and chemistry, teaching in the seminary. The Cathedral Provost was nominated as President. " The members of this committee believed in general in supernatural manifestations which one so often encounters in history, but nevertheless in no way failed to appreciate that nothing is so capable of bringing such divine proofs of favour into discredit as false miracles invented by deceitful or superstitious people . Pre j udiced neither for nor against the matter,

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they restricted themselves to investigating the case before them, and in this way to bringing the truth to light. The work of the committee was public in that it drew to it believers and unbelievers without distinction as witnesses. Firmly resolved to condemn with unsparing severity everything that remained obscure and uncertain, and only to allow quite positive facts, guaranteed in every respect, to prevail, they rejected at once every testimony only founded on hearsay. Only what anyone had personally heard or seen and could swear to with a solemn oath was accepted."

After the expiration of about a year the committee ended its examination, the result of which was then submitted by the Bishop of Tarbes in a detailed report, with the agreement of the doctors in consultation. In face of these splendid testimonies to the truth of the heavenly apparitions and miracles, the Bishop had been obliged to arrive at a firm conviction. For all that Mgr. Laurence exacted as a fresh proof the corroboration of time; he would leave the matter for three years longer undecided, whereupon a second investigation would be instituted. The cures defined as miraculous had been established as true; in the meantime, no one had gone back on his evidence or furnished a contrary proof; for time cannot do anything against the works of God.

Finally, on January 18, 1862, the Bishop of Tarbes published a pastoral letter on the apparitions in the grotto of Lourdes, in which he pronounced their supernatural character, permitted the veneration of Our Lady of Lourdes, and allowed the erection of a church on the rock of Massabielle. Pope Pius IX., on May 30, 1876, conferred on this church the dignity of basilica, whereupon it was consecrated on July 2, 1876.

In the year 1877 the Congregation of Rites was asked by the

Cardinal Archbishop Francesco Apuzzo of Capua, and two other Bishops, if the manifestations of Lourdes were approved by the Apostolic See. On May 12, 1877, the Congregation of Rites gave the answer: Those apparitions are neither approved nor condemned by the Apostolic See, but it is only permitted that they, as piously credible, be respected with human faith, in consideration of the statements which are confirmed by adequate witnesses and attestations.

After this official, very reticent declaration the personal attitude of the Pope towards those apparitions deserves special notice. Pope Pius IX. promoted the pilgrimages to Lourdes in that he recommended the visiting of the holy place there with many indulgences, and bestowed on a brotherhood of Our Lady of Lourdes, founded there, the privilege of an archconfraternity. Pope Leo XII., at the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day of the apparition, granted an indulgence in the form of a jubilee, had the church of the Rosary solemnly consecrated in his name, and, at the request of a great number of Bishops, permitted that, under the title of the Apparition of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, a separate feast should

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be celebrated annually, on February 11, with a special Office and Mass of its own.

Pope Pius X. prescribed this commemoration to the whole Catholic Church by a decree on November 13, 1907, and by a Pontifical Brief of November 27, 1907, granted to all pilgrims who should go in pilgrimage to Lourdes from February 11, 1908, to February 11, 1909, a jubilee indulgence under the usual conditions.

Pius IX. had already had a small copy of the grotto of Lourdes set up in the Vatican garden. With the approbation of Leo XIII. this was renewed and enlarged, and then consecrated with great solemnity, when the Pope himself blessed the statue of the Blessed Virgin. Pius X. had the site extended and artistically beautified, whereupon, in the presence of the Papal Court, and more than 20,000 other participants, a reiterated consecration ceremony took place.

THE SACRED THORN AT ANDRIA.

At Andria in Apulia since the year 1308, there has been a thorn from the Crown of Thorns of Christ, of which a daughter of Charles II., King of Naples, Beatrice of Anjou, had made a present to the Cathedral there, at her wedding with Bertrand del Baolzo. This thorn is about 2½ inches long, of ashen grey colour, and somewhat curved in the upper half. Under the bend there are one larger and above it four smaller stains of a violet colour, which, according to a tradition many centuries old, are said still to be traces of the Precious Blood of Christ. Now the thorn is preserved in a very beautiful reliquary shaped like a monstrance, dating from the year 1838, in the centre of which on four columns a small temple rises, that is covered with a glass case. In this, on a little, gilded socle, stands the sacred thorn, in front of which, on either side, two cherubs kneel in the attitude of prayer.

Every time that Good Friday falls on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that is on March 25, which occurs in every century three or four times, those stains are animated in such a way that they assume the colour of fresh blood, and at times spread themselves out over the whole upper surface of the thorn. The first authentic record concerning this phenomenon always considered as miraculous, dates from the year 1633. As is stated in three other documents, however, these manifestations had also occurred in earlier centuries, and indeed, always when the sacred thorn was exposed to public veneration on the altar of St. Richard. The records of them have unfortunately been lost in consequence of the destruction of the town by fire. Further records lie before us, dating from the years 1644, 1701, 1712, 1785, and 1796. In the last century the miracle was observed in the years 1842, 1853, and 1864. Up to then, on the part of the episcopal authorities, sufficient investigations into these remarkable events had been instituted, so the Bishop, Mgr. Stalti di Brancaleone, proceeded with especial

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caution in the year 1910. As early as July 10, 1909, he called together a committee of six priests and thirteen laymen, in order first of all to examine the thorn thoroughly once more with them. The seals of the reliquary were broken, the glass case removed, the thorn itself was examined microscopically, and thereby complete agreement was established with the official description of April 12, 1864. After this the relic was enclosed in the glass case again and sealed, and this was put in a box that was again secured with nine seals. As a preparation for the miracle to be expected anew on March 25, 1910, the Bishop ordered special prayers, stricter fasting and other exercises of penitence for priests as well as for layfolk, for the period of time from November, 1909, until March, 1910, and issued, on February 1, yet another special pastoral letter in order to call the attention of all his diocesans to the day so important to them. In order to confirm the prospective miracle on the thorn scientifically with all possible care, the thorn was this time not to be exhibited in the chapel of St. Richard, but watched in the broadest daylight in front of the high altar by the members of the above mentioned committee. In anticipation of an immense congestion of people, at the instruction of the Bishop, on Maundy Thursday, all the benches and chairs were removed out of the church. In the sanctuary, which was barricaded with strong wooden rails, a tribune was erected for the experts to whom, amongst others, many doctors, physicists, chemists, and distinguished civil and military personages, belonged.

After the conclusion of the Good Friday ceremonies at eleven o'clock, the relic was brought out of the episcopal palace close to the cathedral into the church in solemn procession, and with great enthusiasm on the part of the crowds of people. At the head of the procession two priests carried the said case in which the relic was locked. Then followed the Bishop, the clergy, and several of the laity. The relic was put in the sanctuary on the table, at which sat the Bishop and the nineteen members of the committee, who had undersigned the record of July 10, 1909. First of all the seals of the case were examined, verified, and broken; then the reliquary was taken out, and its seals also examined, and of all this an attested record was made by four notaries. At half-past twelve the universal prayers began, which from that time onwards were continued without interruption. Meanwhile the relic passed from hand to hand at the table of the experts, while each one examined the thorn most minutely with or without a magnifying glass, and awaited the well-known changes with interest. The Bishop insisted that every one of them, whether believing or unbelieving, might examine the relic according to their opinions, in order, later on, to obviate any objection to the actuality of the miracle. This investigation lasted about three hours without the changes taking place. During this the experts conversed together so noisily and regardlessly that through their conduct they were a cause of general scandal to the praying con-

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gregation. Also, the whole afternoon went past, evening came on, the people prayed with increased fervour, it was eight o'clock, ten o'clock, it was finally midnight, but the miracle longed for did not take place. After a record was made of this the thorn was carried back into the episcopal palace. In the deepest disappointment and sadness, the people left the church, while the adversaries of the supernatural gave expression to their joy in scornful and derisive language. This first non-appearance of the miracle was universally ascribed to the disrespect with which the committee had continually carried on their investigations.

The next morning the greater part of the clergy, who had spent the whole night sleepless in great grief, appeared at the Bishop's palace, in order to lay before him the request to bring the sacred thorn once again into the church on Holy Saturday, not to hand it over any longer to the committee in the sanctuary, however, but to expose it for public veneration, as hitherto, on the altar of St. Richard, where in the past the miracle had always infallibly come to pass. The Bishop at once consented. While the ceremonies were still going on the relic was carried into the Cathedral as on the day before with the lively approbation of the people, and exposed on the altar of St. Richard. Towards 10.30 High Mass began; many priests and a large crowd of people were praying kneeling before the sacred

thorn, while Canon Agresti observed it carefully in close proximity. When, towards eleven o'clock, the Gloria was intoned by the celebrating Archbishop Cristiani, at the high altar, and this was sung to the accompaniment of the universal pealing of bells, Canon Agresti suddenly perceived the first changes on the thorn. After he had convinced himself of it still more certainly, he gave the people an intelligible sign with another small reliquary, whereupon, in a few seconds, the whole house of God resounded with the shouts of joy of the faithful. The Bishop was immediately called, for whom a way through the thronging multitude could only be made with difficulty. At last he reached the altar of St. Richard, where he also confirmed the miracle and forthwith had the whole committee called together. These also confirmed that the pale, violet stains on the thorn had assumed a bright red blood colour. As this did not suffice for the Bishop, he required the experts to swear on oath to their observations, to which they all agreed without further ceremony. Only a single one, Captain Leo Ferruccio, local commandant of Andria, refused to take the oath. Of opinion that it might perhaps be a question of illusion which seemed to him not impossible with the dim lighting of the chapel, he expressed to the Bishop the desire that the relic might be brought into the daylight on the tribune in front of the high altar. His request was at once fulfilled. Now before the high altar this officer also convinced himself of the fact, whereupon he acknowledged his observation without hesitation, in a loud voice. The same day an official record was made of this event and attested by four notaries.

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On Easter Sunday, also, the thorn was again carried into the cathedral. Immediately on entering the church, the stains reddened and remained red until towards three o'clock; then they faded, but soon became red again, and stayed so until seven o'clock in the evening. On Easter Monday the same happened, whereupon towards ten o'clock a magnificent procession with the thorn through the whole town was undertaken, in which more than 50,000 persons took part. During this the miracle repeated itself several times. In St. Augustine Square the point of the thorn swelled extraordinarily, and shone as red as a live coal. The Bishop at this gave the blessing with the thorn, whereupon the latter immediately lost colour again. After the conclusion of the procession, the Bishop had everything reported exactly to the Holy Father Pope Pius X., through Cardinal Merry del Val, to which he received the following reply:

" His Holiness, very well satisfied with such a splendid avowal of faith by the good inhabitants of Andria, thanks God, who in His infinite goodness never ceases * in such a marvellous way ed in modo così meravigliosa to speak to the minds and hearts of men, in order to draw all to Himself. He is confident that the piety of these faithful people will contribute to the sanctification of their souls, and to the greater glory of God. Meanwhile He blesses Your Grace and the whole diocese with all His heart, and calls down upon them the plenitude of divine favours/

This year also, 1921, Good Friday again fell on March 25, together with the feast of the Annunciation of B.V.M., and this time as well, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, the changes on the thorn could be confirmed. They were examined in detail by a committee of eighteen members, which was half composed of doctors and chemists. According to a short statement in the Osservatore Romano, Mgr. Virili, a member of the Congregation of Rites, came from Rome to Andria expressly for this purpose. The present Bishop of Andria, Mgr. Eugenio Tosi, again reported to the Holy Father Pope Benedict XV., who thereupon, through Cardinal Gasparri, had the following telegram despatched:

44 The Holy Father is greatly pleased at the communication as to the miracle of the sacred thorn with which Our Saviour has favoured the devout people of Andria, returns thanks to the compassion of God and bestows on Your Grace, the clergy, and the faithful the desired Apostolic Benediction.

" CARDINAL GASPARRI."

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