

PRINCE GALLITZIN, PRIEST AND PIONEER.

A life how useful to the Church he led!
How loved when living, how revered when dead!

THE traveller sitting in the western-bound Pennsylvania Limited will notice merely as a scurrying speck on the landscape a little hamlet nestling upon the summit of the Alleghanies a few miles east of Cresson Springs.

It is so insignificant in size and importance that the great cyclops eye of the hurrying engine passes it without even a moment's recognition. Yet less than a century ago the town of Gallitzin, situated at the apex of the old Portage Road, was a centre of much importance, for it was



PRINCE GALLITZIN AT THE AGE OF SIXTY.

there that the machinery was located which was used in hauling the canal-boats in sections over the mountain that intercepted the progress of the water-way between Philadelphia and Pittsburg.

The interest clinging to this picturesque spot is not, however, connected with the history of its traffic, but rather with that of the holy man from whom it takes its name, the glory of whose memory sheds a halo around those lonely mountain-peaks, where one hundred years ago Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, prince of a noble Russian house,

laid aside wealth, title, and worldly honors to become a priest and pioneer in the wilds of the Alleghanies.

The descendants of his flock love to dwell upon the traditions transmitted to them by the old people who knew him in the last days of his pastorate, and who spoke of him as of one worthy to be canonized.

It was a sparkling morning in the early autumn when, filled with a spirit of reverent interest, I turned my horse's head away from Cresson and drove towards Loretto, where all that is left of Prince Gallitzin now rests, upon the spot where he first planted the cross and established his colony.

Receiving from a small, rosy-cheeked boy on the roadside the rather ambiguous information that it was "four miles to Loretto and three miles back," I concluded he reckoned the distance by time rather than measurement, and that the approach to the town must be well up the mountain-side, and several miles beyond the hamlet which bears the name of Gallitzin.

And so it proved; for while yet a long way off I could see, gleaming against the sky like a coronet upon the hill-top, the village in the distance.

Having accomplished the dizzy ascent, the gilt cross on the top of St. Michael's Church, glistening in the sun, heralded my destination.

The great iron gates of the Mount Aloysius Convent grounds stood invitingly open, and soon the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the stony drive attracted the attention of the Mother Superior, who, with several of her scholars, was seated beneath a wide-spreading shade-tree.

Passing down a narrow, grassy lane, and through a little wicket-gate, I found myself beside the quaint and inartistic monument of native stone, surmounted by a worm-eaten wooden coffin and weather-beaten cross,—the loving tribute erected to Gallitzin's memory by his sorrowing flock in 1847.

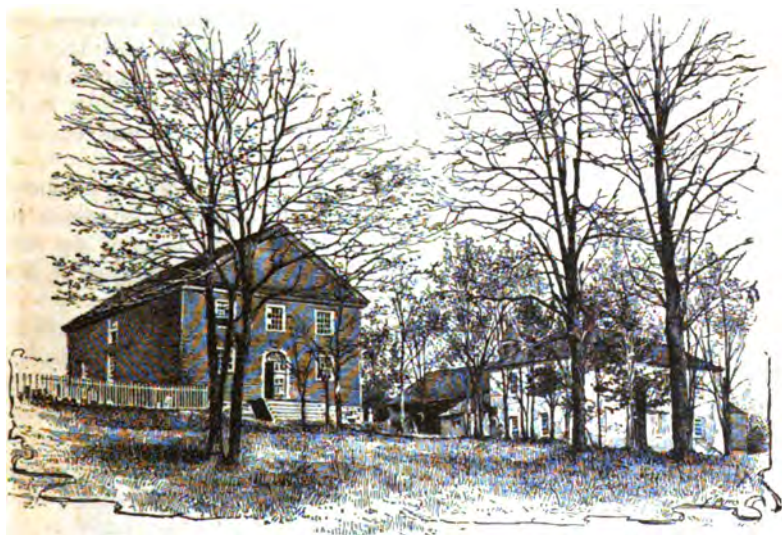
The inscription on the cenotaph is in both Latin and English, and reads,—

Sacred to the memory
of D. A., a Prince of the Gallitzin family,
born the 22d Dec. 1770,
Who having renounced Schism
was raised to the Priesthood,
exercised the sacred ministry
through the whole of this region,
and, distinguished for Faith, Zeal, Charity,
died the 6th of May, A.D. 1841.

Within the enclosure which separates the tomb from the surrounding graves swings the old brass bell which was three times blown from its eyrie height in the steeple by the gales which sweep around those barren mountain crags in winter. Now, from the very grave of the princely father, its voice calls the faithful to the house of worship founded by him through years of toil and renunciation. One has but to note the hundreds who come from all directions to Sunday morning mass to be assured that his sacrifices were not in vain, for truly his works live after him.

Leaving the cabin in which the prince lived the ascetic life of a stoic, I entered the little chapel in which he officiated, so many years ago, amid the howling of wild beasts and the nipping cold of those early winters. This small edifice, which has braved the storms of a century, stands in the centre of the first cemetery in the Alleghany Mountains, and is a landmark worthy of preservation. To Rev. Ferdinand Kittell, of St. Michael's Church, Loretto, is due the honor of having restored the chapel, which was rededicated on the 29th of September, in the presence of hundreds of people, most of whom were the descendants of Prince Gallitzin's loving flock.

It is the desire of Father Kittell to repair the tomb, and, using it for a pedestal, to erect a life-size statue of Gallitzin as a more fitting monument to him than the unsightly wooden cross and coffin which now adorn it. Should his efforts be rewarded, it is probable that the



CHURCH, CHAPEL, AND RESIDENCE OF PRINCE GALLITZIN AT LORETTO, PA.

centennial of Prince Gallitzin's arrival in America will be celebrated by the unveiling of his statue.

We more and more admire the self-abnegation of the man when remembering the inducements to a worldly life of indulgence that awaited him in Russia at the brilliant court of Catherine II., where his father was chamberlain and privy councillor, and stood so high in the empress's confidence that upon one occasion she left him in charge of her realm when, with her minister, Potemkin, she visited a neighboring court.

But, aside from his father's influence, the young prince himself had high military rank, and was a member of the Royal Guards. He was, moreover, talented, handsome, and of princely bearing.

Born at the Hague while his father was ambassador to the Netherlands, his childhood was passed amid the luxury of that famous resort.

His mother, the Countess Amalie de Schmettau, the talented daughter of the distinguished field-marshal of Frederick the Great of Prussia, retired to Münster when her children, Prince Demetrius and his sister the Princess Maria Anna, were old enough to begin their studies. Here she attracted about her a coterie of the brightest men of her day. In the atmosphere of such intellects as Goethe, Jacobi, Hamann, and Hemsterhuis, the young prince grew to manhood. At the court of France, to which his father was later Russian ambassador, he was brought into close contact with Voltaire and Diderot, his father's intimate friends. Although a member of the Greek Church, the elder prince shared the sceptical opinions of these men, while his wife, the Countess Amalie, who was a devout Catholic, held to her faith against Voltaire's scorn and Diderot's arguments.

When but seventeen years old her son became a convert to her religion, and was at once confirmed, assuming the name of Augustine. His conversion was destined to exert a wide-reaching influence, not only on his own after-life, but upon the whole house of Gallitzin, and Catholic converts at large, for his cousin Alexander soon embraced that faith, which so offended his uncle, then minister of worship to the emperor, that through his efforts the Society of Jesus was banished from Russia.

Subsequently, Elizabeth Gallitzin, another near relative, renounced the Greek religion and went to Paris, where she became one of the founders of the Order of the Sacred Heart. In after-years she came to America and opened several houses of her order, and died at New Orleans, of yellow fever.

Educated for the army, it is probable the young Prince Gallitzin would have fulfilled the destiny marked out for him by his parents had not circumstances combined to bring him to this country.

The unsettled condition of Europe, then torn with dissensions, made travelling unsafe, and the grand tour which is a part of the education of Russian noblemen could not be undertaken by the prince, who, having attained his majority, needed but a term of foreign travel to complete his accomplishments before assuming his duties at the court.

About that time (1792), when Gallitzin's parents were bewailing their son's misfortune in losing the advantages enjoyed by other young nobles, a German theological student who had the friendship of the Countess Amalie was preparing to sail as a missionary to America, and proposed that Prince Demetrius accompany him and make a tour of the New World.

The States were enjoying a period of independent prosperity, and, desiring that her son should meet Washington, Franklin, and other brilliant men whose names were holding the attention of both continents, the countess readily consented to the proposition, and preparations were made to hasten his departure.

Such were the causes that turned his face towards America and renunciation.

Tradition says that the prince was, however, loath to leave his own country even on a pleasure-tour, and that when on the pier he

hung back, and besought his mother to allow him to return home with her. The countess, displeased with what she thought the evidence of a weak and vacillating will, pushed him towards the vessel, telling him to have more courage, and commanding him to go on board. The foot of the prince slipped, and he fell into the sea, from which, it is said, he emerged a new man.

Whether or not the cold plunge affected his character it is useless to surmise, but nothing is more certain than that great strength of purpose and an inflexible determination marked his whole after-life.

During the voyage over, Prince Gallitzin became much interested in the plans of his companion, and before he reached America he had determined upon a career widely different from the one towards which the teaching of his life tended, or his parents desired.



FIRST CEMETERY OF THE ALLEGHANIES, SURROUNDING GALLITZIN'S CHAPEL.

Even while they were dreaming of his brilliant career and joying in the anticipation of his return, he was choosing a future in which they had no part.

Upon his arrival in Baltimore he presented letters of introduction to Bishop Carroll, and at once entered the Theological Seminary founded there years before by the Saint-Sulpicians. Thus ended the grand tour of the New World, for which he had been allowed a two-years' leave of absence from the army.

We can imagine with what grieved surprise his parents received the news which deprived them of their only son and heir. Many appeals were made to him to change his decision, and at last his father wrote that unless he returned at once he would lose his military rank.

In reply Prince Gallitzin assured his parents that his choice was final, and that he would pursue the life to which he believed himself called.

Shortly after this he was ordained by Bishop Carroll, and was the first priest to receive full orders in America. He at once entered upon his missionary work, his first appointment being at Conewago, in Pennsylvania, and including all the territory lying from there to Lake Erie and from the Susquehanna to the Potomac.

After several years spent in itinerant work which embraced large districts in Maryland and Virginia, he decided to concentrate his efforts at some one point, with the object of establishing a Catholic community.

Indifferent to the hardships ahead of him, he chose for his field the highest point of the Alleghanies, to which a few of the early settlers had penetrated. Among those few families he began his life-work. Desiring to gather others there, he bought a large tract of land and subdivided it into farms. He built grist- and saw-mills, and other conveniences for the people. Very soon his colony of a handful was increased many-fold.

While his parents lived, the prince received yearly remittances from Russia, which enabled him to do much for the good of his people, but in 1803 his father died suddenly, and the Russian government immediately disinherited the priest because of his religion. The estate thus forfeited was "in real property, the village of Lankoff in the government of Vladimir, and the villages of Fabauzin and Nikulskin in the government of Kostroma, with all the lands, mills, and other property thereto belonging, with one thousand two hundred and sixty-two male subjects; and in money seventy thousand roubles." This real estate embraced as many square miles as the entire State of Pennsylvania.

Prince Gallitzin's friends tried to have him reinstated, and during the time of waiting the Countess Amalie died, her entire property devolving to the Princess Maria Anna, who for a while assisted her brother, until her husband, the Count de Salm, gained control of her money. The government would not relent, and the princely priest found himself almost penniless.

Before his remittances had ceased coming to him he had borrowed of the Russian *chargé-d'affaires* at Washington the sum of five thousand dollars, with the expectation of returning it when his funds should arrive. When he realized how matters had gone at home, he was so distressed that he undertook the then tedious trip to Washington to explain the case to his creditor.

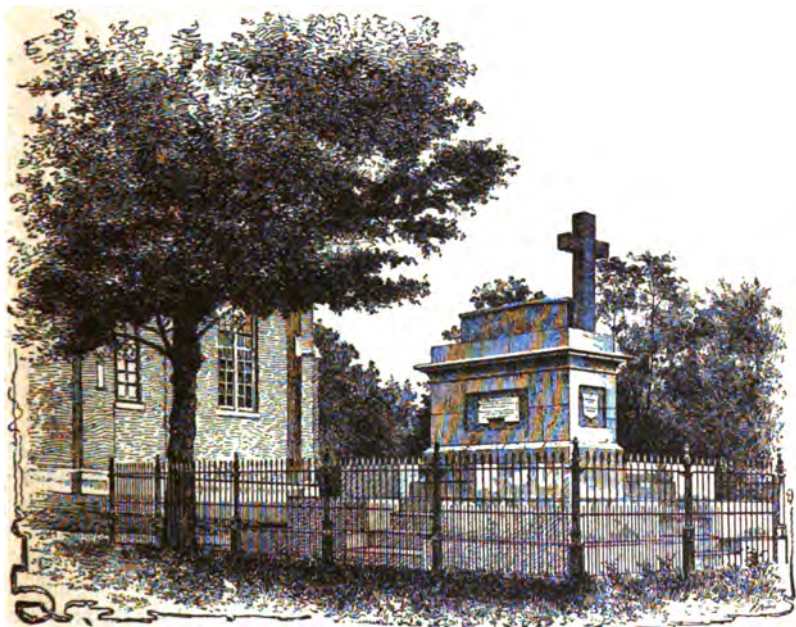
The *chargé-d'affaires* invited Henry Clay to meet the prince priest at dinner, after which the host performed the graceful and generous act of lighting his cigar with the promissory note bearing Gallitzin's signature, and upon the latter protesting he declared that the obligation was satisfactorily settled.

Although the reverend prince observed the most rigid self-denial, his poverty increased, until finally the sheriff would have sold his few belongings and turned him out of the little hut whose door was ever

open to the poor, had not the men at work upon the Pennsylvania Canal combined and paid off his indebtedness.

Their generosity was the evidence of their love for the saintly man whose days were spent in doing good to others, in carrying consolation to the dying and hope to the suffering. For this life of privation and toil he had forfeited the finest estates in Russia.

He, however, made no complaint, but continued his labors in the region which owes its prosperity, both material and spiritual, to his zealous efforts.



TOMB ERECTED TO PRINCE GALLITZIN IN 1847, NOW GREATLY DILAPIDATED.

In a letter written to Bishop Carroll, in 1809, Gallitzin described with enthusiasm his humble abode as follows: "There is a house built for me, sixteen feet by fourteen, besides a little kitchen and stable. I have now, thanks be to God, a little home of my own, for the first time since I came to this country. Our church, which was only begun in the harvest, was finished fit for divine service the night before Christmas. It is about forty feet long by twenty-five feet, built of white pine logs, with a shingle roof. I kept service in it on Christmas day for the first time, to the great satisfaction of the whole congregation, who seemed very much moved at a sight which they never saw before."

What a striking contrast to this is Madame Swetchine's description of the splendid Gallitzin chapel in Russia! "Speaking of prayer," says this lady, "I never knew so many circumstances to unite in disposing me to it as on the occasion of the consecration of Prince Gal-

litzin's chapel. I have never witnessed more magical effects. The graceful form of the chapel, which is decorated with simple elegance; the mellow light with which it is radiated; the melodious voices issuing one knew not whence; the quiet pomp of the service; the silence which piety demands and maintains; in short, a species of actual enchantment, whose remembrance even now transports me."

The princely father craved none of these imposing surroundings. He was so austere with himself that he never allowed fire in the church on the coldest days of winter, deeming it a sinful indulgence. Although lenient with others, a rigid self-abnegation characterized his whole life.

He even went so far as to assume the name of plain Father Smith, hoping thereby to divert the thoughts of his people from his worldly sacrifices; his attempt, however, was not successful, for he was seldom called by the name.

Tradition tells us that on one occasion, while Father Gallitzin was celebrating a mass in which the aspersion of holy water was a part of the ceremony, he sprinkled the bare shoulders of a lady who had attended service so indecorously dressed. This must have been in the days when our grandmothers wore low-necked gowns at all times and seasons, in obedience to the dictates of fashion.

A sight familiar to the inhabitants of the entire mountainous regions of Pennsylvania was Prince Gallitzin, attired in rough top-coat and high peasant's hat, driving over the mountains on a sled, a means of conveyance which he used in both summer and winter.

Father Lemke, who spent many years doing missionary work in the Alleghanies, describes, in his "*Leben und Wirken*," his first meeting with the reverend prince. He says, "A journey to Loretto can be made now by the Pennsylvania Central Railroad in nine or ten hours, but at that time [1834] it was a break-neck affair: one had then to be dragged about in miserable stages for at least three days and nights. . . . I arrived, at last, in safety at Munster, a little village laid out by Irish people on a table-land of the Alleghany Mountains, only four miles from Gallitzin's residence. The stage stopped at the house of a certain Peter Collins, a genuine Irishman, who kept the post-office and hotel. The next morning—for it was evening when I arrived, and they would not on any account let me go on—a horse was saddled for me, and Thomas, one of the numerous Collins children, now a man of influence and reputation, stood ready, with a stick in his hand, to show me the way and to bring back the horse. We had gone about a mile or two in the woods when I saw a sled coming along, drawn by two strong horses. In the sled half sat, half reclined a venerable-looking man in an old, much-worn overcoat, wearing a peasant's hat, which no one, it is likely, would have cared to pick up in the street, and carrying a book in his hand. I thought, seeing him brought along in this way, that there must have been an accident,—that perhaps the old gentleman had dislocated a limb in the woods; but Thomas, who had been on ahead, came running back, and said, 'There comes the priest,' pointing to the man on the sled. I rode up, and asked, 'Are you really the pastor of Loretto?' 'Yes, I am he.'

'Prince Gallitzin?' 'At your service, sir: I am that very exalted personage,' saying which, he laughed heartily. 'You may perhaps wonder,' he continued, 'at my singular retinue. But how can it be helped? We have not as yet, you see, roads fit for wagons; we should be either fast or upset every moment. I cannot any longer ride horse-back, having injured myself by a fall, and it is also becoming hard to me to walk; besides, I have all the requirements for mass to take with me. I am now on my way to a place where for some years I have had a station.'"

Notwithstanding the hardships, the poverty, and the inconvenience to which he was subjected during the forty-one years of his ministry at Loretto, his labors were crowned with wonderful success; for where he found twelve families he left thousands, where there were no churches he left many, and schools for both sexes were flourishing where he had found a barren waste. These are still growing under the care of the Sisters of Mercy and the Franciscan Brothers.

More than one hundred priests now officiate where Gallitzin struggled alone.

A branch of the Benedictine Order has been established in that region to which the prince gave his life so freely.

Many are the changes that have come in the wake of the nineteenth century over the mountains. Spreading towards the east lies the growing town of Loretto, upon the quiet streets of which one occasionally meets the sweet-faced Sisters belonging to Mount Aloysius Convent, now adjoining the new St. Michael's Church. Again, one of the Franciscan Fathers, in sombre black soutane, can be seen crossing the cemetery and, with bowed head, entering the church for evening prayer.

No more fitting or peaceful spot could have been chosen for a religious retreat than this mountain-height, with its many hallowed memories, and as I turned my back upon its restful beauty and faced towards the selfish, busy world, there lingered still the uplifting of heart and soul as of one who had walked with the saints.

Hester Dorsey Richardson.

SINCE THE BEGINNING.

NOTHING is new 'neath the sun, said he,—
 All things have been that ever could be.
 The grass has grown since the world began,
 And old at birth is the life of a man!

Into his heart on the morrow came
 A grief that smote like a brand of flame.
 The grass grows fresh with the year again,
 And new in each heart is the throb of pain!

Kate Putnam Osgood.