

Report on the transference of the mortal remains of
Our Venerated Mother from Gentilly to Upton
(Extracts from the Annals of 1904).

House of Gentilly.

... God demanded of us a very great sacrifice :
on June 13th we lost our treasure. The venerated
remains of our holy Foundress were taken away
from us. While we mourned our loss, all nature
seemed to rejoice. The sun shone out in all its
splendour causing hundreds of white roses to
blossom : God Himself had prepared the route along
which the cortège was to pass. The Chaplain from
Val de Grâce said on entering the house, "There is
an odour of sanctity here which does one good".
At eight o'clock in the morning Monseigneur de
Courmont arrived with the priests who were to
form the Tribunal, our Mothers from Paris,
members of the de Bonnault family and a few
friends of the Society. During the long meeting
of the tribunal in the parlour when two persons
who had assisted at the burial of Our Venerated Mother
were sworn in, the bricklayer was taking down
the wall in order to open the vault from the lower
part of the terrace: It had been decided not to touch
the top of the beloved tomb. After he had worked
for two hours other men were brought in to help
as very great precaution was necessary.

It was about noon before the coffin could be brought out. At that moment a deep feeling of awe took possession of us. Monsieur de Bonnault his hands joined prayed fervently. The leaden coffin was put inside a new wooden one, in which were also placed tubes containing an official report of the proceedings.

The venerated remains were then carried in procession to our small parlour where they were placed on a table covered with a white sheet. The police superintendent put black seals on the two screws which close the coffin at its widest part and then withdrew. After which Monseigneur de Courmont placed red seals on the screws at the head and foot of the coffin. Then white tape was tied once round the length and three times round the width. The tape was fastened off in a knot at the foot of the coffin, both ends of the tape being sealed by Monseigneur. Then all the witnesses signed the report. All the pieces of the worm-eaten coffin were enclosed in a case which was sealed by Monseigneur. "These pieces" he said "will be precious relics later." The case was sent to our house in Paris to be left there for the time being.

The undertaker's men very respectfully took the new coffin and placed it in their carriage. It was three o'clock when this precious treasure left for St. Lazaire station.

House of Paris. (extract from Annals)

On the 13th June we assisted at a touching ceremony - the precious remains of Our Venerated Mother had been taken from France to England - our Chaplain had the privilege of accompanying them to Upton.

House of Upton (extract from Annals 1904)

On the feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, whom we honour in a special manner here, we had an unexpected visit from our former bishop, Monseigneur Knight. His Lordship had presided at the tribunal for the Cause of Our Venerated Mother. It was fitting, then, that he should be the first to hear of the great event which interested all our Society: the house of Upton had just been chosen by Our Very Reverend Mother to receive the precious remains of our holy Foundress. It had been deemed advisable to remove her remains from France on account of the religious troubles in that country. At 4.38 pm on June 14th two of our Mothers awaited the arrival, at Birkenhead station, of the Society's most precious treasure. The transport from the train to the hearse was made with the greatest respect, all the railway officials with head uncovered standing at attention. The pious cortège proceeded to our little cemetery where it

was received by the Upton community and representatives from Chester, Bellerive, Holt Hill, Skipton and Preston.

The preceding Sunday, His Lordship the Bishop of Shrewsbury had delegated two of his Canons to replace him for the fulfilment of the prescribed formalities. The case enclosing the oak coffin was unscrewed and the ecclesiastics present certified the identity of ~~Monseigneur~~ the seal of Monseigneur de Courmont, the delegate of the Cardinal Archbishop of France Paris. Then the grave was blessed and eight men lowered the precious coffin into it, placing it on sheets of slate fixed a few inches above the soil so as to allow a circulation of air. On top of the coffin was placed a sealed flask containing a piece of parchment on which was written a summary of the events connected with the translation of the body from Gentilly to Upton, the date of death and of burial, the date of the exhumation and of inhumation, the names of the members of the Tribunal, of the reigning Pope, of the Superior General of the Society. Then the grave was closed by cement slabs. Our chaplain believes that this parchment will be very useful at the time of canonisation.

After this touching ceremony the priests and witnesses betook themselves to the parlour where they drew up a report of all that had just taken place. The French lady who had accompanied the body

from Gentilly to Upton had to take an oath that it was really the body of Our Venerated Mother, and to show the papers authorising the transference. The solicitor and the undertaker had also to swear that they had received the case intact at Birkenhead and had accompanied it to its destination. Then, all signed the report, even those of the Community who had assisted at the ceremony. It was a late hour at night when all was finished.

While regretting the unfortunate events which have necessitated this translation, the house of Upton esteems it a great honour to be the happy possessor of such a cherished treasure.