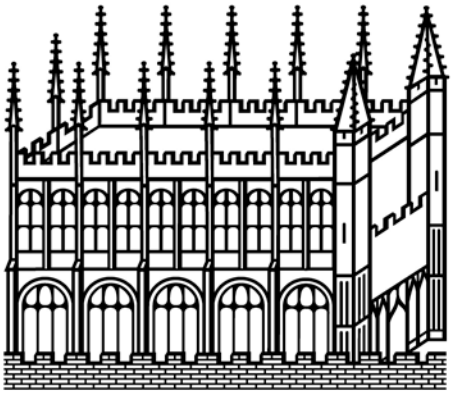

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SONS OF THE CHURCH

RENÉ BAZIN

1100 c.93

SONS OF THE CHURCH

SONS OF THE CHURCH

BY RENÉ BAZIN
of the French Academy

TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH

WITH A PREFACE BY HIS GRACE
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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THIS little book was written originally in the French language by Monsieur René Bazin. Like the reſt of his writings, it has a faſcinating ſtyle. It is simple, clear, and homely. The book is made up of a number of different articles, each perfect in its kind and all tending to show the wonderful ways of God in calling souls to himself. The whole book is full of intereſt for all who read it, but perhaps the laſt Article will appeal with greater force to the people of Great Britain and English readers elsewhere, for the reason that it recounts something that happened in our own time, on our own island. It tells us how a number of souls, who as Anglicans were following the Rule of St Benedict, were slowly but surely drawn by God into his one true Fold. I refer particularly to the ſtory told of how the Anglican monks of Caldey and the Anglican nuns, then of Milford Haven, but now of Talacre Abbey, found their way into the Catholic Church. And that after they had made their submission to the Catholic Church they were allowed by permission of the Holy See to remain as separate Communities and to live as Benedictine monks and nuns. I am not, however, going to anticipate the intereſting ſtory, which is written in this book. This book of René Bazin, which has been admirably translated into English, has a special intereſt for the Community at Talacre Abbey, for the reason that some of the profits arising out of the sale of this translation will be devoted to the building of a chapel there.

Talacre Abbey, formerly known as Talacre Hall, was the seat for many centuries of an old Welsh Catholic family, Moſtyn by name. This family had always adhered to the Catholic faith in spite of the so-called Reformation and the penal times that followed it. It was one of the spots in Wales where, during those troublous times, a prieſt could always be found. When the Benedictine Siſters took over Talacre they found a chapel in the house, but, unfortunately, it was not of

sufficient size to accommodate so numerous a Community. It was necessary, therefore, to use for the time being the drawing-room and the library, which could be made into one large room by opening the folding-doors between them. This is the arrangement at the present time; but it will be easily understood that it is by no means convenient for the working of the Abbey, especially as the two rooms now used for the chapel are wanted for other purposes, to meet the needs of a growing Community. It is most important then that either a new chapel should be built or that the old one should be considerably enlarged.

I trust, therefore, that this English version of René Bazin's work will have a great sale, both on account of its own merits and also on account of the object for which some of the profits will be used. Moreover, this chapel is to be erected as a memorial to the late revered Lady Abbess, Dame Scholastica Ewart, O.S.B., who reorganised the original Community at Malling in 1907 and who was blessed as first Abbess after this Community came into the Catholic Church. She was a charming personality, who was beloved and respected by many outside her own Community, and doubtless many will look upon it as a privilege to take part in erecting a memorial to one who was so deeply respected and so deservedly loved by all who knew her.

This little book is of special interest to me inasmuch as it was my privilege to reconcile to Holy Church in the year 1913 the members of the Community of Monks at Caldey and also the members of the Community of Nuns at Milford Haven, now moved to Talacre Abbey. I have a still greater interest in the latter Community, for the reason that it now occupies the house in which I was born, and which was for so many years my home. It is, then, with all sincerity that I say: "May God bless and reward all those who help the Benedictine Community at Talacre to build or enlarge their chapel."

✠ FRANCIS MOSTYN,
Archbishop of Cardiff.

December 17, 1927.

A Memorial Church

"I HAVE been asked to make an appeal to your readers on behalf of the Benedictine nuns of Talacre, North Wales. They are in great need of a church which shall provide not only a choir for themselves, but also be a parish church for the Catholics of the neighbourhood.

"But they are very poor, and are still burdened with a heavy debt on their property. They need £3,000 to build a church, in concrete, which will serve for the service of God. They cannot have their enclosure properly established till they have such a church. It is therefore for them a pressing need.

"They propose to build this church as a memorial to their late Abbess, Dame Scholastica Mary Ewart. She is surely worthy of such a memorial. Your readers will remember the wonderful story of the conversion of this Anglican community together with that of the monks of Caldey in 1913. They were then at a temporary home, St Bride's Abbey, Milford Haven. Nearly forty sisters then became Catholics. This was due mainly to the energy, zeal, and faith of the Abbess. Not only did she most earnestly desire to become a Catholic, but she brought her whole community with her. And as the famous French writer, M. René Bazin, has recently shown in his wonderful book, *Fils de l'Eglise* (now being translated into English), she was mainly responsible by her influence and her prayers in bringing into the church the monks of Caldey Abbey.

"The community of Talacre is a large and flourishing one (over fifty nuns) and is itself her best memorial. But I am sure that many Catholics will feel that it is a fitting thing that we should help her daughters to raise this memorial church, and thus enable them more worthily to carry out their sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

"It is a great privilege for me to take a part, however slight, in thus doing homage to the memory of one of the most remarkable women who has lived in this country for many generations. Abbess Scholastica recalled the great monastic figures of past ages; St Hilda of Whitby, St Etheldreda of Ely seemed to live again in her. May God inspire many souls to come to the help of her daughters in their present difficulties.

(*Signed*) "Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B., M.A., F.S.A.

"Benet House,
"Cambridge."

Archbishop Mostyn writes:

"I am very pleased that you are going to help the good Sisters of Talacre. It would indeed be a great thing and noble memorial to the late Lady Abbess, were it possible to put up a church at Talacre, even though not an expensive one. Your appeal is admirable, and I do not see what you can add or take from it.

"With my blessing,

"Yours very sincerely in Christ,

(*Signed*) "Francis,

"*Abp. of Cardiff.*"

BISHOP VAUGHAN, the Diocesan, thus gives his approval:

"I think your idea of a memorial church to the late revered Abbess, Dame Scholastica Mary Ewart, an altogether excellent one, since such a church would provide the Benedictine nuns of Talacre with a choir for themselves and would also serve as a parish church for the Catholics of the district. I hope that the project will receive the practical help which it deserves, and I commend it with my blessing to the Catholics of this Diocese. May God bless you in your good work.

"Yours devotedly in Christ,

(*Signed*) "FRANCIS,

"Bishop of Menevia."

THE ABBOT PRESIDENT thus sanctions the appeal:

"Realising the pressing need of a suitable church for the proper development of their Religious Life, I approve of this appeal of the Abbess and nuns of Talacre, and I trust that the generous response of the personal friends of the late venerated Abbess, and of all the well-wishers of Talacre, will enable the good nuns to see an early fulfilment of their cherished hopes.

(*Signed*) "W. E. KELLY, O.S.B.,

"Abbot President of the English Congregation."

[*Over*]

Finally, His Eminence CARDINAL BOURNE gives his gracious approval as follows:

"I gladly bless the appeal that you have submitted to me on behalf of the Benedictines of Talacre, and I trust that it will meet with a generous response.

(*Signed*) "FRANCIS CARDINAL BOURNE,
"*Archbishop of Westminster.*

"*September* 29, 1927."

All offerings should be sent to:

THE RT. REV. LADY ABBESS,
TALACRE ABBEY,
PRESTATYN,
FLINTSHIRE.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

AS far as it depends on me, this present volume will be followed by one or two others. For many years it has been my dream to write this book; the notes that I am using were almoſt all collected before the War. Now is the time perhaps to put them together and in order. People are saying: "These are hard times." They are not far wrong; but was there ever an easy time? There are too many complaints. If we are not to give up doing, we muſt begin to give up complaining. "What we want is to get back order." Good! but tears will not bring it back, nor will speeches help us to love it: we want the example of men like ourselves, with weak natures, subject to ills and hardships akin to our own; tempted as we are by sadness but refuſing to yield, richer in faith, hope, charity, and courage to live their lives.

I have no other aim than to show them as they were. To what age will they belong, these men and women that I am calling back to life? To every age, our own included. Sometimes I shall give a brief hiſtory of their life: at others I may only mention one or two episodes: I shall ſtop when these forefathers or contemporaries have given us the counsel entruſted to them. Whence shall I take them, for their number is great? I shall choose them from amongſt ourselves, by preference, because I know them better. Others will be from far-off lands bearing ſtrange names, speaking a language other than ours, but akin in heart and faith to what we hold moſt dear. Will they all be saints? Moſt of them, since the lives of the saints are the greateſt treasure we can possess; human wisdom trained in a divine school. Nevertheless, there will be also simple Chriſtians, less known, those to whom we do not pray, but who have known how to pray.

It is a true relationship. What matters age? What matters condition and race? They have prayed and are of the family: for guidance they had the same ſtar as we; they incurred the same dangers; they were troubled by the same enemies from

without, they were always the same, from the Church's beginning, except in appearance and name. It follows when we hear some episode from the lives of our victorious brethren, we are touched, and we say: "He was better than I: I will do what he did." And not seldom a hidden sweetness, a sense of gratitude, remains within us, from this Communion of souls, and we are helped, without those whom we desire to imitate having ever divined it. Christianity is a great society of mutual assistance.

Before telling the story of the "Sons of the Church," should we not call to mind the One who designs them, adopts them, upholds them, and who alone can explain them? It seemed so to me, and it will be the subject of the first chapter.

In no way is this a summary of the Life of our Lord. Many books have taken up and explained the Gospel narrative, some of them magnificently. There will always be fresh ones to the end of Time. What I have in view is something much simpler and easier. There is no Christian who does not sometimes, or even often, think of the Life of his Saviour. In the rude world-multitude, denying, outraging, blaspheming Eternal Love, we are all like the disciple in the crowd on Calvary, turning our souls towards that Face marred and tearful.

None of us deserve the happiness of Veronica; our veils are not sufficiently white to receive the impression of the sacred Image. But from what we have seen and understood, there remain memories in our heart, and certain reflections which are the homage of the passers-by on the uphill road, unemployed and uninfluential witnesses.

It may not be amiss to mention some of these at the outset of this book. They will remind us, though imperfectly, of him whom Christians have ever tried to serve, their Model, their Friend, and also of the Church begun in suffering, living by it still.

Our forefathers delighted in poring over the lives of the Saints. There are many signs that the present generation is coming back to love the examples of those who are greater than ourselves. They are being brought to it by various paths, and, above all, by that disappointment which noble hearts experience in the vain search of Self. Give us something else! Something else! Then they remember, or are made aware, that these Sons

of the Church, brave and compassionate, faithful comrades, in work and in distress, were the most lovable of men, and often the most light-hearted. They passed on their way singing. Their ways were other than those of the world, but they must be the right ways, for they were full of joy, ever increasing joy. They must needs possess a secret. They do, indeed: they teach us on the eve, in the very midst of trial, to say the word of the morrow—ALLELUIA!

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SONS OF THE CHURCH

THE ONE WHO FOUNDED THE CHURCH

THERE was, in the Jewish Temple, one place sacred above all others: the Holy of Holies. One man entered it once a year: the High Priest. Death was the penalty for anyone who dared to enter the Presence of God. And *we* —live with this God and feed on him.

He became Man for love. The very thought of the sacrifice overwhelms us. Moreover, he died for love. And for whom? He knew beforehand all the crimes that would be committed; and all the evil thoughts, more dreadful still, the names and countenances of sinners of all ages. He saw all the horror of it, and in spite of all, he willed the sacrifice: he also saw his own elect, and for the sake of a single one, our most generous Lord, Christ the King, would have come and have given his life. Bossuet has said: "What must have been our misery, since our deliverance demanded the death of such a friend!"[1]

* * * * *

One wonders why God created the world, foreseeing as he did the ruin of his work? Ah! but he also foresaw his Christ, his Perfect One, his all Holy One, the only One who mattered, through whom thousands of souls would attain to beatitude, dazzling in his sanctity, enrapturing in his goodness. Yes, God the Father, Creator of all things, saw his Christ and the elect of his Christ. And seeing this he made the world.

* * * * *

For those who pass by greatness that is merely superficial, the Saints are the most important factors in the history of the

[1] *Meditations sur l'Evangile,* 2e partie, XIe jour.

world: their action is more lasting than that of temporal sovereigns, and the number of their spiritual children far exceeds that of the most prolific families. Jesus Christ holds the first place amongst them. He is the All-Holy One: Satan, as we learn from the Evangelist, called him "the Holy One of God."[1]

* * * * *

In the practice of every virtue he reaches out into the Infinite: there are human acts of religion, justice, kindness, labour, but their perfection and merit are in no way comparable with ours. He has a share in our natural weakness, for he is afraid. He can suffer, he is seen to weep, and to be sorrowful unto death; but he has no share in our weakness which is of the nature of sin. In this one point he is different to all other Saints: sin cannot come near him. He is the greatest of penitents, but it is for others he expiates. Our sufferings are not all pure, they are often only the natural consequences of our sins, but he alone in his innocence has suffered for no other reason than because he willed it, and because his loving Heart constrained him to do so.

There is yet another difference between him and the Saints. The virtue of faith could not exist in him, nor could he hope for personal salvation. For in faith there is obscurity, and in hope a certain fear; but these are only compatible with human nature. He is Man, but he is also the Son of God. Charity, on the other hand, is found in him in all perfection. When the world is made new, and the Judgement is past, faith will no longer exist, for it will be replaced by sight; hope will vanish in fulfilment; charity alone will abide in the elect, it will be the heavenly virtue. And our Lord when he sojourned amongst us, was himself a Heaven on earth.

* * * * *

[1] In this place, and in some of the following paragraphs, I have developed ideas suggested by Père Longhaye, S.J. He is the author of many remarkable writings on literary criticism, much admired by Brunetière. He gave the young Religious of the Society a course of lectures entitled: "History of the Saints." I have had access to the autograph manuscripts of this course, and have taken from them the subject-matter developed in paragraphs 3, 4, 6.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Nor was there need of any effort against himself, except that one time in Gethsemani, when Jesus took upon himself a part which was not really his, that of universal sinner; but a glorious display of all virtues, surpassing qualities of mind, beauty of countenance and form, mercy which made it impossible for the poor or sinners to be afraid of him, but, on the contrary, drew them towards his tender greatness. No ceremony was needed to approach the greatest of all kings. Suffering was the best letter of introduction; and the mere beginning of faith gave a claim to be listened to, pardoned and healed.

No one has ever been able to say that he was above all just, or pure, or charitable; that the characteristic mark of his sanctity was the excelling in one virtue rather than in another: for in him all were and are infinitely perfect. No one can deny his moral greatness and beauty, and in a sense no one does. Even those who deny the Divinity of Christ are forced to recognise that his words and example are sublime. They look upon him as a most marvellous teacher, and though by refusing to admit his Divinity they commit a sacrilege, yet at least they make no difficulty in admitting sanctity. They hate him because they are sinful, and find no shadow of sin in him: but Satan himself is obliged to confess him.

* * * * *

Jesus Christ has paid us the immense honour of becoming "the Son of Man," and has accepted the sacrifice it entailed. He has taken to himself our most poor human nature. Could he not have taken an angelic nature and have appeared in this world clothed in the radiant glory, unspeakably inferior, it is true, to that of the Divinity, of those princely creatures, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Cherubim, Seraphim? He could indeed. We could equally well have been redeemed by a God-Angel. Why then did he prefer our nature? St Thomas gives us a very beautiful reason. He says that in taking flesh in the womb of the Virgin the Word has raised the whole universe, both angels and men, to the unspeakable dignity of divine union. What difference can it make to a charity of this kind to humble itself a thousand million degrees lower? It was fitting that minerals and plants in whose exist-

ence we share, and our flesh, should be made joyful and glorious as well as the spiritual side of our nature, which we have in common with the angels. It was good that the Almighty Father, after the Incarnation of his Son, could look upon his glorified creation and say again *quod erat bonum*. Let us not wonder if our Lord seeks his glory in such humiliation. Perhaps it may have cost him as much as did his death!

Son of Man: count the number of times he called himself by this name, the most humiliating for him, the most glorious in the order of Redemption: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?"

We ought to rejoice every day of our lives, lowly creatures that we are, when we think of the Incarnation: he was one of us. He is still one of us, in his glorious Body in heaven, and hidden in the Eucharist.

* * * * *

The Body and Soul of Jesus, since they are united to the Divinity, are deified, and therefore worthy of adoration. He is not as we are, an adopted Son, but the true Eternal Son. By reason of this, and by the infinite mystery of the Godhead, he ranks far above all saints, yet at the same time he is like to them in countenance, in speech, in the Blood coursing through his veins, in his Heart that beats, in his Eyes expressing love or displeasure. A Man who fought against moral evil which had no power to touch him; a Man who bore all kinds of pain that suffering might be transformed into something sacred and sanctifying for those who consent to suffer with him; a Man who was near us for three and thirty years in that little corner of Judea; and who is closer still and everywhere present under the appearance of the Host, until the end of Time. We do not know how long the mountains may last, but we do know that that Bread will last as long as there is a soul who needs it.

* * * * *

Jesus Christ is the efficient cause of all sanctity.

His action reaches forth, beyond humanity, to all beings capable of possessing grace, to the different hierarchies of angelic spirits, to hear of whom is a delight.

"Although, like us, he possesses sanctifying grace, it is not in the same way; we have it in right of our adoption as sons of God, he has it in right of being the Only-Begotten Son of God. Consequently, he can never be merely one of the elect: he is one by himself, or rather the One supreme Elect."[1]

* * * * *

Since he is in himself an inexhaustible spring of grace, there can be no limit to the increase of sanctity in his disciples.

* * * * *

They spoke of him as "the Lord." Thomas's cry was: "My Lord and my God!" And St Mary Magdalen, as she lingered by the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection, said: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." What a beautiful name it is! I can imagine a conversation between two serfs in the Middle Ages.

"Have you a good lord?" "Pretty fair!" "There is not another like mine!" "Tell me about him." "Powerful, great, liberal, it does a man good to see him." "Lucky fellow! If I were not bound to another, I would certainly go to him." "I owed him an enormous sum of money that I couldn't certainly pay." "Well, what happened?" "He let me off my debt." "That's not usual." "He did much more than that: he came one day into my hut and sat down at table with us when we were at dinner; he talked to my wife and me, and we told him all our troubles, just as if he had been one of ourselves. And he cried when he heard." "Your lord did that? I don't wonder you love him! Is he brave?" "He is as powerful as he is good. Whoever gives him his allegiance may count on his help at any time, if he perseveres he has the promise of a kingdom!" "I shall go to him." "Do, and never go back whence you came. Some of ours have tried leaving him; they have found nothing but misery."

The first and greatest of knights, unequalled in nobility of birth. He left his court for the sake of the poor. So great and so undeserved a love was never seen. All in this quest was divine.

* * * * *

[1] *Jesus Christ according to St Thomas,* by Father Schwalm, O.P.

He has passed through death and life before us. O Elder Brother, have mercy on us still living! Leave us not, who yet must die, O Lord of the way! This idea has been beautifully worked out by someone:

"He whom I love is at this moment actually in the ideal condition of a risen human being.

"What unspeakable delight! beyond all dreams, to be every moment in close touch with such an one!

"To feel that we really have within our soul the constant presence of an ideal being, the Infinite Ideal, Christ himself; it is more than enough, even should no word be exchanged between us.

"If we think further that our Lord is Man, God's creature as we ourselves are, our intimacy with him, our familiar friendship, as the *Imitation* has it, will be closer still: intimacy grows with the feeling that we are of the same nature.

"Blessed life that now is! for now it is that we weave the cords of eternal union with our Lord. Why do we not more often recognise his personal action in the form of those who do us some good?"[1]

Those who refuse to acknowledge him as their Master have another, that it is not to their credit to name. It may be gluttony, resentment, folly, or some evil friend who makes for himself a following of those whom he wishes to deceive.

* * * * *

Wholehearted service which has its root in trust and fidelity is disappearing, and bondage is taking its place. Servants are hardly to be found now, on account of pride, which makes men enemies one of another, and enemies to themselves. There are only the angels, whom we cannot see. There is only our Lord, who, as Servant of his people, ever obedient, comes down at the word of some poor and perhaps unworthy priest, under the appearances of bread, and enters the sinful hearts of men.

* * * * *

He will never act in such a way as to force our liberty. His creatures must seek him at least in some degree.

He is always to be found. "Do you not know me?" St

[1] L'Abbé de Tourville.

Mary Magdalen near the sepulchre, on the morning of the Resurrection, takes him for the gardener. Even so great a Saint hesitates. But as soon as he says one word, "Mary," she falls on her knees. The disciples going to Emmaus take longer still: it was only later when they were thinking over things that they remembered how their hearts were burning within them as the unknown stranger by their side explained the Scripture: for them the sign came in the Breaking of Bread. When St Matthew tells of the first apparitions at Jerusalem, he says that many disciples saw the Lord, but that many of them doubted. They submitted later on. I feel certain that it was only the pure child souls, the big children, the fishermen, who understood at first sight. The attraction was always there, but, excepting for the privileged ones who had been on Thabor, nearly always the absence of convincing evidence, the meritorious act of faith, and then the divine joy of having found him.

* * * * *

Christians are but poor, feeble beings, upheld by a little love. Not a day passes without the Name of Jesus being invoked millions of times; the charity of Jesus imitated, imperfectly, no doubt, but still it can be recognised: the humility of Jesus loved and followed; the patience of Jesus given to sufferings unbearable but for the sight of an all-powerful love.

* * * * *

He is the greatest Figure of History. He divides Time into two parts: what comes before and what comes after. The largest library in the world could not contain the books that have been written against him: but there never was found a single proof that could convict him of falsehood. As during his Passion, there were only false witnesses, who cried out, "Crucify him!" or those too terrified to speak, who let things be. His work lives throughout the world. His Church, although committed to the care of men, has a longer and more glorious history than that of any nation: souls who seem to be indifferent feel his Look resting upon them, they say: "Later on"; they do not say, "Never," and would not dare to say it. Catechumens are not a class by themselves at the present day, they are found everywhere.

* * * * *

It would be possible to compile a Gospel out of the prophecies. God has not willed to give us evidence in place of the sufficient proofs we have of his Divinity. He gave, nevertheless, to his chosen people abundant revelations. Through his prophets he made known to them all the essential marks of his Christ, and gave them a detailed description of the chief events of his Life—father, mother, date and place of birth—such a perfect representation, so rich a delineation of characteristics and qualities, that it could only apply to one man, that when such an One should appear in Israel, he might at once be recognised and adored by all the people. Faith, to be perfect and enduring, had only two difficulties with which to contend. First, the writers of Sacred History, who had sung of the Messias through all the long waiting time, had not one of them told everything. To know him completely, the different writings must be brought together, Moses and David, Jeremias and Daniel, Isaias, Nahum, Micheas, Zacharias, and the rest. An easy matter, this, for those whose whole lives were passed poring over the sacred roll. But, above all, in Sacred History there was the Passion! A stone of stumbling, a scandal for many. How could the thought of all those humiliations and sufferings be borne? Can this be the King promised to the Jews and the Desired of all nations?

I can imagine the conversation of the devout among the rabbis, in the synagogue, outside the regular hours of instruction:

"The mountains and hills will sing praises to God, and all the trees of the forest will clap their hands, because of the coming of the Lord, the Ruler, and his eternal kingdom."

"Yea, so teaches our faith."

"He will manifest himself to all nations! . . . The king who will reign for ever is God's Anointed, the Christ, the Messias."

"We believe it."

"He will be born of a Virgin, of the house of David in Bethlehem of Juda."

"Alleluia!"

"The kings of Arabia and Saba will adore him. His precursor will proclaim him."

"We know it! He will prepare in the desert the way of Jehovah."

"Then will the blind eyes be opened, the deaf ears hear, the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the mute rejoice."

"May we ourselves see his salvation!"

An elder rabbi, unrolling the parchment, reads with trembling voice the prophecy of Zacharias: "Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour: he is poor, and riding upon an ass." But a younger rabbi cannot accept the meagre state of the prince as here depicted, and he answers: "We shall behold the glory of his triumph!"

No, in good truth they understand nothing more, and yet there were devout hearts amongst them. They cry out, when the prophecies which follow show the Man of Sorrows despised, looked on "as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted," scourged, insulted, led as a lamb to the slaughter, sold for thirty pieces of silver; when it is announced that his Hands and his Feet will be pierced, his garments divided, his tunic bestowed by lot, that he will be given vinegar and gall to drink, and all the rest of the terrible tragedy.

They are beside themselves at this inopportune reminder, and one of the more sagacious, seeking to vindicate the Messianic royalty from what he considers a dishonour, finds another passage, and reads, emphasising the words:

"He shall never know corruption. He will rise glorious from the tomb!"

No, we could never have imagined a destiny like this for the Son of God. In the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption there is an understanding of the life and the glory which baffles human intelligence. Above all others, this must have been a shock to those Jews who were looking for the great King of their nation and his world-wide kingdom. They did not believe in him, because they saw him suffer. Pride, in the beginning, was the ruin of the world, and once again it robbed the chosen people of their faith.

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Jesus Christ is the best loved of all men. The most perfect human souls have always loved him, and they will love him

to the end. The world would become uninhabitable if the devotion he inspires in souls could come to an end. Every man not blinded by error holds paganism in abomination. The last state of a nation fallen back into paganism would be far worse than the first. It would expiate the crime of not desiring salvation; power in such a nation would be simply devilish. It is the Christians who preserve in the world what yet remains of justice, fair dealing, dignity, respect. The very renegades are unaware of how much they have borrowed and how much they owe them.

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None more active, no one more intensely living than he. A vast number of human beings obey his Will, and even his counsel, not merely now and then, but always and in small matters, except in those occasional moments of forgetfulness when the soul slumbers and these sons and daughters of the Master fall back into their weakness and imperfection. The priest who leaves his father's house, and goes forth into the antipathetic crowd, seeks to imitate him; to save depraved souls, so often hard and full of wiles and shifty ways, who perhaps would be left to go their way, if it depended on us. A young girl learns to keep her eyes under control, to see and yet not to see: to live pure in dangerous surroundings; she withstands the curiosity that tempts her, and the love of which long ago she used to dream, because she knows, and, above all, believes, that there is a knowledge that would lower her dignity, and that lawful love is other than that which prowls around soliciting her. Jesus Christ is the leader of this battle of the days of youth. He rules the man, tempted through his senses and tempted sometimes to deny his unseen Lord in the presence of those who ridicule or who are influential, ready to poke fun, or resolved to beat down the poor man courageous enough to say: "I am his." There are circumstances, especially in the life of a workman, when to confess Christ openly is as meritorious an act as in the early days of Christianity in the Roman pretoriums. The condemnation which follows is no less certain: the wild beasts to which the Christian will be cast have human faces, but hearts of leopards, tigers, bears, and hyenas. Some day we shall be surprised and

delighted to behold in highest glory, some poor hemp comber, cobbler, blacksmith, worker in steel, dockyard worker or collier, whose heroic merit has been unknown to all but the comrades who insulted him and the wife who conforted him, when she said: "Never you mind what they say, they don't matter." No, it is only God that matters. The world transfigured will have quite another view of greatness. It will no longer be riches, strength, or age, but the thirst of the spirit will endure and all the love that God has blessed and made pure in himself. Jesus Christ will be there with his friends. They will say, "I should like to know," and they will know; "I want to see," and they will be shown. Small minds may think: "What shall we do in heaven? How monotonous it will be!" Every science, all history, all poetry, all that men could know or guess at, all of which they are ignorant, so long as the light of the Face of God has not shone upon all this, the elect will know. And far more, they will know all that is possible to know! And beyond that, there will still be the Infinite. It is hardly necessary to try and understand what they really mean, without putting it into words, when they give vent to such ungracious utterances.

Men possessed of so avaricious a spirit show up their true nature, which is regret for sensual joy, material diversions, and pleasures. Theirs are the thoughts of a grub before it has wings! They will not remember that we are to rise again; that the light, perfume, savour, well-being of paradise will far surpass the limited delights of this mortal state; that no fear of loss or defect will ever diminish what the Scripture, in so many places, calls the torrent of pleasure, which will flow upon the Saints on all sides from the throne of the blessed God, and beyond this, that the mere communication, by the necessity of our nature, of our spiritual joys to our senses, would be enough to make us die of happiness, had not God decreed that Death and Time should then have an end. O Death, where is thy victory? Past! Past! It is no more even spoken of, it was an enemy that in one effort exhausted all its might.

One of the holiest men that I ever knew, the Duke of Alençon, said, on his deathbed, to Princess Louise of Bavaria: "I have had a glimpse of what is beyond and I am beside myself with joy." These are words which may well be thought

out. He was a man so reserved in his words, so reasonable, so well-balanced that I have no doubt whatever that he was given the grace of a foretaste of heaven.

It is probably granted to many souls.

The greatest gift that Jesus Christ could leave us, and that he has left us, is himself in the Eucharist. It is well to observe that his Presence there has among ourselves and throughout the world a greater number of adorers now than there were a hundred or two hundred years ago. Jansenism is dead. What harm it did! How could faith fail to grow dim when the Lord and object of faith came no more to inspect the house? One wonders how it was that the pride at the heart of the heresy was not more universally recognised by the men of the seventeenth century. Doubtless, it made its appearance under the garb of humility, declaring the unworthiness of sinful men and saying: "I will deprive myself of the happiness of receiving the Body of the Lord, and I hope this mortification will draw down his grace upon me"; forgetting that by refusing to receive him they implied that they could get on without him, and imagining that they could love him when they were shutting the door in his Face! Strange words theirs which laid Christians once more under the law of fear; how sad this assertion, made about the greatest proof of love ever given to men! Many souls refused to accept so hard a doctrine. One proof among others of this may be found in Bossuet's *Letters of Direction*. But the holy bishop, otherwise so courageous, was afraid to speak out boldly against the errors of his time. The author of the *Variations* seemed not to recognise in Jansenism that Protestant spirit which claims to be saved by faith alone. His instinct was to oppose the avarice of priests, who turned away the faithful from the divine Treasure of the Church, and the pride of the faithful who, in their ignorance, thought they could defend themselves without having in their hearts our Lord taking part in the fight. But his counsel was half-hearted. We cannot altogether judge the secrets of the spiritual *morale* of those past generations: nevertheless we are right in supposing and saying that many faults were committed in consequence of this deadly doctrine by well-instructed Christians, living in a truly religious atmosphere, but weakened by being deprived of the opportunity of coming

constantly into contact with our Lord. This prepared the way for the frivolous, iniquitous eighteenth century.

Our times have witnessed the end of Jansenism and the triumph of the Eucharist. For many reasons, and, above all, thanks to Pius X, most generous-minded of Popes, frequent Communion has become once more the habitual practice of a great number of the faithful. This is especially the case amongst those who assist at early morning Mass. They do not doubt their unworthiness any more than did the Christians of the eighteenth century: but they know it is sufficient to be free from grave sin in order to approach Jesus Christ, living amongst us day and night for this very purpose. Oh yes, we must receive our Lord, begging his pardon for the unworthy condition of the house, which before his coming has been the lodging of undesirable guests, thoughts, desires, negligences. The traces of rents and stains are still on the walls; but should we not find in this a reason for greater love? The abasement of the Incarnation, this other abasement which makes God appear under the form of a crumb of bread; that long fruitless waiting in the churches of many lands, the indifference of so many Christians, who might come and do not; the imperfect love of those who do; the mind is overwhelmed by the charity of God, by the inventions of his Love and our response.

In large towns throughout the world, sometimes even in villages, there are people without homes; others who are obliged to pay a high price for an inadequate lodging which is unwholesome, unworthy of God's creature. We complain justly, but we forget that the Lord of Heaven experienced this at the very outset of his life, and later, that he still has to endure it.

For when our Lady and St Joseph came to Bethlehem, in obedience to the Roman Law, to be enrolled on the Registers, they sought in vain for a lodging or an inn; there was no place at all for the poor young couple, travelling without baggage, who had not thought of bespeaking a room in advance. The open country alone was hospitable; there was the stable, the manger, an ox and an ass to look on. Our Lord was born in the open. Not long after, when his parents had to flee with him by night into Egypt, their shelter was the desert or a rock, a tamarisk, perhaps a tent, opened to them out of

charity. When Jesus began to preach, he no longer had a home of his own, as he himself expressed it, "not a ſtone whereon to lay his Head."

Men gave him inſtead the wood of the cross.

Nowadays we give him lodging in our churches, but how many of them are deserted? He desires to dwell in souls through his sacraments: but how many refuse to give him admittance, like inns where there is room for everything and everyone except for him! Some few receive the Sacred Hoſt, the Body, the Blood, the Soul, and the Divinity of Jesus Chriſt, sacrilege is committed even by some of these. In the Pater we ask for the *Panem quotidianum*. Oh! the wonderful ways of Chriſt!

In France we see these visits of Chriſt increasing. In the urban parishes especially, there are ever-increasing groups of the faithful from all parts for whom daily Communion has become the looked-for morning meeting with their Sovereign, who will liſten to their petitions made on behalf of the world or for themselves, who will pardon their faults, and send them away fortified with a ſtrength that they know has been given them to meet the difficulties of the day, amid the dissipations or temptations of town life. If they cannot come to him, he will go to them, brought by his prieſt, sometimes preceded by a small boy ringing a bell; in the towns without any pomp, as much unknown as he was when on his way to the ſtable of Bethlehem. One morning, on the coaſt of Kent, I was present at the seven o'clock Mass in a Catholic Chapel. After Mass, the prieſt—a religious—took the Blessed Sacrament, placed it in a pyx wrapped in a little bag which he put in the breaſt pocket of his coat. Then, he took his bicycle, which was leaning againſt the shrubs in the garden, and went through the well-kept roads of the little watering-place. No one guessed that Jesus Chriſt was passing by. And even if the grocer, the chemiſt, the fishmonger, or the policeman *had* known, they would have given no sign of recognition. They have been told that the words "This is my Body" do not *mean* "This is my Body." The bicycle ſtopped before the green gate of Silsfield. The prieſt went upſtairs, hardly noticed by the servants, and yet the angels were all around him; he gave Holy Communion to an old English actress, a pious convert, well

known to the world. Then he went away. In what meagre state, O my God, do you consent to live amongst men, some of whom are too ignorant and others too sinful to thank you for being so wonderful a friend?

A man of fifty, supposing that he has been fervent from his youth up, will have received Holy Communion more than ten thousand times. How the thought must fill him with confusion! How clearly God should be seen in him. How wrong it would be if he were to hesitate ever to confess him who has visited his servant so constantly! Such a case is not uncommon in our great towns, nor even in the country. To those Christians who live a life of frequent Communion God is closer than their nearest and dearest, more present than the light of day. They have power to keep him with them, till they give themselves to him again.

In a little book written by the Bishop of Malaga, Mgr. Gonzales de Garcia, there is this beautiful thought:[1] Jesus Christ prepared himself for his parochial life by a fast of forty days. For in very deed he is the Parish Priest of the world. His parish is a small and ungrateful one. Like a parish priest, whether in a town or in the country, he counts on our assistance for many things. He wills that his creature should be associated with him in the spiritual government of the world. A secret word is spoken to each one: "Do that; go to such an one; console that sorrow; speak these words; write that letter; accept the incomparable honour of being despised for my sake." What a magnificent privilege, and no one is exempt from it. If only we had the leisure and strength to cry out: "Lord, I am ready to do this," what graces might not be given to some other creature, some family, town, or nation? How great and sweet a thing to know that we are "used" by Jesus Christ, having nothing of ourselves, but a will which gives itself up!

If God were not God, if he could have part in our imperfections, he would find us most importunate, with our constant cries for help, bringing up our little troubles, beseeching him over and over again with tears for things he knows would do us harm if he granted them. He bears with this continual

[1] *Ce que peut un curé,* édit. Spes.

begging and even invites us to it in the Gospel. He takes pleasure in our prattling for the sake of the secret adoration hidden therein. The Saints are not satisfied, as we are, with being beggars and blind beggars withal. If at times they ask an alms of his omnipotence, they know also how to speak to him of himself, of his Love, his happiness; very feebly, no doubt, but this effort of his creature, to be detached from itself and to reach out to the Infinite, is the homage which pleases him most.

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The Judgement has come.

That poor man is dead, one of the 140,000 who die each day.

The soul rises. A voice cries out:

"Lord, here is a soul asking for vengeance on this man."

"Let her speak!"

"It is a woman, who had been seduced by him. Half innocent, but weak, she could never hear even the name of love without trembling. Everything seemed to be pitted against her. She had careless parents who gave her no example; a school-mistress who never uttered your Name and yet suffered for this in secret; there were passers-by in the street, young and old, who gazed at her for years, first as an apprentice, then as a workwoman, with a look which attracted her; there were also those who spoke to her always with the intention of harming her, the authors of the wretched books she bought, the plays she saw acted, advertisements posted up on walls, pictures at the cinema, songs that she heard sung; then there was this man on whom she now looks with horror, because he accomplished the work of her destruction, and lied to her when he said: "I love you."

The twentieth part of a second passes.

Another man has died. "Seven millions of souls against him!"

"Who are they?"

"All those whom he has prevented from knowing you, Lord God! He sat in the armchairs of the Chambre, without speaking, always preoccupied with his own popularity, a hater of souls, and of your image in them. He has corrupted

little innocent souls! He has snatched them away from their Creator, from joy, and from the way to Paradise!"

Lord Jesus Christ, by nature we love only ourselves and for ourselves, enlarge the hearts made small by nature. Drive far from us, and from all we love, our arch-enemy, who contemns all honour, all virtue, all authority, who makes false promises and gnashes his teeth! If possible drive him far from our land!

In our nation I feel the power of him whom in your Gospel you call "the prince of this world." He occupies all the posts from which you have been driven. And under deceptive titles misery comes with him. But, Lord, give us a big blessing! Give us joy. Restore hope to weary souls. Like the maiden, they say it is dead; if it be your will it will only be sleeping, slumbering. Bid it rise. Tell them to take heart! Silence the mourners! Dismiss them with their music!

ST MARY MAGDALEN[1]

MARY MAGDALEN and Mary of Bethany are names which most probably designate the same person, mentioned in the Gospel, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. She lived in the little fortified town, only two miles distant from Jerusalem, built on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. It consisted of fine houses, surrounded with gardens. The most ancient Lives of Martha and Mary say that, according to trustworthy tradition, the family was noble, that they possessed much property in the neighbouring country, in Jerusalem, and even in Galilee. They also tell us that Martha was the eldest. The second daughter was called Mary, a name which has two meanings: "Sea of bitterness" and "Star." Later on there was added to this the name of Magdalen, which came to her from her property in the pleasure-loving city of Magdala. She is said to have been most beautiful. The Talmud describes her hair as a golden river, and the painters of all times have represented her thus. It is not certain whether she was married, although some ancient writers speak of her husband (the Pharisee, Paphus). But whether married or not, there is no doubt that she lived a sinful life. Rich, graceful, sought after, frequenting the lax court of Herod Antipas, she found lovers, and threw public opinion to the winds. Associating herself with what was non-Jewish, Roman, and Hellenic, she became an object of scandal. She gave sumptuous feasts. Sellers of precious stuffs and costly furniture, pedlars, who came from Arabia selling spices, knew her. Her name was mentioned with a shrug of the shoulders; yet when she passed she was looked at with curiosity and admiration. She was the abode of seven devils. And she was a great sinner till the day that she came face to face with Jesus. But, gifted with a noble heart, in her life of feasting and luxury, she had not yet lost the power, the grace, of growing weary amid pleasures and passion, the faculty

[1] See *St Mary Magdalen,* by the Rev. P. M. Sicard, Doctor of Theol., former Professor of Theol. 3 vols. Paris, Savaète, 1910.

of hating self and loving the Eternal Beauty, when the time came for her to meet with Jesus.

She in no way sought him. St Vincent Ferrer, in one of his sermons, says that she was present at one of our Lord's discourses. Was it at Magdala or Naim? It is thought to have been one or the other. She had come, as a worldling, to see the last new thing. She wanted to see and hear the prophet, "mighty in work and word," who was run after by the whole of Judea and Galilee. In this desire was hidden the secret grace of God. Mary Magdalen came to see. Her mind was teeming with plans for the morrow. She half-lowered her eyelids as she raised her head, to see this Christ in the midst of the people.

"Ah, that must be he. Everyone is pressing round. He is tall; he is . . ." But hardly has she seen him than she grows grave. Jesus is speaking to Mary, of whose presence and thoughts he is well aware. He is speaking of the folly of sinners, and the misery which awaits them. "Our gentle Saviour," continues St Vincent Ferrer, "willing to gain the poor soul he himself had called, put some power unspeakably persuasive into his words, some grace more efficacious than usual into his teaching. At once Magdalen is stirred to the depths of her soul. Her head sinks beneath the weight of shame and repentance. Tears pour down her cheeks. Her heart is conquered." The horror of her sin has cast out the devils. Magdalen is another woman. As her eyes follow the receding form of the Prophet, separated from her by the crowd, she thinks: "I will go to him and be his disciple, and he shall know of my repentance." He knew already.

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As soon as she heard that Jesus had been invited to the house of the Pharisee Simon, she hastened to the sellers of spices, and asked for the most precious perfumes they could supply, from Arabia, the land of precious gums. St Ephrem, Deacon of Syria, who was a poet, it is true, but who may have been repeating some traditions from Palestine, relates the dialogue between Mary Magdalen and the merchant.

The latter is surprised to hear her say as she entered his shop: "Peace be with you. I have come to ask for the most exquisite perfume you have, worthy of a King. It must be

something without compare, since he to whom it is offered has no equal, nor ever will have." At first she refuses to name or to indicate Jesus: but the merchant is curious: he promises this rich worldling who will brook no delay—as he supposes her to be—that he will serve her royally, if she will but reveal to him the name of this man raised so far above all others. Then Magdalen accuses herself. She confesses that she is no longer the pleasure-loving woman whose manner of life is but too well known. A Saint has come upon the scene. She has witnessed his miracles. Above all, she has understood his gentleness and mercy. "He receives sinners. He will not drive away the lepers. He is accessible to all, even to those who blaspheme. He is not moved to anger by any importunity or unworthy treatment. It has stirred me to the depths. Unhappy woman, I said to myself, how can I live without his pardon and help? Dare I go to him, sink of corruption that I am? And yet dare I neglect to save my life, when my physician is there? What am I saying? I believe it is God himself, come down to earth, he is able to control nature. But his power and freedom to do as he pleases go much farther, for he remits sin. . . . I am certain that if I can only get near to God made man I shall be delivered from all my sins. There is my secret. And now that I have fulfilled your desire, give me the perfume quickly, and let me go."

The merchant advises Magdalen to beware of the Pharisees.

"They will not allow you to enter when they see you going to him."

So Magdalen leaves the shop, bearing in her hands the alabaster box, filled with ointment. She goes anxiously towards the house where she knows our Saviour is to dine with the Pharisee, wondering if she will be allowed to enter.

The devils have been cast out of her, but peace is not yet there. She needs God's assurance of forgiveness. She loves Jesus with a perfectly pure love, and an immense sorrow for having sinned; she feels herself unworthy to come near him and yet flies to him: she knows and sees a love, the revelation of which has completely changed her and so enlarged her heart that the whole world appears to her as nothing. For the Infinite has been opened to her. But that God, to whom she has listened, will she ever be able to come near him?

And to speak to him? No, she knows well she can only weep. She speeds along. Her only thought is of her desire to see him, and her fear of not seeing him. She reaches the Pharisee's house. No one has stopped her. The place is overflowing with guests, as is generally the case on Feast-days, in the houses of the great. Magdalen passes through the groups standing about, here and there, who are more interested in watching the guests and those serving them than in the arrival of newcomers. They hardly notice her. But now she has reached the Feast; she is close to the couches on which the guests recline.

What audacity! See, she is stopping behind the prophet, bowing low over the feet of the Master. What is she doing there? Weeping and covering them with kisses. How can he possibly allow a notorious woman like that to touch him and to remain near him? It is only another scandal, added to others. Has he not already given offence by eating with publicans and sinners? Simon looks at Magdalen in such a way as to leave no room for doubt; the Prophet, too, ought to see what is expected of him. The whole assembly is moved. Here we must quote the words of St Luke, for no others will ever come up to their beauty and meaning.[1] "And one of the Pharisees desired him to eat with him: And he went into the house of the Pharisee and sat down to meat. And behold a woman that was in the city a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment; and standing behind at his Feet, she began to wash his Feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his Feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee who had invited him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. And JESUS, answering, said to him: Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most? Simon, answering, said: I suppose that he

[1] St Luke vii.

to whom he forgave moſt. And he said to him: Thou haſt judged rightly. And, turning to the woman, he said unto Simon: Doſt thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gaveſt me no water for my Feet; but she with tears washed my Feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gaveſt me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my Feet. My Head with oil thou didſt not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed my Feet. Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he saith to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe: go in peace."

Magdalen has been absolved by Jesus. "It is not so much a woman as poor, guilty Humanity coming back to its God. The tears she sheds are the tears of Adam and our own, the kisses she showers on his Feet are ours who have offended him; in one word, it is our reconciliation she effects. She loved much! It is the new Commandment she is inaugurating.[1]

Henceforward Mary Magdalen will follow Jesus from village to village with the other women, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's ſteward, and Susanna; she will follow the cuſtom of rich Jewish ladies, in attaching herself to the moſt celebrated teacher of the day and aſſiſting him with her goods. She will liſten to him; she will continue the Act of Adoration begun in the house of the Pharisee, and she will be the treasurer who will supply all that is needed by the Divine Traveller and his Apoſtles. Following her example to the end of time, virgins, widows, penitents, will make it their business to see that the Prieſt is provided with those material means which will enable him to exercise his Apoſtolate without solicitude. It is good to remember that Mary Magdalen, when she was not following in the footſteps of Jesus, lived at Bethany with her ſiſter Martha and her brother Lazarus, and that she left Magdala, the scene of her sins.

St John tells us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her ſiſter Mary, and Lazarus."[2] This home, then, was for our Lord the

[1] Rev. Father Sicard, I, II, pp. 71-72.

[2] St John xi, 5.

home of friends. There he saw in the person of the two sisters the active and the contemplative life; the saints of all times were represented in each act and thought of these first models of regenerated humanity. In that home were united round the Master the future Martyrs of the Gospel, the apostles and first disciples; there, when Jesus was absent, the first place was held by that man in whom were soon to be made manifest the promise of the Saviour and his power over death. The house of Lazarus was one of the first Tabernacles, the first ciborium, a Mother Church of early days.

In this same house took place what may be called the second act in the mystery of Magdalen. Whilst Jesus, fleeing from his enemies, had taken refuge in the mountains of Galaad, Lazarus fell ill, and before long was in danger of death. Let us turn to the eleventh chapter of St John's Gospel: "Now there was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister. And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his Feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick."[1]

See how Mary is given the first place, the place of honour, although she is younger and had lived a life of sin. How powerful an intercessor, how great a contemplative she has already become! How the honour of precedence, given to her in the Gospel narrative, witnesses to this:

"Jesus said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God: that the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days: then after that he said to his disciples: Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if he walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. These things he said; and after that he said to them: Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep he shall do well.

[1] St John xi, 1-3.

But Jesus spoke of his death; and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. Then therefore Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead; And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him. Thomas, therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with him. Jesus, therefore, came and found that he had been four days already in the grave. (Now, Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha, therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha, therefore, said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother hath not died. But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the Resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live. And everyone that liveth and believeth in me shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? She saith to him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the Living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly and cometh to him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town: but he was still in that place where Martha had met him. The Jews therefore, who were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her saying: She goeth to the grave, to weep there. When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing him she fell down at his Feet, and saith to him: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself. And said: Where have you laid him? They say to him: Lord, come and see. And JESUS wept. The Jews therefore said: Behold how he loved him. But some of them said: Could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the

sepulchre: Now it was a cave: and a ſtone was laid over it. Jesus saith: Take away the ſtone. Martha, the ſiſter of him that was dead, saith to him, Lord, by this time he ſtinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her: Did not I say to thee, that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? They took therefore the ſtone away. And Jesus lifting up his eyes said: Father, I give thee thanks that thou haſt heard me. And I knew that thou hearеſt me always, but because of the people who ſtand about have I said it; that they may believe that thou haſt sent me. When he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound feet and hands. . . . Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go."[1]

The active life went forward to meet Jesus, the contemplative life awaited his call. When they came to Jesus there was the same Act of Faith: "Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died." But Magdalen threw herself at once at the Feet of Jesus. She it is who is the intercessor, proſtrate there, speaking silently yet more eloquently than with words, by the outpouring of her heart full of tender love and transports of adoration. When our Lord, in order to work the miracle, commands the removal of the ſtone from the mouth of the cave, Martha, who surely does not doubt, says: "Lord, by this time he ſtinketh, for he is now of four days." But Magdalen remains in adoration: she no longer sees, no longer hopes, she knows she has been heard; she is already loſt in gratitude. And the Collect of her Feaſt says that it was the tears of Mary Magdalen that obtained the resurrection of Lazarus.

For the Jews the resurrection of Lazarus became a secret grievance, and it was one of the causes which led to our Lord's death. St John tells us that the chief prieſts and Pharisees, disquieted at the sight of the many conversions effected by the miracle, assembled a council, and that the High Prieſt Caiphas, prophesying the salvation of the world, and indicating the victim, said to them: "You know nothing, neither do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man die for the people, and the whole nation perish not."

[1] St John xi, 3-45.

It is impossible that Jesus should not know of this. He retired first to that part of Judea which was on the confines of the desert, then he returned to be taken and delivered up, because his hour had come. His last days were given in great part to his friends at Bethany. In the "Meditations" of St Bonaventure, he speaks of the honourable company, whom he supposes to have been there assembled. "During the few days before the Passion of Jesus Christ, the house of Lazarus was his chief resort. He had his meals there by day, and at night he slept there with his disciples.

"Our Lady, his Mother, was also staying there with her sisters, and received much honour from all, but chiefly from Magdalen, who was her constant companion and never left her."

There can be no question, since it is distinctly stated in the Gospel, that six days before the Pasch a feast was made at the house of Lazarus in honour of Jesus. Martha, great lady that she was, took the place of waitress, that she might serve Jesus and be near him. Magdalen was to renew the prophetical anointing of the feast at Naim.

Our forefathers of the Middle Ages imagined that Lazarus after his resurrection never smiled, that he could never forget the vision he had had of hell and purgatory. It is nevertheless certain that the designs of God's mercy were more far-reaching than this, and that he was not called back to life simply that he might weep. But Lazarus was there, close to his loved Master, in the house of Simon, the leper miraculously cured, when Mary entered. She had brought a pound of pure spikenard, which Judas Iscariot, keeper of the purse, an avaricious and dishonest man, calculated to be worth three hundred pence—that is to say, about 1,000 francs. Her loving heart divined that her beloved Master was about to die. She knew it by a gift of foresight, or because her great love had gathered up, pondered over, and understood certain sayings of Jesus, that others, less clear-sighted and less solicitous in their love, had forgotten. She wanted to adore him, to offer him one of the rich and rare gifts of creation, one of those precious perfumes which at his Birth he had accepted from the hands of kings, and which now, at the hour of his Death, he willed to accept from the hand of a woman raised infinitely high by

the grace of forgiveness. St Matthew and St Mark relate this episode in the same chapter in which they begin the account of the Passion. And if St John places it as early as the eleventh chapter of his Gospel, it is because the beloved disciple has written so fully of the last discourses and the last days. We will follow the text of St Matthew:[1]

"And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to him a woman[2] having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on his Head as he was at table. And the disciples, seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus, knowing it, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you; but me you have not always. For she in pouring this ointment upon my Body, hath done it for my Burial. Amen I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her."

Mary Magdalen is now, by the appointment of Jesus, inseparable from the Gospel.

Her praise is written in the book which will never die.

A still greater honour is in store for her; she is to merit it by a more than virile courage; she is to follow Jesus during his Passion; to be, as it were, the shadow of his holy Mother, who was faithful above all in the sufferings of her Son, and as a reward, Jesus will appear to her first of all, and will entrust her with the charge of announcing his Resurrection.

We will now think of her in that capacity.

Our Saviour left Bethany the first day of the Azymes: he went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pasch and to deliver himself up to his enemies. Now it was commanded in the law that one lamb should be slain for each family, and it is a probable belief that the Virgin Mother, with her court of saints, her community of religious, accompanied Jesus. They would assist at the institution of that Sacrament by which henceforth souls dear to their Saviour would live a life of strength and purity. How is it

[1] St Matt. xxvi, 6-14.

[2] Her name is given with those of Martha and Lazarus in St John.

possible that the Mother of God should be forgotten in the First Communion given to men? "It is commonly believed that the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalen, Mary of Cleophas, and the other holy women assisted at the Supper, in a neighbouring apartment, that they were able to follow with their eyes all the actions of our Lord, and to hear the sacramental words, and that they received from his own Hands his Sacred Body and Blood."[1] A not altogether unauthorised belief, since St Matthew in his Gospel, immediately after telling us of the Death of Jesus, adds: "And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him. Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the Mother of James and Joseph, and the Mother of the sons of Zebedee."

We find, then, these holy women following Jesus and faithfully serving him, above all during his Passion, when one by one men forsook him. Is it not extremely likely, would it not be worthy of the Heart of Jesus, that they should receive the firstfruits of sacramental Communion? Their fervour and their courage say enough.

What a wonderful thanksgiving there was after Communion in the Cenacle! Let us contemplate this infant Church receiving Jesus; amongst the Apostles, that wonderful creature in whom Heaven came down to earth. And yet there was a traitor among them, and perhaps a sacrilegious Communion at that first Holy Table.

We may think, then, that Magdalen accompanied our Blessed Lady through the streets of Jerusalem during the tumult and horror of the Passion, that she saw the Sacred Victim pass, and heard the taunts and blasphemies of the crowd, that she supported the most sorrowful Mother, when she beheld her Son fall beneath the weight of the Cross, and felt herself powerless to help him. She was present at the last moments of the human life of Jesus. St John says: "Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus his Mother, and his Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen."

As long as Jesus was still alive, nailed to the bitter Cross by his Hands and Feet, bleeding and in agony, the women were allowed near him, since their hands and their tears could avail

[1] Rev. P. Sicard, Vol. II, p. 106.

nothing on his behalf. But when he was dead, the soldiers, who from a certain sense of pity had not hitherto enforced regulations, compelled all spectators to withdraw, and kept them at a distance from the dead bodies of the victims. They said: "What is the good of these people being here, now all is over?" They probably appealed to their chief: "Shall we send these women away, standing there clinging to the Cross of the King of the Jews? They only add to the disorder of the crowd, and their mantles are soaked in blood."

The centurion, standing in front of the Cross, had been privileged to receive a last look from Jesus. He had fathomed the meaning of the signs which appeared in heaven and on earth. First convert of the Cross, he believed that it was indeed the Son of God who had been put to death by men. And it was out of respect and on account of the remorse with which his soul was filled that he told the soldiers to keep back the women and all who attempted to approach. That is why the Evangelist St Mark, after telling of our Saviour's death and of the loud cry of the Conqueror, adds: "And there were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalen and Mary the Mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome . . . and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem."[1]

The sufferings of those privileged souls equalled their love. With bitter tears they meditated on the Passion of their God. And she who had once been the abode of seven devils wept most bitterly, because she knew that she was the cause of the sufferings and death of her Beloved, of him who had pardoned her. "I believe, myself," says St Teresa, "that if Mary Magdalen did not die the death of a martyr, it is because she was one already through her grief at witnessing the Crucifixion. Then what terrible pain his absence must have caused her during the long years afterwards!"[2]

Joseph of Arimathea then went boldly to Pilate to ask permission to bury Jesus. A member of the sanhedrim, rich, a disciple of Jesus in secret and fearing the Jews, by this action he denounces himself. He exposes himself to all kinds of vengeance. In exchange for his fortune and tranquillity, he

[1] St Mark xv, 40.

[2] *Interior Castle,* Mansion 7.

asks for the Body of his God. Henceforth he will never again receive any earthly honour. How hard! But that is the least of the risks he will run.

Helped by Nicodemus, and as St Bonaventure thinks, doubtless by our Blessed Lady and the holy women, he takes the Body down from the Cross, wraps it in the winding sheet, in which he places myrrh and aloes, and carries it to the new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock for himself, in his own garden, close to Calvary.

It is the evening of that day which will be henceforward known as Good Friday, to the end of Time. When the sun goes down the Sabbath begins. The Jews may do no more work. They must make haste. When the great stone, which ran along a groove scooped in the rock, has been rolled before the opening of the sepulchre, the two disciples of Jesus withdrew. The women, who have accompanied Joseph, sit down over against the sepulchre, and they have taken note how he is laid, for they mean to come back as soon as the sabbath has passed to finish their work of embalming the Body of Jesus.[1]

Throughout the night, and the whole of the next day till evening, "they rested according to the commandment."[2] But in the evening of the Sabbath, when the Jews had permission to buy and to sell, after the setting of the sun, "Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought sweet spices,"[3] and awaited the dawn of the following day.

As they had passed the Sabbath at home they did not know that the chief priests and the Pharisees had obtained permission from Pilate to place a guard near the tomb and seals on the stone. It was still dark when the women started for the sepulchre. They said among themselves: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Mary Magdalen is named first by St Matthew and St Mark; she is the only one mentioned by St John. God willed her to be the great witness and apostle of the Resurrection. After our Blessed Lady, doubtless (of whom the Gospel, however, tells us nothing), it was she to whom Jesus appeared first in his

[1] St Luke xxiii, 55. [2] *Ibid.*, v, 56. [3] St Mark xvi, 1.

glory. The wonderful account of this is moſt fully related by St John. The women go to the Sepulchre. They arrive juſt as the sun is rising. Mary Magdalen, the youngeſt, carried away by her ardent love, outſtrips the others, and sees that the ſtone has been taken away. It has been rolled away by an angel, and the terrified guards have fled. Mary realises that the Body of Jesus is no longer in the Sepulchre. "She ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

"Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the Sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the Sepulchre.

"And when he ſtooped down he saw the linen cloths lying: but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the Sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying. And the napkin that had been about his head not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came firſt to the Sepulchre: and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he muſt rise again from the dead. The disciples therefore departed again to their home.

"But Mary ſtood at the Sepulchre without, weeping. Now, as she was weeping, she ſtooped down, and looked into the Sepulchre: and she saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepeſt thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. When she had said thus, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus ſtanding; and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepeſt thou? Whom seekeſt thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him: Sir, if thou haſt taken him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him: and I will take him away. Jesus saith to her: Mary. She turning saith to him: Rabboni (which is to say, Maſter). Jesus saith to her: Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to

your Father, to my God and your God. Mary Magdalen cometh and telleth the disciples: I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me."[1]

The eyes of Magdalen had at first deceived her, for her heart was no longer there, and all earthly things had become indifferent to her since she had lost Jesus. But suddenly she recognised the Voice. A single word convinced her, and she gave one cry of adoration: "My Master." A love like this is different to all other; it is an avowal of infinite distance, of self-abasement in his Presence. All future colloquies between God and souls will henceforth begin by that same word, "Rabboni," which expresses humility, surprise, gratitude, and unspeakable joy. Even if no word is spoken, it is the disposition of the Christian soul in prayer. Mary Magdalen, the first contemplative religious, who had kissed the Feet of her Master and wiped them with her hair, receives the command: "Touch me not," that is, "till thou reach Heaven, when union with my Divinity will inebriate thy whole being: be a soul whose only thought is of loving and adoring me, whose only sweetness is in spiritual contemplation of thy God: accept the separation from me for a time."

According to the tradition of Provence, at that moment the God-Man touched the brow of Magdalen, eternally consecrating her understanding to that science of sciences, the life-giving knowledge of Christ. This is the last mention of Mary Magdalen in the Gospel. She is a triumph of Redemption, pardoned, consecrated, reformed by God on the infinitely more glorious plan of the New Testament. But the Saints tell us that Jesus had more blessings in store for her: and they are not mistaken.

In the Meditation, said to be by St Bonaventure, we read: "It is probable that our loving Saviour often visited his holy Mother, his disciples, and Magdalen his beloved daughter, comforting and rejoicing the hearts of those who had been so overwhelmed by fear and sorrow during his Passion. See how Magdalen again takes her old place at his Feet, listens eagerly to his words, and, if she is able, serves him with a most joyful heart. . . . And do you not think that Magdalen,

[1] St John xx, 2-19.

sitting at his Feet, dares respectfully to hold him by his garment, lest he should leave her?"

We must believe the Saints when they speak of the Saints. And what room is there for doubt that our Saviour wished to have his special friends—Magdalen, Martha, Lazarus—as witnesses of his Ascension, when the Gospel speaks of Bethania as the place from which our Lord ascended from earth into Heaven? St Luke, after relating the words of Jesus, when he gave and explained to the Eleven their Apostolic Mission in Jerusalem, adds these lines, which are the last in his Gospel: "And he led them out as far as Bethany: and lifting up his Hands he blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he departed from them, and was carried up into Heaven. And they adoring went back into Jerusalem with great joy: and they were always in the Temple praising and blessing God."[1]

Yes, Magdalen was with the disciples at Bethania. Yes, she was blessed once more, and received that increase of strength and joy on which she lived till old age. Jesus Christ had chosen the first Missioners: he bestowed on them courage and power when he himself decreed to which privileged nations the first teachers of Christianity should be sent. And our nation of France received in that glorious day of the Ascension, from the very Heart of Christ, the whole beloved family of Bethania, and amongst them those first great nuns, one active, the other contemplative: Martha and Mary.

When our Lord was lost to sight the disciples returned from Bethania to Jerusalem, and assembled in the Cenacle, which was probably that large room in which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his Apostles. The Book of the Acts names some of these witnesses of the Ascension. "It was Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alpheus and Simon Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James. All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."[2]

Magdalen was certainly there. With those firstfruits of humanity renewed—the infant Church—she made this first

[1] St Luke xxiv, 50-end.

[2] Acts i, 13-15.

enclosed Retreat, she received the Holy Spirit on the Feaſt of Pentecoſt: she was confirmed in piety, fortitude, underſtanding, love of souls, purity. Peter had conducted that Retreat, as we see from the Acts, when he tells his brethren that they muſt elect a twelfth Apoſtle in place of Judas; he and the other Apoſtles had together gone over the whole of the Life of Jesus and his doctrine, whilſt the disciples liſtened to their teaching; our Blessed Lady, who is the Myſtic Rose, and whom the Gospel already represents to us, during the Childhood of Jesus, as keeping and pondering all things, muſt have prayed to her Son more than once in the name of the infant Church, not yet exposed to persecution, and those who heard it never again loſt the sound of her voice; moreover there was needed a superabundance of grace that all might fulfil their mission: that of Magdalen was a long life of penance. Nowadays hiſtorical criticism recognises that France may well have been evangelised from the firſt century. They do not say who the possible or probable Apoſtles were. And, in fact, written documents to this effect do not exiſt. But the Provençal tradition supplies for the silence of Hiſtory, and the objections raised againſt it do not appear decisive. It claims for Gaul, besides Mary Magdalen, Martha, the servants Marcella and Sara, Lazarus, who became Bishop of Marseilles, Maximin, Sidonius, Mary of James and Mary Salome, Trophimus Bishop of Arles, Eutropius, Veronica the saint of the white veil, Zacheus who received Jesus as a Gueſt. Did Peter send Mary Magdalen and her companions to the coaſts of the weſt, or were they forcibly driven there by their pursuers? The former opinion is that of the early Lives. The second has been adopted by the Roman Breviary, by the hagiographers who came after the MS. of the ninth century, and by poetry, sacred and profane.

"That ship without sails, rudder, oars, leaking in all parts, into which these friends of Jesus were forced by the Jews . . . and which they then towed to the open sea, and left to the will of the winds and the deep, is well known."[1]

It muſt have been somewhere about the year A.D. 42 that the ship touched the shores of Provence, on the sands of

[1] Rev. P. Sicard, Vol. II, p. 135.

Camargue, not far from the place where now stands the Church of the Holy Maries—that is to say, Mary Cleophas, and Mary of James, who wished to remain where the pagan fishermen had so hospitably received the Missioners.

Magdalen followed St Maximin, and travelling by the Roman road which passed through Arles, reached Marseilles, where she preached to the people, telling them of the Passion of Christ and his Resurrection. She spoke under the portico of the Temple and close beside her spoke the friends of Jesus, his witnesses who had come from Asia, and affirmed the truth of what she said. This caused no surprise to the people of Marseilles, accustomed as they were to strangers. A centre of Christianity was formed, and Lazarus became the Bishop. A crypt in the Church of St Victor is said to have been the meeting-place of the first Christians of Marseilles. The pilgrims of Jesus had already left some of their company at each stage of their pilgrimage. They now left Lazarus at Marseilles; St Maximin remained at Aix. Whilst he became Bishop of that town, and evangelised it through his preaching and the working of numberless miracles, it is said that Magdalen lived in retirement in a cell, where she meditated and prayed. She herself was a perpetual prayer for the spread of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in Gaul. Her vocation had been already tried, and her noviciate of solitude begun. Miracles came from her eyes, her hands, and her heart, obtaining graces for the world, grievously afflicted by pillage, ignorance, and violence. She longed for a more complete separation from the world, for a hitherto unheard of solitude. Then it was that the Sainte-Baume was shown to her, a cave with wild and desolate surroundings. Tradition tells us nothing of the difficulties of the journey: for there were none. All it says is: "The angels of God, in response to the desires and supplications of Mary Magdalen, bore her from Aix to the mountain, to the entrance of the cave which was henceforth to be her dwelling."[1] The angels ministered to her. They took her with them seven times a day to the summit of the mountain, that the Saint might pour forth her prayers to God in light, raised above earth. They enveloped her with their wings; and

[1] Rev. P. Sicard, Vol. II, p. 179.

every morning, at the threshold of the cave, they communicated her with their own hands. "This place had been prepared for her by God," says St Antoninus. "There she remained for thirty years, unknown by all. And in that solitude there was nothing whereby she could live or quench her natural thirſt. For our moſt loving Redeemer meant to show that he willed his beloved to live, not by earthly food, but by that which came from Heaven." These marvels, or at leaſt the elevation of the contemplative, are mentioned in the Roman Breviary, and St Vincent Ferrer has composed the words of her seven canticles. He says that at the hour of Vespers—I shall only quote one example—the angels bearing Magdalen sang: "Within his treasury, the King has replaced the groat which was loſt; the precious ſtone, drawn from the mire, sparkles in the radiance of the sun." Another saint, St Bernardine of Siena, describes the seven delights of the elevation of Magdalen. Nothing seems too magnificent to express the mercy of God towards the repentant sinner, and the glory and beatitude granted momentarily in gratitude to her who prays in habitual mortification. For it is cold and damp, it is often dark and terrifying among the wild beaſts and the demons, those counsellors of sadness and discouragement, in the cave in which Mary Magdalen lives. And this is only a small trial. The great trial is to think that she may not yet follow him to Heaven, whom she had followed on the roads of Judea, among the executioners, and to the Sepulchre, whom she had watched ascending in glory over the fields of Bethania.

She interceded, she gained merit for the infant Church, for the young land of her adoption, and for sinners of all ages. "Albert le Grand holds for certain that God has made two great lights—the Mother of God and the siſter of Lazarus—the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night, for an example to sinners. But this doctrine is not peculiar to Albert le Grand: it is that of a multitude of churches, for we find it taught in the ancient Liturgies of Lyons, Tours, Auch, Paris, Chartres, Beauvais, Arras, Orleans, Le Mans, Saint-Brieuc, Cambrai, Fontevrault, Salisbury in England, and various others."[1]

[1] Rev. P. Sicard, Vol. II, p. 229.

When the day drew near on which her life in this world was to end, that she might go and live once more with Jesus Chriſt, it was made known to Magdalen. She prayed the angels to place her near the Oratory of St Maximin, below in the plain, among the olive-trees, which can be seen from above the Sainte-Baume. Warned, as are the Saints, by that divine grace which is ever present with them, the Bishop was awaiting Magdalen on the side of the Aurelian Road. She desired to receive Communion in the ordinary way, to show that she belonged to the Church Militant, and he therefore communicated her. Whilſt for the laſt time she was thanking her Maſter, she was overtaken by that slumber which precedes eternal joys.

The body of Mary of Magdala was buried in the plain; later a basilica was built on the spot, to which pilgrims will never cease to resort.

ST AMBROSE DEFENDS HIS CHURCHES AGAINST THE ARIANS

AMBROSE, son of the Prefect of the Gauls, was born at Trèves, in that part of Roman Gaul which reached to the Rhine, and which, together with Great Britain and Spain, was governed by the representative of Rome. His race was both noble and Christian. A few years earlier, in the beginning of the fourth century, the family of Ambrose had gloried in a martyr, Saint Soteres, whom on account of her great beauty the executioner had disfigured before putting her to death. It was an abuse of those days of antiquity, not without its counterpart in the Jansenism of the eighteenth century, that frequently the children of the Christians were not baptised till a later date, although their names were inscribed on the list of catechumens. So it was in the case of Ambrose and his brother Satyrus; only their sister Marcellina was received into the Church in early childhood.

Ambrose had no intention of taking Holy Orders. Brought up at Rome after the death of his father—that is to say, from the age of fourteen—surrounded by patrician families out of whose ranks from time immemorial the Roman state had chosen her highest functionaries, protected by the counsel of powerful friends, he had begun to follow an administrative career. And already in 374 he had been for several months governor of one of the most fertile provinces, comprising all the north of Italy, when the bishop of its capital, the large town of Milan, died.

The prelates of Insubria, Emilia, and Liguria assembled in the choir of the principal church to deliberate on the choice of a new bishop; in the nave the people in crowds were divided into two turbulent parties, Catholics and heretic Arians, when the tumult became so disorderly that the governor intervened. He suddenly appeared upon the scene and addressed the crowd, seeking by his words to avert further disorder. He was unequalled as an orator, and his successful career at the bar in Rome was a household word among the Milanese; good

to look upon, charitable, possessed of youth and dignity, his morals in those corrupt times were irreproachable; he was beloved by the people of Milan, who already feared to lose him. A child in the middle of the church cried out: "Ambrose is bishop!" The idea was immediately taken up with immense cries of joy, and the unexpected choice imposed by the acclamation of the people. The bishops were all at one in the matter. The emperor, when it was announced to him that Ambrose had been elected, replied: "There does not exist a more upright character, nor one more inflexible."

On November 30, 374, the young consul of Insubria, Emilia, and Liguria was baptised: the week following he was ordained and consecrated bishop.

That a bishop nominated, one might almost say improvised, under such extraordinary conditions should have become a doctor of the church, cannot be accounted for merely by his genius. It needed an extraordinary grace from God and correspondence to it, which means immense effort. The Duke Albert de Broglie, author of *L'Eglise et l'Empire romain au IV^e^ siècle,* has described to us the daily life of the bishop. From the day that he crossed the threshold of the Church, he seemed to have no further thought for the things of the world, its pomps and anxieties. Never was there a more complete transformation. His was the life not only of a priest but of an anchorite.

He poured into the lap of the poor all the gold and silver he possessed, gave to the Church his entire capital, reserving only to his brother Satyrus and his sister Marcellina the usufruct. The marvellous suppleness of a spirit equally detached from work and from intercourse with men, which could at will either diffuse or concentrate itself, allowed him to dedicate himself entirely to the duties of his sacred ministry and to the earnest studies needed to fill up what was wanting in his theological training. From early dawn, after his exercises of devotion and the celebration of the holy Sacrifice, he would seat himself at his table, absorbed in some volume of Holy Scripture, which he compared with a Commentary of Origen, or of St Hippolytus, or a sermon of Basil of Cæsarea, reproduced by the stenographers of the East. His door was always open; all who pleased might enter, even without being announced. If

anyone craved an alms for body or soul, he would interrupt his reading and attend to his interlocutor with ever-ready and charitable attention. The consultation over, he returned to his reading, without even concerning himself as to whether the importunate visitors remained to watch him with indiscreet curiosity. So passed every day almost without any interruption, even for meals, for, excepting on two days in the week, he fasted till evening. When night came it was the time for composition; he then prepared his sermons for the following Sunday or drew up some dogmatic expositions; but whether notes or books, all were written by his own hand; no one might share his night watches.[1] His house was situated somewhat apart, on the outskirts of the town. The bishop had gathered all his clergy round him and lived with them in community. "There," he wrote, "priests read, write, and work together. Removed from intercourse with the world, they are for each other a mutual safeguard. . . . Nothing adds more grace and strength to the priesthood than to be from youth subjected to a life of austere discipline and to submit to a holy rule which, while allowing the clergy to live in the world, sets them free from its ways and customs."

His ideal for a priest was of the highest; he demanded of him nobility and at the same time simplicity, and never tired of repeating that there ought to be nothing "plebeian" in a priest, yet he was careful to impress on his brethren that if their one aim was to imitate the Life of Jesus Christ this could only be done by making themselves all things to all men, and especially by being at all times accessible to the poor, whether in the streets or in the churches.

There is hardly any bishop in our own times who is not obliged, by the force of events at one time or another, to enter into the lists with the secular power, and to fight in defence of the Faith, Christian liberty, or the rights of the poor. The bishop is the "*Defensor civitatis*"—that is, of the divine city and its human element. Weak or strong, he is compelled to take his stand. There are innumerable examples of this, as varied as are the occasions which give rise to them, and the characters which enter into conflict.

[1] *L'Eglise et l'Empire romain au IVe siècle,* by M. Albert de Broglie, of the French Academy, Part III, Vol. II, pp. 9 and 10.

Books and pictures often recall that scene related by Theodoret; the Bishop of Milan presenting himself at the door of the church when the Emperor Theodosius, still under the cloud of a heinous crime, appeared upon the scene. He had ordered the massacre of Thessalonica, and had as yet shown no signs of repentance. "It is clear to me, Emperor, that you have no notion of the gravity of the murder you have caused to be committed. . . . It may be the extent of your power prevents you from realising your fault," etc.

The speech is worthy of the man to whom it is attributed. But did it really take place in this setting, and in the presence of the court? There are good reasons for doubting it, although the indignation of the Bishop of Milan, the correspondence in which he so freely expresses it, are facts as strongly established as is the tardy though sincere repentance of the emperor. It is good to quote examples of virtue, but they must be authentic. Instances of courage are not uncommon in the life of St Ambrose. The line of action he followed in what may be called the dispute of the churches in the reign of the predecessor of Theodosius can never be too well known. We have special reasons for studying it, for the pretensions put forward by the Imperial state, feeble yet violent, and under the influence of Arian heretics, have their counterpart in the religious policy of several modern states. Certain instances of the period of St Ambrose recall, for example, the epoch of the *inventaires* in France, so much so, that if we did not know our Catechism we should say that the devil had grown old, he repeats himself so often.

I have said that the Bishop of Milan excelled in public speaking. Although his voice was feeble and easily tired, he was much sought after as an orator. The "sweetness of Ambrose" was proverbial. But from the outset it was manifest that this gentleness was only an ornament and adjunct of strength. Saints are not men without character. The Emperor Valentinian had not been mistaken. He himself experienced this strength of the bishop, and his successors were also to know it. All the means that could induce a man to sacrifice the rights of truth were employed against the Bishop of Milan, not only force, but also the power of legal intimidation, flattery and the bait of power, artifice, delay, threatenings of

grave calamity; but he would not surrender what were not his to give, the rights of the Church.

From the dawn of his Episcopate in 375, the complaints of Catholics ill-treated in the East, threatened in the West, by pagan or Arian officials, reached his ears. The Emperor Valentinian, although a Christian and a genuine one, had in a moment of passion allowed some of these vexatious proceedings, for he had been irritable, out of health, and as for the other wrongs, he might also be held responsible, not having been able to prevent or repress them. The bishop, despite the universal panic, was not afraid; he presented himself before the emperor and spoke on behalf of those who dared not speak for themselves. The emperor was touched, he repented and proved his repentance by his acts.

Two years later, the youthful son of Valentinian I was the reigning sovereign; or rather, his mother, the false-hearted Empress Justina, an Arian, ruled in his name, governing the East. She was petitioned by the Arians to allow them the free disposal of a church, the Portian Basilica, which had just been built on the outskirts of the town of Milan. In order to gain strength, and to appear zealous for the right, she called together the council of high officials, known as the Sacred Consistory, obtained a decision which could not well be refused her, and summoned the bishop to the palace. It was the beginning of Lent in the year 385. The bishop arrived, not knowing what was expected of him. He was received in the Consistory. The emperor was present, surrounded by his principal officers and the dignitaries of his court. The assembly had been called together to intimidate Ambrose. We have a kind of official report of what passed, written by the Saint. Attacked for what he had said and what he had left unsaid, in a matter in which the right order of Christianity was at stake, he had to defend himself; he has so graphically related the facts and recalled the dialogues, that the emotions by which the actors were swayed are still felt in the account of the struggle.

Hardly had the bishop entered than he was informed in caustic terms that he was expected to give up the Portian Basilica.

Ambrose would not deign to reply to the official who

addressed him; turning to the emperor, he refused what was demanded of him. "No," he said, "for me it would be a crime, and for you a misfortune. Emperor though you are, you have no right to violate the house of a private individual; and do you think you can invade the house of God?"

"The emperor can do as he pleases," interrupted a courtier, "since all belongs to him."

"You are mistaken, the emperor has no right whatever over the things of God." The imperial child reiterated the demand to yield up the church; the bishop again refused, and the discussion might yet have continued for some time longer if at this moment of intense excitement the clamour of the crowd surrounding the palace had not been heard. News had spread that the bishop had been suddenly called to the palace, and as the unfriendly designs of Justina towards him were suspected, anxiety became universal, and the Christians, who formed the immense majority of the population of the town, were assembling to defend him. It was soon known that it was not the life of Ambrose that was in danger, but the honour of Christian worship. The people's irritation was not quieted by this news, they began to throw themselves upon the palace with such vehemence that the doors were shaken and threatened to break in. The officer of the guard vainly tried to call out his troops, but he was not even able to put them in array, and at the sight of their raised swords all cried out unanimously that they were ready to give their lives for their Faith.[1]

The empress was afraid, she changed her attitude and her speech:

"Bishop, quiet your fanatics!"

"What am I to say to them?"

"Tell them that no basilica shall be taken from them."

Fear does not make lasting treaties. It could only be a respite. On Friday, April 4, two days before Palm Sunday, personages of importance, members of the Consistory, presented themselves before the Bishop of Milan, and notified him that he must give up to the Arian form of worship, not only the Portian Basilica, but the metropolitan church itself, known as the New Basilica, in which he was accustomed to officiate

[1] Albert de Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire romain au IVe siècle*, Part III, Vol. II, p. 161.

and preach. "And above all," they added, "keep the people quiet."

Ambrose replied: "It is not lawful to surrender the temple of God." And he awaited events. On the morrow, the rumour of what was to take place having spread, the New Basilica was filled with people. Ambrose was there as usual, and was preparing to say Mass. The Prefect of the Prætorium having also come, felt uneasy at the sight of so large and unquiet a crowd. "Yield," he said, as he came up to Ambrose; "at least, give up the Portian Church, and the emperor will be satisfied."

But the crowd standing round and seeing through the stratagem, cried out: "Ambrose, yield up nothing!"

The official, as they all do in similar cases, withdrew to make his report. The next day, whilst the bishop was celebrating the Office in the church, more crowded than the previous day, news came that those who were attached to the service of the palace had taken possession of the Portian Basilica, left unprotected by the Christians who thought it no longer threatened, and that they were engaged in putting up rich hangings round the pillars of the vestibule and the nave, as was even then the custom in Italy on days of great solemnity. An official subterfuge, clearly a twofold attack, half of which is nothing but a bait. How often it has served! It will serve again.

The people at once poured out in disorder and ran to the profaned basilica. But Ambrose would not interrupt the function, and began to say Mass. Someone brought him news. He begged God to intervene that no blood might be shed, and offered himself as a victim for the safety of the cathedral and of the heretics themselves. He said: "Lord, suffer me not to survive the destruction of this city, which would be that of Italy herself." These are the words of a hero, of an Italian!

For the second time, fear of popular sedition held back the empress. The young emperor did not make his appearance in the Portian Basilica, nor did the Arian priests celebrate their offices within its walls; there was only a great parade of troops in the town, especially outside the entrances of the two churches, the Portian and the New Basilica, and a prohibition against leaving their homes or assisting at the cere-

monies of Holy Week was issued to all Catholic workmen, and to all Milanese attached to public offices. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday passed without any violent conflict. The palace officials and all kinds of astute people who care little for justice, but hope to bring themselves before the public eye if they bring to an issue, no matter how, a conflict of public order, did not fail to counsel the bishop to make concessions to the reigning power. Their one principle is what will succeed, and they dispose of what belongs to God without any difficulty. The argument of the state always weighs with them.

"The emperor possesses everything," they said. "Can he not do as he pleases with a basilica?"

"No," replied Ambrose; "what belongs to God does not belong to the emperor. If he asked for what belonged to me, my estate, my money, anything of that description, I should not refuse, though all my goods are those of the poor. . . . If he desires my patrimony, let him take it; or my life, I offer it him. But a basilica, O Emperor, I have not the right to give, and you have no right to take. You have no right to violate the house of a private individual, and you imagine you can seize upon the house of God!"

"But at least," replied the councillors and tribunes, "undertake to pacify the people." The answer to this is striking and deserves consideration: "I need not urge them on, but it appertains to God alone to quiet them. Besides, if it seems to you that it is I who have roused them, there is but one thing to do; avenge yourselves on me and send me into exile."

To prove that he was in no way a stirrer-up of the populace, but simply a man who could not repudiate just indignation which he had not aroused, Ambrose did not officiate in the New Basilica or in the Portian, but in an ancient chapel, which had been abandoned for some time. There, on Holy Wednesday, they came to tell him that it had been decided to take possession of the New Basilica by force of arms, and that the church was already surrounded by troops.

"Tell the soldiers," he replied, "that those who take part in this act of violence will be separated from communion with the faithful." The Office was not interrupted, neither did the

bishop leave the church; he even began the lesson which he had prepared for the catechumens, drawn from the Book of Job. Before it was over there was heard the sound of arms; soldiers appeared at the door: there was general confusion, and distracted women uttered loud cries. But what was the surprise of all when they saw the soldiers themselves fall on their knees and declare that they had come to pray with their bishop, not to fight against him, that the New Basilica was free, and that all were loudly calling for Ambrose. A proceeding hitherto unheard-of; an armed force had failed to carry out its instructions; it had not only resisted an order, which is common enough, it had without treachery and for conscience' sake resisted an order to pay false-hearted, self-seeking homage to a new master; it had refused to violate a right more sacred than that of the emperor, and respected the claims of a higher obligation than military obedience.[1]

The Feast of Easter, it will be well understood, was celebrated with special joy that year. The bishop, so resolute in defence of truth, did not defend himself personally, but, on the other hand, he did not provoke the secular power. He was protected by the affection of a whole people. He enjoyed peace, or what seemed to be peace, for a whole year. But in January, 386, there appeared, not an order from the Consistory this time, but a law of the empire, establishing liberty of worship in favour of the Arians, and punishing by death those who should in any way oppose it.

The first demand made on the Bishop of Milan, in virtue of this law, was to present himself before the Imperial Consistory to answer concerning the Faith in the presence of the heretical Bishop Auxentius. The regulations of the court were as follows: each party was to name its own umpire; the emperor himself was to preside over the assembly, and after having heard the exposition of Ambrose, he was to decide in favour of one or the other. The bishop's reply to the imperial message was that he should not appear:

"It is for the laity to be judged," he added, "and for the bishop to judge. . . . Read the Scriptures and you will see that in matters of doctrine it is not emperors who judge

[1] Albert de Broglie, *op. cit.*, 167, 168.

bishops, but bishops who judge emperors." Lest his meaning should be misrepresented by the messenger, Ambrose wrote at the same time to the emperor, and the sovereignty of the Church Catholic in religious matters is again affirmed in this famous letter: "Wait till you are old, and see what you will then think of the bishop who yields up the rights of the Church to the power of laymen. Your father with his mature judgement said: 'It is not for me to decide between bishops.' And you say: 'It is for me to judge!' Suffer me, O Emperor, I beg of you, not to come and seek you in your Consistory. It is not a place to which I am accustomed to go, except when there is a question of your interests: I cannot accept a discussion in the palace, for I neither know, nor desire to know, the secret of such dwellings." In the same letter Ambrose said to the emperor: "If I am the only obstacle to your desires, why make a decree aimed at all the churches? Sacrifice me and leave the churches in peace."

The court in some embarrassment, not daring to promulgate a decree of exile which would only stir up the people, sent an officer to Ambrose with a message, in which no trace of such a decree was to appear: "Leave the town, go wherever you please, and take with you whomsoever you please." They hoped that the bishop, worn out by the struggle and fearing the anger of Valentinian, would of his own accord forsake his flock. He did nothing of the sort, and prepared himself for whatever might happen. He was seen in all parts of the town as usual, visiting the faithful and praying at the tombs of the martyrs. And he continued to live in this manner, even after the Arians, towards the end of Lent, had fruitlessly summoned him, in virtue of the law of January 2, to yield up the long-contested Portian Basilica. Holy Wednesday arrived; the bishop began the Office in the New Basilica, and the crowds there assembled were the more numerous on account of the agitation felt by all as to what might happen.

Everyone declared that the anger of the empress mother and of the emperor could not fail to break out. In the evening when the bishop wanted to retire, the Catholics prevented him, asking leave to protect him, and to pass the night in the church or the cloister and the quarters annexed to them: for the soldiers had set seals on the basilica, and were keeping guard.

The faithful even began to construct barricades within as if to sustain a siege. Ambrose only smiled, and reminded them that the surest protection was that of the angels. Men entered the church and left it by stealth. During the entire week a large number of the faithful remained thus enclosed in the precincts of the basilica. Ambrose filled up the long hours of waiting by instructing the faithful; he told them of the proposals or threats which had been made to him by the court and the Arians, as if to the commander of a besieged place; he emphasised the limits of the religious and civil powers, and formulated that doctrine which he was defining and practising with equal serenity: "Fear not, my children," he said, "I shall never leave you as long as it depends on me. I may sigh and groan and weep, for tears are the weapons of the priest . . . but desert my church or forsake my children, that I shall never do. I am the emperors' subject, not their slave. The emperor is in the Church, not above her. I say this in all humility, but I shall maintain it to the uttermost." The bishop also made them sing psalms and hymns in two choirs, one of men and one of women, a custom which had only been in vogue so far in the churches of the East. He even composed hymns, such as the "Morning Hymn," and this wonderful leader not only made verses for his troops, but sang with them. In this courageous assembly of the faithful, pressing round Ambrose to defend him, there was a young professor of rhetoric, well known in Carthage, Rome, and Milan, who had lost his faith in consequence of his disordered life. This great man, wonderful artist and teacher of rhetoric that he was, and much beloved by his juniors, although born of Christian parents, had not yet been baptised. He was restless and dissatisfied in his vain search after Truth, for he had turned away from Catholicism, which indeed he had never clearly known. His was an anxious, ardent, affectionate nature. Augustine had come at the request of his mother; he had promised to follow the teaching of the bishop. From his Episcopal Throne, Ambrose could see Monica and Augustine, both of whom he knew. As the religious chant developed into more penetrating prayer, he could watch, and see in the face of the former the anguish of her maternal heart giving place to confidence in Divine succour, whilst the troubled features of the son bore

marks of the painful struggle going on between the emotions of the heart and the rebellion of the intellect.[1]

Augustine sincerely admired the bishop, but only half understood him. He has written in his *Confessions:* "I willingly heard him preaching to the people, yet not with that intention which I should have brought, but spying, as it were, upon his eloquence, whether it were agreeable to the fame that ran of him or more or less than was reported. I was careless and despised the matter which he delivered."[2] But the power of Truth was steadily gaining ground, under the example of the stand taken by the crowd in face of peril and opposition, and Augustine writes further on: "For I kept my heart free from giving a firm assent to anything, and fearing the precipice was yet slain more surely by the latter . . . my soul could not be healed but by believing, yet in fear of believing false things, it refused to be cured."[3]

The hour was approaching when Faith would triumph, and we may well say that the event which was to give so great a Doctor and so rich a genius to the Church, was partly brought about by the preaching and example of Ambrose during the siege of the Milanese Basilica.

The bishop's firmness received a recompense of another order. The troops sent against the Catholics relaxed their vigilance. Soon they were withdrawn. Peace was not yet established. But from the beginning of the year 387 it was forced from Justina and the Emperor Valentinian II by a terrible danger threatening them from Gaul. Gaul was at that time governed by a usurper, a rough and crafty soldier, who was on the look-out for an opportunity to get his foot into Italy. He thought his chance had come in the Milanese disorders, and having some complaints to lodge against certain troops that Valentinian had set to keep guard over the Alpine passes, he added to his letter a paragraph in which he declared his indignation at the persecution of the Italian Catholics and his intention of protecting them. There was only one man who knew Maximus, only one man who had the power to dictate to him—this was Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan—and the court could not afford to wait. Valentinian sent for Ambrose,

[1] Albert de Broglie, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.

[2] *Confessions*, Bk. V. [3] *Ibid.*, Bk. VI.

who for the space of two years had been treated so unjustly, and he left the town after Easter, 387, as the emperor's ambassador, with orders to go to Trèves to negotiate with Maximus and save the empire of the West.

The Church, from these early days, had passed through almost every kind of suffering that human malice could inflict upon her. She had yet to experience the encroachments of Christian princes, to keep herself free from the yoke of even friendly civil power, and refuse to keep silence in face of the errors or faults committed by her official protectors. Ambrose was soon to experience this second trial, and to issue forth from it, I will not say to *his* honour, which is but a feeble human expression, but to the honour of the Church. A man of high birth and cultivation, of great mental activity, a perfect type of Latin civilisation at its best, without Catholicism he would probably have been nothing more than an orator with a veneer of rhetoric. The Faith was all his strength. It made him a very great man, and kept him from being a slave to the music of words and the paltry ambition of power.

THE BAPTISM OF ST AUGUSTINE

ST AUGUSTINE left his native Africa and settled in Italy, having been drawn thither by the fascination of Roman civilisation. The atmosphere of Tagaſte, his birthplace, and even of Carthage was too confined for his fiery nature. He thirſted for life as it was lived in Rome, or in one of the other great Latin cities. He was impatient for the company of philosophers, rhetoricians and poets, for the daily round of feaſts amid luxuriant and refined surroundings, and a not too severe code of morals: he longed to know the world as it might be known through the eyes, conversations, and defamatory writings of the lords of the earth. He was born of a Chriſtian mother: but following the reprehensible cuſtom of that time he had not been baptised in infancy, and at the age of thirty had not yet received the Sacrament of regeneration. He reached Milan, preceded by the luſtre of a great reputation. He had been sent thither by Symmachus, Prefect of Rome, as a Professor of rhetoric—that is to say, his rôle was not only that of teaching the art of speaking to the young, but he had come that he might be a glory to the literary profession, a great intellectual power, who would make his influence felt through the whole realm of Latin thought. For some time now Auguſtine had broken with Catholicism. His knowledge of it was but scanty, and he was in no wise disposed to learn more, for he knew this much, that it was a religion which demanded the subjection of the flesh to the spirit, and, as Joseph de Maiſtre was to say later on, that it was a religion of repression. His own disorderly life counselled him—and how ſtrongly—to disregard a doctrine which delivers us from ourselves. And yet, how could he live divorced from Truth? For his great mind this was impossible. He had forsaken Truth and was ſtill seeking it, passing from one error to another, as a wayfarer, hoping that he might find a place at laſt where he might reſt.

When he arrived at Milan, Auguſtine belonged to the ſect

of the Manicheans, and the apostolic spirit with which he was endowed was active within him for the propagation of heresy. The marvellous gifts he had received could not remain inert; not being used in the service of the Church, they were employed against her; but there was no peace in his soul. How many are the marks of resemblance between Augustine before his baptism and a man of our own time! Full of curiosity on all matters, except the Church of God—that is nothing but a memory, a disquieting subject to be avoided—with ceaseless activity of mind over problems of literature or the Stock Exchange, constant disappointments, good-natured cordiality towards the mixed elements of the society around him, which in his heart he despises, warm in friendship, and yet obdurate in face of good example, delighting in all that gives pleasure to the senses, disquieted by the changes in society and the menacing attitude of uncivilised races: how like it all is to what goes on in our own day! If he had not been so great a genius, we should feel tempted to say: "There are many like him!" A certain "Renaissance of Paganism" makes the resemblance still more striking. The latest biographer of St Augustine, Louis Bertrand, has seen and expressed with peculiar lucidity this likeness of his hero to the men of the present day.[1] "We are all ready to agree," he says, "that at the present time there is no more actual personality than St Augustine." He has explained with great accuracy the long struggle between Augustine and the world, between Augustine and his past. "How difficult it must have been to break free from the materialism in which he had lived so long, to emancipate himself from the influence of its corruption, so subtle and at the same time so coarse! We can understand the hesitations and struggles, the moral agony of St Augustine before his conversion. But to break with all this was not enough, the soul had yet to be purified from all the evil effects of its former corruption. For him there was truly need of a second birth, an entire and new creation of the new man of the Epistles.

[1] *St Augustin,* by Louis Bertrand, 1 vol, Paris, Anthème Fayard, 1913. By the same author: *Les plus belles pages de St Augustin,* same publisher, 1914. See also a new translation of the *Confessions,* by Pierre de Labriolle, 2 vols, Paris, edition Les Belles Lettres, 1925-1926.

. . . It is a miracle of sanctity that a man once so perverted in intellect and will should have become a model of charity and a Doctor of the Church. I cannot recall a more lofty example of Faith and divine Charity united with reason." As soon as he arrived in Milan the new Professor of rhetoric went to pay his respects to the Bishop, "known everywhere as a master mind." From that day he began to love him, on account of the welcome he had received. Sympathy for the man and literary curiosity were, as I have said, the apparent reasons, the only ones of which he was conscious, that brought him back again and again to Ambrose.

Nevertheless, little by little and in spite of himself, the expositions of Holy Scripture, to which he listened, began to refute his Manichean objections; the moral exhortations spoke to his heart; the proofs concerning human freedom penetrated his spirit, and began to stir up the remembrance of faults past and present. By words scattered here and there in the *Confessions* we can follow the steps by which that noble mind passed from error to Truth.

"With a blind and contentious spirit, I had accused thy Catholic Church, which, though I had not yet found to teach truly, I had already found not to teach those other things whereof I so bitterly accused her. . . . I was glad also that the ancient writings of the Law and the Prophets were no longer read by me with that eye to which formerly they seemed absurd . . . those things which, if understood literally, might seem to induce a man to a perverse belief, were spiritually opened and expounded by (Ambrose), the mystical veil thereof being removed. Nor spake he anything which offended me. . . . For although the Catholic cause seemed not to me to be overcome, as yet withal I took it not to be victorious."

Little by little the determination formed itself in Augustine to break with the Manicheans, without, however, as yet declaring himself a Catholic. He desired greater certainty. A holy woman was anxiously watching his progress, Monica, his mother, who from the year 384 had joined her son in Milan, hoping for that conversion for which alone she lived, prayed, and mortified herself. The Bishop of Milan also desired his complete conversion, and those two saints were in pursuit of

the soul of him who has called himself "the fugitive of Eternal Providence."

Monica's ambition was to see her son converted and married; it was the Will of God that he should be a priest.

In order to facilitate the marriage for which Monica hoped, it became necessary to separate Augustine from the woman with whom he had lived ten years, and by whom he had one son, Adeodatus.

This separation was at last effected and the woman in question returned to Africa. On her arrival there she made a vow to love no other man, and she kept her word. "That mistress of mine," says the *Confessions,* "being torn from my side, my heart that cleaved to her was broken and wounded until it bled."

Virtue had no part in this separation; nevertheless, it greatly facilitated a return to a Christian life. Augustine's life was not suddenly transformed; he had not as yet any intention of living chastely, and another woman took the place of the African. But the sacrifice which still had to be made would be less hard, for it would be asked of one who had already broken with his youth.

The discourses given by Ambrose to his people continued to enlighten Augustine. They were invested with greater authority during those tragic days when the Bishop, shut up in one of his churches with a number of the faithful, was watched and menaced by the troops of the Emperor. Afterwards, when these days were over, several examples of conversion to Catholicism worked upon Augustine. His objections, drawn from the existence of evil, the superstition of his mind, which yet believed in the doctrines of astrologers, his errors concerning the Nature of Jesus Christ, whom, until now, he had considered as a man of eminent wisdom but not as God, all faded away little by little; the pride of poor human knowledge diminished, the insufficiency of human philosophy became clear to him, and that virtue so opposed to paganism was revealed to him: humility.

Simplicianus, an old and saintly priest amongst those surrounding Ambrose, told him of the conversion of Victorinus, who had been a celebrated rhetorician in Rome, addicted to the worship of idols to an advanced age, but who, as soon as

he became convinced of the truth of Christianity, declared himself a Christian with undaunted courage, and without fearing the censures of the world in which he had held so prominent a position. Augustine was deeply touched by the narration of his courage, and needed little more than to imitate him, for mental questionings were practically at an end, and what he still lacked was the generosity to make the sacrifice, rather than faith. We can see what influence the example of Victorinus had upon him, in that book in which he tells of each advance of his soul towards truth from the days of his youth. The following, in the words of the *Confessions,* is the conclusion of the narrative of Simplicianus: "When the time was come that he was to make profession of his faith, which at Rome was wont to be done in a certain form of words learned by heart, and pronounced by them who were to receive thy grace from some prominent place in the sight of thy faithful people, an offer—so he told me—was made by the priests to Victorinus, that he might make his profession privately, as they sometimes did permit, when the parties were in likelihood of being either afraid or ashamed; but he chose rather to profess his faith in the presence of the holy assembly. For that which he had taught in rhetoric was not matter of salvation, and yet he had publicly professed it . . . as soon as he went up to declare himself, all those of his auditors who knew him—and who was there did not know him?—did whisper his name to one another, with a voice of congratulation; and 'Victorinus, Victorinus,' ran with a hushed murmur through the lips of them all rejoicing. On a sudden did they speak for joy, when they beheld him, and as suddenly were they hushed again, through the desire they had to hear him. He declared his true faith with an excellent confidence, and all of them would have been glad with speed to take and lodge him in their very hearts. Yea, greedily did they take him in thither by loving him and rejoicing over him, embracing him by their affection instead of by their hands."

Is there not in these words of Augustine something of the eager emulation with which he listened to Simplicianus, when he spoke of the celebrated Roman?

Further conversations and examples put the finishing touches. One of the chief officers of the palace, like Augus-

tine, a native of Africa, came to visit him, and saw, lying on a playing-table, a book. This book happened to be the Epistles of the Apostle St Paul. And as the officer was a Christian, he began to speak of the marvels worked by grace, and especially of the life of St Anthony, the hermit of Egypt, and of the other solitaries.

Augustine silently compared his own life with the lives of penitence and tranquil joy led by these Christians. He was stirred to the depths of his soul; the call of grace became more pressing, and when the officer had left, Augustine said to Alypius, his intimate friend, who was present at the interview: "Must we bear this? What is it? What didst thou hear? The unlearned start up and carry Heaven by storm, and we, with all our learning, see how we wallow still in flesh and blood! Are we ashamed to follow, because they have gone before, or shall we not be much more ashamed if we do not so much as follow after them?"

He turned away abruptly from his friend. His accent and features betrayed the intensity of his emotion. Let us picture him to ourselves leaving the house and going into the little garden full of trees, Alypius following closely in amazement. They sit down at the bottom of the garden. Let us now open the *Confessions* and read those wonderful pages which reveal to us the powerful current of grace, upholding a soul on the verge of salvation:

"I, raging with most tempestuous indignation, did groan in spirit with myself, to see how I made no more haste to enter into thy Will and Covenant, O my God. Yet all my bones cried out that this was the way, extolling it unto the very skies; for in this way we travel not in ships, nor in four-horsed chariots, nor yet on foot, nay, not even for so small a part thereof as from the house unto the place where we were sitting. For in that way there is no more required of us—not only for our setting out, but even to attain our journey's end—than this, that we have a will to go therein; but indeed we must will it with an entire and strong will, not with a will half-wounded, that staggereth and tumbleth hither and thither, wherein the part that riseth must struggle with that other part which inclineth to fall.

"For I kept saying within myself, 'Behold, let it be done

now, let it be done now'; and, as I spake the word, I did almoſt resolve to do it. I almoſt began to do it, and yet I did it not. Neither yet did I slide back into my former cuſtoms, but ſtood close by, and drew another breath. And once again I endeavoured, and I was even arrived almoſt near enough to touch and to lay hold of it, yet I was not there, neither did I attain to embrace it, but I was suspended between dying to death and living to life. And my ancient evil cuſtom was of more power with me than the purpose I had towards that which I had not experienced. Yea, the very inſtant of Time, wherein I was to be made different, did ſtrike terror into me the more by how much the nearer I drew to it. But it did not drive me back nor yet divert me, but only kept me in suspense. Very toys of toys and vanities of vanities they were, those ancient favourites of mine which detained me; they caught at the fleshy garment of my soul and softly whispered: 'Dost thou caſt us off?' and 'Can it be that henceforth we shall not be with thee for ever?' But those things which they ſuggeſted by their 'this or that,' what was it they ſuggeſted, O my God? O may thy mercy guard the soul of thy servant, from all the filthiness and shame they meant!

"I heard them, indeed, though now far less than half their former size, nor daring to withſtand me to my face; but softly muttering behind my back, and plucking slyly at me as I went from them, as if in hope of making me look round. And in this sort they did indeed withhold me, who delayed to free myself by shaking them off, and haſtening forwards whither I was called; whilſt force of habit dinned into mine ears: 'Doſt think that thou canſt ever live without them?' But by this time it spake even this but very faintly. For in that quarter to which the face of my soul was turned, and whither I yet trembled to advance, the chaſte dignity of Continence discovered herself. Cheerful she was, not dissolutely enticing, but sweetly inducing me to advance and to fear nothing; yea, ſtretching forth to receive and to embrace me those dear hands of hers, that were full of good examples. Many they were, both young men and maidens, yea, and of all ages, grave widows and aged virgins, and Continence herself in every one of them, not barren, but *a fruitful mother of children,* of joys begotten by thee, O Lord, her husband. And

she smiled upon me with a mirthful encouragement, as if she said: 'Canſt thou not do what all of these have done? Or can these men or maidens perform ſo much by their own ſtrength, and not rather by that of the Lord their God; that Lord and God who gave them unto me? Thou ſtandeſt upon thyſelf, and therefore it is that thou ſtandeſt not. Caſt thyſelf upon him and fear not. He will not withdraw himſelf and let thee fall. Caſt thyſelf upon him ſecurely, he will receive thee and will heal thee.'

"This laſt debate did pass only in my heart, between me and myself. But Alypius, who sat close by me, did expect in silence the issue of my unwonted perturbation.

"So soon then as deep consideration had drawn up out of the secret depths of my heart the whole heap of my misery, and had piled it up before the sight of my mind, there rose a tempeſtuous ſtorm which brought with it a huge shower of tears. And that I might pour them forth with cries unheard, I rose from Alypius—for solitude seemed to me more fit for such a business of weeping—and I withdrew so far off that his presence might not be a reſtraint to me. Thus was it with me at that moment, and he perceived it: though I think I had said somewhat, whereby my voice betrayed my load of tears, and how gladly I would be delivered of them. In this sort I rose, and he remained where we had sat together, loſt in amazement. I caſt myself down, I know not how, under a certain fig-tree, and gave full liberty to my tears, which brake like rivers from mine eyes, *an acceptable sacrifice unto Thee, O Lord.* And I cried out at large to Thee, not perhaps in these very words, but to this effect: *'And thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord? Wilt thou be angry with me for ever? Remember not my iniquities of old times.'* For I felt myself to be ſtill enthralled by them, and therefore did I caſt forth these lamentable exclamations: 'How long, how long? To-morrow and to-morrow? Why not even now? Why not even at this inſtant, make an end of my uncleanness?' Thus did I say, and I wept in the moſt bitter sorrow of my heart.

"And lo, I heard a voice, as if it had been some boy or girl from a house not far off, uttering and often repeating in a sing-song manner: 'Take up and read, take up and read.'

And instantly with changed countenance I began to consider intently, whether children in some game of theirs were used to sing any such words, yet could I not find that I had ever heard the like.

"Then, stemming the course of my tears, I rose up, conceiving that I was required from Heaven to read that chapter which the first opening of the book should lead me to.

"Hastily, therefore, I went back thither, to where Alypius was sitting, for there I had laid the book of the Apostle, when I had risen from thence. I took it quickly into my hand; I opened it, and I read in silence from that chapter, on which first mine eyes were cast: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Christ, and make no provision for the flesh and its concupiscences.'

"No further would I read, nor was there cause why I should; for instantly with the end of this sentence, as by a clear and constant light infused into my heart, the darkness of all former doubts was driven away. Then, shutting the book, and putting my finger or some other mark between the leaves, I declared unto Alypius all that had happened, with a quiet countenance. And he also revealed in like manner unto me that which had passed in his own heart, whereof I knew nothing. He then asked to see what I had read. I showed it, and he read on further than I had done, for I was ignorant of what followed, which yet was this: 'Now him that is weak in the Faith, take with you,' the which he applied unto himself, so he told me. And by this admonition he was much strengthened and without any troublesome delay, he united himself with me in that good purpose and resolution, the which was most agreeable to his disposition, wherein he did ever differ from me greatly, and greatly to the better. From thence we went in unto my mother, we told her and she rejoiced. Then did we declare to her in order in what manner the whole was done, whereon she did exult and triumph, and bless thee, O Lord, who 'art able to do above that which we can either ask or think.' For now she saw that thou hadst given her more in my regard than she was wont to beg of thee in all her sad and tearful lamentations.

"'O Lord, I am thy servant; I am thy servant and the son

of thy handmaid. Thou haſt broken my bonds in sunder, to thee will I offer a sacrifice of praise.' Let my heart and my tongue praise thee, and 'let all my bones say, O Lord, who is like unto thee?' Who am I and what kind of thing? What evil is there that I have not wrought by my deeds, or if not by my deeds at leaſt by my words, or if not by my words at leaſt by my will? But thou, O Lord, art gracious and merciful, and thy Right Hand had reſpect unto the profoundness of my death, and from the bottom of my heart it drew forth that huge bulk of corruption. And this deliverance, what was it but that I willed not any more that which I was wont to will, and began to will that which thou willedſt?

"But where had that free will of mine remained for so long a time, and from what deep and hidden corner was it called forth, in that moment when I did submit my neck to thy easy yoke and my shoulders to thy light burden, O Chriſt Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer? How delightful did it inſtantly grow to me to lack the delights of those vain things; yea, it was now a joy to me to be deprived of those joys, which formerly I had feared to lose.

"For thou, O Lord, didſt caſt them out from me, thou true and supreme Delight, thou didſt caſt them forth, and in their place didſt enter in thyself, more sweet than all earthly pleasure, though not to flesh and blood; clearer than any light, yet more hidden than any secret; higher than the higheſt honour, but not to such as are high in their own conceits. Now was my mind free from the biting cares both of honour and of riches, as also from weltering in filth, and scratching the itch of luſt; and I prattled childlike unto thee, my Light, my Wealth, my Salvation, my Lord and my God."

After Monica, Ambrose was the firſt to be told of the conversion of Auguſtine; this was done in a long letter which was at the same time a confession and a requeſt for counsel. It was the autumn of the year 386. Auguſtine, whose cheſt was affected, and who was out of health, was able, without causing unnecessary commotion, to send in his resignation of the professorship. He did this, and then retired with his mother, his son, and a few friends to an eſtate lent by one of them and called Cassiciacum. The following months were passed in silence and ſtudy, meditation and conversation on

philosophical subjects; it was also a time of repose, of looking into his life, a remote preparation for Baptism. The immediate preparation took place at Milan during the Lent of 387. The Bishop preached and instructed the catechumens; the body of the Conferences he addressed to them form the treatise known under the title, "De fuga saeculi" ("Of forsaking the world"). Augustine, recalling these days of fervour, says: "How plentifully did I weep in those Hymns and Psalms, being touched to the very quick by the notes of thy Church so sweetly singing! Those words did flow into my ears, and the Truth which was contained therein distilled, melting into my heart, and from thence the affection of piety did overflow, so that my tears ran streaming down, and happy did I find myself therein."

Augustine, Alypius, Adeodatus and several others were baptised on Holy Saturday, April 24. A few days later Augustine was at the port of Ostia awaiting the ship which was to convey him back to Africa, where he intended to live a Christian life in the company of his mother and a few friends recently converted. But God had other designs. These hours were the last which the mother and son were to pass together and the first in which they could speak heart to heart of the things of the soul and of Heaven. Augustine has left us the narrative of one of these dialogues, and it has never been surpassed in the literature of any land.

"But the day approaching, when she was to depart out of this life—which day thou knewest, though we knew it not—it happened, as I believe through thy procurement by thy secret ways, that she and I alone were standing, leaning in a certain window, which had a prospect upon the garden of the house where we then lay, at Ostia upon the Tiber; where, being sequestered from company after the labour of a long journey, we were preparing ourselves to pass over by the sea into Africa. Therefore did we confer alone, with much dear tenderness and 'forgetting those things which are behind, we reached forth unto those things which are before'; we did inquire between ourselves of thee, who art the ever-present Truth, of what kind should be that Eternal Life of the Saints in Heaven, which 'the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.'

" With the mouth of our heart we did earneſtly aspire towards the heavenly things of thy Fountain, the Fountain of Life which is with thee, to the end that, being refreshed by it according to our capacities, we might in some sort consider of so high a myſtery.

" And when our discourse was drawn to such a point, as that the greateſt delight of flesh and blood, in the brighteſt of material light, did seem not only unworthy to be compared, but even so much as to be remembered in reſpect of the sweetness of that Life Eternal, we, raising ourselves towards that selfsame, with the moſt ardent affections of our minds, made a kind of progress by degrees over all things corporeal, and this vault of Heaven itself, from whence the sun and moon and ſtars do shine upon the earth. And higher yet we ascended, by more interiorly conceiving and discoursing of thee, and admiring thy works. And then we ſtruck inward upon the consideration of our own souls, and did even transcend and pass beyond them also, that we might touch upon the confines of that region of plenty which never faileth where thou feedeſt Israel for all Eternity with the food of Truth, and where Life is that very Wisdom of thine, by which all these things are, and were, and shall be made. And this Wisdom is not made, but it Is, so as It was and shall ever be. Or rather to have been in times paſt, and to be hereafter, is not in it, but only to be now, because it is eternal; for to have been, and to be hereafter, is not eternal. And whilſt we thus spake and panted towards it, we grew able to take a little taſte thereof with the whole force of our hearts. And we sighed, and left there confined ' the firſtfruits of the spirit,' and we returned again to the noise of language, where every word is begun and ended.

" How little like to thy Word, O Lord, who remaineth in himself, without length of days, and yet renewing all things!

" We said therefore: If to any man the tumult of the flesh be silent, if fantasies of earth and air and sea be silent also, if the poles of Heaven be silent, and the very soul of man be silent to itself, and by not thinking pass beyond itself, if all dreams be silent, and all such things as be revealed by the imagination, if every tongue and every sign and everything that hath its exiſtence by passing-on be silent wholly unto any man —since all these things proclaim to him ' that hath an ear to

hear,' 'We made not ourselves, but he made us who remains for ever'—if then, having uttered this, they, too, be silent, as fastening their attention upon him that made them; if then HE ONLY speak, not by them but by himself, that we may hear his Word, not by tongue of flesh, nor voice of angel, nor by the sound of a cloud that is broken by thunder, nor by the dark riddle of a similitude, and we may hear him, whom in these things we love, himself apart from them—like as we two did now stretch ourselves up, and in swift thought lay hold a little upon the Eternal Wisdom, that abideth above all things—if this were to continue and all other visions, in order far inferior, might be withdrawn, and this alone might so transport and swallow up and wrap him who beheld it in those intrinsical joys, so that his life might be for all Eternity such as was this moment of understanding, which we did so ardently sigh after; would not this be that whereof is written: 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?' But when shall this be?

"Shall it be when 'we shall all rise, but shall not all be changed'? Such discourse as this we held; and, if not just in this manner and in these very words, yet thou knowest, O Lord, that in that day when we uttered such things as these, the world with all the delights thereof grew contemptible, even as we spake of it. Then said my mother: 'My son, forasmuch as it concerns me there is nothing now in this life wherein I take delight. What I have yet to do here, or why I am yet here I know not, now that the hopes I had in this world are wholly at an end. One thing only there was, for which I desired to stay in this life a little while—namely, that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. And behold, my God hath vouchsafed this to me in a manner more abundant, for now I see thee, with contempt of all earthly happiness, to be his servant. What then do I here any longer?'"

A few days later Monica breathed her last, at Ostia, "having fulfilled all her hopes."

ST GWENHAEL

IF you open one of those old books, in which the lives of the Breton Saints are told with such charm by history and legend, so that it is not always easy to distinguish between the two, you will meet on almost every page the name of Great Britain, that island also peopled by Celts, whence there came across the sea, to Lesser Britain, apostles who dwelt among us and figure among our Saints.

So the old Dominican hagiographer, Albert le Grand, said pleasantly, in the beginning of his life of St Jacut:

"It must be confessed that if we are under an obligation to Brittany for having preserved to us so many saints and illustrious persons, we are no less under one to England for having sent them to us."

Was it not the land of St Brioc, the Welshman; of St Meen; of St Nennoc, daughter of the princely race of Guthiern; of St Gulven; St Malo; St Efflam, the Irish Saint, and many others?

Perhaps we are also indebted to Great Britain for Earl Fragan, the father of St Gwenhael. It is possible, but by no means sure, and someone may prove beyond doubt one day that this Earl of Leon and Cornouaille was born in the peninsula among ourselves.

Several events in the life of St Gwenhael, of which we read in the ancient Chronicles, are beyond doubt, as, for example, those concerning the education of the little lord, the Abbey of which he became the head and the model, and the friendship which united him to the King of Brittany. They give us the true perspective of an epoch which is so easily, and in fact so often wrongly represented by modern historical prejudice; they depict a nature very simple and at the same time very richly endowed; they explain the popular devotion of the Celtic provinces towards one of their ancient saints. These are things worth knowing.

If I open the huge volume bearing this title: *Les vies des*

saints de la Bretagne Armorique, par Albert le Grand, de Morlaix, at March 3, date of the death of Grenhael, it tells me the name of his parents. "The brave and noble prince Conan Meriadec, who, with his brother-in-law, Derdon, and his nephew, Fragan, a young man of great promise . . . had favoured Flavius Maximus Clemens in his passage through Gaul, having caused himself to be crowned king of Armorica, chose for his residence the town of Nantes." Wishing to recompense Fragan, he married him to a noble lady of the name of Gwen, which means "White." This explains why the young couple, living in the county of Leon, the government of which had been committed to them, should have called their first child Gwenhael, which means: "He is all white."[1]

Gwenhael, like all children of his rank and times, seemed born for the profession of arms, for it is not the least of the duties of the feudal lord that he should protect the land and families under his charge. The earl wished him to excel as a squire and in the use of arms, and to be a good leader of those under him in the service of the Breton King. And when Gwenhael had reached the age of fifteen years, his approaching departure for the Court at Nantes was discussed, and he began to be taught the things which at that time constituted the art of war.

Gwenhael had no ambition to serve as a page; he had resolved in his heart to consecrate himself to the service of God.

Hence arose some disagreement between the father and son, which was for both a trial. It lasted but a short time, for Heaven declared itself in favour of the child. One day when Fragan was out, attended by an escort, on some business connected with his estate, he was, in open country, overtaken by so violent a storm and such heavy rain that in a few seconds the whole party were drenched to the skin. Neither he nor those who formed his escort were the men to be moved by

[1] At the time of Albert le Grand, who wrote his book between 1628 and 1634, the Manor of Lès Guen was still standing in Leon, and its chapel was dedicated to St Gwenhael. The family of the Dominican Dom le Grand came from that diocese; its coat-of-arms was: Azure, three trefles argent, two in chief, one in base.

any ordinary storm. They had seen plenty such, and their tabards and breeches had more than once been hung up on nails in the guard-room to dry on their return. But there was something so imperious about these claps of thunder, the lightning seemed to strike the ground at such close proximity, and with its golden lances to keep his companions imprisoned, that the Earl, bowing his head, and keeping his back towards the storm, dared not stir, and felt convinced within himself—and why not?—that it was a warning from the Lord of all things. In hours of peril it is more easy to be souls of good-will. He promised, if he escaped death, "not only that he would not hinder, but that he would himself dispose his son to embrace the monastic life."

The storm ceased, and Fragan was able to return home. The chronicler adds: "The noble lady Gwen, and her son Gwenhael, having come to meet Fragan, after the accustomed greetings, he told them of the success of his expedition, and of the vow which he had made, at which the good mother and her son gave thanks to God."

As soon as their garments had dried, and they had had time to prepare for the departure of the young man—that is to say, after a few days—Earl Fragan left the castle once more, this time taking with him his first-born son, on whom his hopes had been set, and brought him to the hermit Corentin, who lived in the parish of Plou-Wodiern de Cornonaille, on the borders of the great forest of Nevet.

To put things plainly, Gwenhael entered the lesser Seminary. This is not properly understood, and must be explained. The hermits of these early ages, at least those best known amongst them, gave Christian instruction, and taught morals and letters to disciples chosen from among the sons of lords, and also from among the people. Thus were formed in the midst of heathen or half-heathen populations religious centres, from which came forth many saints. In a learned book, published in 1923, on the formation of nationality in Wales, M. Jacques Chevalier, professor at the University, has brought out this fact, which is, historically, of great importance. He speaks of the monasteries of Wales and Ireland, founded by illustrious saints, about a century after the time that St Gwenhael lived in Brittany. But it is clear that ideals were the same on

either side of the sea, and that the great abbeys of the north only imitated what the hermits of Armorica had begun to do in the preceding age. "Their monasteries," he says, "comprised, besides monks, a large number of lay 'discipuli'; from the description of the monastery of Cadoc, it seems that clerics formed less than a quarter of the monastic family. . . . Gildas did not content himself with raising and forming to the monastic life a few sons of noble families; but, in order to present to God a greater number of souls, he drew disciples from among the ranks of the people, and formed monastic groups of the poor, orphans, and the afflicted; he delivered slaves from bondage to heathen masters; so that, taught by his example and his words, the people of Ireland, England, and other lands looked on him as their master and their saviour. The Monastery thus became the school of the people,"[1] and as a Scottish historian has justly remarked, "the focus of a new national life."

This is what St Corentin had begun to do, and he is doubtless only one example among many. In the neighbourhood of the hermitage, Earl Fragan's son had as fellow-disciples two young men who became saints, Jacut and Tugdin, and there were also others, like Thethgonus, who fell asleep as he was reading in the fields, and was bitten by a serpent, and when the poison had already taken effect, so that he had swollen up, and turned black, he was saved by the prayers of Gwenhael, more powerful truly than his father, and already holding rank in God's earthly court. Those were rude times; they seem specially so to us when looked at through the mass of legend and writings which deface the historical records of those days. It is enough to know there were serfs and battlemented castles, fights between armed forces, and sometimes periods of local scarcity; even the fact that what they wore in those days was not quite what we wear now is enough to cause some persons to look upon a whole period and a whole people as barbarian.

No, we find here and there light and peace, and this is a

[1] *Essai sur la formation de la nationalité et les réveils religieux au pays de Galles, des origines à la fin du VI^e siècle,* by Jacques Chevalier, Professor in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Grenoble. Paris, Felix Alean, 1923.

great advance on pagan times. In the monaſteries of men and women, human nature was at its beſt, and there were often found amongſt them elect ſouls as flowers on a desolate waſte; turbulent ſpirits acknowledged the power of the law; remorse often followed on some deed of violence; hymns answered back to cries of death; saints were found among half savage tribes living apart from one another, from which one day was to arise the kingdom of France.

Gwenhael but rarely left his beloved solitude at Cornouaille. He was, nevertheleſs, too well known, both by birth and merit, not to be obliged sometimes to leave the place where his soul found ſtrength and joy in continual prayer. Ordained Prieſt, and sent by St Corentin—himself obliged to accept the Episcopate and the government of the Church at Quimper—to rule the Monaſtery of Landevénec, he was frequently visited by King Grallon. This latter, who had succeeded Conan Meriadoc, was a near neighbour. With his Court and his following he had left Quimper, the former capital, to take up his residence in the plain, which is now the Bay of Douarmenez, in the large and pleasure-loving town of Ys. How many cars drawn by oxen passed along those roads of Cornouaille, and how many fords had to be crossed from the bank to another of those little coaſt ſtreams, which twice a day are flooded by the sea! Grallon felt the need of an upright and patriotic counsellor, of one not given to flattery. In those times, as in our own, for reasons both different and similar, it was a difficult matter to rule over men. And as the King went to Landevénec under the pretext of hunting or seeking repose, so did the Abbot go to the town of Ys to return his visit. Gwenhael lived in close communication with Heaven, and the people knew it, which explains why his name continually appears in the Breton legends, when poets relate the end of the town of Ys. His prayer was so continual that sometimes God answered him in other ways than by habitual peace and the gift of wisdom, as, moreover, we may read in the lives of many of the saints. Amongſt the wonderful things that are told us of the great Abbot of Landevénec, those specially delight me which show the power of his inward vision, which enabled him to see what others cannot. For inſtance, he was once filled with a holy longing

to converse with the great Apoſtle of Ireland, St Patrick, and to learn from him some of the secrets of perfection, as infinite as are those of Nature. "I would go to Hibernia, if need be," he thought, "to meet him." In those days it would have been a moſt arduous undertaking; even in our own time it is a long journey. Full of these thoughts, and begging for light to know the Divine Will, he remained proſtrate before the Blessed Sacrament in the Abbatial Church, when his monks had retired to reſt after singing Matins. It was, therefore, about two o'clock in the morning when St Patrick himself appeared, surrounded with light, and, greeting him fraternally, said: "Servant of God, I have been sent to you, that your religious may not be deprived of the comfort of your presence, and that you yourself may be spared so long and painful a journey." They at once fell to discoursing on the government of monaſteries, and the beſt way of sanctifying themselves and others, till the Hour of Prime, which was recited at six, found them ſtill conversing with their hearts full of joy. Again, the day before he died, in the evening, he was praying, an old and broken man, in the church, when it was suddenly illuminated. This splendour, as will be easily guessed, radiated from the presence of an angel and disappeared with him, after he had announced to Gwenhael that the following day was to be that of his death and his reward. The Abbot was full of joy at this news, and passed the night in prayer. The next morning he called his monks together in the chapter house, told them of his vision, and gave a laſt Conference on the Rule. Then he himself nominated his successor, his disciple Wennaël; after which, having reſted a little, for he was waſted by fever, he had himself taken once more to the church; the old oak, feeling the axe about to sever its trunk, wished to fall on the side on which its roots were set. Gathering together all his ſtrength, Gwenhael celebrated conventual Mass, communicated all his monks, and traced in the air over the heads of the assembly a laſt sign of the Cross. In the church, all round him, he could see companies of angels sent thither, companions of a happy eternity.

The pains which were to separate his soul from his body were no longer felt. He gave up his soul in a transport of joy, at the altar, March 3, in the thirty-eighth year of his

religious profession. I should like to repeat that the history of this ancestor of Breton Saints is really a portrait.

Tradition tells us that he was exceedingly great. It says that Gwenhael was penetrated with so much reverence for the presence of God amongst us that he was never seen to sit in church. He either knelt or stood. His temper was always the same, by force of will which showed heroism. Grief did not plunge him in sadness; neither did joy render him immoderately cheerful. Simple, winning, and kind in disposition, he must have seemed to men a foretaste of that time when justice and fraternal charity would reign amongst them. The men of his day had, no doubt, dreams for their descendants which eluded them, as they elude us; for human nature is the same in every age. The Abbey of Landevénec was destroyed in the tenth century by the Normans, and rebuilt in the eleventh. It has again been demolished for many years now, probably for all time. Some fragments of walls, a few bases of columns and pillars are all that now remain of the church of the most celebrated monastery of Brittany. But there has been no diminution in the number of churches and of men who are placed under the protection of the son of the Earl of Fragan and the lady who willed to name him at his baptism: "He is all white."

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, THE PILGRIM

AS an antidote to the incalculable evil of Revolt, which showed itself first in the field of Religion, under the name of Reform, God raised up a knight, whom he willed should be born in Spain.

That this chosen soul might be fitted to accomplish the mission entrusted to him, it was necessary when he came before the eyes of men that he should be of tried courage; he must also be possessed of a kind, noble heart, that he might draw others to himself, and not remain alone in so great an undertaking, he must be learned in the doctrines of the Church, and as incapable of wavering in the defence of the truth as an officer of forsaking his post, which belongs, not to him, but to the army. And such was, in fact, Ignatius of Loyola, the thirteenth child of his parents, who already had five daughters and seven sons when he was born in 1491, in the reign of the Catholic Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella.

He was already a knight by birth, and grace, which perfects all that is good, added later the perfection of chivalry: for birth is not enough. Perhaps he was thinking of himself when in his *Spiritual Exercises* he spoke of the sinner, "like a knight coming before his king and the whole court, overwhelmed with sorrow and shame for having so grievously offended him."[1]

He came of an ancient military stock, which for many years had been holders of the soil. His father, Don Beltran Yanez de Oñaz y Loyola, had his family mansion, his *casa solar* of Loyola, his orchards and other property in the territory of Azpeïtia: whilst his mother was born of a noble house in the neighbouring territory of Azcoïtia, both in the Province of Guipuzcoa.

[1] "Asi como un caballero se hallase delante de su Rey y de todo su corte, avergonzado y confuso en haberle mucho ofendido."—*Ex. spir., Adicion 2a.*

Among families of this type throughout Spain, but especially in the North, as on the other side of the Pyrenees, were found the homes of honour and ancient customs. Their young men were brought up with the idea that the duty of a noble was to serve. From their earliest youth, a military career was placed before them, and they learnt from their father's lips, and from old family chronicles, to keep a pledged word and to despise traitors; to protect the weak and oppressed; not to seek for personal profit in any quest; to repent of their sins whether of deed or thought; not to be puffed up, since the Saviour of the world willed to be poor and humble. Let those who nowadays are tempted to look upon this education as too abstract consider that it is not more so than a literary and scientific one, fully developed indeed, but lacking the principles of which I have just spoken. The "one thing necessary" is a great treasure.

The times resounded everywhere with philosophical disputes; the ways of common sense were violently attacked; the important matter of salvation grew increasingly difficult, for the rich and the noble even more than the poor, on account of the novelties permeating books and conversation.

Ignatius passed his first youth at the house of a family friend who was chief treasurer to the King and Queen, and thanks to him he often stayed at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella. But when he was old enough to serve he followed the example of his seven older brothers, and embraced a military career.

From the year 1517, as captain of a company, he held command over a garrison at Pampeluna, capital of Navarre, that city honoured according to the Spanish custom by specially distinguished "seigneuries," "muy noble, muy leal, muy heroïca." He had—and he himself alluded to it in the *Story of a Pilgrim*—beautiful fair hair, of which he was very vain; history shows him to us high-spirited, ambitious, a thorough man of the world, as we should say, and enamoured of a lady of exalted rank—perhaps the Queen herself, Germaine de Foix, after she became a widow. But this polished gentleman was far from being a man with no aim in life; he was possessed of an exceedingly strong will, and had over himself so great a power that even before reaching the age

of a military leader he seemed destined to command others and to draw them after him.

In 1521—Ignatius was then thirty—the French, under the command of André de Foix, assaulted Pampeluna, and took possession of the whole town, except the citadel, which the soldiers and their commander still held without hope of relief. The bravest among them counselled surrender. They would have given up the struggle had not Iñigo de Loyola, alone, refused to consent. But it happened that on May 20, Whit-Monday, the knight was wounded. As he was passing over the ramparts, battered by the enemy's artillery, his right leg was shattered by a cannon-shot, while a falling stone grazed his left leg. At this the besieged lost courage. Many years later, while walking with his disciple and secretary, Luis Gonzales, Ignatius related to him this incident with several others, which Gonzales took down, and eventually put together in the *Story of a Pilgrim*. He speaks of himself in the third person. "After his fall," he says, "the besieged at once yielded to the French; the latter, having taken possession of the citadel, treated the wounded man with much consideration, giving him many proofs of kindness and good will. After remaining at Pampeluna for about a fortnight they had him carried in a litter to his family demesne.

"As his fracture was still very painful, all the doctors and surgeons of note were called in, and they gave it as their opinion that the leg should be reset and the bones readjusted. . . . He underwent this torture a second time, and as in all those he had already undergone . . . he spoke no word and gave no sign of pain except to clench his fists tightly."[1]

Soon he was thought to be dying; he made a general confession of his sins, and received the Last Sacraments, and at that very hour beyond which the doctors said he could not last, in the night of June 29, eve of the Feast of SS Peter and Paul, he began to revive. The amelioration was rapid. The bones began to unite. But the end of one of these bones, under the knee, protruded, and as at that time it was the fashion to wear trunk-hose, Ignatius felt he could not consent

[1] *Le recit du pelerin,* autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola, translated into French for the first time by Eug. Thibaut, S.J. Bruges, Charles Beyaert, 1924.

to be saddled with a deformity which would disfigure him in the eyes of the world. He therefore insisted on an incision being made, and the bone cut. After the operation had been performed—without any anæsthetic, it will be understood—the patient was obliged to remain for weeks on his back, "lying in such a position as not to be able to move, with an iron instrument on his leg to stretch it out to the required length."

His knighthood expressed itself not only in courage but also in nobility of soul. He had not delayed to acknowledge the courtesy of the French who had accompanied him to his father's house. To one he gave his shield, to another his sword, to a third his cuirass.

Later on he was to give the French more precious tokens of friendship, and to receive them in his turn from his former enemies. There exists close friendship between men of honour, when their differences are healed, and they think, as they look upon each other, that they will be one day together in Heaven.

As he lay upon his bed, counting the long hours, the young soldier, a great lover of knightly romances, and much given to the reading of the same, asked if there was not some book of the sort in the castle. Not one could be found, and this gave rise to a marvellous grace, which has stirred the world ever since. For, if Doña Maria de Oñaz y Loyola, taken up with the care of her husband, her orchards, her laundry, her expenditure, and her thirteen children, had no time to dream over the exploits of the Four Sons of Aymon, Roland and Amadis of Gaul, she at least read and treasured her books of devotion, which must have been a real support to her in the midst of so many arduous duties. Two books, a Life of our Lord, and one called *Flowers from the Lives of the Saints*, were brought to Ignatius as he lay sick. He began to read them, for want of something better, and little by little his interest arose. But as yet it was nothing more, as he told Brother Gonzales, than "a kind of attraction."

A change to better things does not, as a rule, come about suddenly. The invalid "broke off his reading sometimes to think about what he had read, sometimes to go back on worldly affairs which had formerly been the habitual occupa-

tion of his mind. Among the countless subjects of vanity which presented themselves before him, there was one above all others which so captivated his heart that he would spend hours at a time dreaming over it. In imagination he would go over exploits to be accomplished in the service of a certain lady, and the means he would take to reach her. . . how he would address her, the great deeds he would accomplish in her service. And his presumption was such that he could not realise the impossibility of what he dreamed; for this lady was not of any ordinary nobility, a countess or a duchess, she was of still higher rank." Little by little, however, he began to understand that the most excellent knighthood is in the service of God. The world seemed to him to be governed by two spirits, always in opposition. He felt, in himself, this battle raging continually. He asked himself: "Why am I in the world? What use ought I to make of creatures? What would have happened to me had I been killed by that cannon-shot which struck my leg, but might have struck my heart?" And his mind, capable of the loftiest speculations, launched out into thoughts far beyond what he found in his books. He prayed as he had never done before. One night he rose from his couch, and knelt down—which must have been exceedingly painful—before a picture of our Lady, and offered himself through her to the service of her divine Son. As he prayed, our Lady appeared to him, "holding her most sweet Son in her arms, and, surrounding him with her splendour, delighted him with her lovely presence. The mysterious visit lasted some time, and inspired him with such horror of his past life, and, above all, of the contemptible pleasures of the senses, that it seemed to him as if a hand had torn from his heart every memory that could tarnish its purity. And results proved that it was not merely a dream, but a heavenly apparition: for, instantaneously, our Lord communicated to him so high a degree of grace, that he was completely changed, and lived to the end of his life in the most perfect chastity."[1] In remembrance, he hung round his neck a little picture of our Lady of Seven Dolours, called in Spain "our Lady of the Heart."

[1] Ribadaneira, *Life of St Ignatius.*

As soon as he was able to ſtand and limp along, he ſtarted on a pilgrimage to Montserrat, where for many centuries an ebony ſtatue of our Blessed Lady, said to have been brought to Spain in apoſtolic times, has been venerated. He was resolved to change his life, and go to Jerusalem. His eldeſt brother, feeling convinced that Ignatius intended to leave his anceſtral home for good, did his beſt to turn him from his purpose, but in vain. Ignatius ſtarted on his journey, accompanied by two servants, whom he ſhortly afterwards dismissed. He was armed with a sword, so much so that meeting one of those Moorish nobles of whom there were ſtill many in the kingdom of Aragon, he was on the point of challenging him to single combat, to avenge some disreſpectful words he had used in speaking of our Blessed Lady.

For a few thrilling inſtants the Chriſtian knight hesitated as to whether it were not incumbent on him to punish the blasphemer, for there ſtill remained in him a remnant of that worldly honour so highly sung in ballads. Meanwhile, the Musoulman was retreating at a rapid pace. "Well," thought Ignatius, "we shall see! There are two roads, one chosen by this pagan gentleman, easy and ſtraight, and the other rocky and ſteep. I will let my mule choose: if she follows the same road as he, I shall overtake the villain." The mule, however, feeling no reſtraint, chose the rocky path, and the son of Beltran de Oñaz y Loyola continued his journey to Montserrat, which is built at the top of a peak on a very narrow platform. Before he reached it he entered a wayside church, where he made a vow of chaſtity, and when he reached the Sanctuary of the Virgin, he began at once to prepare for a general confession of his whole life. He chose for this important act, from among the religious of Montserrat, a Frenchman named Jean Chanones. This holy man had come to Spain as a pilgrim; he remained there upon the mountain, where he muſt have died in extreme old age. He had previously been Vicar-General of the Diocese of Mirepoix, and very rich, and all this he had forsaken, and what is harder ſtill, his country, to lead the penitential life of a monk.

I love to think of this fresh meeting between Ignatius and France. The firſt time he shows his gratitude to the French, who after severely wounding him in battle, afterwards saved

him; the second time, he confesses to a French religious, and seeks from him the seal of his conversion and counsel for the future. Yet a little time and we shall see him come and take up his abode in Paris. He is truly of Spain, of her noblest and best; he appreciates and loves France, his sister in the Lord.

Having now forsaken his past, as much at least as was possible, Ignatius wished to change his outward appearance in the new life that was before him; he gave his tunic and shirt to a poor man, put on a habit of coarse material that he had brought with him, kept watch by night, after the fashion of knights, before the Altar of our Blessed Lady, to whom he had dedicated himself, hung his sword on a pillar, then leaving Montserrat before dawn, in the dress of a pilgrim, "girded with a rope, a staff in his hand, bareheaded, on foot, shod only in a loose slipper, on account of his wound, which obliged him to keep his leg in bandages," he went to Manresa, a fortified town of about 1,000 inhabitants, surmounted by a vast cathedral three leagues from the convent.

It was the evening of the Feast of the Annunciation, 1522. He went first to the hospital, and lived there a short time on the alms he received. He edified all who beheld him by his continual prayer, and his courtesy. His name was unknown. The people called him "the poor man in sackcloth." Standing on the steps of the hospital, he taught Christian doctrine to the children; to their elders he spoke of the strengthening virtue of the Passion; some made sport of him, others secretly admired him, though their souls were closed against his counsel. Who dares to flatter himself that he is never made the subject of gossip? It is ever changing; sometimes it praises, sometimes ignores, at other times hisses. Reason has no part in it. Nothing is more unreasonable. On one occasion, however, all the people with one accord turned to the man in sackcloth, and the favour of the crowd, ephemeral in its existence, like a swarm of gnats on the wing, surrounded the pilgrim, who had not sought it. This is the account given by Ribadaneira:

"The pilgrim was mounting the steep street called Sobreroca. He heard the piercing cries of a little girl, who was leaning over the side of an old well which still exists. A hen had

escaped from her hands, and had fallen in, and the crowd of onlookers were laughing at the poor little girl who was afraid to go home. Ignatius was touched with pity; he knelt down and began to pray earneſtly: immediately the water in the well, rising to the edge, brought the hen up alive, and the saint, taking it with a smile, gave it with his own hands to the child."

A little chapel has been built on the spot to perpetuate the memory of "the firſt miracle of St Ignatius," and the townsfolk, going to their business, can ſtill read the inscription, which is as familiar to them as the Pater or Ave:

> "Saint Ignatius of Loyola,
> in the year of our Lord 1522,
> here worked his firſt miracle,
> & took alive out of the water, rising to the edge,
> a hen which had been drowned."[1]

During the ten months in which he lived in Manresa, firſt at the hospital, then at the Dominican Convent, extraordinary graces were poured out upon Ignatius, corresponding with the extraordinary change in his life. And it was there, and at this time, that the knight, almoſt without knowledge of letters, but attentive to the heavenly voices which taught him with such sweetness, composed one of the moſt wonderful books in the world: the *Spiritual Exercises*.

In order to write it he retired to a cave, a few hundred paces diſtant, since called the "Santa Cueva." His prayer was unceasing.

His soul, once so uncultivated, brought forth under the influence of divine illumination that wonderful harveſt for which it had been created. Ignatius appears as a great philosopher in that book, which might be called the art of converting a soul. He spoke to men in that language, which never fails to make an impression, but which they refuse to hear, unless they are prevented by a powerful grace enabling

[1] Father Ribadaneira, one of the companions of St Ignatius in his latter years, has written a biography of the Saint, a fascinating book in which truth and friendship are never separated. All quotations in inverted commas come from Ribadaneira, unless otherwise indicated.

them to submit to a painful examination of their weakness, of the faults which humble them, the conditions of future greatness so opposed to the ideas of present ease and of happiness which we form for ourselves with the counsel of all our passions.

The *Exercises* are suitable for all. For simple and learned alike there is mental nourishment. It never fails. It may be remarked that they must be practised if their virtue is to be properly understood. A critic has called our own day:

"The exercise of reason, an incomparable example of which has been given by St Ignatius of Loyola."[1]

And in truth this could not be better expressed than by the title—"Exercises." Reason is summoned to examine man; faith and reason, to study the example of Jesus Christ. No thinker like Ignatius has appeared in the world; no one can turn away from so much logic, such love of God and pity for men, from poetry springing spontaneously from the harmonious workings of his mind, from the things which he shows to us in conclusions striking and inevitable: rays of kindly light on benighted seafarers. Spain can boast of great poets: he is one of them in his *Preludes*. She has had great captains: he is one in his power of organisation and intrepidity. He has written a "plan of the world," and it is the only true one, founded on what is divine, for the guidance of men. As we read through those paragraphs so full of meaning, where there is not one unnecessary word or one out of place, we say to ourselves: "How well he knows us!" And when we have finished the book we think: "How much he loves us!" And this brings the *Exercises* very close to the *Imitation*. It leaves with us one thought: "These pages were inspired." At a time when heresy was rife, God took Ignatius the Pilgrim, and filled him with wisdom and understanding for the good of souls. This idea almost reaches certainty when we consider the circumstances: a poor man living on alms at Manresa, with very little learning, writing a masterpiece in which no trace of error can be found: genius is not enough to account for the heavenly beauty of its pages.

Towards the middle of February, 1523, Ignatius bade fare-

[1] Jean Héritier, in *A Study on René Boylesve*.

well to his friends in Manresa, which he considered his second home. Several wished to accompany him, at leaſt for part of the way, for he had determined no longer to put off going to Jerusalem. But he refused and would not even consent to have a guide who spoke Latin or Italian, to help him in the difficulties of so long and perilous a journey. "No," he said, "I will have no companion, though it should be the son of the Duke of Cordova, none in truth save Faith, Hope, and Charity."

He travelled, therefore, on foot, according to his cuſtom, to Barcelona, and there embarked on a vessel juſt setting out, where he was taken free of charge, on the condition that he brought his biscuits for the voyage. The vessel landed him at the port of Gaëta. Thence Ignatius continued his journey on foot till he reached Rome, and after having received the benediction of Pope Adrian VI, he directed his ſteps to Venice. Peſtilence was at that time raging in Italy, which caused great embarrassment to the pilgrim. He was so poor and spare in appearance that people refused to allow him to enter their villages. Would not such a man as this bring the sickness along with him? He was obliged to sleep in the open, which is a ſtrain on the moſt robuſt health, when there is no protection from rain and wind, and no covering againſt cold.

When he reached Venice he did not change his way of life, except that he slept on the pavement in front of St Mark's inſtead of in the fields. Would it be possible to-day for a man to sleep close to the campanile, or under the arcades of the Doge's palace? Who can tell? If the police came across such a one they would quickly awaken him from his firſt slumber, and ask for his papers. It may be taken for granted that Ignatius of Loyola had none. But it muſt be remembered that pilgrims for the Near Eaſt did congregate at Venice, and it cannot have been uncommon to find amongſt them travellers who could not pay for a night's lodging. A poor man could claim in those times more rights than he can now.

The city of Venice, sung by poets to such an extent that it requires some courage to open a new book which speaks of her, gave hospitality for several weeks to one of the greateſt of God's saints, and it does not seem that she is mindful of

the honour done her. I may be mistaken. I do not remember ever to have had my attention directed to the celebrated pilgrim of 1523, when I visited the museums, the principal churches, and several of the little neighbouring islets, which are reflected in the Venetian Gulf.

Ignatius only left Venice on July 14. It took about a month and a half for the sailing vessel, which touched at Cyprus on the way, to reach Jaffa, and it was on the last day of the month of August that it deposited there a weary pilgrim, who hoped to spend the remainder of his days at Jerusalem. The Holy Land still received, and continues to receive, men who had and who have the hearts of Crusaders. Ignatius was one of these. Charles de Foucauld and many others, whose names are unknown, have desired to live where their Saviour lived. They were needed elsewhere. God brought them back. He brought back Ignatius very speedily and in a most unexpected way. For the Provincial of the Franciscans told him not to stay in Jerusalem, or in the Holy Land, but to return to Italy. The reasons that he gave for this were, in appearance, worth nothing—he dreaded above all the thought of the dangers that would be run by a man like this Spaniard, who seemed to have no fear—but beneath them were hidden, unknown to the humble religious, the decree of the King of Heaven. He went so far as to threaten the pilgrim with excommunication if he did not at once give up his project. Ignatius gave his word, and straightway left the land where he had once hoped to live. Before starting for the coast, he wanted once more to see the Mount of Olives, and the stone on which is the impression of two feet: the Feet of our Saviour ascending on high, according to the popular tradition. At this time it appears that the journey was a dangerous one. Brigands were on the watch for pilgrims at the gates of the city. It was necessary to take an escort, or at least a Turkish soldier. But Ignatius had no money to pay for this, and, besides, he trusted in a far higher protection than that of an armed man. This is the faithful Ribadaneira's account of the journey, or rather of Ignatius' two journeys to the Mount of Olives. "He secretly left the other pilgrims, all alone and without a guide . . . he quickly climbed the mountain, and having nothing else to offer to obtain admittance, he gave his penknife to the

guardian of the mosque. Full of joy he turned his steps in the direction of Bethphage, which is quite close, when he remembered he had not noticed in which direction the sacred footprints of our Saviour were turned. He therefore retraced his steps, and in payment for the fresh favour that had been granted he gave a little pair of scissors that he had with him."

Then, lost among the other pilgrims, who unlike himself, had not come to live and die in the Holy Land, after six weeks' stay, he retook the road to Jaffa, passed in a boat between the rocks that guard its entrance to the port, beyond the breakwater, till he reached some sailing vessel in which he could embark.

About the middle of January, 1524, he landed at Venice, and, having no means of conveyance other than his feet and his staff, he set off for Genoa, where he hoped to find a ship bound for Spain. Lombardy, at this time, was full of French and Spanish soldiers, who were at war. The traveller came across troops of one and the other, and when I think of the welcome he received, here and there, it somehow seems to me as if God willed to cement the sympathy that already existed, since the days of Pampeluna, and later at Montserrat, between Ignatius and the French. Extreme poverty courts suspicion. With his short breeches, made of coarse material, his worn-out shoes and ragged doublet, the pilgrim must have seemed in the eyes of the sentinels scattered over the country to be a person whom it might be worth while to interrogate. In all his raiment there was nothing new, with the exception of a piece of linen, which he used to wrap round his chest, and which had been given him by the charity of a Spanish merchant at Venice. He went thus in the depth of winter, from village to village. In one of these he was seized by some Spanish soldiers, who brought him before their chief. "He is a spy!" they said. The commander asked him: "Are you a spy?" He replied: "No." To all other questions he refused to give an answer, so that the captain took him for a simpleton, and sent him off. But the soldiers, angry that they had not been believed, as soon as they were out of sight of the captain, avenged themselves unmercifully on their liberated prisoner, for the small value that had been set on

their words, and rained kicks and blows upon him, loading him with insults. Ignatius recalled the One Innocent Man the world has ever known. who was ill-treated by the soldiers of Pilate. The next day he fell into the hands of the French, who, also, in their turn, brought him before their commander. He was asked: "From what country do you come?" "From the Province of Guipuzcoa." "I live not far from there," replied the officer, who probably belonged to some town or village of the Pyrenees, and recognising a near neighbour in the Spaniard of the district, immediately ordered a meal for him. A little earlier during the same journey, when he had only gone as far as Ferrara, Ignatius of Loyola once more ruined himself by charity. As he was praying in a church, a beggar, noticing his devotion, and hoping that it might be of the bountiful kind, asked him an alms for the love of God. How could the pilgrim refuse? No such thought ever crossed his mind. When he was at Venice, had he not received together with the piece of linen to wrap round his chest, a handful of small coins? He held out a farthing to the beggar. Immediately a second one came up soliciting: "An alms for the love of God." Ignatius gave him two farthings. He had doubled the gift. Would the fourth have four farthings? Thereupon the whole troop of beggars assembled at the door of the church, getting wind of what had taken place, came limping, coughing, dragging their limbs towards the benefactor in disguise, who gave away all he had, without a word, to whoever asked him.

Shortly afterwards when he left the church, more impoverished than any of them, they set up a cry: "A saint, a saint!" But they never knew whether they were heard or no.

When he was at home again in Spain, Ignatius, unable to follow his attraction for solitude, and the conversion of infidels, those graceless inhabitants of the Holy Land, asked himself in what way he could be most pleasing to God. It seemed to him that he could best do this by studying and taking his degrees in the University. He would have to learn Latin declensions and conjugations with beginners, to submit at the age of thirty to all the drudgery and monotony of a grammar class, and with a mind full of lofty thoughts and aspirations to do the wearisome tasks that would be given

him. He did it, however, and for the space of two years studied under a grammarian, Geronimo Ardebalo. He lodged in the house of a pious lady, Doña Iñès Pascual, a rich cotton manufacturer, but accepted none of the commodities which she would have gladly offered him, begging his bread, whether black or white, through the town, and sleeping on a wooden bed, without mattress or bolster, a pretence of a bed, in truth, above which, as he prayed in the night, he was frequently seen raised and surrounded with light. The people called him Father Ignatius, and he went about dressed as a cleric.

At the age of thirty-five, he became a student at the University of Alcala, a strange kind of student, who, after attending the lectures, would spend his time visiting the sick and prisoners, teaching Christian doctrine to children and uninstructed persons, and preaching retreats. One child was enough for an audience. Four companions, of whom one was French, imitated the pious practices of Ignatius, and, like him, instructed the people. This need in no way astonish us, for in these troublous times through which we are passing may we not find the same apostolic spirit in men of the younger generation, chosen souls who are ready to make use of like industries, or of any others, to teach the neglected and forsaken about God?

Ignatius, after remaining a little less than a year at Alcala, joined his companions, who had gone on before him, and had had their names inscribed at the University of Salamanca, one of the most celebrated schools of Catholicity, numbering over a thousand students. His coming was eagerly awaited. Not by a great number of people, nor by men of renown. But the special friends of God already held him in veneration. When he reached the great city he went, as was his wont, into a church. This was enough. A poor woman saw him praying there, and though she had never before set eyes on him, by his outward appearance she felt sure it must be Ignatius. It may be imagined how she would approach him, addressing him in a reverential and low tone of voice: "I think, sir, you must have four friends living here in the town? Their lodgings are quite close, and if you will have the goodness to tell me your name, I will willingly take you to them." Ignatius told his name, and poor as ever, conducted by a poor woman, he

went to join his companions in a house inhabited by folk of slender means.

He began to live at Salamanca as he had lived in other towns since the time of his conversion, so when this somewhat ancient student had accomplished his duties, he preached wherever he could get an audience. But the times were very unquiet. All kinds of dangerous novelties were abroad; Protestantism, already long in preparation, was at the birth and about to separate whole nations from Rome; pride of private judgement and contempt for authority had produced men who, without warrant, wrote and spoke on philosophical and religious subjects in a way often contrary to truth, and nearly always harmful. Spain and other lands protected their faith and their unity by means of the Inquisition—that is to say, by ecclesiastical courts, whose office it was to search out and pursue cases of heresy. Ignatius in his rôle of popular preacher could not fail to awaken the suspicion of those charged with the preservation of order in these matters. Already, in other towns, he had to suffer from the severity of this institution, which belonged to the state as much as to the Church. At Salamanca he was imprisoned, first with one of his companions, then with all, and subjected to an examination, whilst inquiries were set on foot concerning the manner of life past and present of these enterprising and rather disquieting young men. For twenty-two days he submitted, with unfaltering and even joyous courage, to prison chains and the galling suspicion of having preached erroneous doctrine. But the judges were men of right judgement. In time they pronounced their sentence. Ignatius and his companions were held to be men of exemplary morals; their teaching was untainted by heresy; they might continue to instruct the people; only they were admonished not to touch on vexed questions before they had studied theology. The reply of Ignatius, reported by Ribadaneira, is most remarkable; it throws light on his character and for this reason I quote it. It shows perfect accuracy and indomitable determination; requisite qualities in a leader of men. He does not refuse to obey, although the sentence cannot have been to his liking; but his obedience is measured to time and place, and he claims liberty for the future and the right of being responsible for his teaching, that he may be able to help souls.

"The holy Father replied that he would obey in all that the judges had the right to command him; that it was not just, however, since no fault had been found in his conduct nor error in his teaching, to hinder him from serving souls by forbidding him to speak freely of the things of God; that he was free to go where he pleased, and that he would see what he had to do."

His determination was soon taken. This was made known to his four companions. Many of his friends in the town tried to prevent Ignatius from carrying out his project. But the deliberate determination of a saint, which has been submitted to God, is not easy to move. When he was in prison, he had made up his mind to go to Paris, as soon as he should be able, to study theology at the Sorbonne, and take his degrees, then, if it pleased God, to choose some companions, and found an Order. All alone in the inclement season of the year, he left for Barcelona, "driving a little donkey before him loaded with books." Thence, still on foot, he crossed into France, and reached the capital in the beginning of February, 1528. From there, on March 3, he wrote a letter to a pious lady of Barcelona who had given him an alms, signing himself "Iñigo, poor in all good," and addressing it to "Pasquala, my sister in Christ our Lord."

He was now thirty-seven. He remained in Paris till the spring of 1535, not without a journey or two, for he was yet a pilgrim, and he might be found in England at the tomb of St Thomas à Becket; and also in Flanders, where, during the vacation, he went to beg from the Spanish merchants means to enable both him and his companions to continue their studies.

It is good to assist at the formation of a saint! It is also good to see an ancient escutcheon renewed and embellished. How precious an example the pursuit of knowledge by a descendant of an ancient military family in which traditions of courage, honour, courtesy, and kindness had always been handed down. But they no longer sufficed. The new times demanded something more. All this is of immense significance. A Spanish noble seeks out in Salamanca and Paris the scholars of greatest European repute, and asks to be initiated in the learning of that day and in the study of the Sacred Writings. He has been led and, as it were, almost compelled by trial,

and entrusted by a will whose order and counsel he obeys, with a mission which demands a long mental preparation. He will in his turn form other champions after having been formed himself in the Schools of Philosophy and Theology. He will become a general, but over an army of missioners and scholars; he will overthrow strongly fortified cities—that is to say, souls—he will wage war against innumerable enemies more unconquerable than the armies of the most powerful king: the enemies of God. It is a novel kind of service, offered to many who remain unresponsive. But happily there are many who understand. In Paris he took up his abode at the college of Sainte-Barbe, frequented by Calvin. He shared a room with two other students, further advanced than himself in their studies, Francis Xavier, belonging to a noble family of Navarre, and a Savoyard called Peter Lefèvre, who had been a shepherd; he obtained a Bachelor's Degree and was admitted to the Course of Philosophy; three years later, he became Master of Arts (1532); and two years after this he was given the title of Doctor (1534).

An unforgettable date, which should be held in honour by all who have received the gift of reason and of an interior life, for in that year, 1534, on the Feast of the Assumption, seven young men dedicated themselves entirely to the service of God, and thus laid the foundations of the Society of Jesus, in the Chapel of our Lady, on the hill of Montmartre, already called in an old Chart of King John "the heart of France." A blessed day for the whole world, since a new discipline was to form new saints, glorious for Spain, who had there five of her sons, and for France, whose soil had been chosen once more. There was a Frenchman among the seven young men, whose names were: Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, Peter Lefèvre, James Lainez, Alphonsus Salmeron, Nicholas de Bobadilla, Simon Rodriguez d'Azevedo, all of whom had received the degree of Master of Arts and were students of theology. The two years following, the promises were renewed in the same place, and three more Frenchmen having joined Peter Lefèvre—Claude le Jay from Savoy, Jean Codure from Provence, and Paschase Broët from Picardy—France had four representatives among the first Jesuits. I have not taken upon myself to write the life of Ignatius of Loyola. My intention

is only to show how noble and tender a heart he possessed, for in general this is perhaps somewhat passed over in the praise that is rendered to his wonderful mind; and after doing this I hope to speak of the principal means by which he opposed Proteſtantism.

When he was ſtudying at the College of Sainte-Barbe, he was robbed of all the little ſtore on which he was counting to live for the reſt of the year. The thief fled to Rouen. He was a Spaniard who wanted to get back to Spain. It happened that while he was waiting for the ship to set sail he was taken seriously ill, and in his desperation, having no one to care for him, was seized with the idea, certainly not a usual one in criminal annals, of summoning to his help him whom he had robbed of his little all. What a ſtake and what homage! Ignatius set out at once on foot, and desiring to obtain perfect charity for himself, and for the other the grace of conversion, determined to make the journey barefoot and faſting. This he did, arriving at Rouen on the third day, where he aſſiſted the sick man—it is not said whether he converted him inſtantaneously or no—obtained for him a passage in a vessel, and entruſted him with letters for his companions at Salamanca.

The generosity, the royalty of his heart comes out in the whole work of the Saint. Even where his admirably faultless logic seems to ſtand out, the tenderness of the soul is seen too. In the " Firſt Week " of the *Exercises* he sings—I use the word advisedly—the mercies of God. In the Meditation on the Kingdom of Chriſt, filled with gratitude for the benefits of Chriſt our Lord, he asks how a generous heart should respond to them. In the *Myſteries of the Holy Childhood* his emotion gives place to a smile. He does not exclude them. That is as it should be, and he is like us; we should not speak to children in the way that we speak to grown-up persons, neither should we speak of them without remembering what they are.

The Childhood of Jesus Christ is, for a man of faith, the firſt page of a book that moves him even to tears; and tears there are, some sweet, and others moſt bitter, in these meditations of St Ignatius.

In the life of the Founder and Firſt Head of the Society

of JESUS, there exist unnumbered proofs of his delicacy of feeling in his intercourse with his religious. So severe towards himself, so exact in obedience, he yet knew how to be merciful to the weak, to temper his reprimands, and show the most fatherly care towards the young novices and scholastics; he accommodated himself to the temperaments of all: if he refused what was asked of him, it was with gentle words; he visited the sick by day and night, and kept himself informed of their state; nothing cost too much where remedies were in question; rather than allow the sick to suffer for want of care, he would sell all that was in the house; if he showed severity towards those more advanced in virtue, it was out of love for them. Outside the Society, it was the same thing, he acted by the same principle; he made up quarrels, reconciled and consoled; founded hospitals and asylums for every kind of misery and weakness; prayed for his enemies.

This man of action and authority was most susceptible to religious music. In speaking of it he told his secretary that it made him "experience great consolation," and he added: "If I were to follow my taste and inclination, I should have choirs and chanting throughout the Society; the reason I do not is because GOD our Lord gave me to understand that such was not his will, he would not have us to serve him in the choir, but in other ways."

I will go still further and many will understand this language; when he chose the name of the spiritual army that he was to organise and command, he did not name it "Society of Christ," his ambition and his love found expression in that Name which is dearest and closest to us; he founded the "Society of JESUS."

It would therefore be an injustice—and every injustice has its advocates—to see nothing but the intellectual greatness of the man, and pass over the fact that he had a heart rich in enthusiasm and poetry, abounding in fraternal affection, eager to help in every kind of suffering. It is easy to bring up the example of celebrated writers or scholars who seemed to be devoid of all natural feeling: I do not think we find this infirmity among the Saints.

The great pilgrim had not as yet finished his pilgrimage, for he came back from Paris to his own country, and even to

his own town of Azpeïtia, where the whole population came out to meet him. For the renown which accompanies saints, once they are known, is stronger than all other fame, and the news that they are passing by brings everyone out of their houses, not only the curious, but also the sick and the sorrowful, till the crowd around them is often very great. From Spain he embarked for Italy, where he was to make several long journeys. He revisited Venice, he revisited Rome, and there he remained. But I have said enough to show the tender heart of the pilgrim. I want now to show the chief means he used to combat the great heresy of the sixteenth century. For this was his providential vocation, as Pope Benedict XIV tells us, when he treats as common property the idea that "almighty God raised up St Ignatius and the Society founded by him as an antidote to Luther and the other heretics of that time."[1]

Pride is the foundation of Protestantism. The insidious words which tempted the two first human beings came again to tempt their descendants: "You shall be as gods!" In truth, to make a religion one would have to be God. And what does Luther propose? That everyone should make his own belief by his own interpretation of the Scriptures, without study, protection, or appeal. The littleness of man refuses to be instructed; he rejects authority; he sets himself up as judge; Paradise Lost is acted once again. With his unerring genius, Ignatius recognised the origin of the temptation and the fall; he sets himself by word and example to teach obedience; he exalts it; founds an Order bound by vow to a particular obedience to the Pope; his life, his doctrine, his spiritual sons all rise up against the spiritual anarchy.

And doubtless the Apostolate of the Society varies according to country and time; it builds colleges and universities, it sends out missioners, it has its orators, its writers, its scholars, and its martyrs; but always its first duty is to obey.

I want, as far as I am able to understand it, to explain the theory of obedience as it is taught in several passages of the works of St Ignatius and in the example of his life, and I

[1] Letter "Constantem omnium," April 24, 1748. The Pope recalls the fact that this truth had already been expressed in the Bull of the canonisation of St Ignatius by Urban VIII.

take first, as a kind of preliminary, the celebrated letter on Obedience, which he addresses from Rome to his Religious of the Kingdom of Portugal. The whole world is shown as obedient, and prepares the soul for sacrifices.[1] He is speaking of religious obedience, the model of all others:

"In this way divine Providence disposes all things with wonderful sweetness, bringing them to their end by this subordination of the lowest to those of middle rank, and of these in their turn to the highest. From this proceeds the order that exists in the heavenly hierarchy, each one being subordinate to that above it and all dependent one on the other; from it comes also that mutual relation and harmony between the heavenly bodies and all material things which move in the sphere assigned to each one; their movements and relation depend on a primary motive power communicated to each of them in regular succession from the highest to the lowest. We see the same thing in the world in the Constitutions of all well-ordered States, and especially in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, where all the members and all their Offices depend on one Head, who is the Vicar of JESUS CHRIST our Lord. And in the proportion that this order and dependence is observed, so will the government be more perfectly ordered. On the other hand, no one can remain ignorant of the grievous disorders which disturb every Society where this order is violated. And it is on account of this that I so earnestly desire that this Society of which God has in part confided to me the care and administration should excel in obedience, as though its safety and prosperity consisted solely in the practice of this virtue."

Perfect order, then, only exists where there is subordination. To have order and harmony in the body is an excellent thing; but the head must command.

In business matters wisdom and clearness of vision are rare; we need help from others. The religious finds in his Superior, counsel, support, and the wisdom of a father.

It will be found that Faith is the ground of the Jesuit's obedience. God has established a certain kind of life and perfection, of which obedience is the foundation and essential

[1] Letter of March 28, 1553, kept at Madrid. This letter has been published, together with the Commentaries of Bellarmine, by Father J. B. Couderc. Limoges, Marc Baton et Cie, 1898.

character. God pledges himself to guide, by means of a living authority, whomsoever is willing to obey. See the consequences of this. The religious Superior commands with the consciousness that his authority comes from God, the subject obeys with the conviction that his obedience is given to God. Take away Faith, what remains? Force on one side, fear or interest on the other: two things of very little value.

St Ignatius' correspondence gives us an example of the supernatural way of looking upon obedience. In June, 1553, the news of the death of St Francis Xavier, the Apostle of India, had not yet reached Rome, when the Founder of the Society of Jesus, judging that it would be expedient for his friend, whom he himself had converted, to return to Europe for a time, wrote to him the following letter, in which all is contained and in the right order: the command in the name of God, and the considerate and courteous explanation:

"In consideration of the better service of our Lord and the greater good of souls in India, I have resolved to command you in virtue of holy Obedience to take, among so many paths open to you, that of Portugal as soon as a favourable opportunity offers itself; I order you to do this in the Name of Jesus Christ, but it will only be to return to India as soon as possible. And that you may be in a position to expose the motives of your departure to those who may wish to keep you back for the good of the countries in which you are, I will tell you my reasons for this decision in which I seek the good of Europe and of the Indies themselves."

The Superior may explain his command, he is not obliged to do so. St Ignatius also permits observations to be made to the Superior, provided that the subject obey, if the command is still maintained. There is but one exception to obedience; obedience ceases to be binding if the Superior commands the commission of a sin. A necessary reserve. Where is the civil law that would grant me this? But in what is lawful, always to obey. St Benedict has said: "Obey even when commanded to do impossibilities." St Ignatius says, "like a dead body." He has been reproached for this. The word is not his; it comes from the gentle Francis of Assisi, who on his part understood the duty of obedience in all its rigour, because every religious society, and we may say all society,

depends upon it. "I want to have the dead for my disciples," said the Poverello, "not the living."

How is obedience, thus understood, compatible with the dignity of man? It only needs a little reflection to show that it is so. An act of obedience is a free act. Every time that a man obeys in this spirit, he asserts his will and the reasonable choice that it has made. Moreover, in obedience of this kind, there is something great. The old Enemy of the human race is twice conquered; swollen pride has no place in the command, neither has wounded pride any place in the submission; God is in both. How vastly superior is this to the illusion of superiority, or, more foolish still, that of equality!

To obey is to become greater, to be conformed to the teaching of the Gospel, where it is said: "Deny yourselves;" it is to imitate the example of the Son of God, who willed to be obedient "unto death: even the death of the Cross."

It seems to me, that, without the least disloyalty to the teaching of St Ignatius, we may add a further thought to this summary that I have tried to make. If a Superior should be thus obeyed for the love of God, when he is only a man and possibly but indifferently endowed with what we look upon as human superiority, how much more should we not give an obedience, which is prompt, joyous, and enthusiastic, to the Church in all matters within her jurisdiction? The great Combatant assisted by God, inspired by Jesus Christ, who has promised to be with her to the end of the world; that holy One who dispenses all graces; who shows forth mercy, pardoning sinners in the name of God; uncompromising in her adherence to truth and preferring to suffer all ills rather than sacrifice an iota; prudent in knowing the time for everything; foreseeing what is to come; the great artist, enriched with the best the human intellect has produced for more than 1,900 years; having nothing to learn concerning the depravity of man, for she has had the experience of all, and because of the immortal souls for whom she is responsible she is unwearying in her pursuit of those beings full of errors and passions. Her most honourable title has been given by our forefathers to a village in Normandy, Sainte-Mère-Eglise: she it is who has the first claim on our obedience. But this is not all.

As no one in good faith can think of the Church and really

know her without loving her, obedience towards her quickly assumes the character of love. Christians acquire this "sense of the Church" that Ignatius of Loyola possessed so eminently. A superior sense, which so refines our spirit as to make it capable of feeling a thousand things which would otherwise be beyond it, and so enlarges our heart that it comes to experience for souls something of the universal solicitude of the Church. A sense of the Communion of Saints, that brotherhood unlimited by time or space, a sense of truth, whereby the simplest and most illiterate Christian rejoices in the unity of the whole, shrinks from the danger of a doubtful proposition, and as heir of world-long wisdom becomes capable of raising himself to the summit of moral perfection. A sense of the way that leads to Heaven.

The spirit of obedience is therefore the essential spirit of the Society of Jesus. Incalculable is the service it has rendered to the Church and the world. By forming his religious with special care to this spirit, and through them the faithful; by the creation of a new school of obedience and respect, Ignatius of Loyola has magnified and fortified, as far as in him lay, the great virtue that had been attacked. He wished his sons to add, as I have already said, to the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience common to all religious Orders, the special vow of entire submission to the Sovereign Pontiff. The pilot of the vessel, who is ever on the look-out and ever at the helm, has only to say the word: there is always that company of picked men at his beck and call. For the good of the vessel and its passengers, they are ready to carry out all his behests; those who are up aloft will go down if needful into the hold without a word. And far more than this, he will never have to concern himself about giving them what the world unadvisedly calls a recompense: St Ignatius claimed for them the privilege of freedom from nomination to ecclesiastical dignities, unless the Pope should impose it on them under pain of sin. And things have remained so.

When I think about the end, which I have not yet told, of the life of St Ignatius of Loyola, many thoughts and images come before my mind. First comes the thought that St Ignatius was, as we should say, a great mind. Hardly had he been converted—this captain, whose previous knowledge

barely exceeded that of being able to read and write—than he became aware of another war in which he had taken no part: that waged between the forces of good and evil. And he takes it all in, he sees that according to which of these two triumphs, so are the people strengthened or undone. Not merely does he transform all his customs, habits, and preoccupations, but he goes back to school and sets himself to acquire all the learning of his age. From the men who are to come after him and continue what he has begun, he demands also the highest culture. Letters, science, constant care of good breeding in manners and speech will add a human attractiveness to the sanctity of the religious. He founds the Roman College under the protection of the Pope. In Rome also he founds the German College, for he is profoundly moved by the condition of Germany, so deeply tainted with heresy, and he judges "that the evil in those lands has its source principally in the ignorance and disorders of the clergy." Solicitude for the entire world filled his soul, and it will continue to move and work in the Order he has founded. I think also of that little company of disciples who left Paris in November, 1536, poorly clad, loaded with books and manuscripts, on their way to join Ignatius at Venice, and of the remark made by a labourer of La Brie as he saw them pass: "*I vont à reformer quoque pays*" ("They are going to reform some country"). The man was right; they were on their way to reform, raise up, and re-establish in the Catholic and Roman Faith those whom the pretended Reformation had shaken.

And then I think of their journeys from Venice to Rome, and of those words of Ribadaneira: "They went in groups of three, a priest and two laymen, taking care always to mingle Spaniards, Frenchmen, and Savoyards. . . . They travelled on foot, fasting, for it was Lent, and eating only what was given them by charity. It happened one Sunday, when they had had nothing in the morning but a few mouthfuls of bread, that they walked barefoot twenty-eight Italian miles, which would be equal to nine Spanish leagues, in pouring rain. . . ." Neither inconvenience nor long distances keep back those men dedicated to the service of the Church, on their way to the common Father, to receive his blessing and a new order of route.

I think of the tie that will ever exist between the Spanish and the French through the journeys taken by these holy men in their own countries and the places where they stayed, through the love that they had for both lands.

I reflect how the Canonisation of St Ignatius was asked for by the two courts of Spain and France: by Philip II and Philip III, by Henri IV and Louis XIII.

JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

THE man who was to found the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for the education of the children of the poor belonged to a noble family; he who was to show forth so strong and so enduring an attraction for poverty came from the richer class. Providence is more delicate in its previsions than we are; it seeks the good of the poor more than they do themselves. Had they been consulted in the matter, they would, I suppose, have replied: "Since the Lord is pleased to send us a Saint who is to love our children and take them out of the streets where they are losing their souls, and teach them reading, writing, arithmetic, the Catechism, and sacred history, we think that this one, who is to be such a friend of the people, ought to be taken from among ourselves. Who would be able to give an account of our wretchedness if he has not himself had some experience of it? How would an apostle, born in other surroundings, know how to speak our language, organise our schools, or educate little boys who probably will have the same trades as we have? What would a gentleman know of all this?" We must believe that God had other thoughts than these.

Before sending to his friends, the poor of France, the best man there was, and the one most capable of serving them, he made choice of a well-known family of Rheims, and by the marriage of Louis de La Salle with Nicole Moët de Brouillet, brought into the world on April 30, 1651, John Baptist. He was the first child, who by degrees became the eldest of ten. His family was a wealthy one. I fancy that their financial interests had been promoted by some commercial undertaking in the previous century.

But Louis de La Salle, John Baptist's young father, was on the bench, and held the office of counsellor in the Law Courts of Rheims. He possessed a fine mansion in the Rue de l'Arbalète, near the Place du Marché, called Hôtel de la Cloche, which was seriously damaged, but not destroyed, during the

war of 1914.[1] He was a good and upright man, cultivated in his tastes, living as did the magistrates of that time, for he considered that the embellishments of life, the prerogatives of office, the relations it involved, and a certain air of well-being and dignity ought not to be neglected by those who possessed them, and that in keeping up his position a man was still serving the state. There is a great deal that is true in this point of view, for a nation is not a mass of units, but a hierarchy of offices and service. What is and always will be difficult to discern is when and in what circumstances, for our own sake or that of others, we ought to give up our rank and its adjuncts. Such circumstances are not of everyday occurrence. Only a noble heart can recognise them. The counsellor generously allowed his eldest son, who had been educated at the College of the Bons-Enfants, to enter the ecclesiastical state, and receive the tonsure at the age of eleven, in the Archiepiscopal Chapel at Rheims.

He thought it quite natural—more so than we should—that in January, 1667, the youth of not yet sixteen should be installed among the Canons of our Lady of Rheims in consequence of the evacuation of his stall by the old Canon Dozet, related to the family of La Salle; he even pressed his son, whose remarkable abilities and piety were evident to all, to finish his clerical education in Paris at Saint-Sulpice and the Sorbonne, which was in those days both edifying and scholarly. He died, a few months after his wife, on April 9, 1672, without having been called upon to make any pronouncement upon the great question of social revolution, as we should put it nowadays, the complete renunciation of rank and fortune, an ideal so soon to be followed by his son; however, judging from the spirit in which he met the first sacrifice, I have little doubt but that he would have accepted the others.

[1] John Baptist de la Salle lived in two houses in Rheims, one in the rue Sainte-Marguerite—now rue Destenque—which, being in the close vicinity of the Basilica, was almost completely destroyed by the German bombs; the other in the rue Neuve—at present rue Gambetta—of which there is no trace. This need in no way astonish us; out of the 14,000 houses which the town contained in July, 1914, the citizens of Rheims found, after the armistice, only 60 which were habitable. Of these only a dozen were intact.

John Baptiſt came back to Rheims to look after the orphaned family. He had not yet been ordained prieſt. But there was already in him the spirit of order and method, and even of community. This young elder brother ruled over his brothers and ſiſters so wisely that he loſt not one of the souls entruſted to him; so religiously, that three of them—two brothers and a ſiſter—dedicated themselves, as he did, to the service of God; with so juſt a measure of work and recreation that not one of those little de La Salles, in the Hôtel de la Cloche, found the rule of life laid down by their elder brother burdensome, though it was that of a kind of family convent, to which the edifying youth of the seventeenth century submitted with reſpect.

We see how grace was leading him in the path of self-renunciation and charitable solicitude for others. He already underſtood how much it coſt to be the head of anything, even in a small way. He already dreaded the approach of anything greater. This fear of responsibility and office came to weigh him down at each fresh ſtarting-point in his career. This has nothing to do with want of courage. He had no pride whatever, and simply wanted to feel sure of being called. Having been ordained subdeacon on June 2, 1672, he was not admitted to the diaconate till four years later, and two more years passed before he became prieſt on April 9, 1678. Later on he never took the initiative; he would not respond to requeſts for foundations till after long consideration and earneſt prayer; he would only obey when it was a clear call from God. We have all known men in the army who refused to act without a written order; but that once given, nothing could hold them back except grape-shot and death.

For those who can read without the help of an alphabet, the Will of God is written in circumſtances. See how it showed his path to John Baptiſt de La Salle.

The seminariſts knew all about the various works on foot in parishes. They used to speak among themselves of different forms of charity, and particularly at the time when the young seminariſt from Rheims was pursuing his clerical ſtudies, the subject of intereſt was that of the "*petites écoles.*" Primary, non-free schools had been widely eſtablished in France for a considerable time; there was a crying need in the towns for

schools for the poor. Holy souls felt this deprivation deeply. The Curé Bourdoise wrote in 1649 to the director of Saint-Sulpice, M. Olier: "From the bottom of my heart, I assure you I would willingly beg from door to door to get funds to support a good schoolmaster. Like St Francis Xavier, I should like to ask all the Universities in the land to give me men, not to go to Japan and India to preach to infidels, but at least to begin this work which is so much needed." The whole of Saint-Sulpice from that time forward, masters and pupils, set to work to pray that GOD would raise up a kind of seminary of Christian schoolmasters who would give their services free of charge. And without any doubt, John Baptist had joined with his companions in praying for this intention, little thinking that he would be chosen and called upon to sacrifice his time, fortune, abilities, and all that a man can lose of exterior peace and commonplace distinction on behalf of this invention of French charity for the good of the lower classes.

It was not only the Catholics of Paris who wished to see schools for the lower classes established all over the country. Others had had the same thought as the Curé Bourdoise, and done what they could to realise it, there in France, where no one sows a seed of charity without its bearing some fruit. In Rouen, for instance, Père Barré and Mme. Maillefer had opened free schools for girls, and before their time St Peter Fourier had done the same thing in another province. At Rheims itself, the spiritual director of John Baptist, Nicholas Roland, had set on foot several charitable institutions, a weekly Conference for priests, a refuge for orphans, and also the first elementary schools for girls, besides a little Congregation where mistresses were recruited and trained. This good ecclesiastic died only a few days after his spiritual son had been ordained priest, and, as his last will and testament, charged him to obtain letters patent to erect the little Community into a Congregation, the Sisters of the Holy Child JESUS. So now we see Canon de La Salle obliged to take up the matter of free education and plead its cause before the great ones of the earth, which means that he was thoroughly conversant with it. He gained the day, thanks to his relations with influential persons, and especially through the support of the Archbishop, Maurice Le Tellier, brother of the minister Louvois. The letters patent were

registered as early as the month of February, 1679. And the virtuous Canon now imagined he was to be free to fulfil the duties of his charge, and to be like his fellow-canons, "prudent and discreet," while he looked round to see in what quarter he should direct his zeal for the future. But this was not to be! He had had compassion on the souls of the poor, and, in so doing, had all unconsciously traced out his path in life; his splendid lot was to be one of ceaseless care, for misery, once it has found friends, will not easily let them go. He had promised to love the poor; but he will go a great deal further, he will become one of them. In ancient times slaves were without friends. Since then, there have been men and women in each century who have not only loved the poor, but also loved poverty. In the seventeenth century, which had inherited so many evils from the preceding one, the youth of towns and villages who could not afford to pay for a schoolmaster generally formed the class of what we call the illiterate. There are worse evils than this, but still it is an evil. To remedy it God made use of those who were willing to go all lengths in obeying him; and he sent to the neglected little ones of France a great saint, and lesser ones in his train, as is almost always the case. They are found in groups, like nebulæ round a star. How do they recognise their call? Very often in quite small matters. Let us see how it was with John Baptist de La Salle. In the beginning of the year 1679 this Canon of Rheims went to the house of the Religious of the Holy Child Jesus, to meet there an elderly man, with whom he was unacquainted, who came with a recommendation to talk over with him some question concerning a charitable foundation it was proposed to make at Rheims. This man, Adrian Nyel, accompanied by a companion, came from Rouen, where, as I have said, there had been some foundation of the kind. Nyel and M. de La Salle were introduced to one another by the Superior; they talked together, and the latter approved of the project, but, being moved by the Providence of God and his own characteristic way of acting, he wished to make a further study of it and therefore invited Nyel to stay for a few days at the Hôtel de la Cloche. Without suspecting it, he was throwing the doors open to his future vocation. "I had no idea of it," he wrote. "If I had imagined that the protection, which out of pure charity I was offering to these

teachers, would result in my living amongſt them, I should never have done it."

How truly worthy of admiration are those great men who are not ashamed to show us their weak side!

A few weeks later, on April 15, the firſt free school for boys was founded in the parish of Saint-Maurice de Rheims. Adrian Nyel, with a young associate from Rouen, formed the teaching ſtaff. It was necessary to go quietly and not make too much of the matter. The curé would seem to be the one who had ſtarted the school without any help from the Canon of Rheims; he would be discreet on the subject of those hidden benefactors, M. de La Salle and Mme. Maillefer, the lady in Normandy, for the jealousy of the maſters of the paying schools, already aroused, muſt on no account be increased.

Poor John Baptiſt de La Salle! Poor Canon! His time of ease, or to put it better, the right to dispose of himself, was at an end! And so it proved, for shortly after the opening of the School of Saint-Maurice three young men presented themselves as teachers for the poor, and were inſtalled, like the firſt two, in the presbytery of Saint-Maurice. The Abbé de La Salle had, as a matter of course, carried on the negotiations and given the benefit of his advice to the curé's gueſts, and it was found that another school could be opened in another parish of Rheims; which was therefore done. M. de La Salle was caught in the net of his own charity. Was he not indispensable, muſt he not be at the head of the second foundation, as he had arranged everything for the firſt? How could he refuse? He had to set to work again, and he had also to help defray the household expenses, for the Curé of Saint-Maurice found it rather a heavy burden to feed and house five gueſts as well as his curates and his servant.

This time M. de La Salle thought he might wait a bit. He had founded two small schools, that of Saint-Maurice and that of Saint-Jacques; before taking any further ſteps they would reſt a little. But it soon became clear that M. Dorigny, Curé of Saint-Maurice, was moſt anxious to get back free possession of his presbytery. It happened that not far from the ramparts, in the parish of Saint-Symphorien, there was a large house to let. It would be the very place for the maſters! The price asked was not exorbitant. It was not far from the residence

of the good Canon. He hired the house and established in it the first teachers of the poor, and considering that it would be well to have some kind of rule, had the kindness to draw up for them the hours of rising, meals, retiring to rest, class, study, and prayer, and, as was only natural, came to visit those he had helped. Little by little, and without having sought it, he had thus become a sort of official Superior over an as yet unformed but growing Congregation. For no sooner did Adrian Nyel, his subordinate, feel himself free than he went into the country to recruit new masters. In this he succeeded; M. de La Salle undertook a third foundation, and the ragamuffins of Saint-Symphorien also had their school.

In one year's time the son of the former counsellor in the Law Courts had gone too far to draw back in the new undertaking, and had compromised himself in the eyes of the world by associating with the lower classes. In the seventeenth century there was no lack either of charity or of polite manners, but to sacrifice one to the other would have scandalised persons of good family who did not happen to be saints. M. de La Salle had to listen to many representations of this kind from his near relatives and his friends; they reproached him—or at least attempted to do so—with not living up to his rank, and giving more of his time to schoolmasters, of whom nobody had ever heard, and teacher apprentices, and street arabs, than to people of his own class and standing, and to his own family in particular. His singularity assumed a specially repellent aspect when he reached the age of thirty, which was in the year 1681. The previous year had shown that Adrian Nyel lived too much in the future and was of too unquiet a spirit to be a Superior for the young Community. The fervour and regularity of its members were at a dead level, they had little love of what was humble and obscure. Young men, who had joined full of enthusiasm, spoke of giving up so thankless a task. M. de La Salle had gone so far as to consult Père Barré, who was then in Paris, and had received from him this answer: "If you want to form your masters into truly religious men, and to make them love their state for the sake of the good they will be able to do, you must take them into your own house and live with them, and be constantly in their society." The other understood by this that "reasonable" projects and the

opinion of others henceforth counted for nothing, and he cast himself upon God. Prudent, resolute, he began by inviting the masters to his house for meals; a little time after, at Easter, he gathered them together there from seven in the morning till night prayers, and preached a retreat, which awoke in them fervour, community spirit, and joy. At midsummer, probably at the time when the lease was renewed, he took into his mansion to live with him these poor fellow-labourers, these friends of the poor. He had them to eat at his table with his brothers, and each day the astonished townsfolk of Rheims—many of whom took no pains to hide that they were scandalised, as they would be one day edified by such an example—saw the Cathedral Canon and his brothers in the company of these as yet half-bred teachers, whose personal appearance left much to be desired.

Opposition had arisen against the project, but it bore evident signs of benediction. It began to spread. In 1682, M. de La Salle sent schoolmasters to Rethel, Guise, Laon, Château-Porcien. This cultured man of the world had certainly given up the prejudices of men of the world. I will not say of *all*, but of those whose judgement in these questions, which are often misrepresented, lacks some consistency, and that counts for something! He deliberately put himself outside the pale of custom, and took his place, for the sake of charity, in an inferior rank to that in which he was born.

And, nevertheless, he was in the right. Those gifts of rank and culture, the result of long years of careful training and of many other causes, were not lost: they were only put to another use. A new but unerring experience had taught him that a great name, refinement, culture, good breeding, can be a valuable adjunct to the words and example of an apostle of the people.

The lower classes in general, those of the French nation in particular, are very susceptible to good manners and breeding in those who have to deal with them. It is not wise to change one's language or renounce one's breeding when living with those less instructed and well educated, be it for a short time or for long. The art consists in not doing this. And this courtesy is at once understood; it finds its ways into hearts which would otherwise be closed; it has the gift of repairing

injuries, slights, and blunders; it becomes virtue. The war has been the means of teaching many officers and men the brotherhood that exists between higher and lower, which is one of the elements of an ideal society. I think that a man of good breeding acts in this way by a sort of hereditary instinct. It comes naturally to him. If, in addition to this, he is supernatural, what a friend he will be! His very education makes him able to understand troubles that he has never felt, and inspires him with little attentions and words of which someone less refined would never have thought. He foresees for those who cannot foresee for themselves; he will do anything to help a person in straitened circumstances, and often succeeds where the other would have failed; he never refuses an importunate caller, or neglects to return his visit; he does not expect to be thanked. "He likes that sort of thing," people say. They are greatly mistaken, but that matters little!

Those of the rank and fashion of Champagne who looked on did not hesitate to criticise M. de La Salle. What was he thinking of to leave their society for that of the poor? It was preposterous! They set themselves obstinately against him, and were greatly astonished to find that he appeared not to mind. When his relations reproached him for associating with persons of low breeding and next to no education, he listened to them with his arms folded and said nothing. He might have answered that the same reproach had been made to the highest Gentleman in the world, and the humblest of men, to him who said, "I have compassion on the multitudes," and disdained not to sit down with the lowest. But he preferred to keep silence and continued to live and eat and hold familiar intercourse with sons of labourers and artisans, and to treat with them on the subject of schools, as with his fellow-workers. His first thought was for the good of his scholars who were neglected by the other authorities in the town; his daily visit was to his little ragamuffins saved from the streets. Did he write to some municipal authority, he treated him as he would have treated an ambassador—as though he were at least his equal in rank and wealth, as can be seen by the tone of the following letter written just at this time to an alderman of Saint-Porcien: "Even were I indifferent to the claims of God's glory, I should indeed be hard-hearted not to be greatly

touched by the earneſt requeſt of your good Dean, and by the very kind way in which you have written to me to-day."

He was a well-built man, with a kindly expression of countenance and genial, attractive manners, which at once inspired confidence. All do not possess this gift. It is a precious quality when, as in his case, it is used exclusively to make God, his commands, his Faith better loved.

In our days, Charles de Foucauld said he would like to be a "universal brother." M. de La Salle had the same holy ambition, both for himself and for those whom he trained.

He had already begun to leave the world; soon he left it altogether. In 1682 he finally gave up his mansion and went to live with his fellow-labourers in a hired house in a humble quarter of the town. He was at laſt situated in the midſt of his people. Do you suppose that his generosity was underſtood? Not even by all his Brothers of the Chriſtian Schools. Several of them, finding themselves embarked in an auſtere life, living under discipline, poorly fed, and without remuneration, said: "If he fails or dies, what will become of us? What about our old age? There is nothing to look forward to but the workhouse!" Even at this period the minds of these apprentice teachers was filled with anxiety concerning the future. He replied to their fears by giving up his canonry and all the benefices pertaining to it, and, soon after, all his goods, which he diſtributed to the poor. After this he called together in a Retreat of seventeen days the heads of the schools of Rheims, Rethel, Guise, and Laon to ask from these souls all that they could give, and to bind them together, if they were willing, in a sort of religious community. There were to be no written Conſtitutions at present, the time was not yet ripe, only cuſtoms agreed upon, promises, intentions, directions.

Those who came out of Retreat on Trinity Sunday, 1684, numbered twelve. They agreed to meet again the following year.

But next year there were only eight to come!

Why be aſtonished? Was it not more than enough for perseverance?

M. de La Salle was of this opinion.

So they set to work again, as if they had been a hundred.

This kind of heroism is conſtantly met with in founders of

institutes, and adds something of the spirit of martyrdom to the merit of their labours. It was during the latter years of his sojourn at Rheims that M. de La Salle consented to make some alteration in the dress of the teachers. The mayor of the place told him that was a pitiable sight to see them in winter, in the rain and the snow, with their short coats, and counselled him to give them the *capote,* a kind of cloak with flowing sleeves, worn by the country people of Champagne.

This garment was therefore adopted. M. de La Salle directed that the under-garment should be a cassock fastened by metal hooks; he added the white neckband, the three-cornered hat, and thick-soled shoes worn by water-carriers and wood-cutters; and this completed the whole costume of which Maurice Barrés, always generous in his appreciation, and so much one of ourselves, has said that it was "an ancient costume, somewhat superannuated perhaps, but thoroughly French, more so than any other, except that of the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul."

To make the Institute national it now had to take root in Paris. The Curé of Saint-Sulpice, M. de La Barmondière, had certainly had in his parish seven Poor Schools, formerly founded by the saintly M. Olier; but one after another they had come to an end for want of teachers. There remained only one open in the Rue Princesse, where a priest belonging to the parish maintained order with great difficulty, having no one to assist him but a youth and an honest hosier, who taught the children how to knit. As this kept their hands busy and their attention more or less fixed, the scholars were fairly quiet, but learning made little progress. The Curé of Saint-Sulpice, desirous of saving the school, and rekindling the smoking flax before it went quite out, made known his pressing need to the Rheims teachers, and begged them to come and help him. M. de La Salle must have heard the cries of the souls who were calling him, all those little Parisians who would be saved in this world and the next if he responded. His mind was made up at once, and, leaving his schools at Rheims in the hands of a brother called L'Heureux, he set out on foot for Paris, taking with him two companions. On February 24, 1688, they took possession of the school in the Rue Princesse. It was a stroke of good fortune for a great many poor people: the devil must have feared it, for the difficulties which had not been wanting

to the Institute in its beginning increased as soon as it began to develop. I shall not relate one by one all the trials through which the saintly M. de La Salle had to pass, they may be read in any of his biographies. I shall only point out some of the opposition, hostility, contradiction, jealousy, and misunderstanding which this noble friend of the poor had to meet and overcome, chiefly by patience, for this seems to me to be one of the principal lessons of his life. The *Misereor super turbam* stirs up special hatred in hell.

The teachers previously nominated by M. de La Barmondière quickly recognised the successful action of the new masters. These veterans, including the professor of knitting, had been kept on. It proved to be a mistake. They all took offence, and loudly declared their intention of leaving sooner than submit to the new ruler. A little more, and they would have asserted their right to run to the death the seventh and last remaining school of the poor Curé of Saint-Sulpice. No notice was taken of them at first.

But one of them, finding that comparatively little disturbance was caused when he only attacked the rules, bethought himself of calumniating the director. And in this he proved himself skilful, and even experienced, for the Paris loafer, who is a born listener, and easily believes the wildest stories concerning an abuse of any kind, such as a case of undue severity, runs open-mouthed to hear ill spoken of his neighbour. There does not exist a more successful method of attracting partisans. M. de La Barmondière himself, without giving credence to the idle tales which were going round the parish, was so far influenced as to say to M. de La Salle that the holidays being at hand the Brothers had better be thinking of leaving Paris, and that probably it would be advisable that they should not return. But he was not able to continue in this mind. When M. de La Salle came to take leave of him, and made no attempt to defend himself, he was more than half enlightened as to his virtue, and the inquiry that he afterwards set on foot, through a trustworthy friend, finished by convincing him that it was the masters of the Free School whom he ought to keep and protect.

About a year later, after the death of M. de La Barmondière, there was a strong movement to induce M. de La Salle to

alter the habit of the Brothers. It was no longer a question of warm clothing—Paris has always had the name of being in the height of the fashion—they did not like the mantle with flowing sleeves. But the Superior held firm; he represented to those who criticised it that a rule could never stand if parts of it could be taken away, and he kept the mantle of Champagne.

After that it was the turn of the pedagogues to bring forward a sudden judicial action against the new Institute. The success attained by the Free School in the Rue Princesse had alarmed them. The Brothers taught gratuitously reading, writing, arithmetic, history, catechism: all that the reigning authorities taught, themselves, in consideration of a little remuneration. Was not this an unfortunate coincidence? Was there not reason to fear that children in a position to pay would go to the Brothers of M. de La Salle? What if some well-to-do parent should send his son to the Free School? The salaried teachers foresaw the ruin of their corporation. They brought an action against M. de La Salle and the Brothers, and won it before the Choirmaster of Notre Dame, Claude Joly, teacher of theology, who belonged to the profession and was only too ready to suppress judicially the Free Schools of Saint-Sulpice. It became necessary to appeal to Parliament. M. de La Salle, in his distress, turned for help where it is always to be found, and made a pilgrimage with his Brothers to our Lady of Virtues at Aubervilliers, where he spent a whole day in prayer, and then drew up a memorial full of precision and vigour, defending his rights before the counsellors. After this the salaried masters left him alone for eight years. But, alas! this success only relieved him of one burden. There was a falling away all around, even among teachers he most trusted. His two former companions during the journey from Rheims to Paris left the founder. Others withdrew from the Community he had left at Rheims under the guidance of Brother L'Heureux. This latter had been called to Paris. Good Superiors are not easy to replace! Eight Brothers belonging to Rheims left the Institute when this good and prudent man was no longer there to guide them. Poor M. de La Salle thought it would be well in these trying circumstances to send for the youths of the little noviceship in Champagne, amongst

whom for the most part he recruited his teachers. He would thus have them under his care. But no sooner were they established in Paris than the clergy wanted to get hold of them to serve their Masses. M. de La Salle's readiness to oblige led to another false step being taken. The lads were soon scattered all over Paris: the discipline of the noviceship, for the time being, was at an end, and M. de La Salle, worn out by austerities, crushed by anxiety and betrayal, fell dangerously ill. His life was despaired of. To his Brothers gathered round his bed he could only say:

"I recommend to you close union and great obedience."

He did not die, but his best friend did—Henri L'Heureux, to whom he hoped soon to entrust the government of the Institute. At this time, 1691, M. de La Salle would have given up his undertaking in desperation had he not been a saint—that is, a man for whom hope has become a virtue. In Vaugirard, which was then country outside Paris, he hired a house and garden for the benefit of his companions whose health had been affected by the long stay in Paris. They made there a long Retreat, at the end of which, taking aside two of the most courageous among the teachers, he pronounced with them this vow on November 21, Feast of the Presentation:

"Let us make a vow to keep together and to be united, in order to bring about the establishment of the said Institute—that of the CHRISTIAN BROTHERS—without dispensing ourselves from it, even though there should only be three in the said society, and we should be forced to live by alms, and eat dry bread."

It was impossible for such friends of the poor not to triumph in the end over all opposition and misfortune; but they had to pass through many other difficulties, over which in time they also triumphed, and when in the history of the beginnings of that great Institute of intellectual charity, called the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, we read between the lines, it becomes clear that the Constitutions of which it is formed were drawn up, one by one, in times of trial, that great teacher of souls.

Thus M. de La Salle was to have no repose till his death, which took place on April 7, 1719. When he was told, during the course of his illness, that the malady was incurable, he

manifested a tranquil joy. "I hope," he said, "that I shall soon be taken out of Egypt and brought into the Promised Land."

Teachers in Free Schools, young priests in country parishes, be not surprised if your work meets with such strong opposition. Have your schools and clubs, your confraternities, societies, and associations sometimes to pass through difficult times? Do your friends of the first hour forsake you? Is there a lack of subjects and of resources? Have you become an object of gossip or derision to those around you? M. de La Salle had all this to go through. He never faltered in his love for the people of France. He suffered, he prayed, he began again, he never gave in to discouragement. If we picture the Saints—and we may do so—decked out with as many heavenly jewels as the souls they have saved, his glory must be as dazzling as a sun! How many children forsaken by all, even by their parents, has he not instructed, saved from a life of sin, and changed into God-fearing youths through his own devoted labours and those of the Brothers he has formed! Everything which in a commonwealth is directed against the well-being of souls and the peace of order will rise up to the end of time against the work of Christian teaching, and, in so doing, will show of what spirit it is.

BLESSED LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT (1673—1716)

VENERABLE ANNE MARIE JAVOUHEY, the Burgundian Foundress in the beginning of the nineteenth century of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, said: "To make a good priest, I would part with my last garment." It was a true appreciation of the chief need of nations. In all ages, holy souls have poured out their supplications before God for saintly priests, and they have obtained, as miracles of grace, by their prayers and sacrifices, men who have been the saviours of their country, its true lawgivers, and the promoters of a supremely beneficent and enduring education. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort was one of these.[1] The portraits we possess of him, and which he himself distributed during his Missions, represent him with strongly marked features, a hooked nose, a sensitive mouth, protruding chin, and hair brought down over the temples. It is exactly the head of a little Breton gentleman, above the cassock and clerical collar.

He was the eldest son of a lawyer at the bailiwick of Montfort-la-Cane, Jean Baptiste Grignion of La Bachelleraie, and of Jeanne de La Vizeule de Launay, who afterwards had eight other children. The father, poor and not very successful in his profession, was a man of a somewhat irascible temperament, but honest and upright in his life. The child was put out to nurse with Mère Andrée at the farm of La Bachelleraie, and thus passed the first years of his life in the country and learnt to know the people whom later on he was to evangelise. From his earliest years he was familiar with the expressions, habits, grievances, and attitude of mind of the French labourer. When he returned to Montfort to begin his education, his heart was already given to God, and we may well believe that Mère

[1] See *Le bienheureux L.-M. Grignion de Montfort,* 1673-1716, by Mgr. Laveille, Vicar-General of Meaux. Paris, 1908, Librarie Poussielgue. See also *Le bienheureux Grignion de Montfort,* by Ernest Gac, Professor at the Catholic University of the West.

Andrée, no less than his own mother, had formed his mind to piety. He often gave up his walk or his games in order to pray, and this cost him something, for he was high-spirited and of a robust constitution. One of his sisters, Louise, who was one day to become a nun, understood him and followed him, when he invited her to say the Rosary with him. "Dear sister," he would say, "you will be most beautiful and everyone will love you, if you love God." At the age of twelve he began to study Latin at the College founded by the Jesuits at Rennes, numbering over 2,000 students. An extern like all his companions, and lodging at first in the house of his uncle the Abbé de La Vizeule, and then with his parents, who came to live in the capital of Brittany, he kept up his habits of piety and mortification. Artistic tastes, talents for drawing, for miniature painting, sculpture and poetry revealed themselves and were developed in him, and, at the same time, there arose from the recollection and austerity of his life a vocation to the priesthood. He went through the two years' course of philosophy; then, in 1693, when he was on the point of beginning the study of theology at the college, he heard that there were seminaries in Paris under the direction of the priests of Saint-Sulpice, and he conceived the desire of receiving his ecclesiastical formation from the newly founded Congregation of M. Olier. A family friend, a wealthy Parisian lady, who had a lawsuit with the Parliament of Brittany, undertook to obtain his admittance into one of the ecclesiastical communities grouped around Saint-Sulpice. The good Abbé Vizeule and one of the little Grignions accompanied Louis as far as the bridge of Cesson, which crosses the Vilaine, and then he began his lonely career in the service of God.

From this time Louis Grignion de La Bachellerie called himself Louis-Marie de Montfort. He forsook, with his name, every thought of fortune or leisure, and gave up what little he already possessed. His mother, as provision for the journey that he was making on foot from Paris to Rennes, obliged him to accept a change of linen, a new coat which he carried on his arm, and ten crowns which he placed in his purse. But hardly had he lost sight of the steeples of Rennes than the beggars on the road began to ask an alms for the love of God. Into the hands of the first he delivered the new coat; to the second he

gave the purse containing the ten crowns; and when he saw the third coming he suggested changing clothes with him. Then, having nothing else to give, he went on his way, begging his bread, sleeping in barns, his heart overflowing with joy under the autumn rains.

In ten days he had gone seventy-six leagues.

When he arrived in Paris his protectress was concerned at his miserable appearance. It was amongst those seminarists of slender means, directed by M. de La Barmondière, and, after his death, in the "little community of poor students," that he found shelter. He worked hard; he acquired a knowledge of Holy Writ, and even a familiarity with it, which would be remarked, later on, by those who heard his sermons; he had the discernment for, and love of, the true doctrines, and the scholarly orthodoxy of the young cleric was at once remarked in his Jansenist surroundings. For Jansenism was rampant at the Sorbonne; it had enthusiastic partisans among the clergy and in society; it was the fashionable heresy in this second half of the seventeenth century.

Fénelon wrote to Père Le Tellier, confessor to Louis XIV: "If things continue like this, it will need a miracle to prevent a schism, when the first favourable opportunity presents itself to the Jansenist party. All who are studying at the Sorbonne, except the seminarists of Saint-Sulpice and a very few others, have accepted the tenets of Jansenius."

Jansenism, which was distrust of God under the form of fear of God, had been formulated or insinuated in two celebrated books: *Augustinus,* by the Bishop of Ypres, Corneille Jansenius, and the treatise on *Frequent Communion,* by Antoine Arnauld, of Port-Royal. Like all other heresies, it sought to undermine free will, teaching that Jesus Christ did not die for all, but that some are necessarily predestined to be saved, and others to be cast into hell. This error took away from the dignity of man, and at the same time removed him farther from God. But in what may be called their moral discipline and teaching the Jansenists were no less dangerous. Here they tended to destroy faith by forbidding the faithful to approach the Sacraments. In their rigorism they refused Absolution to sinners, imposed long, difficult, and sometimes public penances, and, above all, they taught—adding to their many errors an

insult to the love of God—that one must be perfect to receive Holy Communion. According to them, Holy Communion, in order to bear fruit, should be long waited for, and to deprive ourselves of it was the greatest homage we could offer to God, since it would manifest a constant desire for perfection. Thus the nuns of Port-Royal passed several years running without making their Easter. A hypocritical heresy, withering up souls and driving them to despair. In the French provinces infected by it, the good Catholic population, who up to that time had lived fervent lives never far from God, were seen to give up Confession, keep away from Communion, and thus to lose grace and in a short time faith itself.

M. de Montfort was not for a single moment the dupe of this heresy, for he was possessed of a perfectly balanced judgement and a supremely humble heart, which helps much towards lucidity of spirit. And as, in addition to this, he was fearless, he took up a stand from his seminary days against the Jansenists. Heresy, being the outcome of hatred, always persecutes. And as long as he lived, in every diocese through which he passed, M. de Montfort had to endure countless sufferings, calumnies, injustices, at the hands of the Jansenists. There is no doubt that the cause of so many and such bitter contradictions came principally from that quarter.

But, in addition to this, the singularity of his zeal often led to a lack of appreciation in places where it was least to be expected. Few men have been contradicted, impeded, derided, and made fun of as he was. He laid himself open to it by his love for men, the fertility of his missionary inventions, and the poverty of his life. From his seminary days, and even in the seminary itself, there were not wanting those who were ready to laugh at the absent-minded ecclesiastic, always lost in thought, mortified, his eyes cast down, who on one occasion, having entered the vestibule of a Paris bank in company with a friend, knelt down to pray, regardless of the presence of the customers and clerks. One of his biographers, the Abbé Pauvert, sagaciously remarks: "As he feared neither scorn, nor poverty, nor death, he was the most courageous of men." Men made fun of him, but they recognised the powers of persuasion and prayer found in M. de Montfort. One of the most difficult charges among those entrusted to the seminarists was that of teaching

the Catechism to the children of the parish of Saint-Sulpice and the youths who came to Paris from all parts as domestic servants. M. de Montfort, with his fellow-seminarist, the Abbé de Flamanville, instructed over a thousand of these. He was always eager to help souls. He knew the subtle influence exercised by one who goes amongst them actuated by fraternal charity, free from any selfish interest, and implores them to take thought for their eternal salvation. During the vacation of 1699 he was chosen with another seminarist of Saint-Sulpice to make, on behalf of the Community, the annual pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Chartres. The way led through the cornfields during the time of harvest. The peasants of the rich cornland of Beauce were busy in the fields reaping and gathering in the grain. M. de Montfort often left his companion and entered into conversation with the nearest labourers. He addressed them with great courtesy, and we are told by a contemporary "he talked to them with so much unction of God, who first bore the burden of the day, that the poor people listened captivated and almost joyously to the unknown passer-by who spoke such consoling words."

The two pilgrims, having set out in the morning, arrived that evening before the cathedral dedicated to our Lady, and, their hearts being full of devotion, they had no thought of going to rest, but went to visit the crypt of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre, and pray there till the doors were closed. The following day M. de Montfort returned to the church; he remained there in prayer, motionless till midday, and after dinner again motionless till evening.

On the Ember Saturday after Pentecost, June 5, 1700, he was ordained priest; but, following the custom of the time, he did not celebrate his first Mass till eight days after, in the Church of Saint-Sulpice. At the beginning of a new and pleasure-loving century, wanting in reverence, frivolous and full of rebellion, a young Breton priest was preparing himself to consecrate all his strength and all his time to bring back souls in France to Christian fervour and to the true calling of their nation. But how and where was this holy Missioner to carry out his mission?

He nearly went to Canada; his director, however, refused to authorise it, "for fear," says a contemporary, "lest the Abbé

Grignion, carried away by his impetuous zeal in pursuit of the savages, should be lost in some vast forest of that land."

At that time M. René Lévêque, a Breton and a disciple of M. Olier, happened to be making his Retreat at Saint-Sulpice, and asked for someone who could succeed him in the government of a little Community of Missioners that he had founded at Nantes. He took back with him M. de Montfort, who wrote, on his arrival: "I am thinking of forming myself for the work of Missions, especially among the poor, for that is my great attraction. Seeing the needs of the Church, I ask ceaselessly with groans and tears for a little company of priests, devoted to poverty, who will go in the name of most holy Mary from parish to parish, teaching the Catechism to the poor, and living by the Providence of God." M. de Montfort was not to remain in this house, which was not well appointed and was tainted with Jansenism. But he prepared there for his first campaigns. He was sent to preach a ten days' Mission at Grandchamp, and in the summer of 1701 several others, the chief of which was at Pellerin. He began at once to exercise an influence over souls, and, in spite of his youth, the people began to call him "Good Father de Montfort." Souls are quick to know who love them. They recognise the secret of this love, lying, not in eloquence, but in a certain constraining influence, which impels them to pray and forsake their vanities. The utterances of a saint do not leave those who hear them in repose or barren admiration. The moment they are spoken they impel their hearers to act, to pray, and to cry for pardon; this is how they bear fruit.

M. de Montfort, shortly after the Mission preached to the peasants of Pellerin, obtained leave from the Bishop of Poitiers, to whom he had been recommended, to devote himself to the poor in the hospital of that town.

He made the journey, on foot, be it well understood, from Nantes to Poitiers, passing in the way by Notre-Dame des Ardilliers, and when he reached his destination, whilst waiting to be assigned his quarters in the hospital, he went into the streets and squares of the town and called round him the beggars and infirm. The poor followed him, and members of the upper classes mingled with the poor. M. de Montfort led all his followers towards the Chapel of St Nicholas; but as it

was too small he preached in the market-place. The whole town was stirred up. The bad and indifferent said among themselves: "He is mad." And in truth it was that same magnificent folly of the love of souls which caused Jesus Christ our Lord to come down from heaven.

In this town of Poitiers, M. de Montfort converted many of those who heard and saw him. He tried to reduce to order the duties of the infirmarians, who often disputed among themselves, to the detriment of the sick. He gathered together a few of the more piously minded among the sick, and gave them a rule of life and arranged a room which he called "La Sagesse," to which they could retire to pray. That he might be considered as the servant who has no choice in the cases he tends, he overcame his last remaining repugnances towards squalor, disease, and death. A poor man covered with ulcers begged his help in the street. M. de Montfort failed in getting him admitted among the other patients, for the doctors feared the plague. But he succeeded in being allowed to take him to a part removed from the common wards. He nursed him there, and spent whole hours with him, though he felt sick at the sight and smell of his garments and flesh. "One morning, when the sight was more repulsive than usual, he went up to the outcast, pressed out into a vessel the matter discharging from his ulcers, and swallowed it at one gulp." It recalled after five centuries the sublime act of St Elizabeth of Hungary. It is absolutely contrary to "custom"; but the author of such an act could cry out with the Apostle: "Who then shall separate me from the Love of Christ?"

"Nature was overcome, once and for ever. He was now free."[1]

Those who undertake the task of reforming the world and imitating Christ, as soon as they become too exacting in their demands and example, find evil rising up to oppose them, while those who are indifferent let things take their course, or even applaud it. All this evil began to cry out and scheme against M. de Montfort. He had mortal enemies amongst the infirmarians. They could not look on unmoved when they saw those few sick women, gathered together by the chaplain, rise

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

daily at four, make their prayer, recite the Rosary, and keep silence as they worked diligently. Their presence seemed to them a reproach. The whole town besides was ſtirred; all the gay world was in a ferment because the daughter of a lawyer at the Court of Poitiers, Mlle. Trichet, accomplished, fêted, and sought after by all, entered the hospital to serve the sick, under M. de Montfort. Mlle. Trichet was quite unmoved. She had enough ſtrength of will to meet the condolences and irony of her friends. She was one day to have the honour of being the firſt Superior of the Congregation of La Sageſſe. For the moment she was its firſt novice. But when she took the habit on February 2, 1703, and went out in the ſtreets with her thick grey woollen dress drawn in at the waiſt, and her headdress of white linen, public feeling was outraged, because this attractive woman had not been given a more becoming coſtume. The fashionable world resented the taſte of M. de Montfort, and when the latter, walking one day on the banks of the Clain, where the washerwomen used to beat their linen, saw a scapegrace, who was bathing close by with nothing on, and took it into his head to give him three ſtrokes of his discipline, all the riff-raff of the place demanded the removal of this too energetic moraliſt. The disaffected Janseniſt prieſts did the same, and the new Bishop of Poitiers, for a moment misled by them, forbad M. de Montfort to say Mass.[1] This prohibition was at once withdrawn by the Bishop when he was better informed; but M. de Montfort thought it more prudent to leave.

He returned to Paris, where he had already made a fairly long ſtay the year before, at the requeſt of his ſiſter Louise, who, having no dower, had almoſt given up hope of entering the Community of St Joseph. As soon as he heard of her trouble he wrote to her: "Reſt in peace on the Bosom of God's Providence and of our moſt Blessed Lady, seeking only to love and please God; because it is an infallible truth, an axiom divine and eternal, as true as that there is only one God; seek firſt the kingdom of God and his Juſtice, and all these things shall be added unto you." If you do the firſt part, God will do the second—that is, if you serve God and his Blessed

[1] Mgr. Laveille is careful to point out that neither this prohibition to celebrate Mass nor those which were laid on M. de Montfort later on bore the character of a canonical interdict.

Mother faithfully, nothing will be wanting to you in this world or the next. When all hope seemed gone, an unknown benefactor came upon the scene and gave a dower for Sister Louise, who left Paris and received the veil among the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament.

A little later, when she pronounced her vows, he wrote to her again, and it is good to read part of this letter, which is eloquent, terse, burning, piercing to the very heavens: "I cannot thank God enough for having given you the grace to become a true victim of Jesus Christ, a lover of the Most Holy Sacrament, and to supply for so many unworthy priests. How great an honour for your body to be spiritually sacrificed during your hour's adoration before the All-Holy! How great an honour for your soul to do here below, without feeling, without understanding, without the light of glory, in the darkness of faith alone, what the angels are doing in Heaven with such delight, and in such glory! What great glory a faithful adorer can give to our God here on earth! But how rare this is, since everyone, even those who are most spiritual, want to feel and to see; if they do not, they are disgusted and lose heart. And yet *sola fides sufficit,* faith alone suffices. And you, faithful child of the Most Holy Sacrament, what power, riches, and delight will be yours at the Feet of your powerful Lord. Courage, then! Grow rich and rejoice as you are consumed day by day, like a lamp, before him. The more you give yourself, the more you will receive from him."

After leaving the hospital at Poitiers he spent the first five months in evangelising and consoling the crowds who passed through the Hospital de la Salpêtrière in Paris, founded by Louis XIV at the request of St Vincent de Paul; a truly mixed population, suffering from ills of every kind, sick, old people, orphans, vagabonds, all living together there to the number of five thousand. He was so enthusiastic, so joyous and prompt in his devotedness, that there also he got into trouble with several people, not among the poor, but among those in charge. After five months he was obliged to leave, having no post and no means, and went to live in a miserable hole in the Rue Pot-de-Fer, where he spent his time in prayer and spiritual joy. His friends of earlier days turned the cold shoulder on him. They forgot they had ever known this little provincial priest,

who had no prospects. He wrote: "I am undergoing in this town plenty of opposition from both men and devils, but it is very dear and sweet to me. Let them calumniate me as much as they please, and scoff at me, and tear my reputation to bits, or put me in prison! What precious gifts are these! What dainties!" One single friend remained true to him, and showed him heaven at the end of his miseries: this was his former Professor and Director of the College of Rennes, Father Philippe Descartes, the Jesuit, nephew of the philosopher.

God was perfecting his servant in his apprenticeship for Missions, which demand experimental knowledge of human ingratitude and refuge in God alone. All became a means to this end. In the preparatory Retreat forced upon him by the coldness of men, M. de Montfort reflected over the Society of Missioner Priests that he desired to found, and it was granted him that the clerical school directed by one of his fellow-workers, the Abbé Poullart des Places, should serve as the seminary for the future Company of Mary.

And suddenly Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, brought him out of the shade, and made this despised individual a reformer of men. He gave him the office of reforming the hermits of Mont Valérien, who lived on the hill above Suresnes, round a monumental Calvary, keeping perpetual silence, cultivating the land, and weaving stockings. It is not difficult to understand that the proximity of Paris and the affluence of pilgrims had contributed to disturb the recollection of these hermits, who little by little had come to welcome visitors and to sell them trifling objects and garden produce; and in proportion as they were entangled in worldly matters the hermits became disunited, like the world. Grignion de Montfort re-established among them fidelity to Rule, fervour, and their former union. Then he went back to his corner in the Rue Pot-de-Fer, where he lived, praying and meditating in great content. And one day he received a letter from the poor of Poitiers, who were clamouring for his return. Not having the address of their friend, they had sent their letter to the Superior of Saint-Sulpice. They wrote:

"Sir, we, four hundred poor people, most humbly ask you, for the love of God's glory, to send back to us our dear and honoured pastor, M. Grignion, who loves the poor so much."

Already the Bishop, who, in the first instance, had been taken in, had begged the Missioner to return to Poitiers. M. de Montfort yielded to their pleading and left his retreat.

We have a very trustworthy account of the life led by M. de Montfort, nominated this time Director of the General Hospital. This is supplied by a priest of Poitiers, M. Dubois, who filled the office of Sub-director, and consequently was hourly brought into contact with this friend of the poor. He says: "The labours of M. Grignion were so strenuous, both mentally and physically, his exercises of devotion and his mortification so continuous, that it has always seemed to me a kind of miracle that he was able to do all that he did without utterly wearing himself out. . . . Mental prayer, the Divine Office, the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, the work of the Confessional, preaching, Catechism, visiting the sick or sinners, singing hymns, were his constant and incessant occupations. In spite of all these strenuous labours, he fasted rigorously three times a week, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, the first of these days till evening, when his one meal consisted of soup, with two eggs and a little cheese. He always wore chains round his body and his arms, drawn so tight that it was with difficulty that he could stoop down, and he took frequent and bloody disciplines. He slept on a little straw with next to no coverings. At our morning and evening meal he generally invited some very poor person, to whom he gave to drink from his own glass, and as a rule this person, after whom he would drink himself, had scrofula or was afflicted with some other dangerous or repulsive disease. However, he never suffered any harm from this. M. Grignion had a particular gift of pacifying those who found the discipline of a hospital hard to bear, and when he failed to do so, or found that they were only embittered by correction, he would kneel down, even in the mud, bare-headed, and refuse to rise till he saw them quieted; and generally it ended by their kneeling down also and asking pardon. And if in these and the like encounters he had to undergo insults of a specially trying nature, as continually happened, he would say it was for his own advantage and a recompense for his good intention."

This life of mortification and charity should have won all hearts to him. But the hostility of the past was not at an end.

The saints were as much in the way of, as they were necessary to, the sensuality of the eighteenth century, which, having secretly rebelled against the commandment, rebelled also against example. M. de Montfort soon saw that his influence for good was rendered fruitless by the increasing opposition of the heads of the hospital. Before resigning his charge, he, the Director of the establishment, the future founder of the Community of La Sagesse, had the humility and delicacy to ask the opinion of the little novice who, through his influence, had come to serve the poor in the hospital, and Mlle. Trichet, now Marie-Louise de Jésus, replied: "Father, it would be best for you to leave the hospital." M. de Montfort thereupon went to Mgr. de la Poype and asked his permission to preach Missions in the various parishes of the town and countryside. Henceforward, to the end of his life—that is, for twelve years, he was to have no other work but Missions. All that came before was the preparation. We are now in 1705; he was therefore thirty-one; he possessed all the power of grace and of human experience, perfect self-forgetfulness, burning eloquence, a penetrating voice, expressive features, an inventive power which would enable him to find the most successful ways of captivating popular imagination and of moving hearts; he could sing and write hymns; he had behind him the support of his philosophical and theological studies; he detested heresy, realising that any infraction of truth is also a subtraction from charity; lastly, he had the love of souls and the Church, the saints, our Blessed Lady, our divine Lord, and these loves, which filled him with ever-fresh enthusiasm, enabled him to surmount all obstacles and remain buoyant when confronted with ingratitude.

For contradiction is a sure sign of sanctity, which is made manifest by the evil.

M. de Montfort was scoffed at in the first offices he filled, and this treatment was to continue to the end; he was misunderstood by one Bishop and obliged to leave his diocese, he was also to be misunderstood by others, some of whom would go back on their first decision, while others would not; his intentions were to be calumniated, and a Calvary which he had erected on the moor at Pontchâteau was to incur the royal displeasure; every Mission that he preached was to be opposed either in public or privately. He said of himself: "The swarm

of sins and sinners that I am attacking leaves me no reſt. I muſt always be on the alert, I am always on thorns or on rough ſtones. I am like a ball in a game of tennis: it is no sooner hit to one side than it is hit back to the other with hard blows."

To all these attacks he vouchsafed no reply, meeting violent opposition with a humility which proved its sincerity by never failing, and by inſtantly showing itself in numbers of circumſtances which could not have been foreseen. Once only he had recourse to authority, or rather to the fatherly consolation of the Pope. It was at the beginning of his missionary career. Rejected and thruſt aside by a bishop on account of what was called his excessive zeal, he went to Rome. Following the pilgrim's track, beads in hand, he ſtopped at Assisi, spent fifteen days at Loretto, close to the Holy House, and when he was two leagues from Rome took off his shoes out of reſpect for the soil of the Holy City. Having been granted an audience on June 6, 1706, he had the happiness of receiving the confirmation of his missionary vocation from Pope Clement XI, who conferred on him the title of Apoſtolic Missioner, and approved of his methods and his doctrine concerning the office and prerogatives of our Blessed Lady, co-redemptrix of the human race. What mattered to him henceforth the opposition which was to be ſtirred up againſt him and the bitter gibes of the Janseniſts? He would give up nothing, and all that would be but a trial to be borne valiantly and as far as possible with indifference. Among the many proofs he gave of courage in adversity none, I think, is more ſtriking than that witnessed by the inhabitants of Pontchâteau in 1710. Not far from that town, in the country round Nantes, there is a high hill, from which can be seen Saint Nazaire, Guérande, and Saint Gilles. During a Mission, Blessed Grignion de Montfort had asked the inhabitants to erect a Calvary at the top of the hill, and to ensure the sign of Chriſt's sufferings being better seen in all the surrounding valleys, he had begged every one, peasants, lords of the manor, men and women, to raise a mound on the moorland of La Madeleine. He himself, during the singing of hymns, had marked out the place, put himself at the head of the firſt labourers, and accompanied the firſt teams of oxen bringing ſtones. The work spread over fifteen months, and

20,000 men's working days had been offered for the glory of Jesus Crucified. On certain days there had been as many as 100 yoke of oxen working at the same time. And the Calvary was so near completion that there was talk of its being blessed. Three crosses, that of our Lord painted red and fifty feet in height, that of the Good Thief painted green, that of the bad thief black, the statues of our Lady of Sorrows, St John and St Mary Magdalen had been put in place. An immense concourse of people were on their way to the moor when, on the very eve of the great day so long looked forward to, September 13, M. de Montfort was told that the Bishop of Nantes forbade him to proceed with the benediction. He went immediately to Nantes. There he learnt that Louis XIV, who had been misinformed, had given orders that the " fortress " of Pontchâteau was to be demolished. Hearing this he fell on his knees and said: " The Lord has allowed me to build the Calvary; he now permits it to be destroyed, blessed be his Holy Name!"[1]

Thus withstood on all sides, but a conqueror of souls, who came in great numbers to hear him and were converted, M. de Montfort evangelised successively most of the Provinces in the West of France.

After the Diocese of Poitiers it was that of Rennes, then Dinan, then Saint-Malo. He preached at La Chèze, Saint-Brieuc, Montcontour, and Montfort, at which latter place he saw his father and mother again. Thence he passed into the Diocese of Nantes, where he organised a great number of Missions; he stayed some time in the Diocese of Luçon and La Rochelle. At the request of the Bishop of Luçon, he crossed to the Isle of Yeu, where he remained two months, and so touched the hearts of the inhabitants when he preached of penance that, with the exception of the Governor, they all came to Confession. After more preaching and Missions in the Marshes of Vendée, he took shelter for a short time in a little

[1] Long after the death of Blessed Grignion de Montfort, the Calvary was rebuilt. It never ceased to attract crowds. The work of adorning it and of carrying out the original plan has been continued. Mgr. Laveille says: " As in the time of Montfort, whole parishes come on certain days to move fragments of rocks and roll away stones to bring the triumphal hill back to its former state."

house in La Rochelle, where he probably composed his treatise on *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. He was found once more in Vendée in the parts about Fontenay and the Forest of Mervent, and towards the north in the region of the Grove of Angiers, where he soon afterwards died, worn out with his labours, at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre.

It must not be thought that the people evangelised by Blessed Grignion de Montfort could be considered good, easy to move, and quick to repent of some slight breaches against the Divine Law. Without counting the parts round La Rochelle and all the southern part of the itinerary of his Missions, a region infected by Calvinism, he had to preach in tracts of country where morality was low and faith weak. Even those parts which, two generations later, were to give so magnificent an example of religious devotedness, had lost their former piety. Jansenism and laxity of morals kept a great number away from the Sacraments. Gambling and drunkenness gave rise to frequent brawls. In many places the offices were wellnigh given up; elsewhere the churches were falling into ruins, or used as barns for fodder. The twelve years' preaching of M. de Montfort renewed all the west of France. The souls whom he addressed were generous to a fault, passionate, but capable of every sacrifice when their word was pledged. He won them back to the Church. From that time the ground was broken up, penetrated by the air of Heaven, sown with precious grain, and gave an abundant return. A saint passes, and a whole land is renewed. M. de Montfort may be called the godfather of heroic Vendée. Two generations later the victorious and persecuting Revolution found nothing to oppose and resist it but the Vendéan peasants, led by one or two nobles or townsmen whom they had placed at their head. Those large, well-ordered families were glorious and fruitful in their martyrs. To this day a special blessing seems to rest upon them. It is impossible to count the number of priests and religious that they have given and that they still give to God—a reward and a sacrifice combined. Both the commandments and the evangelical counsels are deeply rooted amongst them. And I verily think that the Bishop, who said in my presence, speaking of the parts about Mauges, "It is the best corner of Catholicity," did not exaggerate!

M. de Montfort, when he could manage it, conducted Missions lasting six weeks, during which he preached, sometimes to men, sometimes to women, and sometimes to children. He never ceased speaking of our Blessed Lady, invoking her, and explaining the Devotion of the Rosary. Very often, as he was preaching, he would hold his crucifix in his hand, and the tenderness, respect, pleading, and sometimes tears with which he regarded it touched all hearts, even the most insensible and prejudiced. Few could hold out against so burning a love, which had its beginnings in God and went forth to men. He made his hearers sing hymns, of which he had often composed both words and music. To this day many of the hymns written by Blessed Grignion de Montfort are sung by Christian congregations. He asked much more of his hearers than it seemed they would be able to give; but his prayers, mortifications, and humility drew down torrents of grace upon them and made them able to respond. At his call old feuds came to an end, families were reunited, property unjustly retained was restored to its rightful owners, sinners rooted in vice were reformed, heretics forsook their errors, pleasure-loving girls, who came for a wager, decked out in finery, to hear him, left the world and entered Religion. If the church needed repairs he would propose to the parishioners to repair it; if a chapel which had once been a place of pilgrimages had been abandoned and was past restoring, he would cry out: "Come and help me and we will rebuild it!"

The works that he suggested were to be accomplished during the Mission; the whole parish took part in them, everyone wanted to share in the merit, and if there were heavy loads to be moved, the farmers ceased working and brought their oxen to supply the need. He loved processions, and brought along with him oriflammes and banners. At the close of each Mission he caused a memorial cross to be erected in some high and open place.

Sometimes the figure of Jesus Crucified would be attached to the cross; sometimes a Sacred Heart surrounded with rays was carved upon it. The wood was nearly always covered with gilt hearts, signifying the love of the souls who surround the Sacred Tree. There was no lack, we may be sure, of Jansenists to throw discredit on the "little devotions" of M. de Montfort.

As to the matter of his discourses, we can form an idea to ourselves by the fragments of the letters which have been already quoted. Going straight to the mark, burning, spontaneous, nothing could be more homely, and at the same time more lofty. We can also judge by the counsel he gave when he left Poitiers to those who had but recently listened to some of his Missions: "Dear people of Montbornage, Saint-Saturnin, Saint-Simplicien, La Résurrection, and other places, who have benefited by the Mission that Jesus Christ my Master has just granted to you, greetings in Jesus and Mary! As I have been forbidden by holy obedience to come and speak to you myself, I take the liberty of writing to you on my departure, as a father to his dear children; not to teach you anything new, but to strengthen you in the truths that I have already taught you. The fatherly affection that I feel for you is so strong that I shall carry you always in my heart as long as I live, when I die, and in Eternity. Remember, then, my dear children, my joy, my glory, and my crown, always to love Jesus with all your hearts, to love him through Mary, and to let your true devotion to our Blessed Lady be seen everywhere and by all. . . . I beg my friends at Montbornage . . . to keep up and increase the fervour of their prayers, and not to leave unpunished such things as blasphemies, oaths, singing of bad songs, and drunkenness in their faubourgs. You, my dear people, must be an example to all Poitiers and to the country round. Let no one work on Feasts of Obligation: let no one hang out his wares or even half open his shop, as is the ordinary practice of butchers, bakers, hucksters, and others who rob God of his day, and who by so doing will lose their souls, however plausible the pretexts they may make. . . . I beg my dear fishwives of Saint-Simplicien, butchers, hucksters, and others to keep up the good example they are setting the whole town by practising what they have learnt in the Mission. . . . It is only heathens and bad Christians who care nothing for the loss of those precious treasures, souls redeemed by Jesus Christ; pray, therefore, very earnestly for that, dear people. . . . Good-bye, and yet not good-bye; for if God spares me I shall come back to you. . . ."

M. de Montfort did not usually go unaccompanied to those places in which he was invited to preach a Mission. After he

had gone all over Poitou and part of Brittany, when he was asked to preach in the environs of Nantes, he was joined by a Jesuit from Nantes, Père Joubert, and later on by two secular priests, M. des Bastières and M. Olivier.

These fellow-labourers worked more or less under the direction of the chief Missioner. Still later, in January, 1715, when Blessed Grignion de Montfort was preaching at La Rochelle, in the Chapel of La Providence, a young priest, M. Vatel, while hearing and seeing him, felt drawn to consecrate himself to the work of Missions. He also was to travel over Vendée, evangelising the countryside for thirty years after the death of M. de Montfort.

Towards the end of that same year a priest of the Diocese of Luçon, M. Mulot, was suddenly asked by M. de Montfort to join him and help him in his Missions, and straightway followed him. These were the two first Missioners of the Company of Mary.[1] Several Brothers also joined him, Brothers Mathurin, Nicolas, Philippe, Louis, Gabriel, who took part in some of the material labours of the Mission, and helped in the singing of hymns in church, and sometimes went out into the country to collect a congregation, like Brother Mathurin, who was sent through all the vineyards of the parish of Vallet, in the neighbourhood of Nantes, to sing by order of M. de Montfort:

"Alerte! Alerte! Alerte!
La Mission est ouverte!
Venez-y-tous, mes bons amis,
Venez gagner le Paradis!"

"O come! O come! O come!
The Mission has begun!
Oh come, good people all,
For Heaven is within call."

Miracles were not wanting to attest the close intimacy of this faithful servant with his Master. Those worked within the soul, the only outward sign of which was a certain change, tears and

[1] Until M. de Montfort's death, M. Vatel took no religious vow. M. Mulot was indicated by M. de Montfort, on his deathbed, as his successor, and for some time after the Fathers of the Company were called the *Mulotins* in Vendée. The Company of Mary, which formerly had its Mother House at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, was obliged, in consequence of persecution, to transport its novitiate houses into Holland. It has several important Missions in Africa and America.

prayers, an offence pardoned, alms given, were countless. But there were others, witnessed by many of those whom M. de Montfort evangelised. Thus at Landemont, in Anjou, the wife of one of the small farmers came early to confess to M. de Montfort, and, passing by the Presbytery garden, saw him through the hedge, but not alone; he was walking with a lady in white, of dazzling radiance. "Imagination," some will say; "the good woman saw the morning mist." No, she had recognised our Blessed Lady, and she was not mistaken, for she at once told M. de Montfort what she had seen through the hedge, and he replied: "You have no need to go to Confession: you are better than I am, for you *saw* what I only heard."

Several other apparitions were reported in divers places. Another time, during the construction of the great Calvary of Pontchâteau, Blessed Grignion de Montfort, having to feed the great crowd of people who were helping him in his labours, was begging for bread, which he put in a big sack and carried on his back. He stopped at the house of a widow named Guigan, in the hamlet of La Viotterie. It was not the first time he had begged of her. The widow was a good Christian, and never failed to give. But that particular day, seeing the Missioner coming towards the hamlet, she had opened the bin, and found there was hardly any bread over from last week's baking—there remained barely enough for that day. As he was coming in she thought she would take one more look into the bin, to make sure that she had nothing to give; she raised the lid, and saw an ovenful of new bread. Realising that it was a miracle, and wishing to correspond with it, she said:

"If there is anything I can do, make use of me."

"You shall feed all the poor during my missions," said M. de Montfort. She therefore followed him from parish to parish, as long as he was in those parts, and however many slices of bread she cut, and large ones, too, for the beggars, the loaf she held in her hands grew no smaller. This went on as long as the Missioner remained among the people, who could see from their villages the moorland and the great Calvary. But after he left, the neighbours saw the loaf diminishing if the widow Guigan cut off a piece, and they said: "Now she is like the rest of us."

In the last years of his life, and when he was already failing, he gave two Missions, with a few months' interval between, in the villages of Mervent and Vouvant, the first of which is situated in the middle of the forest, and the other on the borders. Whilst he was preaching with marked success, he wanted to find some hermitage where he could meditate on Death undisturbed, and he found a grotto called the Cave of la Roche-aux-Faons. He paid three little visits to it, sleeping in the open and leading that solitary life which possessed such charm for him, the first during the Mission of Mervent in June, 1715, the second in September, and the third in October during the Mission at Vouvant. Since that time the cave has been turned into an Oratory, by popular devotion, and it is called, "Father de Montfort's Grotto." It is the most frequented spot of that vast forest. Before going for the last time to his hermitage, M. de Montfort worked another of those miracles which accorded well with the simple country life led by the Missioner. He reached Vouvant one evening, and knocked at the door of an honest old woman called Mère Imbert. He was hungry, and asked for something to eat. She excused herself, saying that she had nothing to put before him, and that she was sorry beyond words. "Go into the garden," said M. de Montfort, "and you will find some cherries." Mère Imbert, wishing not to appear uncivil, went and opened the gate leading into the orchard. What was poor Father de Montfort thinking of? There were certainly cherry-trees, but it was no longer the month of June nor July nor even September. However, not wanting to be disobliging, she advanced a few steps, and then came back her face aglow: "My goodness, Father, there is one in blossom!" "Go back, Mother, and you will find some cherries!" She did not doubt this time. She took a basket, and brought it back full of ripe cherries. And M. de Montfort stayed to supper with Mère Imbert. When he left she thought she would gather some more, but found neither flowers nor fruit.

A year before his death, being almost worn out by excessive labours, and foreseeing that his life was drawing to a close, M. de Montfort thought it was now time to found the Community of La Sagesse, which already had two postulants, but neither house nor Rule.

He therefore wrote to his former penitent at Poitiers, who was living in retirement and awaiting the signal, and told her to leave the town with another young woman, to come to La Rochelle, and there to open a Free School, which they did at once. He used truly to say that schools were the nursery gardens of the Church.

As he was preaching at some distance away, he sent to his two first religious several articles of the Rule, and said to them: "Call yourselves the *Community of La Sagesse, for the instruction of children and the care of the poor.* . . . Go to Communion every day unless you fall deliberately into any venial sin, because you both need it greatly." A little later, after earnest prayer, he wrote a definite Rule. Finally, twelve days before his death, when his daughters were in very great difficulty and trouble, he addressed to them a letter, the beauty of which can hardly be surpassed:

"My very dear Daughter in Jesus Christ, blessed be Jesus! Blessed be His Cross!

"I am lost in admiration over the just and loving disposition of the divine Wisdom with regard to his little flock, which is outwardly lodged in narrow and restricted quarters, that it may dwell hidden and at ease in his divine Heart. . . . A soul truly wise remains hidden with Jesus Christ in God, but its victories are more splendid than those of the greatest heroes, and it is crowned more gloriously than kings; it shines more brightly than the sun, and is raised above the heavens. If you are the disciple of the Heavenly Wisdom and his elect among thousands, the neglect and scorn you suffer, together with your poverty and seeming captivity, will be very sweet to you, because with these priceless treasures you can buy wisdom and liberty from the Heart of Jesus Crucified!

"If God had not given me other eyes than those which I received from my parents, I should murmur and fret, with all the foolish people of this fallen world, but I take good care not to do so. I want to impress on you that I am expecting greater and more painful contradictions, for the trial of our faith and confidence, in order to found the Community of La Sagesse, not on the shifting sands of gold and silver, which are daily used by all to establish and embellish their dwelling places;

nor with a mortal arm of flesh, which, however strong it may seem to be, is, after all, no more than a handful of hay; but by the very Wisdom of the Cross on Calvary. The Cross, divine and adorable, has been marked and stained with the Blood of God; he has chosen it out of all creatures as the one Spouse of his Heart, the one object of his desires, the centre of all his claims, the end of his labours, his only weapon, the sceptre of his Empire, and the Crown of his Glory. . . ."

The Missioner in the course of this last year preached two more large Missions, at Saint-Pompain and Villiers, in the Diocese of La Rochelle, then, in the spring of 1716, he went to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, where he was expected. The Mission had scarcely begun when he caught cold, during an early morning Procession, led by the Bishop, and he felt death approaching. Pleurisy set in. In spite of this, he wished to preach, as he had promised, in the afternoon, and he did so, giving an address on the meekness of Jesus, in such accents that many of those present were moved to tears.

Before long, as the malady was increasing, M. de Montfort received the Last Sacraments. On April 27 he dictated his last will and testament, in which he nominated M. Mulot his successor, and distributed the few things that belonged to him among the Brothers and one or two parishes of Vendée and Aunis: books, standards, and mission banners. He remained lying for some time upon the mattress, which he had only accepted by order of his confessor. He held in one hand a crucifix, in the other a little statue of our Lady, which hardly ever left him. Some parishioners from Saint-Laurent asked to see him. Their Missioner, even at the point of death, was accessible and refused no one. He lay there in a poor little room, on the ground floor of an inn, situated in the sloping street, on either side of which to-day is a monastery founded by him.

He gave permission for the people to enter in groups, and, raising his crucifix, he blessed them.

Suddenly lifting himself up, he who had so often preached the Christian soul's victory over death, began to sing in a strong voice the first verse of one of his hymns:

" Allons, mes chers amis,
Allons en Paradis!
Quoiqu'on gagne en ces lieux,
Le Paradis vaut mieux."

" Oh come with me, Oh come,
Come to our Heavenly Home;
Whatever joys we find on earth,
Heaven is better worth."

Before dying, he muttered these sublime words: " I am going; I shall sin no more." It was Tuesday, April 28, 1716, at 8 o'clock in the evening. He was forty-three years of age. Ten thousand people from the depths of the country walked in front of the body of this great servant of the people, who had renewed the soul of at leaſt one part of France.[1]

[1] The room in which he breathed his laſt now forms part of an annex to one of the convents of La Sagesse. In September, 1926, it was made into a chapel. In the wall which separates it from the rising ſtreet, there is ſtill the trace of a door, that of the inn, now itself converted.

THE COUNTRY PRIEST WHO WAS CANONISED: JEAN-BAPTISTE VIANNEY[1]

IN 1925 Jean-Baptiſte Vianney, the Curé of Ars, was solemnly canonised by the Sovereign Pontiff; his praises resounded beneath the Dome of St Peter's at Rome, and his portrait was exposed, according to cuſtom, above the heads of an immense crowd. This Lyonnese peasant's son bore a great resemblance to Voltaire: he was slight, and active in his movements; he had the same ſtraight, compressed lips, prominent cheekbones, and piercing eyes. But their souls were very far apart! The only glory he sought was that of God, the only glory which the world has a right to praise.

Jean-Baptiſte Vianney was ordained prieſt juſt at the time when the Emperor Napoleon I loſt his throne. For twenty years he had lived the life of a labourer in the ſtation in which he was born. He never left his native province. Very early in life the call had come to him: "Thou shalt be a prieſt." But how was he to find means to begin, much less to carry on the required ſtudies? The years passed.

He managed to learn Latin, thanks to the charity of a good prieſt in the parish of Écully, the efforts of both maſter and scholar being very elementary. His extraordinary virtue was the chief reason which induced his examiners to accept him when the time came for his examination in philosophy and theology. Humanly speaking, he was not looked upon as having any future before him. He had neither learning, nor connection, nor forture; his pronunciation was always faulty, and the cure to which he was appointed was far from being considered one of the beſt in the diocese. It had a scanty and impoverished population, indifferently inſtruced in Chriſtian doctrine—as was frequently the case at the close of the great wars of the Empire—unromantic scenery, a bleak climate: that was all that was given him. Picture a church ſtanding in the midſt of some

[1] *Le curé d'Ars, Saint Jean-Baptiſte Vianney,* by the Abbé Trochu, 1 vol. Emmanuel Vitte, Paris and Lyons, 1925. (Eng. trans., Burns Oates and Washbourne, London, 1927.)

whitewashed houses, far from any railway, between Lyons and Bourg-en-Bresse, on the edge of the plateau of Les Dombes. Undulating country ſtretches as far as the horizon, bare of vegetation when the corn has been cut, the only shadows caſt upon it being from the clouds; for it is devoid of wood or grove, and the winter and summer winds pass over it unimpeded. Jean-Baptiſte Vianney was to live there for forty-two years, and to draw to himself that world from which he desired to flee.

The work was already heavy enough (and he knew it), limited to a few hundred labourers. What a task it is to keep a country parish up to its duties, to raise and ſanctify it! What a lofty ideal to make all his people praise him who alone is worthy of praise! They are so easily harmed, these little communities, formed of elements almoſt all alike, often possessing no one with any intellectual superiority, and thus imperfect through their lack of hierarchy, sinking back continually into worldly ways of thought, permeated nowadays with the wrong ideas which come in from the towns, having no one to contradict them, and being daily worked upon by every human passion, above all by the love of riches, which some confound with that of equality, but which, on the contrary, is that of inequality, since it never ceases to envy even those over whom it has triumphed.

Yes, but let a saint live there, and suffer, and weep, and radiate virtue, and the poor parish will become, like Ars, one of those spots where prayer never ceases. I went there years ago for the firſt time, attracted thither by all that was said about it and by what my mother had told me. Had she seen the Curé of Ars? I do not remember; but she said to me when I was quite a little boy: "Crowds go down there to consult M. Vianney; they are obliged sometimes to wait a whole day, sometimes two, in order to speak to him; but those who have seen him come back converted or consoled, whichever they needed, and they have ſtrength and courage to persevere in their difficulties.

"When saints speak to us, it is like a ſtar going before to guide us." What my mother said was true. I have read since that the owners of public vehicles, in order to meet the demands of travellers, were obliged, little by little, to eſtablish

five diligence services a day between Ars and the nearest town. From every province of France they came, some in earnest, some out of curiosity; they also came from other lands, from Switzerland, England, Scotland, the United States, and elsewhere. The subprefect of the district, charged with the statistics, wrote one day to the Secretary of State of the Home Department that not less than 20,000 people came yearly to consult M. Vianney. He is sure to have considerably underestimated the numbers, from motives of administrative bashfulness, for he held office under Louis-Philippe, and like his predecessors and those who came after him, he watered down what would be displeasing to his government.

How could one man suffice not only for the needs of his ordinary parish, but also for those of this immense additional parish, were it not that he had no trust in himself, but full confidence in God? The power of an apostle lies in his sanctity. The Abbé Huvelin said, as he was dying: "We do more good by what we are than by what we do." What did the Curé of Ars do? What others did; all that he could. He visited, with great friendliness, each of the families amongst whom he lived, the good and those who were not so good, the very poor and those who were less so. From none of them would he accept a meal or a present. But he gave to them and to those who passed through Ars all that he had. He lived the life of a penitent. His food consisted of a few boiled potatoes, and he was thus able to do without a cook. He used to say playfully, "I have never lost my cloak," for he had never had one. He was ever ready to smile: it came from the grace within him. He was never known to possess two cassocks. A few faggots did service as a mattress for his bed. He slept but little. He really lived in the church, whether praying before the altar, or preaching from the pulpit, or shut up in the confessional to hear the avowal of so many miseries and so much guilt. At 11 o'clock every morning it was his custom to give a homely instruction whenever he was sure of finding hearers. And these very soon became numerous, eager, enthusiastic. It was not Bossuet nor Fénelon nor Ravignan! Teachers of grammar might exclaim as they heard him, but the Christian heart would always be touched; this saintly peasant said things sublime, with a simplicity and boldness which no mere

eloquence could give; his utterances were full of variety, living, and spontaneous; they were free from that feeling that we sometimes have when listening to a learned man, that we are reading a book or a newspaper. What he said came from his very soul. He was thought to be devoid of talents, and he believed himself to be so: in reality, he had many, having kept the spirit of his race and his soil, a blunt frankness of manner, a way of going straight to the point, the love of homely things, ready playfulness, and a heart that could sympathise with every kind of misfortune, like that of Mère Vianney, when every evening she opened the doors of her barn to the needy and fed them with the soup she had made. But read these fragments that I have picked out from the homilies that were taken down and kept. How many others have been lost! "Here is a gun; very well! Load it; but someone is needed to fire it off. In the same way we have in us the power to do good. But the Holy Spirit is the one that fires, and out come the good actions. . . ."

"The Holy Spirit is like a gardener working in our soul. . . . The Holy Spirit is our servant. . . ."

"Thorns give out balm, and crosses breathe out sweetness. But we must squeeze the thorns in our hands and press the crosses on our hearts to get at the sweetness that is in them."

"If you could say to those poor lost souls who have been so long in hell, 'We are going to put a priest at the door of hell. All who want to go to Confession have only to come out,' my children, do you think a single one would remain there?"

"Faith is when we speak to God as we should to a man standing by. . . ."

"Look at those tepid souls who never think twice about speaking, on the slightest pretext, while saying their prayers. Are they offering their day to God, or saying grace before or after meals? They are doing it, it is true, but without thinking to whom they are speaking. They do not even leave off working. If they are men they twirl their hat round in their hands, as if they wanted to see whether it is a good or bad one, as though they were thinking of selling it. If they are women they will say their prayers while they are cutting bread for the soup, or making up the fire, or calling after their children or their servants. . . ."

"The more you pray the more you will want to pray. It is like a fish, which first swims on the surface of the water and then goes deeper and still deeper. The soul goes down deeper till it loses itself in the sweetness of its converse with God. . . ."

And now and then this homely teacher would break out into majestic utterances such as the following: "Nothing is lasting, nothing, nothing, nothing! Life passes quickly; reputation is ruined; fortune crumbles away; health is undermined. We are gone like the wind."

It will be easily understood that eloquence of this kind possessed a power of transforming the simple goodwill of certain souls into faith and nobility. They did not all go to Ars for the purpose of being converted; but moved by curiosity, and not realising that they were drawn by something higher, they suddenly found themselves under the influence of grace and yielded. Nevertheless, most of the pilgrims, whether men or women, set out with a very real intention of confessing to the Curé of Ars, speaking to him of their difficulties and troubles, and asking his counsel and the help of his prayers.

They would say: "Life has become very bitter to me; my wife has left me.—My husband has forsaken me.—My children have left me.—I have lost all my money.—I have lived a sinful life.—I think God is calling me to such a life; am I right?—I am a young man of twenty; ought I to enter a seminary and become a priest?—I am a young girl; shall I enter an enclosed Order, go to work in a Mission, in the Hospital with the Sisters of Saint-Vincent of Paul, among the very poor of the working classes, or shall I nurse the sick in their own homes and minister to their poor souls, if I can, at the same time as their bodies?—Have compassion on me: I have been and still am weakness itself; cowardice which accuses itself and does not want to be cured. But yet, all the same, I come to you, strength of God!" All these voices enveloped the Curé of Ars in a chorus of lamentations and distress, which left him no rest: in this world men who bring peace to others do not enjoy it themselves.

Jean-Baptiste Vianney had the gift of counsel, which the Scriptures place among the gifts of the Holy Spirit: he could read souls; we might even say that, together with the Breviary, they were his one book; he knew, before a penitent had opened

his mouth, whether he was in good faith or not; he was admitted into the secrets of that kingdom of God! Not seldom he would say to one or another: "You have done this, that, and the other: finish your Confession." In a few lucid words, without hesitation, with aſtonishing authority, he would resolve cases of conscience and interior troubles. This was his special and overwhelming mission. The crowd sought for him, lay in wait for him, and followed him. As soon as he was seen in the ſtreet, at once a murmur arose in the church: "Here he is!" Veneration, which so quickly turns into indiscretion, held him prisoner. He was so besieged that no less than four times he made up his mind to leave the village and retire into a monaſtery. But the alarm bell sounded as soon as the people "got wind" that he was leaving. What would have become of the Curé without Ars, and Ars without the Curé?

God wanted him there, submerged in that multitude of sinners, this man athirſt for silence, purity, and meditation.

And four times he was obliged to return to his confessional and to shut himself up in that worm-eaten box that may ſtill be seen in the church. From 1818, the date of his nomination, to 1859, that of his death, he may be said to have lived in it. Jean-Baptiſte Vianney, in the laſt years of his life, used to pass fifteen hours a day hearing the sins of the world, a slave at the galleys of absolution, more importuned than a Miniſter in office, judging more cases than a court of juſtice in a big city, but without any autumn vacation or any respite from his audiences. When it was time for him to leave the world, he could say that not one of the people confided to his care now failed in their Eaſter duties. He had transformed his parish. It has remained fervent after three-quarters of a century.

I do not know if "pretty" is a word that can be used in speaking of a miracle. The word, it seems to me, fits in with the wonderful occurrence that is related in his biographies, and which bears so close a resemblance to scenes in the Gospel. The orphanage that he had founded in the village, to which he gave the name of La Providence, one day fell short of bread. The provision of corn was exhauſted. The Abbé Vianney had recourse to his accuſtomed benefactors, both the ordinary and the exceptional ones, and he got nothing, or next to nothing. Then, taking a relic of St Francis Regis, one of his favourite saints, he

went up into the granary one evening, and, with his hands accustomed to the feel of grain, he scraped together in a little heap on the floor what remained of the former provision, and covered it with the relic. The night passed like every other night; he must have prayed much. Early next morning he went up to the steps leading to the orphanage, greatly distressed at the thought that he would perhaps have to "send away the poor children." One of the Superiors, Jeanne-Marie Chaney, was with him. They neither of them dared open the door. Nevertheless, they did open it. The granary was full of wheat! Was it not a figure of that handful of Christians he had found at Ars, and which had become—in a little longer than a night, it is true—a whole harvest?

THE ATTRACTION OF ANCIENT DISCIPLINE

THE transformations to be effected in souls have their beginnings so very far back that even when we are endowed with good memories we are never able to follow up the entire succession of graces which have led us on to where we are now, nor to recall that first tiny circumstance, having apparently no connection with the future, when we began to wonder whether we were on the right road. There exist rays without light in the moral even more than the physical world; and we shall never realise these things perfectly, though they are our own, until that day when God will say to us: "See, poor soul, how much I have loved you, though you understood me not."

In the year 1885 an Oxford undergraduate, son of a clergyman of the Established Church of England, was travelling by sea from Liverpool to Constantinople.[1] He was shipwrecked near Corunna, and, seeing himself in imminent danger of death, cried for help to our Blessed Lady. She has unexpected clients; she knows it, and loves them. He was saved, and, attributing his escape to our Lady's intercession, the young traveller began to be greatly troubled. By education, family, and surroundings he had grown up an Anglican. The account of his conversion, signed with his initials, has been related by himself in a small publication, in which are narrated several other conversions of Great Britain.[2]

He is careful to say at the very beginning of this chapter: "There can be no reason to doubt the good faith even of those whose position seems to be most illogical. . . . As I am on the subject, I feel bound to add my testimony to that of Cardinal Manning and many others, that, as far as my knowledge goes, I believe the great majority of Anglicans to be in the most

[1] See Notes 1 and 2, Appendix, p. 178.

[2] *The City of Peace. By Those who have Entered It.*

absolute good faith—or the most 'inconceivable ignorance,' if you will." The young man took his degrees at Oxford, was ordained deacon, became a curate in a London parish, and then received, from an Anglican bishop, priestly orders. The validity of orders thus conferred has, after long debate, been declared null by Pope Leo XIII. The spirit of this young clergyman who had invoked Mary could find no rest. He kept saying to himself, as he officiated before the people: "What if it is all a sham and I am not really a priest!"

Travelling abroad, like all Englishmen, but this time neither for sport nor out of mere curiosity, he came to Maredsous, in Belgium, where a beautiful large Benedictine abbey[1] had been erected some fifty years back, in that undulating country, covered with underwood, known as "Entre Sambre et Meuse." Why was it that in his state of anxiety he made choice of a Benedictine monastery? He does not tell us. But highly cultured Anglo-Saxons have often been led by their taste for comparative solitude, study, and moderate activity, and by the attraction of majestic ceremonial and ecclesiastical music, to the spacious houses where the sons of St Benedict spend their lives in work and prayer. The sight of the religious habit did not alarm this traveller, for he had had as his guide through Rome a young Dominican of about his own age who knew English, at that time of life when friends are quickly made and friendship does not die; and he was to write later on, in the *Memoir* of his conversion, these exquisite lines, in which the sentiments of a noble heart are combined with national temperament: "I parted with my Dominican friend with mutual regret. We have never met from that day to this, but I look forward to meeting him again as one of the joys of Paradise."

When he reached the Belgian abbey he was welcomed, as is the custom in those Orders where hospitality is a part of the Rule, and had leisure to think things over. He spoke to Dom Columba Marmion of the doubts which were disquieting the loyalty of his soul. This monk, whose mystic writings are known throughout the world, was not yet abbot, but he was already well versed in spiritual matters. The young man followed the Offices, lost in some corner of the vast church,

[1] See Note 3, Appendix, p. 179.

which reminds one of a cathedral. How wonderful were the chant and the solitude, the alternation of song and unbroken silence! He listened to the monks as they sang those words of the *Credo: Unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam,* and experienced as keen an impression as if someone had said to him: "Enter that one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." And this strange idea, which he mentioned to no one, came into his mind: "If the Abbot of Maredsous sends for me to-day before twelve o'clock, I will take it as a sign that I am to become a Roman Catholic."

The ten o'clock Conventual Mass came to an end. Eleven struck; half-past eleven; twelve: nobody had come to tell the guest that Father Abbot wished to see him. He went down to the refectory, and, as he was waiting to let the long file of monks pass by, one of them came up to him and said:

"Father Abbot told me to ask you to go and see him."

"At what time?"

"This morning; I was not able to tell you sooner."

The little sign he had desired only came at the head of a long procession of solid arguments which had lain for several years imprisoned in his mind. The guest asked to be instructed in the Catholic Faith; he abjured Protestantism, became by his own choice a Benedictine of Maredsous, and in memory of the day when he was saved from shipwreck, which happened to be the Feast of St Bede, he changed his name and was known as Dom Bede Camm.[1]

His conversion was but a single event in the long preparation for the matters which I am about to relate: the preface is not yet finished.

Whilst Dom Bede Camm was living in Belgium, Miss Boyd, a wealthy and pious lady, belonging to the High Church party in England, came to see him.

One day, as she was visiting the ruins of Glastonbury, she felt herself interiorly moved to employ her life and her great wealth in saving from profanation so many places formerly consecrated to God and St Benedict. She came to Maredsous to see an abbey in full vigour, to visit Dom Bede, whom she had known in England, and also with the intention of founding a

[1] See Note 2, p. 178.

Mass, to be said every day, in perpetuity, for "the union of the Churches." When this had been accomplished, the Mass was still to be offered at Maredsous, in thanksgiving. As the formula did not meet with approval—for affirmation and denial cannot be "united"—Miss Boyd proposed that the Mass should be offered "that England, in the matter of religion, should do the will of God." This was accepted, and the old lady, on her return to England, bought a property on which were the ruins of a Benedictine abbey[1] at West Malling in Kent. She built a chapel and established there a Community of Anglican Sisters, who had previously been living at Twickenham, and were trying to follow the Rule of St Benedict.[2]

Those simple and majestic words defining the intention of the Mass to be said daily at Maredsous must surely have been a joy to the heavenly Court. A creature was asking of God, not what *she* thought best, but what *he* judged best. There can be no doubt about it; Miss Boyd would obtain for herself what God judged to be best; but there would also be other souls, and those not a few, who would come under the influence of that benediction.

Wonderful vitality of tradition! In Protestant England there were women striving to live the life of chastity and regular observance of the great Catholic religious Orders; they called themselves Benedictines, although they had no possible hope of being canonically attached to any of the ancient and yet vigorous houses of the Benedictine Order; there were no authorised guides, no ecclesiastical visitors to uphold the Rule and to resolve difficulties that might arise in conventual life. Unenlightened, yet irresistibly attracted, they started on their journey towards the "Pax" of St Benedict.

The way was to be longer than they thought. But prayer, their good faith, and the daily Mass "that England might do the will of God" were to lead them to Rome. Soon, as I am going to show, the light was to shine upon them, and the movement begun by them was to influence others. It was not

[1] See Note 4, Appendix, p. 180.

[2] The Abbey of Malling had been founded, probably in 1090, by a monk of Bec, in Normandy. The list of abbesses is still extant: it begins with Avicia, 1106, and ends with Elisabeth Vernon, who witnessed, in 1538, the dispersion of her Order.

their benefactress, Miss Boyd, who was to convert them. She, indeed, was to abjure Anglicanism and die in the Catholic Faith: but it was not through the efforts she made to communicate her faith to the pious women whom she had taken under her protection that they would be converted. No, this great step was prepared and accomplished by another woman, whom they were to have as Superior, in very remarkable circumstances.

We are, as will be seen, on a sort of spiritual quest, where quite indeliberate actions lead to unforeseen consequences, and the qualities and powers of religious life are conferred by those who do not possess them; where retiring, unassuming souls, seeking the truth themselves, lead those around them, and others farther off, slowly but surely to the very threshold of the Church.

In 1893 an English lad of eighteen was studying medicine in London. His name was Carlyle, he had been born at Sheffield, and had passed a great part of his childhood in the Argentine. Greatly impressed by a book he had once read on the subject of monks, and by a visit to the Anglican Benedictines at Malling, he asked leave to enter a little group of *oblates* that had lately been formed by the Chaplain of the Community. The experiment did not succeed, and the *oblates* came to an end, but Ælred Carlyle formed another group, of whom he became "Superior." This new experiment lasted about two years; then the meetings ceased, as the ideals proposed by the "Superior" seemed too austere and not capable of realisation.

In Lent, 1895, he was no longer in Kensington. He had undertaken, with a few friends, the work of a Settlement in one of the very poor parts of London, overflowing with children who have no one to look after them. He used to gather together the street urchins of the Isle of Dogs and take them to some playground, either a park or common in the suburbs. Gifted with imagination, high-spirited, eloquent and dramatic, having both the power and the desire to command, he had never abandoned the idea that had possessed him in earlier times. Sometimes he would take his boys to an Orphanage belonging to some Protestant Sisters of Charity, the Superior of which, Sister Mary Pauline, a remarkable woman some fifteen years older then Ælred Carlyle, took a maternal interest in him, and, like all mothers who give advice and are

anxious to see it followed, tried to guide the young man, whose spirit of enterprise both delighted and alarmed her.

It was in the same year that Miss Boyd founded the daily Mass at Maredsous for the conversion of England.

The following year, at Easter, Ælred Carlyle wished to enter the Benedictine Order as a novice. To whom should he address himself? He turned once more to the chaplain at Malling, through whose instrumentality he had become an *oblate*. Moreover, as his powers seemed to be doubtful, he took care that the chaplain should be authorised to receive a novice, who for the time being would have neither noviceship nor abbey, since there was no recognised body of Benedictine monks in the Anglican Church. And the authorisation was, in fact, given by Archbishop Benson.[1] A like authorisation was sought for later, when Ælred Carlyle became "Abbot" of an infant Community. Illogical? Doubtless, but let us not smile at it; on the contrary, let us learn to understand all the bitterness and apparent uselessness of the lesson. For this attempt to revive monastic tradition brought into relief the break there had been with the past, and, by showing up deficiencies, led on to research and reflection.

Dom Bede Camm, writing to an English Catholic paper, which had spoken with some bitterness of the little "Anglican Benedictine Community" whose vicissitudes we are going to follow from its beginning to its final establishment, spoke in terms of great beauty, which it is good to quote here. He was inspired by the spirit of charity and his own experience of the difficulties of the way when he wrote as follows: "It is so easy to make fun of people, so easy and so disastrous. . . . I know nothing of these good people, except by hearsay. . . . There is no doubt that they have no real claim to belong to our holy Order; but still they love St Benedict, they try to keep his Rule, they serve God in the best way they can, according to their lights. . . . And therefore they ought to be spared the cruel mockery of those who, by no merit of their own, possess the inestimable gift of the Faith. It seems to me very touching to think of the treasures of devotion laid at the Feet of our Lord by those who, as we know, are living outside his holy Church."

[1] The chaplain of Malling became later on a Catholic priest and entered the Order of St Dominic.

However it may have been, we only know this fact: in 1896 there was, in London, one Benedictine novice; in 1898 a professed Benedictine, who endeavoured to draw round him a few young men, for the most part students, clerks, or apprentices, who seemed to have a love of solitude and silence, of study and the religious life. The Community thus formed lived successively in several different houses. In 1906 they moved to the extreme south-west of England, and took possession of the Isle of Caldey, off the south coast of Wales, a small, barren island which for ages had resounded with the chanting of psalms. On their arrival the travellers took shelter under canvas among the ruins of a pre-Reformation church.

For there had been monks at Caldey since Celtic times, and there is still to be seen, in a fair state of preservation, a Norman Priory of the eleventh century, where had settled the Benedictines sent out from the Abbey of Saint-Dogmael in Gaul.[1]

The island is less than two miles from the little port of Tenby. A small steamboat crosses in twenty minutes. It is something the shape of a tortoise, swimming with its head and neck protruding and pointing towards the west. It measures 556 acres. The highest cliffs which protect it from the waves do not exceed 166 feet, and its most elevated spot, a field towards the southern part of the island, is only 33 feet above them. This gives a bird's-eye view of the whole island, which is green nearly the whole year round, with its meadows, pasture-land, and oatfields, while reeds and ferns growing in the crevices of the rocks form, with their crowded stems and leaves interlaced, forests stirred by the sea breezes, waves which they cannot break. Here and there on the undulating surface of the island are white-walled, red-roofed cottages, a lighthouse with its accessories, a few houses clustering round the new abbey: the sea all round, the passing wind, now and then a vessel out to sea, and, towards the north, the misty line of the Welsh coast. There are no snakes nor frogs in the island. If anyone knows Guernsey, he knows Caldey. The climate is mild, tree fuchsias are often seen growing in the hedgerows, and a branch of the Gulf Stream brings to the shore of Sandtop Bay strange shells from South America.

[1] The Abbey of St Dogmael was itself an old foundation, made by the Norman monks of the Abbey of Tiron.

It was here that Ælred Carlyle, with his group of disciples, came to settle in 1906. Three years previously he had been nominated Abbot, accepted as such by the Anglican authorities, and blessed according to the Roman rite by a High Church American Bishop, Mgr. Grafton, of Fond-du-Lac, Wisconsin. He was helped by the liberality of several members of the High Church party, which enabled him to buy a large portion of the island and build a monastery.[1]

The deep-rooted love of every Englishman for tradition is well known. This could not fail to come to the fore when it was a question of attempting to restore the ancient Order of St Benedict in England. And, therefore, when they came to decorate the high altar of the Conventual Church, the touching idea was suggested and carried out of collecting from all over the British Isles stones chosen from the ruins of the ancient abbeys. The dates of their foundation were engraved upon them, and they were used to cover the base of the altar. Those who wish may approach it, and if they lift its covering can read those names and dates, and yield themselves up to memories of the past: Lindisfarne, 634; Deerhurst Abbey, 802; Muchelney Abbey, 700-1537; Mellifont, 1142; Romsey Abbey, 907; Evesham Abbey, 701; St Radegond's, Dover, 1009; etc.

Another and somewhat strange feature of this love of the past was related by one of those eminent ecclesiastics who visited the island at the time of the conversion of the monks to the Roman Catholic Church. Four of the "Brethren" had obtained permission to live in perpetual silence. They followed the common Rule, but four times a year went to recreation with the others. They were commonly known as "solitaries," although it was not quite the solitary life of the Middle Ages. One of these, in the presence of the person mentioned above,

[1] The Bishop of Fond-du-Lac happened to be in England as the guest of Lord Halifax when, on October 30, 1903, he installed Dom Ælred as Abbot. The Archbishop of York, in whose diocese Painsthorpe is situated, had authorised the ceremony. The following year the Abbot went to America to be ordained priest by Bishop Grafton with the same authorisation. It was with the object of being accepted as a diocesan priest of the Church of England that we shall see Dom Ælred addressing himself later to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

remarked: "We may speak to-day, but I shall be so glad to go back to my life of silence."

All these Anglican religious sang the Office; they set themselves to lead a contemplative life; at the hours appointed by the Rule, some worked on the land, others were occupied in church embroidery or painting. The Community also edited a magazine called *Pax*.

The years went by. The former head of the London Settlement, in the dignity of his new office, feeling he was being watched by many of those who had aided and encouraged him in his undertakings, turned his thoughts to that friend whose advice he had so often sought in earlier days. She was no longer young, but still very active, and at the invitation of Dom Ælred had left her Orphanage and those among whom she had worked so long, to become, in 1907, the Superior of the Anglican Benedictines of West Malling, the Convent formerly established there by Miss Boyd. If only he could induce these Benedictines to leave Kent and settle in the West of England, not far from Caldey, there would then be two Benedictine Abbeys, one of men and one of women, in the principality of Wales! The Abbot of Caldey watched for a suitable moment. This presented itself in 1911.

Sister Mary Pauline, Dame Scholastica Ewart, moved her nuns to Milford Haven, in Wales, and the Abbey took the name of St Bride's. The journey from the coast to this new monastery takes three or four hours. First, Tenby had to be reached, then Pembroke; there was an arm of the river to be crossed in a ferry boat, and the rest of the way on foot. But visits were now possible, and Ælred Carlyle, under the influence of this experienced woman, herself feeling uneasy about the religious questionings raised in her by study and observation, was now to embark on the most weighty initiative he had yet undertaken; he was going to ask himself: Is it possible to be a Benedictine outside the Roman Catholic Church? Is not Catholicism the whole truth?[1]

It is indeed a remarkable fact that the Romeward movement

[1] Dom Bede Camm, in writing of the attempt made by the Anglicans at Caldey to keep the Benedictine Rule, was able to assert that it was the only one which had so far succeeded in introducing the real Contemplative Life into the Anglican Communion.

in the Abbey of Caldey began this very same year when Sister Mary Pauline came into nearer touch with the little far-away island. The Superior of the nuns wrote nothing; she made her abjuration, as I shall relate, the day after the monks of Caldey made theirs; but at that time she said to a person, whose word may be relied on, something which throws light on the whole episode. "She assured me," says this witness, "that for three years—that is, since 1910, before coming to St Bride's, she was entirely convinced that to save her soul she must obey the certainty she had of the truth of the One Catholic Roman Church. For nothing in the world would she have died outside the Church; but she hoped to bring all her daughters with her." Therefore, for three years before 1913, she had been prudently and by degrees drawing her daughters towards the Catholic Church. That she was kept informed of the different phases in the two years' correspondence between Caldey and the Anglican Bishops of Canterbury and Oxford comes out in several allusions in her letters. But it is difficult to believe that her part in this controversy was merely that of a confidante, when it is remembered that the Abbot of Caldey had done all in his power to make her a Benedictine, and to bring her from Kent to Milford Haven with her Community, himself filling the office of Religious Visitor to the newly settled monastery.

I cannot help thinking that she had a great deal to do with the Romeward trend of the Anglican Benedictines of Caldey, since, by her own showing, she was already a Catholic at heart at the time when the question began to be mooted in the minds of these religious, between the authority of the Protestant episcopate and that of the Holy See.

The difficulties which arose seemed at first mild enough. They concerned the interior regulations of the house. But outward discipline is only the rind; put it slightly out of place and you can see the kernel, and judge of the tree. Very soon uneasiness, then hostility, began to show itself on the part of the Established Church, when the religious of the island, accustomed as they were to recite the Office in Latin with the text of the Roman Benedictine Liturgy, desired the Archbishop of Canterbury to approve the devotions that had grown out of it, and especially the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The

whole question of Protestantism was unwittingly brought up by these young minds, who imagined that they would be able in their own church to live the complete Benedictine life. They used the Latin Missal; they had adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: they gave Benediction with a monstrance; one of their eight bells was named *Our Lady,* and bore the inscription: *Stella Maris, succurre piissima nobis.* Was it possible for them to continue in error? The harmony of Catholicism is one of the strongest proofs of its divine origin. It alone explains the world; it alone expresses the whole soul. There is no contradiction in it. Its doctrine, Liturgy, history, art, each in its own way witnesses to this universality. The prayer of the Church is impregnated with it; and it also gives instruction, for it is closely allied to the dogma which it assumes and sings; it draws the mind to the words of Christ and the definitions of Councils. It is not, therefore, surprising that men attentive to, and familiar with, the words of the Psalms, hymns, Epistles, Gospels, and invocations to God and the Saints, should have gained the perception of the whole truth, which others have reached by other paths.

The letters in which the debate is carried on between the Anglican claims and those of Rome, in which it opens out, and becomes stirring and imposing, finally resolving itself in the conversion to Roman Catholicism, have been published under the simple title, *A Correspondence,*[1] without preface or notes, out of a feeling of delicate consideration for those they have left.

I shall try to give a summary of this little book, and shall publish fragments of the more important letters. They form matter of the greatest interest. Considered in themselves, independently of the circumstances which preceded or followed them, they deserve careful perusal, by reason of their logical tone, their spirit of loyalty, and, now and again, their accents of hidden pain. For it is a sorrow which Newman well knew and expressed, the feeling of setting one's face against the religion of one's youth and country, against one's best friends, who do not understand and will turn away.

The signature of these letters on the side of Caldey is,

[1] The book is now out of print.

naturally, that of the Abbot. He wrote them, and their wording, in the first instance, is his work. But he has only expressed the mind of his brethren as well as his own. The letters bear witness to this. In the most important and decisive of these, he is careful to say that he has come to the conclusion there expressed after consulting his Community, or the "seniors." We have before us two collective forces, in every way unequally matched; on the one hand, two theologians of the English Church, surrounded with counsellors, rich in experience, dexterous in their handling of spiritual questions; on the other, a group of young men who were led by instinct, attraction, or logic, on a quest beyond the liturgical frontiers of Anglicanism, to revive an ancient monastic tradition, and, being greatly encouraged therein, found themselves overcome by it and led to Catholicism.

The correspondence opens by a letter in which Abbot Ælred asks the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of the Church of England, to recognise that the Isle of Caldey is not subject to the ordinary jurisdiction of the diocesan; he wants his own position, and that of his religious, clearly defined by the ecclesiastical authority of England.

Letter from Father Abbot to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"THE ABBEY,
"ISLE OF CALDEY,
"NR. TENBY.
"*December* 13, 1911.

"MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

"I think your Grace may have heard of the existence of a Community of men living under the Benedictine Rule on the Isle of Caldey near Tenby in South Wales.

"I trust you will pardon a letter from me as Abbot of the Community; and I am writing to your Grace as a priest in Colonial Orders to ask you for the usual permission to minister in the Province.

"I must explain that Caldey Island is by its ancient character and present general recognition extra-diocesan and extra-parochial. The island became extra-diocesan by papal privilege granted before the Reformation to the Benedictines who then owned it. This privilege of exemption was extended by

Henry VIII at the Dissolution in his grant of the island property to John Bradshaw, from whom it has passed by sale through nine different families until it came into our possession.

"Caldey is subject to no parochial or county taxation, and its ecclesiastical position as a Peculiar is recognised by the nearest diocesan—the Bishop of Saint David's. The island is very self-contained, and belongs entirely to our Community; and all the people who work here in the little village are employed by us and are under my care. . . .

"The Community, now numbering thirty-two members, includes two priests, of whom I am one. From the beginning we have tried to live according to Catholic Faith and practice, and we have always taken care to be obedient to the principles of Catholic Authority.[1] We have never once disobeyed either the commands or the known wishes of the bishop of the diocese in which we happened to be; and every step in the life of our Community has been taken with the sanction of authority. . . . Seeing that our Community has now become firmly established and is growing rapidly, it is necessary for my own ecclesiastical standing to be duly authorised. I am frequently asked about our present relation to Authority, especially as our extra-diocesan position leaves us, I suppose, subject to no Bishop but the Archbishop of the Province. The nature of our work does not appeal to a very large number of Churchmen; but we have many friends, and there are nearly 1,000 members of our Confraternity, while our magazine *Pax* has a circulation of more than 2,000 copies. A number of priests and laymen from all over the kingdom spend their holidays at our Guest House, and many come to us for days of retreat and spiritual refreshment.

"If your Grace will send me the permission to minister that is usually granted to priests in Colonial Orders, it will give me the necessary relation to the Episcopate that will help to ensure the stability of a work which has been slowly built up during the last thirteen years.

"I should have asked you for this permission when we first

[1] The writer evidently refers to the authority of the English Church, which he looks upon as a branch of the Catholic Church. It is a common formula among members of the High Church party.

came to Caldey, but I was strongly advised to wait until our work had passed the experimental stage and it was seen that our Community could settle permanently on the island.

"I trust your Grace will pardon this somewhat long letter, which I have tried to make as short as possible while yet giving you a sufficient explanation of what is needed. With great respect,

"Believe me, my Lord Archbishop,
"Your faithful servant,
(*Signed*) "D. ÆLRED, O.S.B.,
"*Abbot.*"

"TO THE MOST REVEREND THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY."

Letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Private Secretary (Rev. Arthur Sheppard) to Father Abbot.

"LAMBETH PALACE, S.E.
"*December* 18, 1911.

"DEAR SIR,

"The Archbishop of Canterbury directs me to thank you for your letter of December 13. His Grace will certainly give full consideration to your request, but I am to say that he would like to have copies of the various letters you refer to in order that all the facts may be clearly before him. . . . Will you further tell the Archbishop what is the ground upon which you speak of Caldey as being extra-diocesan and exempt? The Archbishop had always understood that in the seventeenth century Caldey was regarded as a parish in the Diocese of Saint David's. . . .

"Yours faithfully,
(*Signed*) "ARTHUR SHEPPARD,
"*Private Secretary.*"

"THE REV. D. A. CARLYLE."

Next follows a letter sending the required documents; the papers relating to the particular situation of Caldey, as to the jurisdiction of the bishop, had not, however, reached their

destination when, on February 14, 1912, the Archbishop himself wrote the following letter, which is not free from a certain reserve, on the subject of the Benedictine Community:

"LAMBETH PALACE, S.E.
"*February* 14, 1912.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have now given careful attention to the letters. . . . You have offered me strong assurance of your loyalty to the Church of England, and I have heard from independent sources as to the help which you have been able to give to men whose faults or failures have brought trouble upon them. The records before me seem also to show that you have consistently striven to render vigorous aid in Church work in different parts of England. The position, however, is not a simple and ordinary one, and it would be essential that I should be further satisfied upon several points about which at present I know very little. I am anxious in all reasonable ways to support and encourage those who are working in loyalty to our Church, even where the usages of their work and worship are not those which I should personally adopt. Very likely you may be able to give me complete satisfaction in these matters. This could perhaps be best arrived at by means of an interview, when you could lay all the facts before me, and I could make any inquiry of you which seems necessary.

"Caldey Island is a long way from London, but if you are shortly coming to town for any reason I shall be glad to hear from you and to arrange, if possible, for an interview at a time convenient to us both. My days are necessarily very much occupied, but I would gladly appoint a time and reserve it for you. Until we have had such communication it is difficult, and indeed impossible, for me to give you a decision upon the request which you have put before me, or to say more than that it is my earnest endeavour to give sympathy and support to honest work of whatever kind which is done to the glory of God within the large and reasonable limits of the Church of England.

"I am,
"Yours very truly,
(*Signed*) "RANDALL CANTUAR."

"THE REV. D. A. CARLYLE."

The interview of the Abbot with the Archbishop took place in London, at Lambeth Palace, on March 6, 1912. A note published in *A Correspondence* between two letters sums up what was said on this occasion. I give it in a shorter form. The Abbot exposed the situation of the Community at Caldey, and of those Benedictine Communities affiliated to that of Caldey: Milford Haven (St Bride's), a Community of women in the Diocese of St David; Llanthony and Pershore, communities of men, one in the Diocese of St David, the other in that of Worcester. He explained what the work of the Benedictines had been for fifteen years. Speaking of the permission to be asked of him, the Primate said: "I understand that you wish me to give you at the present time a Licence under the Colonial Clergy Act for officiating in the Province of Canterbury, though you neither hold nor ask for Diocesan accrediting, or Licence, or Office."

"That is the very thing," answered the Abbot, who was asking permission to have two of the religious ordained as priests without their being obliged afterwards to serve two years in some parish.

The Archbishop then read a few notes that Abbot Ælred had prepared on the subject of ordinations. From this question the Abbot passed on to another, that of the faith and practices of the Community at Caldey. He told the Archbishop that the Brethren used the Benedictine Breviary and the Missal in Latin, but that the use of these books was confined to themselves. For example, in the village church at Caldey they made use of the Book of Common Prayer. According to him, this latter was for the use of the people but was not suitable for the members of a religious Order.

The Archbishop insisted that priests who visited Caldey should perform the different services according to the Book of Common Prayer; he promised, moreover, to take into consideration the whole matter, and to give his answer in due time.

"LAMBETH PALACE, S.E.
"*May* 20, 1912.

"MY DEAR FATHER ÆLRED,

"At our interview two months ago you told me before you left that you were in no hurry about a reply to your

questions, but that you would like to receive it in May or June. I have had opportunity of thinking over the whole matter quietly, and of taking counsel with some of those who are best qualified to advise me, and I have more than once talked the matter over with the Bishop of Oxford."

Here follows in substance the reply to the most important request of the Abbot of Caldey:

"If your Community is to hold a recognised place within the Church of England it must conform to the general principles laid down by the Committee of the Lambeth Conference of 1897, in a Report which the Conference commended to the attention of the Church. These recommendations were reiterated by a Committee in the Conference of 1908 and circulated throughout the dioceses of the Anglican Communion."

The Abbot replied in a few lines:

"I will read your letter to the Senior Brethren of the Community and discuss the whole matter with them."

He then wrote to the Anglican Bishop who had ordained him priest in America, Dr. Grafton, Bishop of Fond-du-Lac. The Abbot represented to Dr. Grafton that the Abbey was now firmly established and numbered thirty-four religious; he asked for three of them to be ordained priests for the needs of the monastery. He gave an account to the Bishop of the correspondence between himself and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and, in the course of a long letter, gave expression to his own and his brethren's opinion on the chief question, with which it is clear the Primate of England was exclusively occupied.

"As perhaps you may have heard, we have recently passed through a critical time in regard to the Roman question.

"The matter had for some time come up in various ways, and so last Lent we felt that we ought seriously to enter into ourselves as a community, and see exactly where we stood. We spent much time in careful deliberation, and by Easter we were able to come to a most happy and unanimous decision in regard to our position in the Church of England. It was clearly shown

us that God had placed us where we are, and that it would be quite wrong for us to surrender our present position and to transfer our obedience to the Roman Church. From this resolution there was only one dissentient, and he left us at once to be received into the Roman Communion. Before taking this step, however, he changed his mind again; so that we have come through one of the most difficult of religious experiences not only without suffering any loss, but with the great gain of a clearer realisation of our position, and a unanimity of opinion that would have been impossible unless we had been rightly guided to settle the question in the way we did. . . .

"Ever your affectionate and grateful Son,

(*Signed*) "D. ÆLRED, O.S.B.

"*Abbot.*"

Letter from the Bishop of Fond-du-Lac, Dr. Grafton, to Father Abbot.

"BISHOP'S HOUSE,

"FOND-DU-LAC,

"WISCONSIN.

"*August* 5, 1912.

"MY DEAR SON IN CHRIST,

"Your letter greatly gladdened my heart. We had heard of the Roman question being agitated at Caldey, and had daily prayers said for your guidance. I have no doubt your decision was a right one, and pray God's blessing upon it. If the Church of England is to regain her full Catholic heritages it must be by men so firmly grounded in the Catholic Faith that Romanism has no attractions for them.

"Our little Monastery of St Dunstan is the baby monastery of Christendom. We have been blessed financially. We began with five members and some aspirants, but I was obliged to reduce the number, for various causes, till we are at the present moment only two. But this is the number with which Cowley began, consisting the first year of Father Benson and myself. Our great Father's (St Benedict) work was tested in the same way."[1]

[1] Bishop Grafton was a member of the Society of St John the Evangelist.

From the Abbot to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"The Abbey,
"Isle of Caldey,
"Nr. Tenby.
"*August* 29, 1912.

"My Lord Archbishop,

"During the past three months I have been able to discuss with the Senior Members of my Community the various points bearing on your Grace's letter to me of May 20.

"We hold a Chapter every year at Pentecost to decide matters of importance; and I am speaking both for my brethren and myself when I say that I hope and believe we shall be glad to welcome the opportunity of electing a Visitor in the person of Bishop Gore. . . . There is, as there has always been from the beginning, on the part of our Community, a distinct recognition of the authority of the Episcopate. Without this authority being sought and obtained, we are assured there can be no true or permanent Religious Life in the sense that the Catholic Church has always understood the dedication and setting apart of those who felt called to the service of God under a particular Rule.

"It is not sufficient that the Rule itself should have been approved as a wise and competent Directory for the manner of life adopted. In the case of the Rule of St Benedict, it has 1,400 years' sanction and recognition as the chief of the Cenobitic and Contemplative Codes. But it is essential to the canonical existence of the Community, the exercise of proper authority by Superiors, and the validity of Religious Profession, that the living authority of the Church should be sought and obtained. . . . There is now among the members of the Community a conviction that the time of what may be called the work of Foundation is finished: and we are in a position to know what is wanted in the practice of the purely Contemplative Life of Prayer under a strict Rule. During these past years we have gained some experience . . . considering the actual position of Caldey as extra-diocesan, it would not be possible for the Bishop of Saint David's to be *ex officio* Visitor. . . ."

The Abbot adds that it is the desire of the religious to elect Bishop Gore, of Oxford, as Visitor. He then comes back on the

request he had already made, whether he might be allowed to have two of the Seniors at Caldey ordained priests, the others remaining "laymen," in the sense that they would not receive minor Orders.

The Archbishop, who was on the point of leaving for Italy, answered in haste on September 8, 1912; but he is able to say that he approves of the idea of a Visitor, and that their choice of the Bishop of Oxford is an excellent one. As to the ordination of the priests, the Archbishop is of opinion that it would be better to postpone the matter and to go further into the question.

"You should now, I think, follow out your purpose of putting yourself into communication with the Bishop of Oxford in order to ascertain directly from himself how he views the proposal which you contemplate. I am sure that in the whole matter we must act quietly, deliberately, and with a due regard to the importance of precedents which we may be establishing. Further questions may doubtless arise. . . ."

During this time Bishop Grafton, of Fond-du-Lac, died. The Abbot of Caldey wrote to his successor, and communicated to him his desire for the ordination of two religious, apparently ignoring the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose object was to gain time. The Bishop of Fond-du-Lac replied that he was quite prepared, as his predecessor had been, to ordain the two religious "with the permission of the Archbishop." Thus, on the side of the Archbishop of Canterbury, there was procrastination, acceptance on the part of the Bishop of Fond-du-Lac, but subject to the authorisation of Canterbury, so that the Abbot of Caldey could not yet foresee when the Anglican hierarchy would grant him the two priests for whom he had petitioned long months ago.

He wrote to Dr. Gore, the learned Bishop of Oxford, to tell him once more how glad the Community of Caldey would be to have him for their Visitor. He could gain complete knowledge of the whole question by a visit to Caldey, which would facilitate everything. He adds—the letter is dated at the beginning of October: "It might be well to do so before the bad winter gales set in." Alas, the Bishop of Oxford took the same line, and put off his visit till later. As the office of a Visitor was to preserve the constitutions and regulations of a body,

ought not one who was called upon to fulfil these functions, previously to study and become thoroughly conversant with the customs, devotions, and Liturgy of the Community? At that moment a journey would be impossible. Let all necessary information, therefore, be sent to the Bishop of Oxford, who will be glad to help the Abbot as far as he is able.

Evidently delay is not rupture. The Abbot, on October 21, 1912, says that he will shortly send the "Declarations" of the Community, which he is having printed. They will show how the Benedictine Rule was interpreted in the Abbey of Caldey.

These Declarations and the liturgical and devotional practices "have grown around the life of the Community to meet the spiritual needs of the Brethren, and a true estimate of their place and value would seem to demand some personal knowledge of the way in which the Contemplative Life is being lived at Caldey; for the life as it actually exists is the true explanation of our scheme of devotion.

"If the Bishop of Oxford is unable to come himself, could he not authorise two or three from among his clergy to set on foot an inquiry and to draw up a report?"

The same day the Abbot of Caldey tells the Archbishop that if he will grant permission, the Bishop of Fond-du-Lac is quite prepared to confer ordination on two of the monks of Caldey. The Primate refused his consent. "The question of the Ordination is a very grave one, and I am quite clear that nothing in connection therewith ought to be decided until the election of your Episcopal Visitor has taken place. . . . The Bishop of Oxford, to whom I have spoken on the subject, agrees with me."

The Abbot of Caldey submitted to the decision. He still hoped that the election of the Visitor might take place in 1913; but he wrote as follows to the Bishop of Fond-du-Lac:

"The time has fully come for us to have recognition of Episcopal authority behind us. Whatever we might be willing to endure in the way of Episcopal neglect as private individuals is quite impossible for a rapidly growing Community. Without Episcopal authorisation we should be in danger of drifting into a position like that of Father Ignatius[1] at Llanthony, and

[1] Father Ignatius died in 1908. He was a strange figure, rebellious in his attitude towards the authority of the Anglican Church, in which he had been ordained deacon. He passed his whole life in

at my death there would be no security whatever for the continuance of the work. What I have seen of Community life among us has convinced me that most of the failures to keep men together are due to a want of clear understanding of the necessary conditions and of straightforward appeal to the bishops. If Community Life is to be stable and permanent, and the vows of members valid and binding, there must be obedience to properly constituted authority.

"We do not seek much in the way of recognition; and I beg your prayers for our guidance and that we may be granted sufficient help and consideration to place upon a firm footing this Community which has taken twenty years to bring to its present condition.

"If only the bishops will realise that we are not a parochial institution for turning out so much work and that the Contemplative Life has special needs of its own, it will be a great step in the right direction.

"I have been continually told by well-meaning people that if only we will be wise and leave the bishops alone, they will leave us alone. But that is the very last thing to be desired. . . . As Catholics we cannot allow ourselves to be looked upon as a sort of private society, and personally I never had the least desire to be a free-lance with no dependence upon Superiors. You will understand, therefore, that much as we are feeling the need of priests at the present time, I willingly obey the decision of the Primate, and must wait until he allows me to accept your kind help."

The Bishop of Oxford having accepted the proposition that had been made to nominate two members of his clergy to come to Caldey and inquire into the status of the Community—a new departure for the Anglican Church—the Rev. Darwell Stone and the Rev. W. B. Trevelyan were chosen, and arrived at

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preaching with great eloquence, and in efforts to establish in England the monastic life such as he understood it. He wore the habit of a Benedictine abbot. In his later years he built at Llanthony, in the Welsh mountains, a church between two monasteries, one intended for monks, the other for nuns. They sang the Office in Latin, English, and Welsh without, however, being able to see one another. This experiment fell to the ground, as did all those of "Father Ignatius."

6.30 p.m. on January 2, 1913, at Tenby, where they embarked in the little steamboat which was to take them to Caldey.

The visit took place. The bishop's delegates examined the Constitutions of the Community, and went into the question of the jurisdiction, rites, and devotions of Caldey. When the minutes of the report had been drawn up, on Sunday, January 5, they were read to the Brethren assembled in Chapter, so that all might know the points that would be laid before the Bishop of Oxford. It was understood that, for the moment, all that could be asked of the latter was not the approbation of what was done at Caldey, but the acceptance, according to the authorisation of the Primate, of the office of Visitor to the Benedictine Abbey. This would be an official recognition of Caldey by the Church of England. Later on, if necessary, the Visitor might make some observations, and they would be taken into consideration. Such was the hope of the Community.

It was doomed to disappointment. On February 8, 1913, the Bishop of Oxford wrote to the Abbot of Caldey the very important letter which follows—it reveals the fear, up to the present only hinted at, but concealed in the hesitation and requests for delay, that the Benedictines of Caldey were tainted with leanings towards "Romanism."

Letter from the Bishop of Oxford to Father Abbot.

"CUDDESDON,
"WHEATLEY, OXON.
"*February* 8, 1913.

"MY DEAR ABBOT,

"I have received the report on Caldey from Dr. Stone and Mr. Trevelyan. After considering it, there are certain things which it seems to me I must say first of all.

"1. A new point to me. I believe I could not become Episcopal Visitor of an institution unless I had satisfied myself that the property of the institution, buildings, etc., were legally secured to the Church of England and were not private property, such as might be given or left by any individual or group of individuals to any person or Community without regard to communion with Canterbury.

"2. I am quite certain that neither I nor any other bishop could become Visitor of your Community without the priests belonging to the Community taking the usual oath and making the usual declaration before they were allowed to minister. The result of this would be, in my judgement, that certainly the Liturgy—that is, Communion Office—of the Prayer-Book, would have to become exclusively the rite in use of the Chapel or Chapels of the Community, and the priests, whatever else they said, would be bound to the recitation of the Morning and Evening Prayer.

"3. I am quite sure that I could not become Visitor of your Community (and I think the same would be true of any other bishop) until the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and, I should think, the Corporal Assumption, had been eliminated from the Breviary and Missal. I feel sure that the public observance of these festivals and the public profession of these doctrines—*i.e.*, as part of the common faith—cannot be justified on any other than a strictly papal basis of authority. It seems to me that you cannot reasonably assume this authority for purposes of devotion and then appeal behind it to justify your position as a Benedictine Community. . . .

"4. I could not possibly become Visitor of a Community unless it were understood that Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction given with the Blessed Sacrament were abandoned. The same would probably be true of the Exposition of Relics and Benediction given with Relics. I cannot promise that this list is exclusive. I should have very carefully to attend to a number of details and bear in mind on the one hand the general principle of policy, and on the other hand the exceptional position of your Community. This would involve on both sides a good deal of labour and trouble. I really have not begun at this work, and, therefore, I make no promises about it. But what I have stated above are preliminaries that seem to me to be obvious and to lie outside all possibilities of bargaining and concession, and I do not think it is worth while going on until these preliminary points are taken for granted. . . .

"I send you a postcard from Subiaco, which was incomparably more interesting and moving than I had anticipated."

Letter from Father Abbot to the Bishop of Oxford.

"The Abbey,
"Isle of Caldey,
"Nr. Tenby.
"*February* 11, 1913.

"My dear Lord Bishop,

"Your letter of February containing your very explicit preliminary requirements, I shall read to my Brethren and discuss with them at our Chapter Meeting next Sunday. I am not able to do so any sooner, as three or four of them are suffering from influenza, and two of the Seniors do not return from Llanthony till Saturday. I am bound to say that I think your letter may offer considerable difficulty to some of the Brethren. It seems to me hardly fair to the Community to put before them at once what is merely a series of negations that 'lie outside all possibilities of bargaining and concession'; and I do not see that we can reasonably expect them immediately (and without any sort of idea as to what you may further demand of them) to surrender such practices as the use of the Benedictine Liturgy and the devotions to the Blessed Sacrament to which they have so long been accustomed. . . . They have been prepared for a good deal of self-sacrifice in order to submit loyally to your ruling, so that it would seem a great pity to prejudice their minds before they have an opportunity of knowing yours more fully. . . .

"I am sure that to read them your letter, asking at the outset for the unconditional surrender of what they value so much, will perplex them and cause unnecessary doubt and dismay. The difficulty might, I think, be avoided, if you could send me a few words stating your general position, and telling them what, in your opinion, might be allowed by the explicit or implied teaching of the Church of England. . . .

"As a Community, our Faith and practice are identical with those of hundreds of Church of England people, and one of the chief questions that will come up is whether we can, as a Community, be allowed to believe and express with due Episcopal sanction what so many others in ordinary parochial life believe and practise, as individuals."

The Bishop of Oxford replied in a short letter. He did not define the belief of the Church of England. But he gave distinct answers to two of the questions in the Abbot's letter. On the one hand, he said that no kind of doubt would be expressed as to belief in the Objective Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; on the other hand, he did not think there was any possibility of obtaining permission to use the Latin Liturgy. The other points would be given careful consideration.

An ultimatum was thus given to the Community of Caldey.

For fourteen months negotiations had been carried on between the Abbot and eminent members of the Church of England. The correspondence had led the Bishop of Oxford to formulate certain prohibitions. The Community must obey and give up its customs, or leave the Church of England.

But before giving the general declaration which was drawn up by the Community and the explanatory letter from the Abbot, we must relate in what way they prepared for the final scene in the drama. We have here a trustworthy witness, an English Benedictine, whose name has already been mentioned. Dom Bede Camm, only a very few days after the Benedictines of Caldey had to make their choice between the Anglican Church and Rome, was asked to visit the island, and hear the account, still fresh, of what had just taken place. He has crystallised this in a memorandum which breathes moderation and calm. I have taken one or two passages from it.

" They (the monks) felt that authority and definite direction were an absolute necessity for them, if they still wished to progress towards the ideal of their life. They had sought, therefore, first from the Archbishop of Canterbury, then, acting on his advice, from Bishop Gore of Oxford, this direction and Episcopal authority. We know the end of the long negotiations carried on between them. . . . The Bishop, as was expected of him, inquired into the belief and devotional practices of the Community, and found, after so doing, that certain of these were such as no Anglican prelate could approve. It was inevitable.

"Before this decision they had no feeling—at least as a Community—that there was any direct or manifest obligation to submit to the Catholic Church; they simply wrote to their friends that their vocation was to pray and to suffer, to expiate the sin of schism between England and the Holy See, and to bring the separation to an end. The decision of Bishop Gore was a providential means of opening their eyes. They became fully and clearly aware of their situation. The whole correspondence with the Bishop was shown to the Community, and each one was invited to give, in writing, his opinion what was best to be done."

The letter from the Bishop of Oxford was dated February 14. On the 18th a general meeting of the whole Community was held, in a large parlour which formed part of the Abbot's suite. The latter stood near a table, with his Community in front of him. Most of the Brethren read their answers, and these were almost unanimous. We will take up again Dom Bede's account:

"They started from the fact that the conditions made by the Bishop had proved to them that their Faith and practices could not be admitted by the Church of England, and 'could not be justified on any other than a strictly papal basis of authority.'"

These were the words used by the Bishop. They felt, in consequence, that they must turn to Rome to obtain that recognition and Catholic direction which they felt to be absolutely and vitally necessary for the carrying out of their work.

When all had finished, the Abbot spoke. He said, as far as he himself was concerned, his desire was to submit absolutely; that obedience was the condition of progress, and the Will of God seemed unmistakable. The power of his eloquence, as I have already said, was moving. Emotion was at its height. He ended by saying: "All who think with me come to this side of the table." Thereupon nearly all those who had been drawn to Caldey by the ideal of monastic life went to his side of the table. The next day, the 19th, a respectful letter, clearly expressed, was drawn up, addressed to the Bishop of Oxford. It bore twenty-seven signatures—including that of the Abbot—professed, novices, oblates.

"THE ABBEY,
"ISLE OF CALDEY,
"NR. TENBY.
"*February* 19, 1913.

"MY LORD BISHOP,

"We have as a Community carefully considered your last two letters, and we are all agreed that we cannot conscientiously submit to the demands you make of us.

"In view of your Lordship's request for the immediate surrender of property, Liturgy, and devotions, together with your definite refusal to give any sort of assurance of what you might further require of us, did we accede to your present wishes, we are sure that our life as a Contemplative Community under the Benedictine Rule would be quite impossible.

"The preliminaries that seem to your Lordship so obvious as to 'lie outside all possibilities of bargaining and concession' concern matters which are vital to our conception of the Catholic Faith; and your requirements are so decisive that we are forced to act upon what we believe to be God's Will for us.

"With great respect,
"We are, my Lord Bishop,
"YOUR FAITHFUL SERVANTS."

On February 22 the Bishop's answer came. He considered the decision of the Community "most regrettable." He advised them to take time and counsel. Moreover, there were serious misunderstandings. He said he did not ask them to give up the property of Caldey; he only wanted a loyal assurance that it belonged to a company of men in communion with the See of Canterbury. The Bishop declared that he absolutely failed to understand what they meant by saying that to comply with his demands would make their life as a Community under the Benedictine Rule impossible. He asked, finally, whether there was a minority in each group of signatures, whose way of looking at things was different to what was expressed. . . . He wished them clearly to understand that his letter was a request to them to withdraw their reply and to make it the matter of fresh and serious consideration.

The little publication *A Correspondence* contains only three

more letters, all signed with the name of Dom Ælred, the first and last addressed to the Bishop of Oxford, the second to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The following is by far the most important:

To the Bishop of Oxford.

"THE ABBEY,
"ISLE OF CALDEY.
"*February* 22, 1913.

"MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,

"When I read the last three letters of our correspondence to the Community, we all felt that we were face to face with an extremely grave situation. . . . The whole question narrowed itself down in our minds to that of Authority. All the way through the history of the past fifteen years Authority has been of paramount importance in the growth of our Community life—which we knew to be impossible without it.

"We have appealed to the Authority of the English Church as represented by you, acting upon the wish of the Archbishop of Canterbury. We have submitted an account of our doctrine and practice honestly for your decision as an official Teacher of the English Church. We have told you, without any sort of evasion, exactly what to us are matters of the first importance; and we have done this for the purpose of obtaining what had become necessary to the existence of our life and status as a Community in the appointment of a Visitor whom we could trust to help us to be faithful to our Rule and Observance in the vocation God has given us.

"The appointment of Visitor was rightly made a *sine qua non* by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the regularising of our status in the Church of England; and every other consideration was put on one side till we had complied with his request. My licence as a priest, which I asked for in 1911, was refused. The offer of ordination for two of our monks I was forbidden to accept. Our Rules, Constitution, and the practices of our devotional life were asked for without any reference to me as to what I might consider to be our special needs as a contemplative Community. When I begged you to visit Caldey yourself, to see something of the actual working of our life, you replied that the first stages of the negotiations could be conducted in

writing. . . . Our special spiritual needs do not seem to have deserved any consideration; and upon the chief points you did not give me any chance of discussion. You 'thought it was not worth while going on until those preliminary points were taken for granted.'

"You must pardon me, my Lord Bishop, if I write strongly. I have not been working heart and soul for so many years at what I firmly believe to be my Vocation, and God has not helped me through countless difficulties, for me to find it easy when I am asked practically to deny what I have always believed and taught openly, because I felt that, with all the anomalies of the Church of England, her formularies were patient of a wide interpretation, and that her boasted comprehensiveness—holding so many divergent opinions under a common denominator—could find a real place, if only a small one, for a body of men who gave themselves entirely to God in the life of Prayer under the Rule of St Benedict. . . . It seems to us that the circumstances do not admit of argument or of delay. We are anxious to avoid anything like rashness or hurry, but your letters leave us no hope that delay would be in the least useful. We cannot bargain about what are matters of principle, if not of actual Faith. The points at issue between us are to us matters of pure conviction. We cannot say that we will not accept you as Visitor, but will try to remain as we are. This would be perfectly impossible. . . . Our conclusion is that we are thrown back upon the 'strictly papal basis of Authority,' and your dealings with us show us plainly that our hopes and aspirations have failed, at least so far as the Church of England is concerned. On the one hand, we cannot possibly give up what we believe; and, on the other, we cannot as honest men continue to hold and to practise what we have been asked authoritatively to surrender, and remain in a Church while holding opinions and continuing practices which have been forbidden by its official Teachers.

"Our Community of Nuns at St Bride's, of whom I am Visitor, belong to our Congregation and keep the same Rule and Observance. They have had the facts laid before them, and in their own Chapter have decided to take the same step. Thus it is that both the Communities of Caldey and St Bride's have determined to ask admission to the Roman Church.

"Up to this moment I have taken no sort of action, and there have been no negotiations whatsoever with any Roman Catholic. When this letter to you is finished and I have written a note to the Archbishop of Canterbury, I am going to invite Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B., who has not the least idea of what has been taking place, to come to Caldey to give us his help and advice. I am asking Dom Bede Camm as one who is a convert himself and a Benedictine; but I have never even seen him. I feel sure there will be misunderstanding upon this point, so that I wish to state emphatically that Dom Bede will be the first Roman Catholic I have approached on the subject. We have made no plans of any sort, and there is no idea of making terms with the Roman Authorities. It is just absolute and unconditional submission for us; such submission that we could not give to you because of the conditions you laid down, which were contrary to our faith and conscience. Everything in the future we leave to the good Providence of God. This only is certain, that we can no longer remain in the Church of England. . . . It is to the principle of Authority that we appeal; and we shall make our submission to the Roman Church because we have come to believe that there can be no organised and stable form of Catholic Life outside the Communion of that See from which our English forefathers were torn away. . . .

"I do thank you most gratefully, my Lord Bishop, for all your kind trouble, and the desire I know you have had to help us. . . . I commend myself and my dear brethren to you, asking that you will not think hardly of us, but pray that God will give us grace and strength to be faithful to what we truly believe to be his divine Will.

"With my respectful regards,

"Believe, me, my Lord Bishop,

"Your faithful servant in Christ,

(*Signed*) "Dom Ælred, O.S.B.,

"*Abbot.*"

The above quoted letter having crossed one written to him by the Bishop of Oxford, the Abbot of Caldey wrote another with the object of replying to him on the question of "minorities."

". . . We are in all, counting the Sisters of St Bride's, sixty-five persons. The following is the minority in the four classes of signatures: Besides the twenty-seven brethren who have signed, there are four who, for different reasons, have not signed. One monk, solemnly professed, first gave his signature and then withdrew it. For years he had been a Nonconformist, and although he saw that the Community could not come to any other conclusion than we have reached, he thought, as far as he was concerned, that his convictions did not oblige him to join us.

" One monk, in simple vows, did not sign because his mind was in too disturbed a state to come to a decision.

" One of the novices had been told, some time before the crisis, that he would not be accepted; thus, in any case, he would have left the Community; lastly, an oblate wanted to go and spend some time in France and think matters over before coming to a decision.

" Your observation, to the effect that we accept and reject the same authority on different points, has been matter for deep reflection, and it has greatly aided us in coming to the conclusion that, with our clear convictions, we must lean on the authority of the Pope. You know that we had thought all the time that our views were shared by many in England, and that we could loyally follow them, and at the same time form part of the Church of England. But you have cleared the whole situation.

" You have helped us to see that we were in a false position, and that we could not honestly persevere in our beliefs without being false to the Church of England, from whom, through you, we asked for approbation. . . ."

The separation had been thus accomplished between the Abbey of Caldey and St Bride's and the established Church of England. On March 5, 1913, Dr. Mostyn, at that time Bishop of Menevia, in which diocese Caldey was situated, received the abjuration of twenty-five Anglican monks; the next day he received those of thirty-four nuns, who were followed in their conversion by three ladies, not included among the religious, but living with the Community. The Abbot of Maredsous, invited to Caldey a few days earlier, had prepared the monks for this important act, after which there were no longer an

Abbot, professed, or novices, but only a group of converts, desirous of being received, this time according to rule, into the Order of St Benedict.

Conversions such as these, bringing whole communities and groups into the Catholic Church, have often occurred in the course of her long history. What seems to me of great interest is the principle from which they have arisen, and which stands out more prominently and more strikingly in the case of a number than in that of individuals. Collective psychology, expressed in writing, is necessarily simpler than the detailed analysis of an individual, overcharged as it must be with recollections, doubts, struggles, repetitions, all intensely vivid to the soul who has passed through them and who relates them. And for this reason the correspondence between the Abbot of Caldey and the representatives of Anglican authority constitutes a stirring episode, worthy of being related: the story of the influence of ancient Catholic discipline over our non-Catholic brethren, separated from us for the space of four centuries, and whose attention and longing drew them towards the three treasures of Catholicism—unity, authority in matters of belief, and the Real Presence.

The attraction is not uncommon, but it needs great courage to follow it. No one can talk with a convert of the sacrifices he has made without discovering deep wounds. The sacrifice of so many customs and prejudices, even history, and nearly always valued friendships: to hear of it rouses admiration. But perfection is not reached. To give up a false opinion is indeed a beginning. Let a family, religious or otherwise, recognise the truth of the Roman Church and join the Catholic Communion; it does not from this fact enter into a state of sanctity. Sanctity does not come at a moment's notice; converts are not necessarily saints. They are still subject to human frailty and tempted by the weakness of their former life; they may succumb, or only recover slowly from the effects of error.

The Community of Caldey, after its conversion, had to pass through several trials, some of them fiery ones, which seemed at one time to threaten its very existence. Pecuniary difficulties were only to be expected, for donations made to an Anglican abbey could not be continued to one professing obedience to Rome. Trials of another kind, and one in particular—a member

of the Community and not one of the least—seriously compromised himself and was obliged to withdraw. But the rest exhibited unswerving constancy in the faith and in monastic observance. The fault of one cannot efface or tarnish the example of those two companies, one of men and the other of women, led to the truth of religion by the Liturgy and honesty of purpose.

Lastly, the result of the tempest was to prove the solidity of the foundations. Rome, to whom they had turned as their guide and protector, brought the Benedictines of Caldey out of their difficulties, and, in 1926, the Community, henceforth to form part of the Benedictine Cassinese Congregation of the Primitive Observance, resumed its normal life under the direction of the Abbot of Ramsgate, Dom Egan. The Prior of Caldey, Dom Upson,[1] was able to declare that the noviceship was once more open; professions and ordinations took place, and the life of the Community can now develop in peace.

It has been seen in the past how, after a long preparation, the conversion of a family or group takes place with unanimity, by an irresistible yet easy movement, as a wave forced by the current of a river reaches the sea and is lost in it. The nuns of Mother Scholastica give a splendid example of this.

I have said that, in my opinion, the nuns had, by example and counsel, prepared the way for the conversion of the Benedictines of Caldey, and that they may be considered as its authors. They were also the precursors. If we study their history, we shall find that they are already on the road to Catholicism, at the time that the religious at Caldey are still hesitating, and debating, and preparing themselves to make certain "concessions" in order to remain in the Church of England.

The Bishop of the Welsh Diocese of Menevia, speaking in London in 1913 of the days he had just spent at Caldey and Milford Haven, during which he had officially received into the Church the two Communities, stated, without, however, drawing any conclusion, that the nuns were further advanced than the monks in the study of Catholic doctrine. One who was present communicated this to me.

[1] See Notes 5 and 6, Appendix, p. 180.

The nuns of St Bride's were the first to ask Dr. Mostyn to receive them into the Church; but their abjuration, as we have seen, did not take place till after that of the monks of Caldey. The Bishop questioned each one in particular, to make sure that they were acting from personal conviction and had not been influenced by anyone. He found that they had made an exhaustive study of Catholicism. One of them, a person of much culture, showed the Bishop a summary of the instructions she had given to her Sisters on the doctrine as well as the history of the Church. She developed, for instance, the question of the Pope, his supremacy, his infallibility. Those who talked to Dame Scholastica at that time retain a very clear remembrance of it. The impression made on them by the discreet words of the Abbess was that she had been a Catholic herself by conviction for many years, and that advanced in years, but still full of energy and interest, great lady and apostle that she was, she had been, as Abbess of St Bride's, something more than a mere counsellor; she had been the guide of the Community at Caldey.

After he had satisfied himself concerning the faith of each one, the Bishop assembled the Sisters together and asked them to lay before him any difficulties that they might still have. A few questions were put to him on the subject of papal Infallibility, but in none of these was there implied any doubt. Their faith was perfect.

These nuns had been following the Rule of St Benedict according to strict observance; they rose at two o'clock in the morning to sing the Office in Latin, which they did beautifully, using the Italian pronunciation and the Solesmes method. They never ate meat, and their morning repast—which went by the name of "pittance"—consisted in Lent of two ounces of dry bread. The Bishop of Menevia remarked in the course of his narrative: "You would think they had always been Catholics."

After blessing the chapel and its ornaments and consecrating the chalices, he celebrated Mass.

When, afterwards, he allowed these devout souls to have Jesus present and hidden amongst them, he noticed that two or three were always in the chapel praying before the Tabernacle, "so that our Lord might never be left alone."

The quondam Abbess had become, since the day of her

reception into the Church, a simple postulant like the rest, and was now called "Mother Scholastica." She expressed to the Bishop the shame that she and her Sisters felt at having ventured to borrow without permission, one after another, all the customs of Catholicism—words which seem to me redolent of humility. She also said—and it sheds a light on all the past: "We have always looked upon you as our bishop."[1] Silent, constant, preoccupied with the progress of the inner life, she had obtained what she had so long desired: she reached port, followed by her thirty-seven nuns, she entered the Church "with all her daughters."[2]

[1] This Community is at present settled at Talacre, in North Wales. Forming part of the English Congregation of Benedictines, the nuns follow their life of prayer in peace under the direction of the Venerable Mother Scholastica Ewart, who so happily guided it in its journey towards the truth.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

[2] See Note 7, Appendix, p. 180.

APPENDIX

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. See page 142.

The ship which was on its way from England to the Mediterranean was wrecked about 7 p.m. on October 27, 1885. During the night several of the passengers perished, and the survivors were not saved till the following morning.

2. See page 142.

Dom Bede Camm, the undergraduate spoken of above, was born December 26, 1864, at Sunbury Park, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex; his father, John Brook Maher Camm, M.A., of Burnham Grange, was at one time in the 12th Lancers, but afterwards took Orders in the Anglican Church (his conversion took place soon after that of his son); his mother, Caroline Arden, was the daughter of Richard Edward Arden, of Sunbury Park. He was educated at Westminster School, and later went to Oxford, where, in 1887, he took his B.A. degree with second-class Theological Honours, after which he went to Cuddesdon, previous to his ordination in the Church of England. He was ordained deacon in December, 1888, at Rochester by Bishop Thorold, and given a curacy at St Agnes', Kennington Park, till 1890, being ordained priest December, 1889. On May 27, 1890, five years after his shipwreck, he was received into the Catholic Church at the Abbey of Maredsous, which then belonged to the Congregation of Beuron, where, on December 8 of that year, he was clothed in the Benedictine habit and took the name of Bede. He pronounced his first vows in 1891, after which he went to Rome to prepare for the priesthood at St Anselm's; he was ordained priest at St John Lateran by Cardinal Parocchi, March 11, 1895. From 1895 to 1912 he was attached to the Abbey of St Thomas, Erdington, near Birmingham, founded in 1876 from Beuron. In 1913, the

Anglican Benedictines of Caldey and St Bride's asked him to obtain their admission into the Catholic Church; on February 28, 1913, he celebrated the first Mass said in the Isle of Caldey since the Reformation; he was appointed, by the Holy See that same year, Master of Novices at Caldey; in 1913 he became attached to Downside Abbey, in the English Congregation. From 1915 to 1919 he went to Egypt as military chaplain; then became Head of Benet House, Cambridge, and received the degree of M.A. (Cantab.); in 1922 he was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Dom Bede Camm is the author of numerous works on the history of Catholicism in England.

3. See page 143.

In 1872 a colony of monks was sent to Maredsous from the Abbey of Beuron, near Sigmaringen. This abbey had been restored in 1863, under the protection of Princess Catherine of Hohenzollern, by two brothers, Dom Maurus and Dom Placid Wolter, German monks of St Paul-outside-the-Walls. In 1878 Maredsous was erected into an abbey, Dom Placid Wolter being elected Abbot; the second Abbot, Dom Hildebrand de Hemptinne, was elected in 1890. In 1893 he was nominated Primate of the Order, and was succeeded at Maredsous by Dom Columba Marmion, an Irishman, the author of several mystical works. The present Abbot, Dom Celestine Golenvaux, was elected in 1923. Maredsous numbers 120 monks. It has an abbatial college and a technical school of art. Not far from Maredsous, at Maredret, there is an abbey of nuns, founded in 1893.

The *Revue benedictine* and the *Analecta Maredsolana* have made Maredsous known in the literary world. In 1888 a church was built in the purest style of the thirteenth century, on a property belonging to Henri Desclée, who, with his brother, Jules Desclée, was the founder and benefactor of the abbey. On their side the monks of Maredsous inspired the brothers Desclée with the idea of founding, in 1882 at Tournai, the celebrated liturgical and artistic printing establishment, placed under the patronage of St John the Evangelist.

4. See page 145.

Dom Peter Paul Brookfield, of Downside Abbey, tells us that Malling Abbey is mentioned in Doomsday Book. The benefice probably was in the hands of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Gondulph, Bishop of Rochester, successively. The latter appears to have built the abbey between 1078 and 1106. In gratitude the Bishopric of Rochester was yearly to receive from it a tribute of ten pounds of wax and a wild boar. Both abbey and village were destroyed by fire in 1190, but immediately restored. The dissolution took place in 1538. Dame Elisabeth Vernon and eleven nuns were turned out, and Cranmer took over the land and the convent.

5. See page 175.

Dom Egan. Born at Bedford in 1856, educated at St Augustine's, Ramsgate, and St Ambrose, Rome, Religious of the Cassinese Congregation and priest in 1883. Dom Erkenwald Egan was Head of St Augustine's College from 1887 to 1906, prior-Administrator of Ramsgate 1906-1909, and blessed as its first mitred Abbot in 1909.

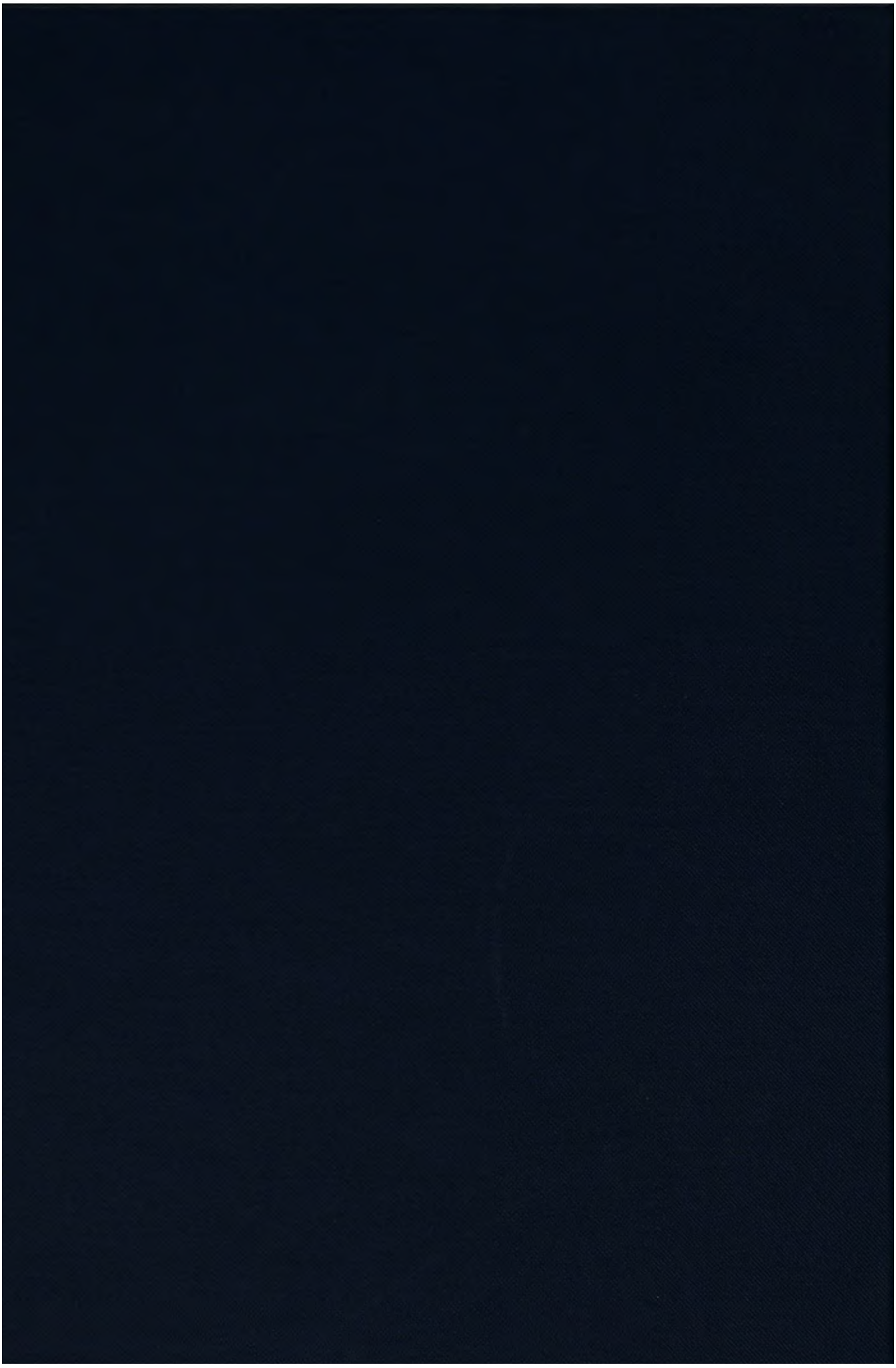
6. See page 175.

Dom Wilfrid Upson was charged with the government of Caldey on the resignation of Abbot Carlyle in 1922.

7. See page 177.

Dame Scholastica Mary Ewart was born March 20, 1852. She entered the Anglican Community of All Saints' in 1884, and was clothed on St Valentine's Day, being called Sister Mary Pauline. She was professed on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 16, 1886. She was sent out to the Cape to be Superior of a House of Mercy, and was in a terrible carriage accident, which resulted in much loss of life. She herself was badly injured and invalided home. She was made Superior of a Mission House at Finsbury Park, 1891, and after that became successively Superior of St Gabriel's (a hostel for girls), St Elizabeth's Home for Incurables in Mortimer Street, and the Boys'

Orphanage at Lewisham. She then went as Bursaress to All Saints' Convent, and had a great deal to do with the building of the new convent at St Albans. In 1905 she retired from active work, and after some months spent at Leigh-on-Sea in the All Saints' Rest House, she went to Eastbourne and spent a year in retirement and prayer at the Convalescent Home. On the death of Abbess Hilda, the first Abbess of the Anglican Benedictines at Malling, she was invited by the Community to become their Abbess, and was installed there in April, 1907. Under her rule the Community increased so rapidly that she was soon obliged to face the alternative of building on to the house or moving to a larger one. By this time Abbess Scholastica had become convinced that Benedictinism was impossible outside the Catholic Church, and that the only course open to her was to make her submission to the Holy See and bring her community in with her. She foresaw that in this event the Anglican Trustees, in whose hands the property at Malling was vested, would try to deprive them of it, and she therefore determined not to spend any more money on the house. In 1911 she moved with her nuns to St Bride's Abbey, and in March, 1913, they were all received into the Church by Bishop Mostyn. Three months later the house was canonically erected as a Benedictine monastery, in virtue of a special rescript from the Holy See. The following year the Community took their vows, and Mother Scholastica was solemnly blessed as the first Abbess of the newly founded monastery on June 16. As she had foreseen, the nuns were deprived of their property, and they also lost many old friends in consequence of their conversion. During the years that followed the Abbess made many fruitless attempts to find a permanent home for her community. St Bride's was only a rented house, and in 1919 it was sold over the heads of the nuns. Just at that time the old Catholic property of Talacre, in North Wales, came into the market. It was the birthplace of Bishop Mostyn, whose family had possessed it since the fifteenth century, and by his efforts the nuns were enabled to purchase the house and adjoining grounds, but their scanty resources were completely swallowed up, and they were obliged to incur a heavy debt. In 1921 the Community applied to the General Chapter of the English Congregation of Benedictines for admittance, and their peti-

tion was unanimously granted. After many years of suffering heroically borne, on April 1, 1927, Abbess Scholastica died very peacefully, after receiving the Last Sacraments from Archbishop Mostyn. She passed away at 5.40 p.m. on the Friday before Passion Sunday, the day and hour when, fourteen years before, she had made her submission to Holy Church.

She was succeeded by Dame Flavia Garland, who had been in the Community since 1911, having entered as a postulant at Malling.