

Written for CATHOLIC RECORD. CATHOLICS OF SCOTLAND.

BY THE REV. ANSAS M'DONELL DAWSON, LL. D., F. R. S. PART II.

Through the interest of the ex-king (Chevalier St. George) Cardinal Albani was now appointed Protector of Scotland. The Scotch had very little to thank their would-be Monarch for in this appointment. Albani was the very opposite of the good Spinelli. It cannot be said that he was unjust; but he knew no mercy. His first measure was as hard, as in the circumstances of the time and country, it was impolitic. He made a condition of the payment of the legacies left to the seminaries by the late cardinal, which certainly was not in Spinelli's will. His right to do so, according to our idea of last wills and testaments, may well be questioned. He intimated to the Bishops that the legacies in question would not be paid until a full and exact account or census of the state of the seminaries and of religion in general should be made out and returned to Rome. As cardinal protector, he may have been entitled to command such a measure; but we fail to see that he could make the execution of it a condition of the payment of Spinelli's bequests. It was highly impolitic, besides, as it was calculated to arouse the jealousy of the government which still, through the penal laws, held the lash of persecution over the heads of the Catholic people. The Scotch Catholics were so widely scattered, moreover, especially in the Highlands, that it was exceedingly difficult and not without danger, to obtain such a report. The Bishops, however, set to work, and a return of the statistics of the Lowland District was made that same year. But such was the difficulty in the Highlands, where there were only four secular and three Jesuit priests, that it was impossible to enumerate the population scattered throughout the missions till the year 1764. It must be stated that Propaganda also required this census, as a condition of continuing their annual subsidy.

The report of the Bishops made manifest how disastrous to the Catholics the expedition of Prince Charles had been. Their numbers were diminished in consequence by at least 1000. The Government soldiers, the executions, the American colonies had reduced, in that expedition, their numbers in the years 1745 and 1746. When war with France broke out in 1756 there was another loss of population, not fewer than 6000 Scotch Catholics being then, as was calculated, draughted into the army for military service, chiefly in the East and West Indies. The number of communicants in the whole country, as stated in the report, was 15,000, the number of the Highlands being double those of the Lowland vicariate. It was otherwise as regarded the number of secular priests in each district, there being only four in the Highlands, while there were twelve in the Lowlands. The latter district possessed, in the whole, ten Jesuit Fathers, the former only three. The greater number of the secular clergy had been educated at the Scotch College of Rome, as had been also the Bishop of the Highland District and his coadjutor, together with the coadjutor of the Lowlands.

The report further shows that at the time it was despatched, Mr. Hay, in addition to his mission of Rathven in the Ezie, was charged with the still more laborious mission of Strath-Isle, of which Keith is the chief town. It was, at the time, without any other pastor. It is noticeable that in the report of the bishops Messrs. Hay and Gidsman are specially spoken of as being both worthy sons of the Scotch College of Rome, distinguished by great piety, prudence and zeal "according to knowledge."

We now find Mr. Hay, September 1763, acting as secretary to a full meeting of all the bishops and administrators at Edinburgh. Abate Grant, from the nature of his position, was obliged to devote much of his time to the entertainment of the numerous British visitors of distinction who came to visit the Papal city. This led to a certain neglect, as agent, of the interests of his constituents in Scotland. Mr. Hay, in the name of the administrators, wrote a vigorous but friendly letter, complaining of the agent, and enclosing a copy of the original rules of the administration, framed in 1702, regarding the duties of the Procurator at Rome. Abate Grant replied, and having made a full explanation and promised amendment, Mr. Hay, whose sincere regard for the agent had never ceased since his student days at Rome, recommended that the administrators should adopt mild measures in regard to him. To this they finally agreed. At this meeting also, they appointed a new Procurator for the mission in Scotland, the Rev. G. Gordon, of Stobhall, Mr. Alexander Gordon retiring from the office.

It was a busy time with Mr. Hay on his return home; and his labors were not lessened by a letter which he received from Bishop Smith, requiring him to repair to Aberdeen, where Bishop Grant was lying dangerously ill. It was thought that perhaps the life of the coadjutor depended on the advice which Mr. Hay should give. However this may have been, the bishop's health greatly improved on occasion of Mr. Hay's visit. A favorable report was sent to Bishop Smith by Mr. Hay himself, who, in the same letter, adds: "I have been so hurried about with calls to Banff, Strath-Isle, Aberdeen, etc., and a crowd of business of one kind or another, at home, that since Bishop Macdonald left the Ezie, I do not remember to have been but two whole days at home all this time." Many years later he was heard to say that his fatigue, at this time, on Sundays, was so great that, from exhaustion, he was scarcely able to get home. Notwithstanding his engrossing occupations, such was his zeal for promoting ecclesiastical education, that he took two boys from the Highlands who had given some proof of a clerical vocation, to study with him at Presmore

and prepare for a foreign college. This proceeding came to the knowledge of his Protestant neighbors, who, looking upon it as the commencement of a seminary, which was against the laws raised such a clamor that he was obliged to abandon his laudable design.

Notwithstanding Mr. Hay's unceasing and exhaustive labors, he continued to enjoy good health throughout the winter, as he himself states in a letter to Bishop Smith, of date March 18, 1764. As there was only poor accommodation for the congregation at Presmore, Mr. Hay was anxious to restore the ancient chapel of the Craigs, which had never been used since it was pillaged by the Government troops in 1746. Much difficulty, however, was anticipated; and accordingly, Mr. Hay proceeded with the utmost caution and prudence. His first step was to request the influence of his relative, Hay of Rannoch, with the minister of the place. Mr. Hay and his family entered cheerfully into the plan of restoration, and, without difficulty, obtained from Mr. Grant, the minister, a cordial promise that he would not only throw no impediment in the way, but would assist with all his power. He began by removing everything about the place which belonged to himself, and said that if any notice was taken of the undertaking in the Presbytery, he would do all he could to prevail on his fellow Presbyterians to overlook the proceeding. He understood, also, to give Mr. Hay timely warning if the Presbytery should decide unfavorably to him. He thus showed, in a very marked way, his appreciation of Mr. Hay's prudence and peaceable demeanor. There was much deliberation as to whether the site of the young Duke of Gordon should be waited, as he was proprietor of the ground on which the Church stood, and could effectually put a stop to all operations. At first a few men were set to work repairing the old building, of which the walls still remained, as a monument worthy of being preserved, placing a roof on it, etc. Meanwhile the sentiments of the neighbors could not be ascertained, as the work would necessarily attract attention. Then if no serious objections were made to the Catholics resuming possession of their old Church, it might be opened, at first, on Sunday afternoons, for the catechism class, or the Sunday School, and, afterwards, opened, as they found encouragement. There would, as a further step, be prayers on some half-holiday, but, without closing the meeting at Presmore, till full possession was secured. Whilst all this was proceeding, friends of the Duke of Gordon were engaged to represent to him that, by favouring the restoration, he would gain the good will of his numerous Catholic tenants, on occasion of his first residence amongst them. For this end, it was urged, he had merely to overlook their proceeding in regard to the old Church. Labors, so wisely directed, could not well fail to succeed; and the design of Mr. Hay was fully carried out by the end of the following year. On December 3rd, 1765, Mr. Hay wrote to Bishop Smith that his chapel (Church) was now in good order, and an altar erected, with which all were pleased. A circumstance may now be mentioned which shows that Catholics were still in dread of government persecution. One Sunday Mr. Hay was standing at the altar in the recently repaired Church, when he was informed by some one who had brought to him by some one who had been appointed to keep watch outside, as was still the custom, that a soldier was seen approaching. Mr. Hay immediately withdrew into the adjoining wood; but was speedily informed that the disturbance was caused by a false alarm. The bright scarlet waistcoat of the late Rev. G. Mathieson, had been mistaken for the British uniform. The panic, of course, subsided and Mass was proceeded with.

The temporary vacancy of several neighboring missions now added considerably to the labors of Mr. Hay. He, in consequence, requested F. Alex. Menzies, who succeeded Mr. Geddes in the Cabsrach, to take the station at Achansach, near Keith, of his hands. F. Menzies replied: "I am very sensible how fatiguing it must be for you to serve both the Ezie, Grange and Achansach; and you judged well that I would incline to see my friends at Achansach as often as I can." (March 30th, 1764)

An occasion now occurred on which the wonderful ability of Mr. Hay for such a mission was recognized. The Scotch Bishops were about to recover their college at Douai, in consequence of the expulsion of the Jesuits from France; and it was in contemplation to appoint Mr. Hay to the charge of this Institution. Rev. G. J. Gordon, one of the senior missionary priests, opposed this proposal. He speaks of Mr. Hay in the following eulogistic terms: "I have very seriously and attentively considered the proposals about a Master for the House of Douai if it is obtained. As to Mr. Hay I think him much better fitted for being more useful as a laborer at home, by his clever, active spirit and great qualifications for doing greater good in the country, than in the narrower sphere of a shop (college) and a few prentices (students). Besides the place now occupied could not be so advantageously filled by any other laborer (missionary priest) we have at present. Moreover, it is of no small consequence to have so near the Duke of Gordon's yet much in the dark, a person that is much loved and esteemed by every one and has gained kindly many friends among the better sort, who may be of use to protect him if any danger was threatened. In fine, which with me is of great weight, he is, in my opinion, the only fittest person, among all the missionary priests, to be made coadjutor in due time, being neither too young, nor too old, and having abundance of qualifications, both natural and acquired, with much zeal and a great fund of piety. So that it would be very unadvisable to let him go out of the country, or from the place wherein he is settled." Dated Aberdeen, March 12th, 1765.

Bishop Smith, in replying to this letter, alluded to another reason for retaining Mr. Hay in the country, insisting that his medical knowledge was absolutely necessary for preserving Bishop Grant. The

idea of his appointment was, therefore, abandoned; and Mr. Robert Grant sent to govern the seminary.

In Lent, 1765, Mr. Hay sent a report of the state of the mission to Propaganda, through Bishop Smith. The number of his communicants was 939, probably including those of a neighboring mission which he had to attend to at the time. Within the preceding five years, twenty-nine new communicants had been received into the Church, or were in course of preparation.

Bishop Macdonald's report had awakened the Cardinal to a sense of the want of clergy in Scotland. Cardinal Catelli, who succeeded Spinelli in Propaganda, felt more particularly this want; and the Cardinals of Propaganda held a meeting, on this important subject, with the Protector, Albani, and Cardinal York, who was now Bishop of Trascasano. Time only, through the agency of well-directed seminaries, could provide the much-desired remedy.

There were many reasons for desiring a greater number of priests, and the want of them was more felt in the Lowland than in the Highland district. In the Lowlands there were several noble families, each of whom required a missionary priest to themselves, such as Traquair, Drummond and Stobhall. In towns where the spirit of persecution still existed, sometimes more, sometimes less active, like a smouldering fire which rises or falls with the changeable gale, a greater number of priests were necessary for supplying the spiritual wants of their flocks, because they were obliged to live very privately, almost in total concealment. In the Lowlands, also, although the number of Catholics was less than in the Highlands, they were more scattered and mixed among Protestants with whom they were necessarily in relation, and, consequently, in greater danger of persecution than brethren in the Highlands; and hence the greater need of pastoral superintendence. It was manifest also, from experience, that wherever a priest was supported, religion prospered, and its decline followed as soon as he was removed.

There were several parts of the country where the "Reformation" was not deeply rooted, in which the settlement of a learned and zealous priest might be attended with much good. Such arguments and statements were laid before the Cardinals through the bishops, and inclined them more and more to give all the assistance in their power. While Mr. Hay insisted much on a strict investigation and account of the state of the mission, recommending strongly an endeavor to obtain further assistance, The Bishops, at the same time, were preparing a powerful appeal to Propaganda and collecting details and opinions from all the more influential priests in order to support their claim for more aid, in both men and money. Mr. Hay wrote, on this subject, to Bishop Smith, discussing the whole subject, and earnestly advocating a frank disclosure of all the resources of the mission fund, such as they were. Bishop Smith, in a notice of Mr. Hay's mission, which he communicated to Mr. G. J. Gordon, April 20th, 1765, says: "He generally writes very judiciously. But, sometimes, pushes things too far."

Not only was there, as we have just seen, a spirit of persecution in the towns of the Lowlands; this available quality appeared anew in the Highlands. It broke out with renewed vigor in the remote parts of the western Highlands. The fact of the forfeiture of estates, while collecting the rents at the end of the year 1764, gave notice to the investigation of some of the more violent ministers, to all the tenants, that unless they began immediately to attend public worship in the parish church, they must all leave their farms at the next term. This was a trial of their fidelity to their religion, ruin and starvation were imminent if they refused to comply; their farms being their only source of subsistence; whilst on the other, they had lately enjoyed but few opportunities of instruction and encouragement in the practice of their religious duties, owing to the scarcity of missionary priests. Notwithstanding all this, these good people, in the hour of trial, were not wanting in that spirit of Christian fortitude, which animates to martyrdom. They declared to a man that they would never renounce their religion. Government, it appears, had not sanctioned such extreme measures, for, when the case was represented to them, they caused matters to be accommodated without disadvantage to the injured Catholics. It was still necessary, however, for the Catholics to observe the greatest caution and prudence. This is further shown by a communication of Bishop Hugh Macdonald to the Scotch agent at Rome. He gives a full description of the necessities of opening a seminary. This was done, partly to the positive want of a priest to reside over it, and partly to the strict watch over every movement of his by a number of the ministers who, being without congregations, had nothing better to do than to act as spies on their Catholic neighbors, and by their wicked contrivances bring them into trouble. "Through the present movement," says the Bishop, "the visible in that respect, yet under agents, instigated by our enemies, even execute the laws that are in force against us; for which reason we must act wisely and step by step for fear of raising a new storm."

The Bishop, nevertheless, was determined, as soon as there was a possibility of doing so, to establish a seminary. In the meantime, he sent his "Prentices" to a distance, under the care and direction of Mr. Gidsman and Mr. Hay, in the Ezie. He had applied to the latter for a character of the two boys supported by Cardinal Spinelli's legacy, which had been presented to the Protector with the Bishop's attention. It shows both the poverty of the mission and the value of money at the time, that Bishop Macdonald gave it, as his opinion, that a missionary could not have less for a decent maintenance than £20 in the year. He looked forward, hopefully, to the time when each pastor should have a dwelling of his own, however humble, to which he might retire to recollect himself and compose his dispirited spirits in prayer and study; for nothing but danger could result from his going

continually from one house to another, with mean accommodation, and no opportunity of seclusion, as was then the case with Highland missionary priests. TO BE CONTINUED.

THE SOLDIER BISHOP.

A LEARNED FRENCH PRELATE WHO PERILIOUSLY REPAIRED THE SCANDAL HE HAD GIVEN.

From the Realities of Paris Life. We have a very striking instance of the vocation to a religious life which is sometimes found in a soldier, and as many of our readers will give us the story in particular, we will give the story of the dragon who became a bishop.

One of the venerable prelates, not long since of the hierarchy of France, was in his youth an officer of dragons; he was one of those who looked with a contemptuous eye on those professing any kind of belief, and considered religion intended for women and children.

One day passing with his regiment through the town of Chalons, and struck by the architecture of the cathedral he wandered into it, to gaze at its beauties and to admire them as he might those of any other monument. It was Sunday, and Mass was going on. He neglected to take holy water, omitted bowing to the tabernacle, and, although he saw before him a dense crowd of faithful, reverently worshipping, it never occurred to him to imitate them; certain it is that had any breach of military discipline taken place in his presence, at all comparable to his ecclesiastical shortcomings of which he himself was guilty on this occasion, he would have visited the officer with becoming severity; but as if unconscious of the presence of the God of Battles, and forgetting that he was within the camp of the General of Generals, he thought of nothing but his own sufficiency, and marched down the aisles with a lofty carriage and a nonchalant air, and, in fact, behaving as if on parade. He was rather flattered than otherwise, when he saw the heads of the worshippers attracted towards him as he passed, for the rattling of his spurs and the clashing of his sword against the flags were loud enough to startle the assembly, and to divert the attention of even those most absorbed.

If the "Suluses"—generally as severe in the exercise of his authority—allowed the matter to pass, it must have been either from fear of the fierce looks and hostile arms of the man of war, or of the yet greater scandal of a discussion; be that as it may, the officer walked two or three times around the sacred edifice, and retired to his quarters, without any of those pious sighs which distinguished a Christian from a heathen. Some years after this, the heart of this officer—touched by divine grace, and brought back to God by the very usually efficacious with the sons of men—was seized with affliction—was softened, and he became a man of God, and unquenchable; he felt within him the tokens of a nobler vocation even than that of arms. To the astonishment of all his comrades, he determined to forsake the dazzling career now so fairly opened before him, and entered a seminary. The studies completed, he became a priest, and consecrated himself with all the zeal of an ardent charity, to the duties of his ministry.

After many years had passed away, and his virtues no less than his knowledge were become the theme of admiration—though in his simplicity, he knew not he was raised to the episcopate, and dignified to relate, the cathedral which now became his was the very one under the venerable roof of which he had permitted himself his cavalier promenade, and the profane display of the contempt he then felt for sacred things.

He resolved to make honorable amends for the scandal he had given; and however humiliating, he determined that the repayment should be as public as the offence. On the first festival of the Holy Trinity, a venerable prelate officiated solemnly in the cathedral, he ascended the pulpit, and with a voice trembling with emotion, he thus spoke to the large multitude who were crowding to hear him in that vast nave:—

It is now many years since—dear brethren in Jesus and some of you may perhaps remember the circumstances—that, in this church, filled with the majesty of the living God, in this holy Temple, during one of the most august ceremonies of our faith, at the moment when every sound was hushed, and every forehead was bowed low before the supreme glory of the Most High, a soldier—an officer—entered. Without respect of the sanctuary or for the Holy of Holies beaming from the altar, this wretched man scandalized the devout assembly by his haughty bearing, his insolent attitude, and his noisy step. The mercies of the Lord are infinite: this proud young officer was afterwards humbled and brought low by affliction and suffering, and God, who might have cut him off in the midst of his folly and his absurdity, not only spared him, but filled his heart with the precious graces which have brought him back as the prodigal son, and reconciled him to his loving and forgiving Father. The scales suddenly fell from the eyes of the second soldier; from being a persecutor he was raised to be an apostle, and from the priesthood he has been called to the honorable and responsible office of bishop.

"Now, dear brethren," continued the good bishop, on whose words the people hung with eager anticipation, "that officer of dragons was no other than your bishop, who, unworthy as he is, now addresses you, and is speaking to you for the first time from the pulpit. I have considered it my duty to repair, as much as in me lies, the scandal I then gave, and to ask before you all, first the forgiveness of God, and then yours, my dearly beloved brethren; and I pray God that henceforth I may, by the help of His grace, never give you other than examples of Christian life." The astonishment and emotion of the assembled crowd may be imagined, and perhaps no sermon that ever was preached sank so deeply into the hearts of the hearers as this touching and simple evidence of humility and repentance on the part of a man become so noted for his holiness of life, that all his antecedents had been forgotten.

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