

A CONVERSION.

The *Buffalo Sunday Morning News* of the 16th instant announces the conversion to Catholicity of the Rev. Henry A. Adams, formerly rector of St. Paul's Church of that city. Mr. Adams took charge of St. Paul's Church in 1889, and soon manifested ritualistic tendencies, which led to considerable friction between him and his flock. When requested to resign, he refused to do so, or to abate his pretensions as a priest, and advised his critics to bring him to trial before his bishop. He tried to make St. Paul's a church of the poor, which irritated the wealthier members. With two other clergymen he started a mission amongst the people of Canal street. Suddenly, in 1892, he threw up his rectorate, with its salary of \$8,000, and took a poverty stricken church in New York. In a short time he retired from this, to be private chaplain on Long Island, where he would be freer for study and reflection. The following letter to the *News* dated from Green River, Long Island, where Mr. Adams' home now is, tells his reasons for his step:

My Beloved Friends:

When a saddened and broken life is called upon, in the moment of its utmost loneliness and pain, to take a step which is at once the practical denial of everything for which that life has principally stood, and the apparent contradiction of its own chief aim, one may believe the bitterest of all has come. I have renounced my priesthood, and am about to enter the communion of the Catholic Church. To some of you some warning might have seemed your due, to more some fuller, private explanation; but warning is not possible amid doubts like mine, I have not the heart to dwell at length with any one of you amid the memories sure to be aroused by such a personal discussion of our changed relations.

My clearness of conviction now has, under God, been brought about by the concurrent action of two long chains of reasoning.

Disclaiming all attempt at giving to my friends any connected or exhaustive statement of my conversion, I wish to give as briefly as I may the barest outline of the history of my long struggle. I have become a Catholic at last because there is no other logical deduction from all the facts of which my reading and my observation and my life have made me aware. And, secondly, because there was no peace for me, nor explanation of that unspeakably great problem of myself and you, outside God's Church.

External evidence; internal heart-ache—these moved me steadily for years and years, effectually at last.

As to the evidence, I frankly own that I have neither sufficient learning nor strength of mind to base so vast a step upon deductions made from my own investigations at first hand. I have, indeed, accepted other men's conclusions.

I found this necessary during all my life, and so must every member of the Episcopal communion, that church, as such, having no living, definite voice. I chose my seminary (when 15 years of age), preferring what they taught me in New York to what they guessed at in Cambridge, or dodged in Middletown.

Arriving at the Seminary (aged 18) I had to choose to follow one or two professors in preference to the rest. One at that time was publishing a work announcing that there was no "Sacrament of Absolution" other than Holy Communion (?) and at the same time one or two others were actually hearing confessions. All of them being learned, godly and accredited, no two of them teaching exactly alike, what could a neophyte do but choose to follow one and despise the other? What clergyman who reads

this does not remember—sometimes, let us all hope, with shame and questionings—the jokes and gibes occasioned by these grotesquely different "interpretations?" The solemn chanting (in derision) of the more violent among the XXXIX Articles—those "forty stripes save one," only recently taken back into high church favor! These pleasantries about "popery" and "pro!" Those clandestine "functions," sectarian cliques, incessant partisan feeling, supercilious conceits of the seminarian *contra mundum*? And after ordination I chose my diocese, I chose my work, I chose my reading, I chose my "school." As a rule my people had "chosen" other ideas than mine—the more loyal of them having elected to themselves a set of views which would, in section, have shown the *strata* of the teachings of their successive rectors with a deposit, more or less distinct, of me on top! From my remotest boyhood I never have been able to efface the shame which the consideration of this babel of uncertainty always provokes. That for 10 years I could have been officially connected with a farce so sad can be explained now only by the thought that priests who from the first elect what they shall learn, what teach, become the victims of their own contempt for the authority of anyone to teach. Therefore, I own with frankness, but not shame, that, if I chose to take the word, the logic and the life of Newman for example in preference to that of any other doctor of my church, I did but that which every priest must do—select his teachers. Not having read the whole of what the Fathers wrote, I turn to two great doctors of the church who have. One tells me that they taught the Catholic faith; the other that they were a set of Anglicans. I have to choose between these two. And, as men, as types of the priestly life, as reasoners, as accomplishers, I have never had to even hesitate in choosing those who, through the telescopes of their great learning, showed me the Catholic faith.

Not only in her failure to teach, and by the inconsistencies of her whole theory, did the Episcopal Church grow more and more a cause of shameful sorrow to me; but much more keenly so when I beheld, after ten years of bitterest experimental knowledge of her ways, the miserable fiasco of her parochial and institutional existence. Without a parallel in history, the parish system of the P. E. Church stands at this time the most stupendous and ridiculous monstrosity in Christendom. With a rector "called" by a vestry made up of the rich men of the place—a rector intimidated, harassed, made by his very tenure impotent, the hired mouthpiece of this vestry of rich men sometimes immoral, often ignorant, usually officious, always in the way! Here a "priest"—if he have the courage to proclaim himself one, here the "minister," is to teach these rich masters of his what they already know and like. He is to conduct service as they direct. He is to tolerate and indorse any abomination which may have been (and usually is) established in the parish. He is to belie himself, his message. God's very work for peace sake! And they are the "successful" rectors (poor dumb slaves) who have been able to keep everybody happy and questions and ideas of a disturbing nature in the dark. Priests who write Catholic essays for the *clerus*, and preach absolutely nothing weak by weak; who hear the confessions of young girls on Saturdays, and manage to "keep solid" with the ignoramuses of influence none the less, who get a pair of tapers on their altars by carefully explaining that "they don't mean anything," who fabricate those fairy-tale "Year Books," and land, by virtue of their "safety" and "executive ability," on the Bench of Bishops.

Again in her relations to the poor, in her spirit of equivocating coquetry

towards the sects, in her judicial system, in her no-policy, in her utter lack of discipline, coherence, *esprit du corps*; in her vacillation, failure, pretensions—she crushes out of earnest men their faith in her as the divinely planned and ruled. She breaks the hearts of her most loyal sons. She either casts them forth, or ruins them as men and priests by forcing them into untrue, unfrank, unprincipled and helpless acquiescence in the less than right.

With bleeding heart, therefore, I turned to study the foundations of the Roman claims, and read for the first time the splendid arguments of that half score of giants who have worked out the question with a learning far beyond that of my teachers, and with a sanctity and a disinterestedness beyond words, beautiful to me, so fresh from the time-serving, money-worshipping and truth-avoiding atmosphere of my communion. From peak to peak I was led on by these great Anglican converts to Catholicism, and, dizzy with doubt, worn out by 10 years unreserved out-giving of my heart and nerves and head, I have at last sat down upon the summit from whence Truth seems once more God's gift to us.

My quest is over—although the nameless dread of finding myself alone comes over me. It will be hard to be without you. It will be terrible to be condemned by you.

Thus did the study of external evidence end. As for my heart, the change has called for very little movement in it. As God is witness, I have never believed or loved aught but this Catholic truth. Instinctively I would have gone into a Roman Church in Baltimore when, a mere child, I felt my first religious impulse and God dawned like a cloudless morning upon my lonely and impressionable soul. I was deterred by finding accidentally in some of the more ritualistic churches what then and for some 18 years seemed to be Catholicity to me. With unspeakable joy I gave myself to this illusion, and some of you may know the boundless hope I cherished for its complete extension, its final triumph. Without real study and as a brace to my unpopular position, I, as is common with all Anglo-Catholics, made much of those few points wherein we differed from the Roman Church. Dogmas which I could not define (except as grossly stated by our common error), proved through these years handy enough as sops to my conscience troubled with doubts at times, as well as answers to the repeated "paper partition" taunts of vestrymen and others.

At last, without an effort, with the sense of deep, unfathomable peace, my soul rushed out to meet my intellect returning from its search convinced, and all my nature knew that light was come. After the years of anguish and of doubt and struggle I passed into God's "strong city," even into His tabernacle, there to be hid forever from the strife of tongue.

On—

• • • Such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam:
While that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Your friend and servant,

HENRY A. ADAMS.

July 18, 1893.

Rev. Dr. McGlynn delivered an address before a large audience at Port Richmond, Staten Island, N. Y.

Three new magistrates have been appointed to the Roscrea bench. They are Mr. James Maher, Abbey Cottage, Roscrea; Mr. Louis Maher, Scullerra; and Mr. J. Corcoran, Boneymount. It is generally acknowledged that a better selection could hardly be made, either as representatives of popular and Catholic feeling, or as persons generally qualified for the position. It is understood that Mr. J. Maher, who is a builder and contractor, is to be appointed for Limerick city as well as for Tipperary. The three names were among those sent forward by the late Mr. McCarthy, M.P. for Mid-Tipperary, and a native of Roscrea.

The Poet Priest.

Mrs. M. E. Hery-Rullin, in a recent communication to the *Mobile News*, gives the following interesting reminiscences of the late Rev. Abram J. Ryan, the poet priest:

As a little girl, I often left the school room to copy his poems and editorials for the press. I assisted him in gathering together his poems for publication, and had carte blanche to make all necessary additions and corrections. Of this privilege I availed myself sparingly. During those many years, when he honored me with his friendship, and I may say, without egotism, with that special friendship that minds of the same intellectual direction always hold—"a dreamerlike myself," the good old poet often said—Father Ryan frequently and unreservedly spoke of his past life, his family and many personal matters. I remember his telling me that he was 38 years old, and added: "This ought to be a holy year for me; for that was Christ's age upon earth."

Now as to the poet's name. He himself gave it and signed it "Abram Jefferson Ryan." He never used the form "Abraham" in his letters or any other way. The J. in his name stood for "Jefferson."

The strongest sentiment of family love in the poet seemed to be centered in his younger brother, killed in battle at the age of 16. Father Ryan loved to talk of him, spoke enthusiastically of his great talents, and said: "If David had lived, no one would ever have heard of me; he was so much more gifted." One of this brother's poems is in Father Ryan's volumes. He insisted on publishing it with his own. It is in no way equal to any of Father Ryan's and gives no indication of great talent. Still to the poet-priest, all that touched "David" was sacred and viewed through the vision of tenderest affection and grief. I wanted to ask him to leave out his brother's poem, but did not like to risk wounding his pride in the young soldier. This brother's death marks an era in the poet's own life, a strong influence on his career. As he said himself, "the war meant a little to me, studying theology in college, until David was killed, and then I was another man." This may cast a new light of grief and love on Father Ryan's strong war poems.

Thou art sleeping, brother, sleeping,
In thy lonely battle grave;
Shadows of the past are creeping,
Death, the reaper, still is reaping,
Years have swept and years are sweeping
Many a memory from my keeping,
But I'm waiting still and weeping
For my beautiful and brave.

Of his mother he often spoke tenderly and reverently, saying that his separation from her was a daily sacrifice. She was living at the time of the publication of his poems, 1881, in St. Louis. I think Father Ryan one day remarked that he was puzzled about dedicating his book, and when I said, "Dedicate it to your mother," he seemed greatly pleased that I should appreciate his devotion to her, and as the volume itself shows, he followed the dictates of his own heart and my suggestion. Another member of the family, of whom Father Ryan often spoke, was his young sister, an accomplished musician, who died suddenly while the poet was completing his theological studies at the Barrens, in Missouri.

It may be only a trifling cold, but neglect it and it will fasten its fangs in your lungs, and you will soon be carried to an untimely grave. In this country we have sudden changes and must expect to have coughs and colds. We cannot avoid them, but we can effect a cure by using Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, the medicine that has never been known to fail in curing coughs, colds, bronchitis and all affections of the throat, lungs and chest.

On the night of June 21st, as the mail steamer "Limerick" was leaving Milford, Wales, one of the hands, a Waterford man named Delaney, fell overboard and was drowned. Delaney, who was comparatively a young man, was a native of Dunmore, and leaves a wife and family.