

The Land of the Beautiful Dead.

By the hut of the peasant where poverty weeps, And nigh to the tower of the king, Close, close to the cradle where infancy sleeps...

CATHOLICS OF SCOTLAND.

CORRECTION—In our issue of the 11th inst. there occurs an error which goes to deprive the aged Lord Lovat of the honor which he acquired by professing his faith publicly on the scaffold...

PART II.

For some time before the insurrection of 1745, Presnorne had enjoyed comparative quiet. Whatever facilities it possessed were, on occasion of the ill-fated expedition, ruthlessly torn away.

PART III.

His mission was dedicated in honor of the Blessed Virgin. He was born in 1695. Although his parents were Protestants, living in a ten which they held of the Duke of Gordon, he often, when still very young, was present at Mass and felt strongly attracted towards the Catholic religion.

public for a long time after Culloden. Mr. Godeman, accordingly, was obliged to minister to the people of Rathven as well as those of Bellie. In his missionary excursions, he wore the dress of a farmer, celebrated Mass and preached in barns, chiefly at midnight, in order to elude the search of the soldiers.

At length, the officers stationed at Fochabers, learning on the testimony of both Catholics and Protestants, that Mr. Godeman was not only inoffensive, but lived like a sinner, arranged so as to secure him against all further molestation. They concerted with him to meet them, one night, at supper, in the house of a respectable tradesman of Fochabers, whose wife was a Catholic.

Mr. Hay's arrival at Presnorne in 1759 was a great relief to Bishop Grant. It may be mentioned here, as a remarkable circumstance, that the recently ordained priest commenced his career, which was destined to be so brilliant, in the same district in which his namesake and collateral ancestor had officiated, as a parson, two centuries before.

Mr. Hay, as appears from his correspondence, deferred greatly to his superior, Bishop Smith, and entertained for him sincere affection. From a letter to this prelate it appears that he was much concerned on account of the want of books of instruction for his people of Rathven. "There is a great want," he writes, "of proper books in the hands of the people. My heart bleeds to see the effect of that want. There are several of those pamphlets which I saw with you, such as, 'The Grounds of the Catholic Religion,' 'The Roman Catholic's Reasons,' 'Fenelon's thoughts,' etc., which might be of unspeakable advantage had we numbers of them. It would be a great charity to send us as many as you could of these pieces."

In addition to the labors and fatigue of a missionary life, Mr. Hay was obliged to put up with the discomforts of an old and greatly damaged house. Extensive repairs were necessary, but, in the state of the country, at the time, could not be undertaken. Rev. J. Godeman, writing to Bishop Smith, says: "As he (Mr. Hay) has been accustomed with better accommodation, I fear the room he is in, which is that above Bishop Grant's, is so cold in winter that it will impair his health. The flooring, ceiling and casements of the windows are so much worn that the wind and cold come in every way. I really think he is never warm in this weather, but when in bed."

Mr. Hay himself says, in a letter to Bishop Smith, dated January 1st, 1760, "I am very sensible of the danger of making great repairs; and, therefore, we shall do the best we can, with as little noise as possible; and I hope Almighty God will, through your good prayers, hinder any bad consequences from the coldness of my habitation."

afforded much comfort to Mr. Hay during the hardships of his first winter, to receive a most friendly and encouraging letter from the good Cardinal Protector at Rome. His Eminence congratulates his young friend on the improving prospects of religion in Scotland, and promises, ere long, to supply the scarcity of missionary priests, a subject which he assures Mr. Hay, is very near his heart. The kindly prelate concludes by exhorting Mr. Hay "to assure himself, more and more, of his good will;" and adds: "I take leave of you in the Lord, with my paternal benediction."

Many discomforts attended the life of a missionary priest in Scotland at the time of which we are writing. Not the least of these was the very poor householding to which economy compelled him. It reminds one of primitive times and of the desert life to which persecution led many of the early Christians, such as our Lord, to find a bishop contenting himself with a squalid quarter, sitting by the same fire, using the same candle and sharing the same room with a parish priest. Yet in such humble ways did Bishop Grant and Mr. Hay appear to take delight. There was more still to try the patience, consume the time and exhaust the physical powers of the missionary priest. Such calls were most frequently made on a distance, requiring a journey of many miles over roads, by no means the most comfortable, at times, and in the severest winter weather. Mr. Hay found it necessary to have a pony for such journeys. In relating incidents in which he was concerned, he was careful to avoid all mention of himself. On one occasion, however, he forgot his usual modesty, and began his narrative with the words: "When I was priest at Presnorne," He immediately recanted himself. But it was too late; so he proceeded to tell the company that, one evening, about eleven o'clock, when every one had gone to bed, and he was himself finishing his prayers before retiring, a loud rapping, as if with a heavy whip handle at the outer door, made him start to his feet. The servants

also were roused and went to the door; but, when it was opened, no one could be seen. Search was made in all directions, round the house, outside. But still nobody could be found. Mr. Hay was too much agitated by this extraordinary occurrence to be able to sleep. At two o'clock in the morning, the rapping was repeated. Mr. Hay dressed with all possible haste, believing, surely, it must be a call to some sick person. He was not mistaken. On opening the door, he found a man with two saddle horses, waiting to conduct him to a lady who was dying at a distance of twenty miles.

The continued illness of Bishop Grant occasioned great trouble to Mr. Hay. During the whole of the winter, 1759-60, sometimes, so severely, that his life was despaired of. Mr. Hay's medical treatment, together with that of Dr. Donagan, the Bishop's regular physician, proved very successful. But, notwithstanding, it was considered that Bishop Grant could not survive any length of time, unless he were removed to a more southern country, where, also, he could have all the comforts and better attendance. Accordingly, he set out for Edinburgh, travelling in stages. The change greatly improved his health; and this improvement continued throughout the whole winter.

While doing all in his power to promote the spiritual good of his flock, Mr. Hay, at the same time, gained the esteem and affection of his Protestant neighbors by his moderation and benevolence. He gave medical advice and dispensed medicine without distinction. With only one exception, there was never any controversy or dissension in the parish. The one case which occurred of a self-willed young man whose father was a Catholic, aspiring to make a religion for himself, was conducted so prudently, that it led to no breach of the general harmony.

Mr. Hay was distinguished by great activity, zeal, and business habits. All this, together with his superior address, won for him the confidence of his superiors and brethren. And thus it was that he came to be appointed one of the administrators of the temporal affairs of the mission. It had been the custom to assign this office to seven or eight of the senior missionary priests since its creation by Bishop Nicholson in 1701. Mr. Hay's colleagues, Rev. John Goddard, Mr. William Reid, met him at Presnorne, where, together with him, they addressed a joint letter to Cardinal Spinelli, dated, as was the custom, "ad ostium spei." Later, Mr. George Gordon, another administrator, signed the letter at Aberdeen. The following month, Mr. Hay presented to Bishop Smith an abstract of his correspondence with Cardinal Spinelli, S. J., his former prefect of studies, on the subject of preparing youths for the Scotch College of Rome.

Not long after, June 19, Mr. Hay wrote to the Procurator at Edinburgh, Mr. Gordon, in the name of Bishop Macdonald, then with him at Presnorne, pointing out several material errors in the accounts of the mission, in a clear, business like, but deferential manner. Such letters Mr. Hay wrote in so masterly a way as to lead to the supposition that such like composition must have been a favorite study with him. He was not without private correspondence with one of the most valued of these was a young gentleman, Mr. Alex. Crow, formerly of Houghhead, but latterly resident in Edinburgh.

The clergy of the mission were now blessed to enjoy somewhat more peaceful times. This was more particularly the case in the Highlands. Bishop Macdonald, whose family had an active part in the disastrous expedition of Prince Charles, was still an object of pursuit in the Highlands. This made it necessary for him to reside the greater part of the time out of his own district. He was now aged, greatly broken down by the fatigues of his office and the hardships incident to the disturbed times. He felt, in the circumstances, the want of a coadjutor, who could apply to Cardinal Spinelli, this made it necessary to comply with his request; and desired him to name, according to the received form, three priests from whom the Holy Father might select one for the Episcopal Office. The choice fell on the Rev. John Macdonald, the Bishop's nephew, who had been, for some time, a companion of Mr. Hay at Rome. Mr. Macdonald returned from his studies at the Scotch College of Rome in the year 1753; and was, from that time, engaged in the missions of Scotland. Leith was the first scene of his labours; and was in charge of South Uist when his appointment to the coadjutorship took place. He retired to Shenval in order to prepare for consecration, under the guidance of his uncle. He was consecrated Bishop at Presnorne, under the title of Tiberiopolis, by his venerable uncle, who was present on the occasion, by Bishops Smith and Grant.

A little later, in the winter of 1761-2, Mr. Geddes was sorely tried by illness, which he caught in the stormy wilds of the Castrach. In the spring he had an attack of spitting of blood. Mr. Hay travelled all the way from Presnorne in order to visit his friend and prescribe for him. Bleeding was had recourse to, as was the practice at the time, and not without success.

During the few preceding years, the ranks of the missionary priests were greatly thinned by death. The Rev. John Gordon at Huntly and the Rev. George Gordon, who enjoyed a great reputation for piety, were both lamented in the Lowlands. In the other district, also, several good priests were called to their reward; among the rest a very valuable missionary, the Rev. Eneas Macdonald. In the whole Highlands there remained only three priests capable of discharging the duties of the vicariate. Bishop Hugh Macdonald was on this account under the necessity of undergoing the labors of a missionary priest, notwithstanding the great risk to which he was thereby exposed.

The solicitude of the bishop was now directed to the state of the seminaries, which was anything but satisfactory. Ever since the altar of 1745, the Government had so strictly watched the proceedings of the Catholics, that it was found to be impossible to make any

provision, by means of seminaries, for the ecclesiastical wants of the mission. Bishop Macdonald did all that could be done as regarded the Highland district. He boarded a few boys in private houses near Fochabers, caused them to attend the common schools and receive spiritual instruction from the Rev. Mr. Goddard. This was nearly all that could be done for the benefit of the Highland vicariate. In the Lowlands there was a seminary, Sealair, which has already been mentioned. It was, however, in a very humble condition; and, in the evil days, could not be improved. It had some success under the presidency of the Rev. Mr. Duthie. On his departure to become prefect of studies at the Scotch college of Paris, an afterwards missionary apostolic at Huntly, Sealair, for a time, all its efficiency. This state of things continued till September, 1762, when Shenval was recalled from his post, and Mr. Geddes was recalled from his post, and Mr. Duthie, who is always highly spoken of whenever any of our countrymen are engaged, notwithstanding his wretched health, in a mission than which there was none more laborious in the Lowland vicariate. Bishop Grant bore testimony in glowing terms to his distinguished coadjutor there. "He had not," says years in that country (Auchendown) when by his fervent zeal, unwearied activity and, much more, by the uncommon sweetness of his temper and his exemplary life, he was the means, under God, of the conversion of nine persons, fully instructed and confirmed last August; besides many others, not sufficiently disposed for the sacraments, when he was taken from his flock, notwithstanding his age, and the great grief of all who knew him, both Catholics and Protestants, who, in spite of their prejudices against his principles, esteemed and loved him."

In 1762 Mr. Hay commenced keeping an account of his communications. Their names, in his handwriting, are still preserved at Presnorne arranged under the dates of the communications. So lately invited to send for catalogue and prices before awarding contracts, the Rev. Mr. Hay, while officiating as a missionary priest at Presnorne. There is a table still extant which shows the number of his communications at Easter and Christmas during the years referred to. In addition there was every year a large Communion: 1762, Easter 460; 1763, Easter 460; Christmas 379. 1764, Easter 450; Christmas 342. 1765, Easter 470; Christmas 360. 1766, Easter 480; Christmas 340. 1767, Easter 520; Christmas 360.

Mr. Hay now earnestly suggested, founding on his medical knowledge, that Bishop Grant should pass the approaching winter at Aberdeen. This, he in fact would greatly benefit his health. The Bishop, accordingly, took a lodging in the house of Mrs. Thomas Young. There must now be chronic a heavy loss which the mission sustained in the death of Cardinal Spinelli. About ten years previously he found it torn by internal dissensions and opposed externally by the arbitrary and persecuting Government of the time. The latter evil, through the Divine goodness, was now greatly mitigated. The wise measures of the deceased Cardinal, firmly persevered in, had almost entirely restored peace and union among the missionary priests. This happy result was chiefly brought about by discouraging the cabals and intrigues of certain parties that were not over friendly to the secular clergy in general. Cardinal Spinelli entertained a warm regard for the Scotch Bishops and clergy, extending his kindness even to the students. He also contributed or procured considerable pecuniary assistance to the mission and the seminaries. For these reasons the venerable prelate is justly numbered among the best benefactors of the Catholic Church in Scotland. Such was the affection entertained for him by the clergy that his death was felt by them as a personal loss.

(If discovered, death might have been the consequence, as such was the penalty for a person under sentence of banishment, who returned home.)

TO BE CONTINUED.

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