

there. The volume, in his own words, "met with great success."

Even at this period of Mr. Faber's life, a casual reader of his letters might be led to regard them as emanating from the pen of a fervent Catholic. Exterioirly he was an Anglican, but in his heart he was a Catholic. His study of the lives of the saints, his deep research and wide scholarship, and his foreign travels had convinced him that the Catholic Church was not the monster which his ignorant co-religionists asserted. When therefore in 1842 he was appointed rector of Elton, he, in the words of his biographer, Bowden, "determined to pay a short visit to the continent . . . now more as a learner than as a critic. . . . He had a new source of interest in the inquiry; for the office which he was about to assume made him anxious to gather hints for the work which it would impose." With this purpose he visited Rome where he was received by Cardinal Acton and Dr. Grant whom he came to know through letters of introduction from Dr. Wiseman. In an interview with Pius IX, the latter urged upon him the necessity of giving his own soul the first consideration in the matter of salvation. Having, moreover, visited all the places of Catholic interest in the eternal city, the effect upon him was natural. He afterwards said that upon a certain day, while, in the Church of St. Aloysius, he felt that if in three years he were not a Catholic, he would have lost his mind. In fact, on his return to Elton in 1843, his conversion was retarded by the advice of Mr. Newman who cautioned delay as a prudent preliminary. But Mr. Faber himself was careful to take no step through mere self-will; and consequently his three years rectorship of Elton were marked by unceasing prayer and penance, that God might direct him in the way of truth. During this period he introduced among his parishoners many Catholic practices, such as confession, devotion to the sacred heart, fasting, etc. Elton soon changed from a dissipated town to a model parish. But its rector attributed his success rather to his Catholic innovations than to any excellence of the Anglican ritual. The neighboring parishes were not a little surprised at his strange method, but his open manner and kind

heart, coupled with his power of pleasing all classes, had endeared him to his flock, and do what he might their sympathies were always with him.

Finally in 1845 Dr. Newman joined the Catholic Church and immediately wrote to Mr. Faber that the latter was outside the fold. This was all that Faber required. His church at Elton was in debt, but a gift from a Protestant friend enabled him to meet this last difficulty. Amidst the tears and good wishes of his parishoners he left Elton for Northampton, where on the 17th of November his long-cherished hopes were realized. Seven of his parishoners with a few others were received with him, Bishop Waring performing the ceremony. The seven converts mentioned were members of a young men's society which Mr. Faber had established at Elton. Henceforth, as we shall see the latter lived in inseparable union with his fellow converts.

His conversion opened a new period in his life. From that occurrence to his death he lived as a devout servant of Christ, at the head of a community which soon grew to be a potent factor in the re-establishment of Catholicity in England.

After his reception, Mr. Faber went to Birmingham where he formed a sort of community with the other converts. It is interesting to trace this body from its meagre beginning under the name of this Brothers of the Will of God at Birmingham to the death of its founder, when, as the Oratorians of St. Phillip Neri, its members were already spread throughout England and Catholicity was again rearing her head. Shortly after its foundation Mr. Faber went to Rome to solicit assistance in its behalf. On his return he found many applicants for admission into his community. Kindly accepting all, he was soon surrounded by a thriving little band of devotees. They visited the sick, invited the public for instruction, and held public services. These latter were attractive owing to the introduction of music, singing, and the rosary. Most of the hymns used by the community were written by its director and to him may be in great measure attributed the spreading of that beautiful practice of congregational singing, which is so potent a means of exciting devotional fervor.