

Northwest Review

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY,
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL
AUTHORITY
AT WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

REV. A. A. CHERRIER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

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SATURDAY, DEC. 19, 1903.

Calendar for Next Week.

DECEMBER.

- 20—Sunday—Fourth Sunday in Advent. Sem.
 - 21—Monday—St. Thomas, Apostle, Dupl. 2nd class.
 - 22—Tuesday—Of the Feria.
 - 23—Wednesday—Of the Feria.
 - 24—Thursday—Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Sem.
 - 25—Friday—Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Dupl. 1st class.
 - 26—Saturday—St. Stephen, Protomartyr. Dupl. 2nd class.
- N.B.—The Nativity is a day of obligation. The eve of the Feast is a fast of obligation. But on Christmas, although it falls this year on a Friday, the use of flesh meat is permitted.

A NEW HISTORY OF ENGLAND FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

Longmans, Green & Co., of London, New York and Bombay, have recently published "A History of England for Catholic Schools," by E. Wyatt-Davies, M. A., Trinity College, Cambridge. This is not a mere compilation nor a condensation of larger works; it is a thoroughly original work, to the production of which Mr. Wyatt-Davies has brought as much labor and thought as would have been required for a large history in several volumes. This one is a single, handy volume of 555 pages, with fourteen genealogical charts and as many maps, really illustrative of the facts in the text. It is also provided with a good index, which, however, might have been made more useful by more detailed references. For instance, in searching for the author's estimate of Pitt, the reader might have to turn to 22 different pages marked in the index, whereas, if each page had had its special reference, such as "character," "defeat of," etc., the search would have been simplified.

Let us take this statesman's character as a specimen of Mr. Wyatt-Davies' method of treatment. "At the age of twenty-five Pitt was placed in a position of power such as no other statesman before or since has occupied. By his eloquence, skill and confidence, he had met and overthrown a coalition supported by the splendid abilities of Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and Erskine, and for nearly eighteen years he was supreme in Parliament and in the country. He had learned the arts of the orator from his father, and he could strike with ease almost any note in the scale of eloquence. No one knew better how to turn and retort arguments, to seize in a moment on a weak point or an undervalued phrase, to evade issues which it was not convenient to press too closely, to conceal, if necessary his sentiments and intentions under a cloud of vague, brilliant and imposing verbiage. Without either the fire, passion, imagination, or histrionic power of his father, he could entrance the house by his sustained and lofty declamation and invective; and he employed with terrible effect the weapon of cutting sarcasm and the tone of freezing contempt' (Lecky). Added to this he was unswerving in his devotion of public affairs, and his disregard of the solid rewards of office was so great that when he died he was overwhelmed

in debt. He rewarded his followers by a lavish creation of peerages, but for him titles had no attraction, and he refused the King's offer of the Garter. Partly from a proud, fastidiousness, and partly from weakness of health, he held himself aloof from any attempt to win the boisterous popularity which a statesman of his powers could easily have achieved. To the king, as well as to his colleagues in office, and his opponents in Parliament, he showed a cold and inaccessible demeanor, which extorted respect, but did not inspire affection."

Another noteworthy passage thus describes Elizabeth's character:

"The death of Mary brought to the throne a princess whose personality was destined to leave an indelible mark on the history of England. Elizabeth was now in her twenty-sixth year, but her youth had been spent in a confused tangle of intrigue and sedition, and she had learnt at an early age to walk warily amid the dangers that surrounded her. Perfectly unscrupulous, a mistress of all the arts of dissimulation, caring little for religion, coarse in her language and conduct, capable of acts of passionate vindictiveness, Elizabeth seems to have united in her person the worst traits of the imperious House of Tudor. Added to this she was inordinately vain, and while parsimonious in rewarding those who worked unceasingly for her greatness she showered benefits on the throng of courtiers who knew how to win her favor by their flatteries. Highly educated and accomplished, she was, nevertheless, practically untouched by the marvellous intellectual movement of her reign. The great giants of literature, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spencer, and Hooker, owe little to her patronage. But with all her failings Elizabeth knew to an extraordinary degree how to direct and utilize the great forces of the time. Self-centred as she was she had an instinctive knowledge of the political aspirations of her people. In her amazing activity of body and mind she summed up the leading characteristics of her age—its love of splendor, its daring, its patriotism, its exuberant vitality. She gathered around her a group of statesmen, and two Cecils, Walsingham, Nicholas Bacon, who served her with untiring fidelity. But she was to the last mistress of her own policy, although willing enough to throw the blame of her failures on the ministers, who groaned under the burden of her caprices and vacillations. We speak justly of her reign as the Elizabethan age, because for good or ill, she shaped the destinies of England."

Although this work is mainly a political and not an ecclesiastical history, it handles all religious questions from the Catholic point of view, but with judicial calm. In commenting upon the means employed by the promoters of the Reformation in England, the author has not gone beyond the adverse criticisms of non-Catholic writers of note. A fair sample is the section on "Protestant Martyrs."

"The terrible deeds of the four last years of Mary's reign have blackened her memory in the eyes of posterity, and attached to her name a cruel epithet. But these matters cannot be judged from the standpoint of today. For, in the first place, it is certain that Mary's disposition, in spite of all the embittering experiences of her early life, did not lean to harshness. Her magnanimous treatment of the conspirators at the beginning of her reign, and of those who had harassed and humiliated her in the reign of her father and brother, shows a loftiness of character without a parallel at the time. Of the integrity of her conduct, her kindness to her dependents and to the poor, there is ample proof. But in Mary's mind the Reformation was associated with outrages on all that she held sacred. It had begun with the rupture of the bond of marriage between her father and mother, which branded Mary herself as illegitimate. It had forced on the nation the denial of the papal authority, a belief which to Englishmen was coeval with their Christianity, and it had ended in an orgy of rapine and profanity under Edward VI. In the second

place, Mary necessarily shared the universal belief of her time, that it was the duty of the civil power to put down erroneous doctrine, a belief held by Protestants as well as Catholics. Thus Calvin burnt the Socinian Servetus; Cranmer sent Anabaptists to the stake, and in the code of ecclesiastical discipline, which he drew up under Edward VI., belief in Transubstantiation and the papal supremacy was to be punished as heresy. Two centuries had yet to pass before men could realize the cruel futility of religious persecution. Moreover, recent writers have acquitted Gardiner and the bishops of personal cruelty in dealing with heretics, and justice has even been done to the rough, but not unkindly Bonner, whom Fox, the Protestant Martyrologist specially holds up to obloquy. The persecution was mainly the act of the state, and it was the Council which urged on the bishops to proceed against heresy. And lastly, even if we blame Mary and her advisers, in justice it must be remembered that some, at least, of the Protestant Martyrs were guilty of treason, and that others drew down upon themselves the penalties of heresy by the hideous profanity of their conduct. Men who parodied the beliefs of the majority of their fellow-countrymen inevitably provoked a spirit of reprisal, and involved the nobler spirits of their party in a common fate. Still, in spite of these considerations, the fact remains that an appalling number, variously estimated at from 250 to 300 persons perished under the Marian persecution, and how-ever great the errors of opinion or conduct of the Protestant Martyrs, no one would refuse a tribute of respect to the courage with which they met their terrible punishment."

To this last phrase we should have liked some corrective, for the very words used by such men as Ridley and Latimer at the stake showed that they were counting on the applause of posterity and really playing to the Protestant gallery, and this supposes a thoroughly human view of religion based on what other people think and not on that inward effusion of Divine grace which makes the true Martyr forget everything but God and heaven.

Mr. Wyatt-Davies brings his interesting history down to the coronation of our present King, August 9, 1902, and his treatment of the nineteenth century, and in particular of the Victorian era is very full and satisfactory.

In this respect only is his work more useful than that of Augustas Theodosia Drane, the author of "Christian Schools and Christian Scholars." Her history of England still remains the most "live" of all English histories Catholic or Protestant. It sparkles with those popular sayings which English tradition has consecrated and which Mr. Wyatt-Davies, with the fastidiousness of a scholar, is too much inclined to omit. But unfortunately this history by the ablest of all English women, George Eliot not excepted, ends with the events of some thirty years ago. We have always wondered why some enterprising English publisher does not bring out a new edition, continued down to our own day.

In preparing his valuable work Mr. Wyatt-Davies tells us that he has drawn largely on Dr. Lingard, Dr. Stubbs, Professor Freeman, Dr. Gardiner, Mr. Lecky, Mr. J. R. Green, Abbot Gasquet, Canon Dixon and Mr. Tout, and he acknowledges the kindly interest shown in his work by Monsignor Ward, president of St. Edmund's College; Monsignor Nolan, president of Prior Park; the Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S. J.; the Rev. Sydney Smith, S. J.; the Rev. Herbert Thurston, S. J.; and the Rev. A. S. Barnes, M. A., chaplain to the Catholic members of the University of Cambridge.

This excellent history sells at the very moderate price of three shillings and sixpence, which means that it will cost about 75 cents delivered here.

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