

ORESTES BROWNSON.

HALF A CENTURY AGO HE WAS LED
TO THE FOUNTAIN OF
CATHOLIC TRUTH.

His Change of Faith Was by a Process
Different From That Which Won
Newman and Manning—The Pre-
sident Lesson of His Conversion.

It was just fifty years since all New England, and some other parts of the Union as well, were fairly startled by the news that the foremost American philosopher of the time, Dr. Brownson, had embraced the Catholic Faith. At first it was difficult for many to admit the possibility of the fact, and no wonder, from their point of view. And even now, many years indeed since the illustrious thinker was called to his eternal reward, the story of that conversion is full of interest, and for those who are qualified to perceive its complete bearing, full of instruction or suggestion as to what might be called the natural road by which the greater number of educated American non-Catholics might be expected to travel if once they really set out on their journey to "Rome."

When Dr. Brownson became a Catholic the "Oxford movement" had already begun, but he was not swayed by that movement, or by any undulation from it. For, in fact, says the Catholic Standard, Dr. Brownson became a Catholic because impelled so to do by arguments quite different from those that have set many thousands of sincere Anglicans, from the beginning of the Oxford movement until now, to a course of reflection that ended by convincing their intellect of the soundness of the Catholic claims.

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

and the conversion of most Anglicans have been largely influenced by the class of arguments that depend for their cogency upon certain historical facts. But Dr. Brownson's conversion was scarcely, if at all, effected by what are called the historical arguments in favor of the Catholic Church. The Catholic tradition that still clings to the private life and the public institutions of England, and which served as a starting point for the Oxford movement, had been pretty effectually destroyed in New England, by several generations of Puritanism, and Dr. Brownson, like most of his friends and contemporaries in New England, had not felt the influence in any appreciable degree. The interesting feature to us Americans of Dr. Brownson's conversion is that, apart from the grace of God moving his will, it proceeded almost altogether on intellectual, or subjective, lines. He became a Catholic because it is true, like all other sincere converts, he loved the truth and accepted it when found; but then he found the truth by an almost entirely different process of reasoning from that by which Anglicans like

NEWMAN, MANNING AND OTHERS

have found it. They studied the historical sources of the Catholic Church, and, following by their learning the chain of historical events, they ascertained the unbroken and legitimate connection of the Catholic Church of our day with that of the Apostles. He took quite another course, not from choice, but from necessity. He had not been concerned with any historical controversies as to religion. His New England Protestant training had shut his mind off from the past and from all interest in inquiries as to the apostolic succession or the possession of the deposit of Catholic faith in any particular visible organization. But he believed in God and in His ever present action on the souls of His children, and in studying out the means of that action he reached the conclusion that God must have

ESTABLISHED SOME INFALLIBLE CRITERION
OF HIS TRUTH.

He set out, then, on the search for this infallible criterion, never for a moment dreaming that the search would lead him to what is commonly called the Roman Catholic Church, and which he actually only knew at that time, with a mind infected by inherited Puritan prejudices, as a surviving medieval institution represented in New England by a small number of immigrants mostly ignorant and very poor. Nevertheless, once he perceived the truth, he accepted it, and did so with worshipful humility and in absolute sin-

cerity; and a truer Catholic in mind and heart has probably not lived in the United States than Brownson from the moment of his conversion till his death. The conversion of the great mass of the American people to the Catholic faith is

A LABOR STILL TO BE ACCOMPLISHED, and the story of Brownson's conversion is a lesson, perhaps, how the work is to be carried on. Of course the general run of American non-Catholics are not philosophical geniuses like Brownson, but with most of them who are sincere lovers of the truth the attitude of mind is similar to his. Leaving out the Episcopalians, most any of them are like Brownson, unaffected by any Catholic tradition, and therefore must be reached, if at all, by a line of argument that does not depend for its conclusions upon a mere array of historical facts. The fiftieth anniversary of Brownson's conversion is a good time to study how to reach with as little controversial subtlety as possible, truth-loving instincts of non-Catholic Americans. — *Catholic Universe*.

ANGELS OF THE BATTLEFIELD.

They Gave Gen. Gibson a Truer Con-
ception of the Catholic Church.

The death of General W. H. Gibson, at Tiffin, last Friday, removes from active life a noble and heroic figure, one that contributed in no small degree to the forming of the history of the nation. He was distinguished alike on the forum and in the field, and in the many public positions of trust and emolument to which he was called by a grateful commonwealth, he acquitted himself with credit and signal ability. When the war broke out he was among the first in Ohio to organize a regiment—the gallant 49th—and became its Colonel. It was the first organized body of troops to enter Kentucky from the North and became the nucleus of that magnificent host which afterward became the famed fighting Army of the Cumberland. From the banks of the Ohio to those of the Cumberland and the Tennessee; from Shiloh's bloody woods to the capture of Atlanta—in all the marches, skirmishes and battles of that army he was never found wanting in the hour when duty called. His first battle was at Pittsburg Landing, where he had three horses shot under him and was finally carried off the field suffering from a terrible bayonet wound. Subsequently he served under McCook, Johnson and Wood and was commended by every superior in the reports of all the campaigns and battles in which he took part.

Although in later years a regularly licensed preacher of the M. E. church, his religious environment did not contract his vision to the extent of rendering him fanatical in his attitude toward the Catholic Church; and the Apostles of to-day and their ilk received but scant countenance from him.

In an address delivered at a public celebration in the Columbus City Park some years ago General Gibson thus expressed his views of the Catholic Church. He said:

"When I was a young man (of course I am a young man yet), but when I was a younger man, before the great struggle between the North and South, I must say that I was somewhat prejudiced against the Catholic Church. I used to picture to myself heaven. I imagined it was a grand palace, grand beyond description, because it was the dwelling place of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, as well as of all good Protestants. Of course, I couldn't see any reserved seats for Catholics. They, in my opinion, had no business there.

"Well, the cry came, 'To Arms,' and I presume it is hardly necessary for me to tell an Ohio audience that I had the honor of commanding a regiment, the 49th Ohio Volunteers. After a day's engagement with the enemy, in which my regiment took an active part, and after our forces were badly beaten, I looked out from headquarters which were located on an eminence upon the scene of the conflict, and through the field-glasses I could see black-robed figures going around among the wounded and dying soldiers. I immediately ordered my aid-de-camp to go down and see who those black-robed figures were, and report as soon as possible to me. He soon returned a most breathless and exclaimed: 'Oh, General, it was a heart-rending sight. The figures are those of



Sisters of Charity, who are going around ministering to the wounded and dying soldiers.

"The self-sacrifice of these noble bands of women would bring tears to the heart of stone. I was amazed and concluded to make a personal investigation. I went down into the scene of the great conflict, accompanied by some of my staff officers. I didn't have to go far before coming across a black-robed figure that was cold in death. This heroine of heroines died at her post. She was not regularly mustered into the service; she received no pecuniary compensation; but Oh! what a reward will be hers. This noble woman was called to her eternal reward. Her companions were still engaged in succoring the wounded and dying.

"When I saw this with my own eyes on that eventful day, I returned thanks on my bended knees to the Omnipotent God for opening my eyes to the sublime grandeur of the Roman Catholic Church [Applause.] Those grand women did not ask the suffering soldier to what church he belonged, or whether he belonged to any; neither did they stop to inquire the side to which he belonged. They were performing their God-given mission. They aided those who wore the blue and the gray alike. The black and the white were all treated alike by them. I had the great pleasure of witnessing some members of this order, subsequently, in our hospitals nursing with their tender hands the suffering soldiers. They braved all dangers, and had no fear of contagious diseases. Oh, how often have I prayed since that God may forgive me for my first impressions of the Catholic Church. I saw that Church in its true light that day on the battlefield. I saw heaven as I now believe it really is, and I saw in it one of the largest apartments, one I never in my imagination saw before, the Catholic apartment." [Applause.]

General Gibson took a very conspicuous part in all campaigns since the organization of the Republican party. He was one of the grandest and most eloquent orators of this country and could move his audience from laughter to tears at will. During the campaign of 1884 he received a special invitation from James G. Blaine to stump the State of Maine with him, which he accepted. After their tour Blaine said he never knew a man who had spoken to the people of his State who was so much admired as was General Gibson. Had he lived he would have put William McKinley in nomination for the presidency. — *Catholic Columbian*.

MARQUETTE STATUE CHOSEN.

DESIGN OF SIGNOR TRENTANOVE SELECTED
BY THE COMMISSIONERS.

After over a year of vexatious delay the model for the Marquette statue has finally been selected. The committee, consisting of J. W. Losey of LaCrosse, Archbishop Kutzer of Milwaukee, R. M. La Follette of Madison, James Bardou of Ashland, and Frederick Layton of Milwaukee, met in Madison Wednesday, and after examining the models and designs, fourteen of which were submitted, decided in favor of Signor Trentanove of Florence, Italy. The cost of the statue is to be \$8,000.

The selection of this design will no doubt meet with general approval. The design has received the commendation of the best critics, and Curator Eldredge, of the Layton Art Gallery, looked upon it as the best model submitted. Two beautiful specimens of Signor Trentanove's work are in the Layton Art Gallery, "The Last of the Spartans" and "Art," the former receiving special mention at the World's Fair. The model selected for the Marquette statue, as will be seen, represents a reposeful commanding figure in the regular garb

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of the Jesuit, the face mild and kindly, yet strongly marked, one foot slightly in advance of the other, in the one hand a breviary, the other holding the cassock. In the preparation of his design Signor Trentanove was aided by the Fathers of the head house of the Society of Jesus in Italy, who gave much information regarding the dress and other important details regarding the early Jesuit missionaries.

Among the immigrants from the steamship Dresden, from Bremen, was a family of four persons who had a fortune of \$120,000.

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