

England's Return to Catholicity.

Written for the Register by Wm. Elliott.

At the time of O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation Bill, English hostility to Catholicism has somewhat abated, although a spirit of distrust still ranked in the Protestant heart of the nation, against the ancient faith. While this was so, it was vaguely believed and admitted that Catholics had at least a right to live, but is was considered a very dangerous experiment to increase their liberties. That the measure of Catholic relief passed into law, was partly due to the foresight of British statesmen, but primarily to the extraordinary influence of the great tribune who championed the Catholic cause.

It was not, however, till the accession of Cardinal Wiseman and the withdrawal from the Anglican Church the late Cardinals Newman and Manning, and the present Lord Ripon, and many others that the eyes of the nation began to open to a just conception of the inherent and indestructible qualities of the Church of Christ. The thinking Protestants logically reasoned that men of high culture and position in the Established Church would not willingly incur the odium of their friends for the sake of a mere whim or idle fancy. Inquirers found that the real moving cause was the prompting of conviction and conscience, which led those influenced thereby to regard the things of eternity as of higher value than the perishable concerns of time.

The eminence of these converts attracted widespread attention, and drew hundreds of fair-minded Protestants after them, who had already tasted the first gleams of the true faith, but still lingered in doubt on the very threshold of the Catholic Church. Honest conviction gradually conquered all unworthy fear, and fervent souls, who had received from God the grace of conversion, boldly embraced the true faith despite the jeers and scorn of relatives and friends. Their good example was like the seed that fell upon the good soil, and increased an hundred fold.

A singular feature in the movement towards Catholicism was the fact that most of the converts came from the higher ranks of the people and from the Anglican clergy. This proved clearly that the men who had profoundly studied the merits and doctrines of the Catholic Church, were the readiest to acknowledge her supremacy, and to seek rest and shelter under her saving truths. The repudiation of Protestantism by old-time adherents was fiercely denounced in the pulpit and in the press. In deploring Newman's withdrawal the London Times said, "the Protestant world had lost a star of the first magnitude, and the brilliant luminary had dragged down hosts of minor lights in its descent." The peace of the new converts was not disturbed. Strengthened by sentiments of heavenly security, they communicated their happy experience to other seekers of the truth, spreading thereby the good work of conversion in families and circles that had been living in ignorance of the doctrines of the Catholic Church, her civilizing influences and moral precepts.

Having survived, by the protecting power of God, the inhuman cruelties of the penal laws, and gained her present standing in England, the Catholic Church is destined not only to hold her own in the nation, but to make steady, solid and onward steps towards a higher influence and a stronger position in the land once consecrated by the martyr blood of Thomas A Becket, Sir Thomas More and the heroic bands of noble Christians who sacrificed their lives in defence of their faith.

A sure and practical proof that Catholicism finds increased favor with the English people is evidenced by

the recent appointment of an Irish Catholic—Sir Charles Russell, ex-Attorney-General—as Judge of the highest appellate court in the Empire. Even in Lord Salisbury's last Cabinet, Mr. Matthews, a Catholic, was Home Secretary. And in a previous government under Mr. Gladstone, Lord Ripon—an English convert—was made Governor-General of India, the highest appointment under the Crown, and a year or so ago, Sir Stuart Knill, a strict Catholic, was Lord Mayor of London.

These manifestations in favor of Catholicity are only the first instalments of reparation made by a persecuting Protestant nation for its barbarous and unspeakable cruelties in the past three hundred years to the followers of the religion of Jesus Christ. Of the vast numbers of her faithful children who were murdered for their adherence to the faith the record is kept in heaven.

Laval University.

There appears to be one University at least in the British Empire which has solved the problem that is perplexing collegiate bodies nearer home, and combines poverty with efficiency. The Laval University at Quebec has a small endowment and a considerable debt, while the fees in its classes of law are only £6 or £7, and in the Medical School \$12 a year. Yet, says a correspondent of the *Journal Des Debats*, it is a flourishing institution. This is due in part to the fact that ecclesiastical influence is strongly exerted on behalf of the only Roman Catholic University in Canada, while sentimental inhabitants see in it a relic of Old France.

With its four Faculties of Art, Law, Medicine, and Theology, each under a dean, and with its rector at the head of all, Laval reminds us of the ancient University of Paris, though its relations with the Archbishop of Quebec, its "Visitor and Apostolic Chancellor," are far too cordial to be a faithful counterpart of those which existed between the schools of the Quartier Latin and the Chancellor of Notre Dame. Moreover, it has grown directly out of the seminary opened by Laval, first Bishop of Quebec, as long ago as 1668, an institution at first intended for the training of native missionaries, and afterwards, when the original design had proved a failure, utilized for education of French priests.

Lay students were gradually admitted, and in 1852 the College was strong enough to apply for a Royal Charter. Since that time the original seminary has been entirely distinct from the University. But if its historic past combines with its sectarian character to secure for Laval a large amount of support in Quebec, it is the professional staff who deserve most of the credit for its present success. Whether ecclesiastic or laymen—and the latter are in a large majority—the uniform salary of each professor is but 50 francs a month with board and lodging. For the clerical teacher, who lives in the seminary, the stipend of the nursery governess may perhaps suffice.

In fact we are assured that in the old days the professors were simply maintained at the expense of the institution and received no salary at all, save a small present of one hundred francs for travelling expenses during the annual vacation. But lay teachers, mostly professional men, doctors or lawyers of repute in Quebec, show a very high sense of duty in devoting their time and labor almost gratuitously in the cause of education. Mr. Chapleau, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, leads the way by delivering lectures in the Faculty of Law. It has become, in short, a point of honor with the most highly educated Catholics in the province to help the University. Whatever the religious principles of the Laval Professors may be, they have the honor of making sacrifices for them.—*Manchester Guardian*.

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