

# Random Reminiscences From Various Sources.

## EMINENT ECCLISIASTICS.

The time is long past in England when the Church of the Oratorians—when in those days stood for a new order of things Catholic, established for the most part by zealous and famous converts but lately Protestant—was a sort of show place in the city of London, with admiring throngs promenading in and out, the greater portion of whom were not of the grand old Faith of their proscribed fathers.

The Catholics of that period were a timid race, depending for religious sustenance on what they could find in the bleak little chapels, which depended for the privilege of their existence on the embassies of foreign courts—French, Austrian, Italian, Spanish. It was frequently told—

level, even to the prejudice of not a few noted Catholic Churchmen; exciting the wrath of some, the respect and confidence of others among his readers.

Among the laity may be noted James Burns, the founder of the present well-known publishing firm of Burns & Oates. He was also a musician of some celebrity and a fervent Catholic. When sacred music was at a low ebb in London, he gathered a choir of young men and boys in his employ, and was wont to make with them the rounds of the different churches.

How exclusive was the Catholic position may be further learned from the very trade advertisements. For instance, we find Arguardie the latter who enjoyed the patronage of the Duke of Sussex, respectfully acquainting the "Catholic nobility and gentry" that he is eager to supply their needs. So with bootmakers and furriers, grocers, coal-merchants, and wine dealers; the note of religion being a presumable title to patronage and support.

All this was in the old days, but a new order of things was at hand, due in great measure to the personality of two different men—Cardinal Wiseman and his equally great successor, Cardinal Manning. Although they were as unlike as possible, both were learned, cultivated and refined, both were in their respective ways thorough men of the world. Each was also in advance of his time; but this was a potent factor for the good of the English Church, over which they were to rule.

The life of Cardinal Wiseman has been told so often that it would be superfluous to enter here into any of its details. When he came to England, with all the love of ritual and rubric which he had imbibed during his long residence in Italy grown to be part of his ecclesiastical nature, he came to a land almost Protestant in its meagreness of all that appertained to the beautiful ceremonies and observances of the Church that had once peopled it with abbots and monasteries. But soon everything was changed. Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, retreats, missions, the Forty Hours' Adoration,—all these he revived.

Of large sympathies, possessing a highly cultivated mind, an enthusiastic appreciation of art in all its forms, he disliked conflict or struggle of any kind; and was on this account often accused of lack of energy, when it was really lack of aggressiveness. And if the great man sometimes erred, as even the greatest do, it was from excess of mercy and charity.

It is astonishing at this day to read that when he came to England as its first Cardinal since the Reformation his methods and measures were looked upon with dislike and distrust even by the clergy—or at least a section of them. They called his new devotions "innovations" and "fancy prayers." The "high clerical feeling," as the Cardinal was wont to term it, which characterized the new Oxford converts was one of the best things they brought with them into the Church; far better, indeed, than the intellectualty which was their marked distinction.

The new hierarchy, of which the originator and most energetic supporter was the zealous and indefatigable Bishop Ullathorne, met with considerable opposition from the government. Catholics were accused of disturbing the public peace by their "processions"; the priests were called "supplicious ruffians"; the congregations, "a parcel of dirty people" and "noisome emissaries of Rome." The ringing of bells was prohibited as a "nuisance." But, through all the opposition from without and within the pale, Cardinal Wiseman succeeded in making his naturally cheerful disposition overcome, outwardly at least, all his difficulties.

Gentleness, benevolence, hospitality were among his notable characteristics. All who were guests at his table had reason to value the privilege of his conversation. So courteous and tactful was he that when the company, as often happened, were of various ranks and occupations, he would, with as much good feeling as good breeding, contrive to direct the conversation within the scope of all, so that no one should feel excluded. None could tell a story better than he. Father Faber, it is said, sometimes laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

One story in particular tickled the good Father immensely. It was that of a French priest who, on appearing at one of the Cardinal's receptions immediately after Lent—the

first he had spent in England,—was met, by His Eminence, after the first words of welcome, with his expression of the hope that he had got through his forty days of abstinence without too much difficulty in a climate so much more severe than his own.

"All to ze contraire, Eminence," replied the Southerner; "I have do most well. I find a comestible that ze name zey call 'im; no, it vos-let men here, zey do sell a very useful food for ze Carme, I ask not letter, and I live on 'im all ze time."

"Ah! potted char, probably?" "I zink not, Eminence. Zat is not ze name zey call 'im; no, it vos-let me see—how do you say—ah, brawn!"

Simple old man, not to have known the fleshy origin of brawn!

One day, when the Cardinal had some choice plants on the table, some one ventured to ask their names. "I'm afraid I can't tell you," answered the Cardinal. "I am sometimes as much puzzled by botanical nomenclature as the old lady who said she couldn't be bothered to remember all the long Latin names; the only two she had ever been able to retain were Aurora Borealis and delirium tremens."

He used to relate with amusement and satisfaction how, on his last visit to Ireland, he had been characteristically welcomed by a ragged native. As soon as he had set foot on Irish ground this warm-hearted fellow pushed his way through the crowd, and, falling on his knees, before him, seized his hand, which he covered with kisses, exclaiming at the same time: "Now, thin, by holy St. Patrick, Heaven bless your Imensity!"

There was another story of a young Spanish nobleman he once had staying with him in York Place, whom he observed one morning, to his surprise, in an adjoining room, suddenly snatch up a pair of lighted candles and rush to the window, fall on his knees, and, after making the sign of the Cross, remain some moments in that devout attitude. A day or two after he inquired of his host whether there was not a hospital in the neighborhood.

"Why should you think so?" asked the Cardinal.

"Simply," replied the youth, "because I hear the Blessed Sacrament pass so often—ha!" he said, interrupting himself "there it is again!" And he lost no time in repairing to the window to salute the Blessed Sacrament as before.

The Cardinal found it difficult to maintain his gravity whilst explaining that it was not the Viaticum that was passing, but the muffin bell.

Cardinal Manning had hardly been ordained priest when he was freely spoken of as a future Bishop. Everyone has read of the long and painful struggle he went through before he could see his way to leaving the church of his birth, as well as of the many sacrifices he made in following the dictates of his conscience. He was one of the most attractive of men. Elegance and refinement shone in his graceful and highly-polished manners; kindness and sincerity in the clear, delicate modulations of his beautiful voice. He possessed an extraordinary spiritual instinct, quick to measure the depths and breadths of the evils around him. His previous training was of the highest value in grappling with the needs of the time and applying the proper remedies.

Grown insistent by the carelessness of the rank and file of the clergy, superior in every sense of the word to those among whom he had chosen to exchange the conditions of his late comfortable existence for the rough and tumble life of a Catholic ecclesiast—it could be called by no more euphonious name—he was looked at askance by the people, and, except in rare instances, was given the cold shoulder by the clergy. And yet within a very short time we find his policy carried out triumphantly and completely. Disinterested and loyal—we dismiss the suggestion of ambition as not worth a passing notice,—his was a soul with the highest aspirations. He was one of the most selfless and holy of men, not wishing to shine but to work; seeking and expecting no reward in this world for his labors. When the "reward" came, it was weighed with care, trials and responsibilities, that grew heavier as the years went by.

Work with him seemed to be a passion; and his own individuality became so absorbed in it that he had absolutely no time for the softer amenities and social graces which had made his predecessor so delightful and desirable in general society. He had, however, a strong sense of humor, but confined the manifestations of it to his most intimate friends. One of his stories—a specimen of ineffable Irish wit, for

which he had a great appreciation—runs as follows:

An Irish laborer employed on the framework of an edifice was thus addressed by a passing stranger:

"What's that you're building, Pat?"

"Sure an' it's a church, your honor."

"Is it a Protestant church?"

"No, yer honor."

"A Catholic church, then?"

"Indeed an' it is that same yer honor."

"I'm very sorry to hear it, Pat."

"So's the devil, yer honor."

One day His Eminence related this incident. He had been at St. George's Hospital, visiting a dying woman, to whom he had been reading and commenting on the story of Magdalen. All the time he had been sitting by her bedside he had observed the patient in the next bed intensely watching him and listening to every word he said. As soon as he rose from his seat to take leave of his patient, her neighbor addressed to him a supplicating look, to which he responded by approaching the bed and inquiring if she was "one of the faithful."

"No, your reverence," she answered, "but I should like to be one!"

"That is a very proper and reasonable wish," said he—"provided the motive is sincere and well founded. What has brought you to this desire?"

"Why I have been listening to what your reverence has been saying to that other woman, and that beautiful story of the bag of spike nails made me wish to be a Catholic too."

He had great difficulty, it may be added, in attuning the limited understanding of this poor woman to the necessary knowledge of doctrinal points and matters of faith.

It has been brought forward—very strangely, it seems to us,—as a proof of Manning's coldness of disposition that he never made any allusion to his marriage, and specially requested that nothing be said of it in any biography that might be published after his death. When he became a convert he turned that page of his life forever. It was, besides, so sacred and personal a thing, especially in view of his subsequent career as a priest of the Church, that it would appear but another phase of the refined reticence which was one of his chief characteristics.

When friends who were nearest and dearest passed away, this same attitude of coldness was often remarked in the Cardinal by persons who had never penetrated beneath the inner surface of his nature. But to those who knew him well, it had a deeper and intensely spiritual meaning. The departed had attained to a better life; they had passed beyond sin and suffering and sorrow; they had reached the end of the road along which those left behind were still struggling. He sought not to perpetuate their memory in the familiar places formerly endeared by their presence; he lingered not around the spots where they had been wont to walk together. He sought them, thought of them, lived anew with them, in the spiritual life of the Communion of Saints.

"Shall I tell you," he once said, "where I performed my last act of worship in the Church of England? It was in that little chapel off Buckingham Palace Road. I was kneeling by the side of Mr. Gladstone. Just before the Communion service began I said to him: 'I can no longer take the Communion in the Church of England.' I rose up and, laying my hand upon his shoulder, said: 'Come! Mr. Gladstone remained, and I went my way. He still remains where I left him.' And always remained.—Ave Maria.

## PARISH WORK IN FRANCE.

(Continued from Page 2.)

ous as to ways and means, he has never been forsaken by the Master for whom he works, and, when human aid seems to fail, assistance came from unexpected quarters. This was felt more particularly when it became necessary to replace a small and absolutely insufficient chapel by a church in proportion with the needs of the rapidly increasing parish.

Once a man, well dressed and well educated, came to see the cure, and, without telling him his name, placed a parcel of bank notes in his hand. "Take them," he said; "they are all my savings. If I were to keep them I know that I should make a bad use of them; take them for your church and pray for my mother's conversion." Another time the same unknown brought a second donation of ten thousand francs.

Again an anonymous gift of several thousand francs was sent by a newly-married couple, who, in order

to draw down the blessing of God on their life, gave to the church a sum of money that had been set aside for their wedding trip. Again, an unknown lady, quietly dressed, brought forty thousand francs, and another time one hundred thousand, declining to give her name.

One of the vicaires, whose special charge is the men's club, had a similar experience. He was wondering, somewhat anxiously, how he could pay the bills that were laying before him, and which represented the sums that had been expended on the club and "patronage," when a lady entered, so simply dressed that his first thought was that she came to seek relief. "I owe much to the mercy of God," she said, "and I am anxious to pay my debt; tell me what I can do for the church's parochial works?" The priest pointed to the unpaid bills and named the sum that they represented, whereupon his visitor promptly drew out a bundle of bank notes and laid them down before the astonished and grateful M. G.

Once the cure, while building his church in honor of Our Lady of Labor, felt, almost for the first time, his courage fall him. His funds were exhausted, he knew not which way to turn to get the necessary sum to bring the work to a happy conclusion, and, under this impression, he told his priests that he wondered if, after all, it was the will of God that he should complete the church; another, he added, might succeed where he seemed to fail, and finish what he had begun. The priests suggested that a novena to St. Joseph should be made by all the friends and well-wishers of the work, and the result of this crusade of prayer was that ninety thousand francs came in from unexpected quarters before the last day of the novena.

No wonder, then, that at Plaisance the watchful care of God's Providence is a favorite theme; not that Providence spares his children all care and anxiety, but when human efforts, bravely made, seem insufficient, the assistance so earnestly prayed for comes in at last.

Another subject upon which the priests at Plaisance willingly enlarge is the fact that the attacks made upon the Paris churches last spring were productive of excellent results. Our readers may remember that during the months of May and June, 1903, bands of socialists, free-thinkers and roughs, of every description proceeded to attack certain churches in the outlying quarters of the town. These "Apaches" to give them the name by which they are commonly known, were looked upon with indulgence, and even with approval, by M. Combes and his friends. Their leader was a notorious apostate priest named Charbonnel, and they generally timed their attacks when the churches were full of women and children. The cure of Plaisance, who believes that self-defence in such cases is a social duty, took his measures. On a certain Sunday in June, when the "Apaches" were expected, he decided that Vespers should take place at the usual time, that the women and children should be placed in the upper galleries of the building, and he willingly accepted the offers of all the men who volunteered to defend the church. They came in crowds, not only the practical Catholics, who are members of the different associations that have been founded in the parish, but also men who, although they never enter a church, possess instincts of justice and liberty stronger than their anti-clerical prejudices. All of them were equipped for a fight—some with huge sticks, others with stones and bricks.

"Vespers were chanted, and while the solemn sound of the psalms echoed inside, the hissing and hooting 'Apaches' gathered outside the church. Soldiers and policemen were there also, for a sharp encounter was expected between the Catholics and their foes.

One of the priests present on the occasion described to us how, just before Benediction, the men within the sacred building opened wide its doors to let in some of their friends, who had arrived late. For an instant the scene was a striving one; within, on the altar, the Blessed Sacrament, raised on its throne, was surrounded by a blaze of light; in the front were the kneeling priests, and then a closely packed army of resolute men, all ready to fight; outside, on the other side of the street, stood the yelling crowd; between the two M. Lepine, the prefect of police, pale and nervous, doing his best to prevent an encounter which the defenders of the church desired but could not provoke. Their resolute attitude was enough the 'Apaches,' who throughout their campaign proved themselves to be ardent cowards, fled from a hand to hand fight with these determined men—but the volunteers who that day

crossed the threshold of the church often returned. The priests of Plaisance, and the cure very wisely "Apaches," and whenever an attack was expected, during the summer months, their volunteers were at their post, and the sure very wisely entrusted the defence of the church entirely to their care. What, our readers will naturally ask, are the practical results of the arduous mission work so bravely carried on in the suburbs of Paris? Taking Plaisance as an example, we may safely say that these results are real, consoling, and encouraging, but that it would be unwise to expect wholesale conversions among a population that is, to all intents and purposes, almost heathen in its utter ignorance and unreasoning hostility.

Yet even among the workingmen, who are the most difficult to influence, M. Soulange-Bodin has achieved much good; he says Mass at 11 on Sundays expressly for the men of the parish, to whom a short instruction is addressed. At first forty men only were present; their number has now increased to four hundred, and the number of Easter Communions is more than double what it was eight years ago, when the present cure took in hand the government of the parish.

If these results, comforting though they be, appear out of proportion with the sum of missionary energy spent upon the mission work by those whose life is given up to this one object, let our readers remember against what huge difficulties the priests of the Paris "faubourgs" have to battle. One of these difficulties is the odious and tyrannical pressure exercised by the government upon those who are in their pay. One of the Plaisance priests told us how several government clerks who belonged to the men's club, founded by the cure, were called upon by their chiefs to choose between their employment and their attendance at the club. The men were poor, they had their families to support, and the cure was the first to advise them to leave the club. There is no country in Europe so tyrannized over as France at the present date!

We must conclude this brief account by a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Labor, the patroness of Plaisance, the queen of the busy, struggling "faubourg." Her church is spacious, light and airy; it is built in wood and iron with stone facings. It has a homelike appearance, although it possesses nothing of the old-world, venerable aspect of the churches of ancient Paris, but to a careful observer many signs betray the fact that the builders of the church wish it to be, not only the House of God, but also the home of his hard-worked, suffering children.

From the explanatory notices that are posted up we gather that there are no hard and fast rules at Plaisance; that day and night, at all hours, priests are ready to hear confessions and to baptize; that the people may seek their ministrations when and as they can, every allowance being made for the difficulties of these toilers in the struggle of life. The paintings and ornaments of the Church carry out the same idea, that it was built for the laboring classes, to whom a thousand details bring comforting and strengthening thoughts and visions of a bright hereafter.

What we have written of Plaisance and the mission work that is being carried on among its people is true, in a certain measure, of other Paris parishes, but in point of successful organization M. Soulange-Bodin is unrivalled.

May his efforts and those of his colleagues prove successful! The battle that is being waged against the powers of evil in the suburbs is a hopeful symptom for the religious future of France; ten just men might have saved the doomed cities of Palestine; there are, thank God, more than ten just men in a Paris "faubourg"!

## A. O. H. CONVENTION.

The biennial convention of the Provincial Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians will open in this city on the 17th instant, and will be attended by delegates from the various counties in the Province of Quebec, and sessions will be held daily until the business pertaining to provincial affairs is concluded. On Sunday, the 18th instant, the local divisions will muster at County Board Hall, No. 5 Place d'Armes Square, at nine o'clock in the morning, and headed by the Hibernian Knights in full uniform and hand, escort the visiting delegates to St. Gabriel's Church, Centre street, where solemn High Mass will be celebrated.