



Ruins New and Old.

(Rev. Henry H. Wyman, C.S.P., in New York Freeman's Journal.)

I left the car at Kearney street. After it had clattered and clattered over the cross-tracks I noticed the other passenger who had alighted. He was a young priest. His neat, simple dress, as much as the pallor of his reverent, thoughtful face, suggested at once the recent date of his emergence from the seminary. He lifted his hat to me with an eagerness which went straight to my heart. I did not introduce myself nor ask his name, for everyone of the priests who stream through San Francisco from every diocese in the world is traditionally welcome. It is introduction enough to know that he is a stranger. I am rather glad now that I never asked his name, that we met and talked and parted, and he remains for me an unnamed personality, a type, perhaps; holding over me no claims of personal confidence.

"I am light-hearted this morning," I said, as he fell into the stride beside me. "Light-hearted in spite of the lime, dust and ashes. Our insurance was paid to-day, and my walk up the California street hill, steep as it is, seems short to me now, like the climb back to the rehabilitation of our ruined church. See, already the temporary church is ready for the rafters."

"You are echoing my own fancy, Father," he replied. "The straight, steep path upward through ruins—I could hardly miss the comparison with a priest's life. But—more soberly—"my path leads further than yours."

I gave him a quick glance of questioning. The blackened walls of Grace Episcopal Church tower forlornly a block further up the street. Could he be—?

But his following explanation assured me: "I mean that you are near the end, and my career is yet all before me."

Of course this brought us closer immediately. What privilege is sweeter to the old priest than to encourage the beginner in life's sublimest task? So, by the time we stood beneath the sturdy tower of Old St. Mary's, we had come a long way towards easy fellowship.

Over his head, on the face of the church tower, was the fire-eaten, stone panel which suggested to the sailor boys who come to worship with us, the name of "the church with the motto." To them, in the stream of spiritual disaster, the sculptured words have often been as grim and timely as they were to the city in its day of dread. "Son, observe the time, and fly from evil."

But my friend was attracted by the condition of the stone rather than the warning.

"It looks as if it might be a tablet dug from a Babylonian mound," he said.

"Yes," I assented. "Fire does for iron in a few hours what rust would take years to accomplish. Look at these miles of a city's palaces in ruins! Three days of fire have given them the aspect of years of desolation."

"You are interested in archaeology?" he asked with a faint hint of condescension.

"Wouldn't antiquity be a better word?" I offered in reply—"archaeology's facts rather than its fancies?"

"Ah-h! Your distinction, Father, is exactly what I have been led to expect. We have so long been satisfied with the hap-hazard synthesis of elapsed time that we have been taught to fear the results of scientific analysis.

"For example," he continued eagerly, as if a waiting class were there around us impatient to interrupt him, "those ruins across the street represent what to you is past. How marvelously science penetrates the picture, sifting each heap of ashes, examining carefully each brick and charred stanchion. All it reconstructs for us the shops, the homes of your vanished parishioners, details their simple lives, even brings back to speech the fervor and loyalty to the old church on the corner—which characterized their religion."

It was beautiful; and I smiled my appreciation. It would not be fair to condemn the science of archaeology on this chance illustration of its enthusiastic disciple; it would not be fair to match his hypothesis of the past with my personal knowledge of the quarter, to show him Dupont street swarming with Mongolians, a maze of red and gold ideographs and outlandish doors, or to evoke from the littered brick and scorched, crumbling pavements of Quincy Alley, purified by fire, the long rows of huddled "cribs" and the infamy they sheltered.

I checked my gleeful impulse with a generalization: "The tendency of modern thought, I have long recognized, is to lay stress on isolated facts and ignore abstract principles. Yet, don't you think it is fevering its course in some of the advanced stages, giving too much play to the multiplication of systems at the expense of principles thoroughly established?"

"Hardly, 'too much' Father. You voice the cautiousness of intransigence, which seems too often to get in its own light. Don't you see the superior position of the New Apologetic, which stands firmly on facts, established facts, unhampered by the long accepted principles that may in the outcome prove to have been merely empirical?"

I winced. To what possibly empirical principles did he refer? His remark had reached near enough mystification of jargon for me to give him the benefit of the doubt, but the opposite doubt disturbed me profoundly.

"For instance," I queried.

"For instance, you must admit that the early history of the human race is lost in the mist of antiquity. The first gleams of light appear with Abraham; before that—darkest midnight. There is a written account, of course, but how far is it reliable as history? You must admit that its chronology is unacceptable. You cannot overlook its frequent lacunae. Then the knowledge of analogy, persistent throughout human experience, forces us to ask whether the Mosaic code was not an adaptation of some such previous achievement as the Code of Hammurabi; whether the story of the flood might not have been a pagan myth, utilized as a parable to teach God's hatred of sin. Here is a working hypothesis. And archaeology promptly supplies the facts to support it, the fact of Hammurabi's Code, which it discovers and translates for us; the fact of the flood-myth common to all Semitic traditions, harking back, perhaps, to some vague foundation in reality. Again, take note of the obscurity which hangs over the covenant of circumcision attributed to the time of Abraham. What are these but scientific motives for adherence to newly-welcomed principles which sound the death-knell of the old?"

Once more my eye wandered up the hill to the ruins of Grace Church.

"You—you are a Catholic priest, aren't you?" I stammered.

"Of a certainty!" he reassured me with a patient smile. "I am quoting from the highest authorities in Biblical science."

"But are you sure that they are orthodox?" I asked.

"Yes, Father. You are teasing me now, aren't you? Surely you must appreciate the vast aid to proper understanding of the Bible which scientific investigation brings. See how the circumstances of Josiah's defeat by the Egyptians explains the Book of Job. The office of the prophets was not prediction, as the name implies, but the destruction of idolatrous worship, the correction of a self-willed people bent on acquisition of temporal power. How well they fulfilled this task in the drama of Job, teaching that even the just, at times, must suffer; that God is our moral governor; His ways are inscrutable, and we must adhere to Him interiorly. This conception of the origin of the Book of Job is to me as beautifully convincing as Ezechiel's use of the Babylonian captivity to drive into the Jewish consciousness the true idea of sin."

My mouth was open, and my eyes stared blankly beyond him and I am afraid my voice lost the vivacity of conversation. When I murmured a question concerning the Messianic prophecies, I felt as if I were addressing the depths of an abyss.

"Oh, the Messianic prophecies," he caught me up with alacrity. "That's easy! The miseries of the Persian period molded the state-nation idea propagated by Moses into the church-nation idea of Ezra, first of the Scribes. Some elements of the Persian religion, angelology and demonology, for example, necessarily entered into the Jewish religion, formative under Persian domination. The doctrine of the resurrection and future life, very definite in the teachings of Zoroaster, was very vague in Israel. It is not surprising, then, to find Isaiah attributing the title of Messiah to Cyrus, the friend of the Jews, or to find Persian influence shaping Jewish hopes, just as, under Alexander and the Seleucid kings, Hellenism permeated the doctrines and customs of the nation."

My searching glance expressed without words my earnest question, "What are you driving at?"

"Well, then," he continued argumentatively, "the Old Testament was not written to present a logical, chronological history of any idea. We must keep this fairly in mind if we hope to trace scientifically the origins of the Messianic conception. The favorite theme of the Old Testament is the idea of the Covenant, with its two-fold elements, Israel and Jehovah. Just as the prophets always brought up the deliverance out of Egypt as proof of the covenant, the House of David was later seized upon as representative of Jehovah in the nation's obligation to the covenant. Disloyalty to the House of David is, in the minds of Ezechiel and Osee, Israel's infidelity to her spouse, Jehovah. The nation's fidelity to its royal house makes it, in the words of Isaiah, 'the virgin daughter of Zion.' Now, the first element in the Messianic prophecy is that Israel, in spite of its sin, will live. Here is a case of the Old Apologetic tripping himself over principles, which as I have said might turn out to have been empirical. Scientific archaeology authoritatively substitutes the nation's allegiance to its ruling dynasty for the idea that Messianic prophecy aims directly at the person of Christ. And the substitution makes wonderfully clear much that has puzzled students of the Messianic prophecies in the past, don't you think so?"

I wasn't thinking at all. I was listening to his amazing talk with chaotic stupefaction.

"Jeremiah indicated a Messianic dynasty. Isaiah and Micah took the final step: singled out a king; and centered their expectation in the suffering servant of Jehovah. This, of course, is easily accounted for by the severe discipline suffered by the nation in its exile; and exile, too, naturally contributed the further notion of Jehovah's universal sway all over the children of men."

"I must confess that I have never thrilled with greater admiration," he pursued, with the ardent zeal of a proselytizer, "than when this wonderful analysis of a known fact revealed itself to my mind in all its satisfying completeness. See how each step follows the one before, with the precision of mathematical demonstration; righteousness, revealed by Jehovah, is the supreme duty of Israel; the unrighteous, the Gentiles, must be destroyed; but Israel, also, has been unrighteous, Israel, who by the covenant, shall never die. The illustration of Israel by Divine retribution shall, therefore, bring forth a new Israel, a righteous remnant—Jehovah's people. Then came the exile with its quickening of Israel's hatred against the Gentiles, and the counter-current of thought, strong in the minds of those whom the exile had prospered, that the souls of Gentiles had value in the eyes of God. This idea was far from being in the hands of a weak or unintelligent party. Their contribution to Jewish literature, of the wonderfully clever allegory of Jonah, and the ancient novel called Esther, is proof of their capacity. Daniel under the influence of the Persian doctrine of the resurrection of souls, brilliantly supported this party, and paved the way for the revival of the prophetic

idea of individual salvation over the idea of national salvation held previous to the exile—But what's the matter, Father? Are you ill? Pardon me, I beg of you! Here I've been talking on and on—"

I had backed up against the twisted iron railing of the church yard, under the blighted magnolia tree, and my face, no doubt, expressed an anguish which might readily be taken for physical pain.

"The sun—" I said feebly, in base calumny of the gentle radiance of San Francisco's summer sun. "But don't assist me." I protested, as he took my arm. "Excuse me now. I'll be all right after I have rested a while in the shade."

And we parted graciously, he to pursue his journey up the steep hill, I to find a broken chair in the cool crypt under the tower.

For I truly needed rest and quiet. The oration of this recent graduate from the Seminary, pouring like a flood from the brimming reservoir of his years of diligent study, had added me. "Israel, Jehovah, the allegory of Jonah, the novel called Esther, national salvation, Persian concept of resurrection!" floated through my consciousness on the tide of his level, didactic speech with confusing persistence of fantasies in a disordered dream.

I had been drawn to him from the first; my heart had warmed with joy in his keen, confident outlook on his future, and I reproached myself with my abrupt acceptance of the pretext I had used to bring our encounter to an end, with the sense of distaste, unacknowledged but real, which possessed me when I took his hand and said "good-bye." For he was a priest, a young priest. On him, only last June, perhaps, has been laid the charge, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine; for there will be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, according to their desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and will turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables."

Was not this time already come upon us, overwhelming the posterity of the ages of faith with the ugliness of desolation, as the fire had overwhelmed the fair city of the Argonauts? And he, was he not one of my successors in the priesthood, to take on his strong, young shoulders that burden mine are growing too feeble to bear; to feed the lambs of Christ, possibly, on occasion, in this very church which I shall hardly live long enough to reconstruct? He hadn't said that the Pentateuch was historically unreliable, the flood a myth, the story of the creation lost in midnight darkness, Jonah an allegory. Esther a novel, Messianic prophecy a naturalistic evolution of a nation's self-consciousness—surely he hadn't said these things!

And yet, how did such ideas get into his mind? Where did he learn to recite them so trippingly on his tongue?

For among the blackened crucifixes and melted candelabra heaped in the ruined crypt, the figure of my old professor rose before me, a serene and mighty figure, dominus et magister, "Gibraltar of Orthodoxy," we had called him. I remembered the jealous severity with which he had supervised our reading, the volcanic explosiveness of his denunciation of rash innovators. I heard him once again in imagination, as I had once heard him on an occasion of great honor and solemnity, unfolding the vast treasures of his world-renowned scholarship, proving his right to speak with authority, as he defended the thesis that not only matters of faith but matters of opinion in connection with Holy Scripture must be deferred constantly and unreservedly to the mind of the Teaching Church.

The Church! Had my young friend once mentioned it in our conversation?

The influence of my professor at college has always, powerfully, affected my life as a priest. During those years of intellectual plasticity spent under his sway, the structure and form of my faith and opinion were fixed. The coin as he stamped it has retained the impress of the die throughout life. And I have never encountered a regret for the

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ave of the Church's actual or even possible attitude towards any subject, which he instilled into me. On the contrary!

When my book, "Certainty in Religion," was presented to the public, a reviewer, classing me with the "defunct apologists of the Brownson type," offered the opinion that the modern, scientific school in the Church would reject my view of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But Pius X. approving the findings of the Biblical Commission, recalled to my mind that criticism, and comforted me.

Not long ago, approaching the weather-beaten verandah of a small ranch house in the San Joaquin valley, I saw a dear, white-haired exile from Ireland, reading a little magazine. Her placid face was aglow with contented piety. The kind old eyes, behind her steel-rimmed spectacles, were alight with happy tears. "What are you reading there, grandmother?" I asked.

"You ought to know, father," she said as she handed the magazine to me. To my confusion, I saw that it was my brief story of the "Holy House of Loreto" in the current Ave Maria. But my confusion was personal. It did not include the dominant impulse of my life-thought, derived from my professor in college. It did not stab me with the reproach of disturbing the venerable piety of this humble daughter of the Blessed Virgin.

And as I left Old St. Mary's, to board the California street car, I wondered, compassionately, whether any such reproach will ever fall to the lot of my unknown interlocutor.

Thanksgiving Day in St. Laurent College.

American Thanksgiving Day was fittingly kept at St. Laurent College by the many students in that institution whose homes are in the United States. As usual, the Canadian boys took part with all the brotherly feeling and enthusiasm that characterize such celebrations at the college.

Through many years members of St. Patrick's Literary Society have constantly added glory to the name of their organization until they have won for their society a distinguished reputation and have caused it to be considered one of the best student dramatic societies existing in Canada.

On Nov. 28th the Society made it a duty to try to do even better than in the past, and the success they won may be inferred from the remarks of a literary scholar, present at the entertainment. "I could wish to see no better play."

At 8 p.m. the doors of the theatre were opened to the Reverend Faculty, five hundred anxious students, and a large number of invited guests.

The evening's programme was opened with a selection by the orchestra, "College Life."

Mr. James Sullivan delivered the speech of the evening. On this occasion he sustained his laudable reputation, and proved himself a master at his work.

"Sir Thomas More" was rendered in so fitting a manner as to merit continued applause for the young actors. Mr. Frederick Baker, as "Sir Thomas More," may be considered the "star" of the evening. He relinquished himself, as it were, and became the impersonation of the martyred Sir Thomas More. So natural was his interpretation, his strict adherence to stage principles, his paternal yet manly affections, his prepossession, that he never once betrayed his part.

Due honor must be given Daniel E. Regan, who has frequently appeared in important roles. As King Henry VIII, he embodied that unflinching stubbornness, characteristic of him who was once called the "De-

fender of the Faith." The scene in which Henry grants audience to Sir Thomas More was particularly appreciated. Therein was brought out the religious sentiments of the one and the unreasoning declarations of the other. The success of the two forenamed actors, added to that of Messrs. Griffin, Lamar and McDonough, attest the merit due the Moderator, Rev. Father W. H. Condon, C.S.C., and his assistant, Rev. Mr. T. Kellet. Their willingness and capability to do have long been proved.

Violin and vocal solos were rendered respectively by Messrs. Bourassa and Maher. It is needless to say with what applause a player, bearing the enviable reputation of Mr. Bourassa, was received, and, then, Mr. Maher is the society's favorite vocalist.

To the delight of the audience, Mr. Francis McKeon, an adept in the terpsichorean art, contributed to the success of the evening in a palm-winning selection. His imitation of the approach and retreat of a locomotive was such as can be given equally as well, but by a professional only.

"The Yankee Flag Drill," in which twenty-four junior students took part, prepared under Mr. McKeon's direction, was the admiration of a thoughtful audience.

The college orchestra accompanied these junior students, who, in the course of their performance, rendered several patriotic songs and anthems. As these young voices sang "You're a Grand Old Flag," the American flag, suspended from above, dropped before the full view of the audience, and it was made to wave mechanically, as it would were floating in the free air of heaven.

"High indeed by an immeasurable distance is the delicious intercourse of man with man." This spirit of friendship was shown by the young men from the United States to their Canadian companions, as the Canadian flag, occupying a prominent place between those of Ireland and France, suddenly appeared in the background.

The audience, to a man, arose, as the orchestra played the introduction of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." Pleasing as was the opening, this closing of the performance proved a fitting climax to the evening's entertainment. More than two hundred many voices joined in the chorus of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," as the flag, dear to every American heart, spread its folds to feed our patriotic gaze.

On Thursday, Thanksgiving Day proper, a grand banquet was held in the College dining-room, at which numbers of the students, with members of the Faculty, assisted to do honor to the traditional turkey repast.

It is, indeed, true as may that there is something in the Catholic college banquet that peacefully recalls the blest asceses of our forefathers in the faith.

R. A. X.

A Unique Prayer Book.

Mrs. Matthew O'Connell, living in Geneseo, Ill., has a relic which she prizes highly in the form of a prayer book 200 years old. The book was made entirely by hand labor, all the type being hand set. The book is ponderous in size and locked with heavy brass clasps. The book bears the imprint of M. Gottward Shuster, and was published August 4, 1707, at Zwickau, Germany. Three fonts of type were used. The book was given to Mrs. O'Connell by her mother, the late Mrs. William Weinrich, who read constantly in the book during the last years of her life. It has been handed down in the family for generations.