

A MODERN APOSTLE.

Sketch of Mgr. Nugent.

A Typical Soggarth Aroon.

Father Nugent is an Irishman in England. He is even more. He is looked upon as the head of the Irish in the neighborhood of Liverpool. Very few people understand the importance of this section of the race abroad. According to a writer in the *New Ireland Review*, if the old Ireland were ended tomorrow, it could almost be re-peopled in all its variety and richness from the Irish of Liverpool and Lancashire. Grandsire and vanithee, with their peasant songs and folk tales, ballad singer, ghost hunter, blind fiddler, priest's boy, ghastland chronicler, and all their kindly hearted brethren, would stream out and homeward from many a haunt between Barrow and Bootle.

A TYPICAL SOGGARTH AROON.

Mgr. Nugent, or "Father Nugent," as he is still affectionately styled, is one of the most interesting Irish personages of the last half century, one of the first figures in the philanthropic world at this juncture one with a varied and vivid record, a man of intense individuality, who has made friends and spread projects far and



MONSIGNOR NUGENT.

wide, one who is looked up to in some quarters as the worthy successor of Father Mathew, one whose noblest work has been done in the slums of a great city, but who in this, his chosen sphere, affords an admirable example of the typical soggarth aroon amongst the people. Beyond this he has been closely associated with the initial trials and the gradual growth of the popular Catholic press in Great Britain. Furthermore, he has watched at close quarters the rise of the Irish element in Lancashire from the famine time misery and obloquy to the triumph of this our decade, when it controls parties, leads municipal affairs and enter Parliament. He has done more than watch—he has aided; and it is not possible to name any one in that quarter who has helped more than he by his work to break down anti-Irish and anti-Catholic intolerance and prejudice. Last, but not least, his history exemplifies various turns in the tide of Catholic affairs in Great Britain which the past half century has witnessed.

FATHER NUGENT IN THE FAMINE.

Though Father Nugent's active work began in the city by the Mersey, yet he comes of an Ulster family. In most respects, however, he is more typical of the impulsive, kindly but stormy hearted Celt of Munster, and I believe that in later years he has traveled more in the south than in any other part of Ireland. After his ordination in Liverpool he took charge of the mission at Blundellsoods, some few miles distant, and afterwards he was connected with the Pro-Cathedral, Copperas Hill. His real labors began in the great famine period. Appalled and dispirited, peasants were hurrying in thousands from Ireland as from a land of plagues, and Liverpool was for a long time the scene to which crowds

of them turned in the hope of finding a haven of refuge. It was anything but a haven to some, the unfortunate people had to face such racial and religious hostility as may well seem incredible in these more generous days of ours.

THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE.

In some of the ancient streets off Scotland Road one hears nowadays amazing but authentic stories of the persecutions to which the Irish Catholics were doomed in that hideous period. They recall the terror of the penal days. Ordinary life in the emigrants' quarters just then was only one degree less wretched than the life in the stricken land from which they fled. Their lot seemed beyond the pale of alleviation. Some of the emigrant element was vitiated by its surroundings, and while the greater portion went onward and upward, leaving its impress in a short time upon life and thought in Lancashire, this large fringe seemed to sink helplessly into gloom and demoralization. It was pitiable, but in view of the circumstances it was all but inevitable. Father Nugent was drawn, an intrepid and persevering missionary, to this whole area of slum life.

"Save the Boy" became his motto, and in the new cause he strove with an enthusiasm which to some seemed almost fanaticism. A boys' refuge was soon established—one, by the way, which is still flourishing—he begged and preached week after week in its behalf, had the youngsters educated and taught trades, went with a colony of them to a brighter station in North America, returned, snatched others from the morass and brought them under the sway of the teacher and the handicraftsman. Some of them are journalists and legislators to-day.

The reader may not be quite surprised to find that in the course of time Father Nugent came to think that this emigration scheme of his might be worked upon a much larger scale, and that he went so far as to seriously advocate emigration to the States and colonies as a remedy for Irish ills and grievances. For a long time he cherished the belief that judicious clearances and social propaganda would set Ireland right again, that national and legislative programmes and movements were more or less matters of mere sentiment. These ideas met with much hostile criticism in Irish quarters, and for a long time Father Nugent was not on the friendliest terms with his countrymen. More careful study of Irish questions considerably widened, even revolutionized his views, and for several years past he had advocated very progressive Nationalist ideas.

THE NEWSPAPER.

Under stress of many difficulties Father Nugent founded the *Catholic Times*. As time went on the paper progressed in good fortune.

Father Nugent had go ahead ideas, was a resolute organizer and a couple of times was highly favored by fortune in the selection of editor and staff. A time came when the paper had its Paris, Roman, Dublin, American, Spanish and Russian correspondents, its London edition and local reporters throughout Great Britain. Its proprietor, who carefully followed its fortunes, served for several years of this forward period as chaplain of the Liverpool Borough Jail, retiring a few years ago. His nature in this portion of his career received new and enduring influences. He saw so much of the ugly and vicious side of life that gradually his spirit was over-saddened at the wreck and the pity of it all. He almost expected a touch of villainy everywhere. His zeal in the cause of reformation was, however, redoubled and led him so far that a cynical friend on one occasion asked him if he ever troubled about any but the unrighteous, and if it were possible

for upright citizens to enter into his good graces. The father smiled good-humoredly, seeing, of course, the deep tribute to his labors, which underlay this cynicism. Once in a while, in his passion to set the fallen and the despised on their feet, he brought on his journalistic staff such specimens of literary sloth and jetsam as might well plunge an ordinary editor in despair. But he soon mended matters, for as a rule he had a keen sense of what was appropriate and what would be progressive.

THE CATHOLIC T. A. LEAGUE.

In 1872 he made another new departure, when he established the Catholic Total Abstinence League, or, as it is briefly called, the League of the Cross. He had been a devoted student of Father Mathew's life work and became at length a warm advocate of his principles. He burned with the desire to see the work of the great Irish temperance reformer carried on afresh, but when he started the new organization he could scarcely have hoped to see it in a short time the success which it really became. Cardinal Manning was one of the first to accord his adhesion to the movement; in fact, in some minds the League of the Cross organization has been so identified with the late Cardinal that its origin is ascribed by them to him. This view is, however, incorrect. Father Nugent was the pioneer, and the real centre of the movement for some time was the Father Mathew Hall, Liverpool. Ever since he has labored in its cause with intense devotion and has preached its principles throughout Great Britain and even in America.

In Liverpool he gathered about him a band of men who had all taken the total abstinence pledge from Father Mathew himself and who were delighted to rally round him whom they fondly styled his successor. They formed what was known as the "Veterans' Branch" of the league, and it was at their meetings in a dingy hall of a Liverpool bye street that one could see Father Nugent at his best and simplest. In the midst of the rugged but devoted humanity that gathered about him on Monday evenings all the kindness of his nature overflowed, and he recalled the soggarth aroon of Banim's touching lyric. Father Mathew himself was never more admired by his followers than was Father Nugent by these "Veterans" and their friends. Here his addresses were more natural than anywhere else—simple, pathetic humorous and impassioned by turns. It were a hard nature, indeed, that the scene, with all its simple devotion, could not touch—there in the very heart of sordid slum life. O'Connell was king in Conciliation Hall some thirty years earlier; Father Nugent was now quite as much a king in that hall of Lancashire.

FATHER NUGENT AS EDITOR.

With a Catholic newspaper and a Catholic literary journal (the *Catholic Fireside*) under his control, his ideal is to some extent realized, for a Catholic newspaper such as his is like a centre of a world. A hundred lives and interests converge to it, tidings from Rome and intelligence from five continents proceed to it, while orders and issues have to go out from it near and far. He does not prize his papers or busy himself with their interests from any sense of literary or intellectual enthusiasm. He appreciates them, in the first place, as religious levers, and in the next from the sense of power, usefulness and expanse which they afford to him. To be a working spirit was the passion of his younger days. To be a governing and controlling spirit has now become a second nature with him. His literary and business staff is such that he need never trouble himself in the slightest degree about anything in connection with his papers. Yet he hurries in repeatedly from his

home in a Liverpool suburb (Waterloo) in as keen a state of unrest and anxiety as if he had to write every line of the literary matter and perform the whole duties of the business departments.

LIFE OF HERCULEAN TOIL.

In most quarters of the English Catholic world one hears of the work, career and individuality of Father Nugent. Meeting him for the first time, after this stream of comment on his work and power, one may experience some sense of disappointment, thinking his personality incompatible with the notable character he has won. A short, stooping, energetic little man with thin, severe features, grey hair and searching eyes, the impression he first gives is not one of greatness or force, but simply of a preoccupied spirit, and a busy, unrelaxing individuality. Gradually the sense of grit and power is felt, and when one remembers that his has been a life of herculean toil and anxiety for half a century, and that he is still hale and resolute as in early manhood, the impression is considerably deepened.

NEW FATHER MATHEW.

He is seen, perhaps, at his best during the great temperance meetings and reunions which he summons from time to time to the Picton Lecture Hall, the most spacious of its kind in Liverpool. Father Mathew in his heyday had no more interesting gatherings. The faces, the crush, the interest, the animation suggest pictures of joyous and earnest Munster gatherings in the days before the great famine. Here and there, however, one recognizes faces and features on which slum life has set shadow and gloomy care and which loom out with a spectral and warning interest amidst the general gaiety and unrestrained animation. All grades and stations troop in—the babe and the vanithee seem to make the haunt a chosen one, and the observer is sometimes startled to think that it was the wreck of Irish villages and the clearances of Irish country sides long ago that have made these gatherings possible. There is tragedy beneath them—in a grim, silent and touching way they tell the latter day history of Ireland.

Under the new skies

They bring you memories of old village faces,
Cabins gone now, old well sides, dear old places,
And men who loved the cause that never dies.

Something of all this must strike Father Nugent as he addresses these favorite gatherings. He touches chords that are pleasant to think upon. He speaks from the heart and to the heart.

POPULAR CATHOLIC JOURNALISM.

His journals are essentially popular in their character and have done excellent work in the way of stirring and enlivening the Catholic masses, consecrating and consolidating Catholic energies, and going, as it were, on beneficial and pleasant missions to the homes of thousands of people. A very respectable corps of our Catholic authors have seen service from time to time with Father Nugent. Among them are the Rev. Dr. Barry, "M. E. Francis," Richard Dowling, John Augustus O'Shea, Edmund Downey and John K. Loys. A few members of the Irish party have also been connected with the *Catholic Times*, and a band of younger writers have been among its contributors.

There are cases of consumption so far advanced that Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup will not cure, but none so bad that it will not give relief. For coughs, colds and all affections of the throat, lungs and chest, it is a specific which has never been known to fail. It promotes a free and easy expectoration, thereby removing the phlegm, and gives the diseased parts a chance to heal.

Sho (severely) Henry, what is a poker chip?

Ho (frankly): It's a chip of a poker, I suppose. Did I guess it?—*Detroit Free Press*.