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THE POPE'S EARLY LIFE.

ROMANTIC EPISODE OF HIS YOUTH.

(From the North British Daily Mail)

I have lately received from a Scotch Catholic, who is passing the winter at Rome, the following authentic particulars, respecting a little-known period of the Pope's early life—

At various times it has been hinted, more or less obscurely, that Count Mastai-Ferretti, who in 1815 was one of the handsomest officers in the Guardia Nobilitate of the Papal Court, but who in 1847 was raised to the Papal Chair by the title of Pius Nono, forsook his original profession to become a member of the Church militant, for much the same reason that frequently drives young men in humbler life to exchange the ploughshare for the sword. In plain English—or Italian—for the lady is cosmopolitan, there was, it has been hinted, a lady in the case, but the real circumstances of the tale were very imperfectly known. Quite recently, however, a Scotch Catholic at Rome has gathered, upon authority which, of all others in the world, there is no disputing, the true version of a melancholy and pathetic page in the early life of the kind old man who still sits enthroned on a vain infallibility in the Vatican.

About the year 1815 the young Count Mastai-Ferretti entered the Guardia Nobilitate of the Papal Court, and being of high birth, singularly handsome person, and most winning manners, soon became a "necess" in Roman Society, the favourite of all the men and the darling of all the women. But the young Count had a heart and intellect incapable of being spoiled by flattery, and being soon weary of the frivolous routine of mounting guard on high days and holidays in the ante-chamber of the Vatican and Quirinal began to turn his thoughts towards the Church as a profession. While he was still hesitating, but not before the Superior of the Jesuits and of the Sacred College had marked him as a recruit worth enlisting to prop a Church that was already losing ground in its contest with the spirit of enlightenment and free inquiry, he fell in love, and his love was warmly returned. The object of his affection was a young and beautiful Irish lady, the daughter of a Protestant clergyman who was sojourning at Rome with his family, and who afterwards became well known as a prelate of the national Church. The young people had met frequently during the gaieties of the winter, and it was not long before they began to rehearse the old, old story. The growing intimacy between the young people was not unobserved by the parents of the young lady, and caused them no little uneasiness, but the mischief was done before they became fully alive to its existence, and when the young officer ventured to put his fortune to the touch, and ask for the hand of their daughter, he was met at first by a positive refusal on the score of difference of nationality, and still more of creed. But Miss — had a heart of her own as against the arguments of her relatives, though she had already surrendered to another's keeping. Love recked but little of creeds and formalities, and the future Bishop of —, when he found that his daughter's happiness was vitally concerned in the matter, sacrificed not without some natural reluctance, his feelings of a Protestant dignity to those of a father, and the marriage was duly arranged to take place in Rome. On the morning of its intended celebration the bride and her relatives, with numerous friends of both parties, repaired to the Church of St. —, where, somewhat to their surprise, it was found that probably for the first time in his life, the young count had been negligent of politeness so far as to suffer his intended bride to be the first to

arrive at the altar. The hour came and passed, but not the man,—and after waiting some time in increasing uneasiness and suspense, as the minutes slipped by without any sign of the bridegroom, the party slowly dispersed. Inquiries were made at the house of the missing spouse, but nothing further could be gleaned of his whereabouts beyond the fact that he had started in his carriage for the Church, duly attired in wedding costume, and accompanied by his best man. Since then he had not been seen by any one. After a day or two the police were communicated with, but in those days the Roman police were merely the creatures of the priesthood, from whom they received orders as to what was to be divulged or suppressed; and, as we shall see later, it was not likely that in the present case they would lead any genuine aid towards unravelling the mystery. The young Count had disappeared, leaving no trace behind, and as he was known to be deeply and sincerely in love with his intended bride, and had always been the soul of honor and truth, suspicions were rife of foul play. Nothing, however, could be discovered, and the matter in time died away. Roman Society knew his face no more. The effect upon his fiancée was terrible; she drooped like a bruised lily, and in less than three years from the fatal morning she was resting in her quiet grave. Within six months of her disease, and when the gossip it revived had once more died away, Southern Italy began to be filled with the renown of a young and hitherto unknown priest, whose impassioned eloquence in the pulpit, joined to a devotion to the interests of the Church, and to a purity of life which was then rare enough to attract comment, were in everybody's mouth. In that aloof age, when as yet there was no Catholic revival, a young priest, who seemed to live solely for the world that was to come, and did his best to turn the attention of others in the same direction, was an event of almost apostolic significance. In time it was whispered that the life of the young preacher, who was famed for the sweetness and amiability of his address, had been clouded by some heavy sorrow, and gradually as it became better known, it could no longer be concealed that he was none other than the young Count Mastai-Ferretti, whose disappearance had been more than a nine day's wonder.

The history of his life during the past three years was a blank, which no one could fill up, or find courage to question him on the subject. Very soon it became known that he had offered his services to the South American missions, and was on the point of starting for a new field of duty in the Chilean Republic. How the young missionary, who went forth in the spirit of the apostle to the Indies, to uphold the religion among a mongrel race, who were in many respects worse than heathens—how the purity of his life, and the energy of his fearless rebukes to the slothful friars who had made the city of St. James like unto Sodom and Gomorrah for wickedness, drew down upon him their uneasy indignation, and how the cable formed against him was strong enough to procure the recall of such a fearless and inconvenient censor, need not be here repeated. He returned to Europe where preferment was not long in seeking him out. Gregory XVI. raised him to successive dignities in the Church, and when in 1847 the keys of St. Peter fell from the dying fingers of his patron, all eyes turned to Mastai-Ferretti as the man whom high and low, rich and poor, felt to be the most fitting successor of the deceased Pope. Thenceforth his life belongs to the history of Italy and of the Papacy in its most eventful period of modern times. He was at that time a reputed Liberal in politics, which endeared him to the Italian people, and it was noticed that amid universal kindness and toleration for all classes of people, whether clerical or lay, he made one exception in his scarcely concealed dislike to the Jesuits. More recently when failing health and a complication of circumstances with which he was unable or too timorous to cope, have induced him to abdicate his independence of action, the Jesuit Camarilla is supreme at the Vatican, but it was not in the early times of his accession to the Papal chair. Few persons, except the officials of the Order, could have divined the

secret reason for his aversion to the Jesuits, or have supposed that under that smiling and benign countenance, full of charity both for enemies and friends, there was concealed a bitter reminiscence which, in a man of worse passions, might have incited Pius Nono to repay to them somewhat of the evil whereby they had blasted the hopes of his earlier life. We have now the key to his instinctive distrust of the Jesuits. It has transpired that his mysterious disappearance on his wedding morning was due to a deliberate act of violence. The Jesuits had seen with dismay that an influential Catholic, and one who they hoped would, when he took orders, rekindle the lamp of the church in the waste places of the earth with something of its old brilliancy, was slipping away from their control, and would, with a Protestant bride, be lost to them forever. Every obstacle to his marriage was essayed, but in vain; and when these had failed, with their avowed principle that the end justifies the means, the Society of Jesus (so-called), which has never been squeamish as to the nature of the latter which they employ, determined to prevent the marriage at any cost. As the young bridegroom expectant stepped from his carriage at the door of the church, where the bridal party were awaiting him, he was seized, gagged, and blindfolded by several men, masked and armed, who hurried him away through the narrow streets and lanes of the Eternal City before his attendants or the by-standers could offer the slightest protest or resistance. The fact that no word of this incident, which occurred in broad daylight at the door of a church where many people had collected to gaze at a fashionable wedding, was ever suffered to reach those who were anxiously seeking to trace the whereabouts of the missing man, speaks volumes for the care and completeness with which the plot had been organized, and for the pressure of terrorism which the police were enabled to exert so as to maintain the secret inviolate. The agents in the abduction were the hired myrmidons of the General of the Jesuits, whose secrecy was of course unimpeachable; and it appears that their unfortunate victim was detained under close surveillance, in a place which he was never able in after years to identify, until the time had arrived when all temporal happiness in this world seemed to have gone from him for ever, and that his only hope of obliterating the memory of the past lay in devoting himself to the sphere of duty from which earthly love had alone been powerful enough to divert him. He became a zealous soldier of the Church militant, but the exact date when he took orders is not known even to our informant. Probably this is one of the secrets which Pius Nono, from unwillingness to dwell further on the iniquity of which he had been the victim, will carry with him to the grave. A dark curtain has fallen on this period of his life, and only a portion of it can be lifted. It is said by those who have frequently noticed the fact without speculating on its cause, that when, as frequently happens, amongst the crowd of Northern ladies—whether Protestant or Catholic, matters little to him, for, as he often says, the blessing of an old man can at least do the former no harm—who kneel before him at his receptions, there happens to be any fair daughter of Erin, the tone of his greeting and the fervency of his words of blessing towards her are tinged with an irresistible tenderness and affection which now that the past history of his life has been recounted, suggest that the presence of an Irish countenance, or the sound of an Irish name, may thrill him with a blessed forecast of the day, ever drawing near to his wistful gaze, when those whom man put asunder shall meet at last on the threshold of Divine Love in a world where there shall be no more parting nor sorrow. When we reflect upon the wrongs that Pius Nono suffered before he entered the Church, there is less cause for surprise at the placid equanimity with which he supports misfortunes that to a man of another temperament might seem heavier than anything. Even were his position less comfortable and free from care than it is, it is easy to understand that he would—compared with the secret sorrow of his life—regard the downfall of his temporal power as a matter of very trifling importance.

MR. SPURGEON ON "ECCENTRIC PREACHERS."

On Wednesday week the annual tea-meeting of the friends and supporters of the Pastor's College connected with the Metropolitan Tabernacle was held, after which addresses were given in the Tabernacle by several of the students, and during the evening Mr. Spurgeon delivered a lecture on "Eccentric Preachers." He said he was almost sorry to speak of eccentric preachers, because somebody had been rude enough to observe that he wondered if he should consider himself to be an eccentric preacher. (Laughter.) Of course, he did not consider that there was anything eccentric about him, whatever there might have been years ago. John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking. He was a good Templar and a Baptist, and they said, "He has a devil." Jesus Christ came eating and drinking, and they said He was a winebibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners. Neither he one or the other would exactly suit. He supposed he was eccentric to some people. Granted; but they were eccentric to him. (Laughter.) A man called him a Dissenter the other day, but he did not own it at all. That man belonged to the Established Church, and was a dissenter—he dissented from him. He had as much right to be the standard as that man had. The man said to him, 'You are a Nonconformist'; but he said, 'No, it is you who do not conform to me.' (Laughter.) And was that not so? Because who was to put down what it was they were to conform to? (Applause.) Who was to fix the centre? 'Oh,' some would say, 'it is to be found in the vestry.' If they would open the door they would see—what was it? A laundry? (Laughter.) Black gowns, and white gowns, and green gowns, and albas, and birettas, and—but he was not well up in the terminology of ecclesiastical millinery. What was eccentric at one time was not eccentric at another. Some 100 years ago or more, when John Wesley stood to preach on his father's grave in Epworth Churchyard, people said it was eccentric to preach in the open air. But Jesus Christ and his apostles preached in the open air. Now-a-days a Dissenter must not stand on a gravestone or lie under it. (Laughter.) They were forbidden. Those holy worms that fed on Churchmen would become ill if they fed on Dissenting bodies. (Loud laughter.) One of the charges of eccentricity against Whitefield and Wesley was that they actually wore their own hair instead of wearing wigs. Could anything be more monstrous? (Laughter.) A holy person from Holland wrote to him and said he had read his sermons with pleasure, but he could do so no longer, as he had been told he was a monstache. (Loud laughter.) He had not a word to say for such men, but gave them over as dead horses to the dogs of criticism. He had heard of a man who tried to get a congregation by saying that if they would come he would show them the easiest way to make a pair of shoes, and when they came he fulfilled his promise by taking a pair of boots, and cutting the tops off. That was a species of eccentricity which he would not advise any one to imitate. Old Latimer was eccentric, but there was something very genuine about him, and one could not help loving him. Coming down to Wesley's time, there was John Berridge. He could not live without being funny. He was quaint by nature. When he preached the seats of the church had a double row of people in every one of them. People sat on the top of the beams, and ladder were placed to the windows, and there was a person on every rung. To judge rightly of the conduct and sayings of a minister, they must know the circumstance in which he was placed. Things often looked ridiculous which they would not do if they knew all. What seemed to have been eccentric might have been the wisest thing after all. They should say the right thing and the true, and discharge their consciences before God.

The country storekeeper said: "Here, my friend, those balls of butter I bought of you last week all proved to be just three ounces short of a pound." And the farmer innocently answered: "Well, I don't see how that could be, for I used one of your pound bars of soap for a weight."

A MONUMENTAL BUILDING.

Our Montreal neighbors are disposed to show their appreciation of that grand work which the *Witness* (published in their city) has been doing for Protestantism. At a public meeting recently held, the project of erecting a building for the *Witness*, and to be presented as a gift, was fully and enthusiastically endorsed. We give the speech made on that occasion by Mr. Glendinning, who is a worthy member of our Church, and a most influential citizen of Montreal. His expression gives a clear and emphatic testimony on one or two points of great interest to all Canadians.

ALD. GLENDINNING'S SPEECH.

Ald. Wm. Glendinning was received with loud and long applause. He said:—I have a little personal announcement to make before seconding the resolution. A wise friend said to me to-night—"Be careful what you say." (Laughter.) Now I am a candidate for Aldermanic honors, and I just feel like this, that if that high honor is incompatible with the right to speak here, I do not covet it. I am willing to stand or fall by my principles on this question. (Hear, hear.) I thank God that I live in these times. I know that they are trying times, but I believe we are able to get through them. (Hear, hear.) And I believe if we are faithful to the principles on which we have started out, that we will hand down to our children something worth inheriting. (Cheers.) I do not want to live if I cannot live like a Briton. (Applause.) I have a sort of an idea that the gentlemen who caused the destruction of that little church at Oka, will feel that they made a mistake when they see a memorial building to the *Witness*. (Cheers.) I believe that from the ruins of that little church will spring up a monument of the sentiment and thought and feeling of the great British heart of this Dominion (cheers); for the people of this Province of Quebec have got to show that we never will submit to live on any other terms than equal rights. (Applause.) This is a British colony, this is a British city (hear, hear), and though it may cost a long and severe struggle, we will maintain British freedom here. (Loud cheers.) Now, Mr. Chairman, I have read the *Witness* for about twenty-four years, and perhaps the reading of the *Witness* has not done me any harm in getting those principles into my mind. I know as a matter of fact that in the leading cities of this Dominion the leading minds are as one in this matter, and I hold myself that all political divisions must for the time being be buried, and the great mind of this Dominion must be centered on this one point—to free our country from anything like ecclesiastical tyranny. (Loud applause.) I had the honor, Mr. Chairman, of speaking some time with the Hon. Mr. Huntington the night he went to Antigonish. I had the honor of talking up that subject with him. I told him what I tell you now, and I don't care where it is published, that no Government is going to hold power in this country for any time that is going to bend its neck to ecclesiasticalism. (Loud cheers.) And, fellow citizens, you have a larger interest in this subject than you think. It is a wide subject,—how you can found a Dominion within the very centre of the Dominion, this great Province of Quebec where seven-eighths of the population are led up to the polls at each election by their ecclesiastical masters and told who to vote for. Why, sir, you have a rotten spot in the very heart of the Dominion, that must work to the detriment of the country. Now, Mr. Chairman, I desire to pay my tribute publicly to the *Witness*. Oftentimes, almost alone, the *Witness* has stood up and fought the fight. (Hear, hear.) It has never given an uncertain sound, and what it may. I know that at times it has paid for its principles, and I hold it has a distinct, positive claim upon the sympathy and upon the pockets of the people; for our best interests are bound up in the success of the principles it advocates. We have got to let the enemies of liberty see that we will stand up for our liberties, and that we are prepared not only to stand on platforms and shout (laughter), not only to stand behind our desks and write, not only to go to the polls and vote, but that we are prepared to work with our hands, and to put our hands into our pockets and pay the money. I think one of the proudest days in the city of Montreal will be when the Dominion erects a monument to old John Dougall. (Hear, hear, and applause.) (Last year when I was in New York I went to see old Mr. Dougall. I thought he was one of the institutions, and I would not leave New York until I had seen old Father Dougall. I tell you I was sorry when I saw him. I did not find him in a very grand place. That old man whom I had known for years in this city, I found him in a back street in a miserable sort of building, working away. Why, sir, he had his coat off and was in his shirt sleeves, and was working away like a man of twenty-five or thirty years. I could not help thinking of Moses, who despised the flesh-pots of Egypt. And old John Dougall went up to work for God, despising the riches of the world, and I say God bless old John Dougall. I happened to be one of the bondsmen who stood behind the two Messrs. Dougall when they were arrested for libel in that Masonic business. (Hear, hear.) There never was anything in a British country so shameful as that was. Here were two honest men, staunch, upright and honest citizens, and because they had exposed an inquiry they were brought up as prisoners. I felt when they wanted bail for the Messrs. Dougall, that I would rather be Dougall's bondsman than Governor-General of Canada. (Applause.) Now, Mr. Chairman, as to the building we are going to have it. (Hear, hear.) I want the building, the people want it, and we will get it. (Cheers.) The men who have built this city up and who conduct its business and handle its wealth, will assist in this grand project, and we will succeed in erecting a monumental building to the good old *Witness*. (Loud applause.)

A friend was standing by a window in the evening, with two little girls, and pointing out the moon and stars. Said one, "Aint God a good man to make such beautiful things?" The other replied impatiently, "Don't call God a man. I am sure if there ever was a gentleman, he is one."