STORY OF A CONVERT.

The First Awakening-Step by Step to

The Citizen

Conversions present, doubtless, both an exterior and an interior pathway objective influences, mysterious im-pressions — a whole not readily made intelligible to others. Without make ing a secret of either I shall here aim merely to record the more special external incidents which called my attention Romeward. Born in Western New York of ancestry all Protestant, as far back as my knowledge extends - on the paternal side, English, early settlers of Hartford and New Haven, on the maternal side, Scotch, Welsh, Dutch, early settlers of Penn sylvania - the illusion of heresy without its malice was entailed on me as an inevitable inheritance.

Both my father and my mother be-

fore their acquaintance began, had, for conscience sake, joined the Methodists, a sect at that date heartily despised. Their marriage was entered upon ser iously, and the very atmosphere of my infantile home suggested the presence of God, the all-seeing strict Father and Friend of all who obeyed Him. Prayer came to me almost as natural as breathing. I regarded Methodist preachers as infallible teachers of doctrine and supreme judges of its practical application to manners without this being taught.

I began to suffer agnonizing tortures of mind concerning my salvation while I was still very young. Censure for childish faults sufficed to make me fear the anger of God and condemnation to hell if I died unforgiven, and Methodism furnishes no reliable assurance of forgiveness. The Bible told us nothing defiled can enter Heaven, and as I never heard of a third place, the logic of my torture is apparent. Naturally then, my first real protest against Protestantism was on this doctrine of My mind revolted against the idea of a good and all-powerful Being leaving His creatures to guess out His will from the Bible and then inflicting eternal tortures on them when they failed to guess aright. The implied vindictiveness was contrary to goodness. From this mile-stone I sped rapidly over the toboggan Protestant ism provides and soon found Church organizations a sham, a deception and hinderance to the true following of Christ's precepts which require actual love of the neighbor and a social reorganization after the example of the first Christians as recorded in the fourth chapter of the Acts. I wished for truth. Yet, had the Catholic Church been proposed as a divinely commissioned teacher, so poorly had I grasped the meaning of the revelation through Moses and Jesus Christ, and so besmirched was her reputation by allegations of superstition, deceit and tyranny, that I should as soon have ought light among the nations of the arctic region as of her.

Having given a hearing to orthodox and heterodox sections of Protestantism, I became a socialist, admired Fourier, had unbounded trust in the good intentions of every human being, and a determination to all things and hold fast the good. The social experimenters that I knew were mostly New Englanders and New Yorkers, brought up like myself, piously, only to drift through free speculations into newer phases of religious sentiment. Selfishness, however, was found a rule of life among Utopians, as in the world at large.

Now, fully three years before reached the sheltering embrace of Mother Church, I was shown in the sheltering embrace of prophetic symbolism of a dream which one who knows the future as the past and present could alone have sketched, my erratic course, a wonderous escape, and landing on a rock in front of an edifice which was built upon it. Even then the words of Christ to Peter were suggested. The rock was surrounded by waters so clear that my eye could enetrate to the very center of the globe and find it immovable.

Leaving the occult, I resume the thread of my story just a year previous to the happy finale. The conversion of Dr. T. L. Nichols and his wife appeared then as an item of news in the papers. Both were well known as water cure physicians and also as ultra social reformers. There was a booklet containing about five hundred names of persons scattered throughout the United States who believed the free expression of personal convic tions, however unpopular, would work for good; they, therefore, pledged themselves to sustain each other in these rights, even when the convictions of another antagonized their own. The names of the doctor and his wife were there, proving them enlightened liberals, and the first thought on reading of their turning Catholic was that some mercenary motive influenced marked a retrogression. This was a severe judgment and contrary to my edge, as my name was in the little

A moment's reflection in which I asked what knowledge I had of the Catholic Church that did not come from its enemies, and what I thought of the representation our enemies made of us, and I stood convicted of meanness at the tribunal of my own con just foundation for every prejudice.

Taking, therefore, early occasion to Nor would we consider the mystery

liner, with whom I had a business as we read in some books of devotion, acquaintance, she relieved me of dif- written more affectively than solidly, ficulty by mentioning the item of news regarding Dr. N.'s conversion. I told her I had noticed it and wished to read some Catholic books if I could loan them. She manifested reluctance. It was due, she afterwards explained, to sport of them. Consulting her sister in their private apartments, she wa induced to bring as many as she could carry in her arms. This show of books was in itself a surprise. Of the number I selected four. The Bible the number I selected four. The Bible with its illustrations and "The Following of Christ" impressed me so much was forced to ask what I should do in case it was proven to my satisfaction that Catholics have the true religion The cost flitted before my mind, still I admitted I must become one. The books did not find favor with some in the family, and I deemed it advisable to return them very soon. Apparently their influence was transient.

After an absence of about five months was again in the village, and visited the milliner on business. The good dealer in bonnets handed me a little catechism, saving she thought I might like to look it over. Uninterested yet unwilling to refuse, I accepted the booklet, read it hastily in secret and returned it within twenty-four hours The following day I was sick and for many weeks was confined closely to solitude in my chamber. I have since recalled, what for a time was forgotten, that during the first days of my illness the chapter "On the Virtues floated like a beautiful dream before my mental vision. Space allowed here does not suffice to note the experience of these weeks and the mental mystery involved in my journey to Rome Solitude was enforced on me by my ill ness, and about the last of February. 1858, I resolved to seek health at Water Cure and wrote to Dr. Nicholas for information. He replied after some delay that they had been obliged to close their establishment for want of patronage and had retired to a place where they had access to a convent

The new world of Catholic literature opening before them demanded the exclusive attention they were willing My spirit, he said, seemed to him so Catholic that he advised me to go to the Bishop of Chicago for instruction, if, as he supposed, there was no priest located nearer; and t procure Faber's "Creator and Crea ture," Hecker's "Aspirations of Na and "Questions of the Soul"The Following of Christ. and When this letter reached me I was within three weeks of conditional baptism, but all unconscious of its approach. There was a priest in an adjoining town. I wrote to him, re ceived his reply on Holy Saturday, forgot my illness, was at Mass on Easter Sunday, had an interview with the gentlemanly D. D, related all my story as nearly as I could, five days later saw a Catholic prayer book for the first time, had read in raptures the books recommended by Nicholas and knew in my inmos heart that I had found my true native home at last, that my protests against Protestantism had been from the light natural reason which in crude fashion, asserted what the Catholic Church had uniformly taught.

I wished to be baptized the first Sun-The priest overday after Easter. ruled the wish, deferring it to the second Sunday after Easter, which was, though I did not then recall the fact, the anniversary of my baptism when eight days old. The epistle and gospel of that Sunday has a meaning for me very special, like the eye of one who sees and knows when it rests upon you.

THE BREAD OF HEAVEN.

Why God Gives Himself to Man in the Form of Food.

The gift of the Eucharist is so sublime that the very saints have been thrilled with awe as they tried to pene trate the reasons that induced the Lord to make it. Some of them have thought that Jesus was moved to in stitute this sacrament because of the adoration that it draws to Him, especially at Benediction and at the Feast of Corpus Christi when the Host is exposed for public veneration and carried around in the midst of hymns of

Yet although the solemn homage thus paid to the Blessed Sacrament is glorious to the Son of God, this cannot have been His ultimate object in instituting the Feast. For, this public homage is more than counter balanced by the outrages the Blessed Eucharist has received, from the day of the institution, at the hands of unbelievers or bad Catholics, and by the indifference and neglect It meet with at the hands of those who believe; but it must have them, since by no process of right been to remind mankind of the value reason could they have made so to us of the Gift of the Eucharist, and to tell each of us, as He did once the Samaritan woman: "Oh! if thou knewest the Gift of God !"

If our Lord Jesus Christ had con-sulted only the interests of His Divine Majesty, He would not thus have placed Himself, as it were, within the range of Satanic hatred, as He did His sacred Humanity, in the hands of His executioners, on the day of His Passion for, in fact, taking all in all, the life of Jesus on the altar both as a Victim science. To suffer a suitable penalty I in the Sacrifice, or as our Guest in the resolved to procure, if possible, some Sacrament, is but a sorrowful continu-Catholic books and read them, satisfied ation, hardly compensated for by some Sacrament, is but a sorrowful continuhowever, that they would furnish me a passing moments of bliss, of the dread

visit the store of an Irish Catholic mil- of the Eucharist sufficiently explained, sad they sound, as though weeping

by saying that the love of Our Lord draws Him irresistibly towards our souls, and that His love is satisfied only by self-sacrifice and self-abasement. True, "His delight is to be with the children of men;" but we can hardly think so much of ourselves as to imagine that we are necessary for His happiness, or that our loss would be a real loss to Him; considereternally glorify either of His infinite No, Our Dear Lord being Wisdom Infinite, there can be no sentimentality about Him : He is altogether incap able of any feeling or action that is not grounded on the most substantial and transcendental reasons; and. therefore, we find the true cause of His voluntary abasement in the apsolute helplessness in which He sees that we lie without Him. Being goodness essential, He pitied. saw that without Him we could do nothing, and we could only be prolific of any good by being like branches grafted upon the Vine. He, thereore, grafts Himself upon our soul by Holy Communion to make us thereby less unworthy of Himself. He thus realizes the beautiful name of Emmanuel or God with us, which is His own, and He fulfills the consoling promise made to us at parting: "I will not leave you orphans, I will

come to you." This is a reflection that invites the serious attention of all Catholics who care to be saved. If Jesus saw that His giving Himself in Communion to us was such a necessity that He submitted on that account to all the indignities and neglect consequent on His Real Presence; ought not we to conclude that our salvation, if saved one day, will be owing to the Communions we shall have received, and our damnation, if lost, to the Communions we shall have forgone? Ought we not, then, be alive to our own interest, and show zeal, ave, be longing, to receive Him as often and as worthily as pos sible? The great Lacordaire worded it eloquently one day, as he was leaving some friends to go and hear little boys' confessions: "There is no knowing," he said, "what may be the result of one Communion more or less, on the subsequent life and on the ultimate salvation of a child !'

How sad a fact it is, then, that some Catholics are to be dragged to the Hely Table, by the threat of mortal sin, to receive their Lord, the Food of their ouls! The first Christians received Him daily, for "They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers.' Fabian, finding that the original fervor was no more, enjoined Holy Communion three times a year : at Easter, on Whit unday, and at Christmas; and at last Pope Innocent III. in the Laterar Council, finding that even so little proved too much for lukewarm Catho ics, decreed that, at the very least, we should be obliged to receive Him once a year, and this under penalty of mortal sin, if we fail—a fact that ought to make us blush, as it makes the Angels

wonder. When we shall be on our death-bed and the world will escape our grasp, then Holy Communion will be our only comfort, our only refuge, then the thought of the many times we lovingly received Him will be our only joy, and the remembrance of the many times we neglected doing so will be our bitterest regret.

THE ANGELUS.

ring out upon the evening air in the quiet of the country scenes! It there seems vested with some charm which makes men's thoughts turn instinctively towards Mary, whose angelic purity it announces. Something seems to guide them in the path of prayer, of purity, of holiness, of truth. Try as we will we cannot explain this, but the truth is that nowhere does the ringing of the Angelus bell and missionaries in His stead. Well, have such an influence, such an abiding influence, as in the country. Perhaps the distance of the sound, mellowed by coming so far through the still air, has something to do with it. Perhaps the very stillness of the air impresses the observer with awe. However it may be, most men irresistibly grow silent when the sound of the bell breaks the calmness of the summer air. How grand! How solemn! How im-ploring it sounds! What joy! What sorrow! What gladness are blended in its sweet tones! It commands, it calls, it begs, men to turn to God. Can any one be so base, so devoid of true religious, may even of poetic, feeling, as to resist its pleading? It pleads for purity, for prayer, for repentance. All seems fitted for its heavenly message. The soft tints of the sunset sky seem as though they were the reflection of the glories of heaven shining through her halfopened gate. Far up the sky they mount, glowing, changing, here and there fading and deepening, and filling one with thoughts of the splendors beyond of which they are but the shadow. The earth is still, the very breeze is hushed and the tall tree-tops no longer bend with the wind. The birds have sung their good night song, and after noisy chatter are quietly keeping their watch in the trees The soft lowing of the cattle is heard, though in milder tones. At the touch of the milker's hand even this sound is silenced. Gently, slowly, sweetly, from far down the green valley, over the tops of the trees, softly stealing upon the restful air, ring the

over the sins of the fast dying day. The sun sinks lower and lower. The crimson deepens in the western sky. Still rings on the Angelus bell, with its far distant cadence like the prayers of absent friends. Softly it calls Gently it raises our hearts from the sordid earth to the regions of purer joys. Upward, onward goes the heart through the shining gates of the west to the streets of pearl and palaces of alaba-ter and jasmine, hyacinth and porphory, cleansed and whitened, from the dust of earth. Now, clearer and stronger, with commanding tone, clangs the brazen tongue, calling with powerful note to prayer. Pray Pray! Pray! tells its song. Turn to God! is its hymn. Then slowly, regretfully, it sounds its last calls. seems to bid a sorrowful farewell to the day, to part with pain from the light. It goes down the valley, and dies far out on the bosom of the lake. Now it tells of sorrow, of repentance, of simple childlike faith. Hope! Hope! Hope! it rings. Come Come! Come! It begs the sinner, it invites the saint. The sun has sunk to its tomb at last, only a few crimson rays linger to tell of its departed glory Now here, now there, peeps out a star upon the blue sky. The mournful voice of the frog resounds through the woods and fields, from the banks of the distant river. The cricket sings its humble lay and the voices of men and the merry laugh of children break upon the evening air. Anon is heard the merry song and the rattle of wheels, and a gay party of of wheels, and a gay party of young people pass along the shad-owy road. But over all the sweet, mild infuence of the Angelus hangs Never does it sound as in the calm stillness of the evening. does it so raise the heart as amid pastoral scenes. Instinctively, a hymn to Mary rises to the lips of the listener. His heart cannot resist the soft, sweet influence. He feels that it is better, happier to pray than not and his soul is rejoiced by thoughts of purer, sweeter, happier joys than earth affords, Sweet content broods over his mind. He, feels and prays with the wondering, trusting faith of childhood. Youth, manhood, with all their bitter, sinful years, are thrown aside and with flowing heart he listens to the messenger of God's call to man. Earth is no more—Heaven, Hope, Mary, these are the thoughts that surge his heart, these are the words over which rise to his lips as he listens to the last faint echo of the messenger of

PRIESTS MEN. NOT ANGELS.

Mary .- Catholic Monthly Review.

The great Cardinal Newman preach ing on the subject "Men, not Angels, the Priests of the Gospel," said in part: "When Christ, the great Prophet and the Preacher, the great missionary, came into the world, He came in a way the most holy, the most august, and the most glorious. Though He came in humiliation, though He came to suffer, though He was born in s stable, though He was laid in a manger, yet He issued from the womb Immaculate Mother, and His infant form shone with heavenly light. sanctity marked every lineament of His character and every circumstance f His mission. Gabriel announced His Incarnation; a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bore, a Virgin suckled Him; His foster father was the pure and saintly Joseph; angels proclaimed His birth; a luminous star spread the news among the heathen; the austere Baptist went before His face; and a crowd of shriven penitents, clad in white garments and radiant with How sweetly does the Angelus bell grace, followed Him wherever He As the sun in heaven shines went. through the clouds, and is reflected in the landscape, so the eternal Sun of justice when He rose upon the earth, turned night into day, and in His

brightness made all things bright. "He came and He went : and, see ing that He came to introduce a new and final Dispensation into the world, He left behind Him preachers, teachers glorious, such as He was, such must His servants be, such His representatives, His ministers, in His absence : as He was without sin, they too must be without sin; as He was the Son of God, they must surely be angels angels, you will say, must be appointed to this high office; angels alone are fit to preach the birth, the sufferings, the death of God. They might, indeed, have to hide their brightness, as He before them, their Lord and Master, had put on a disguise; they might come, as they came under the Old Covenant, in the garb of men; but still, men they could not be, if they were to be preachers of the everlasting Gospel, and dispensers of its divine mysteries.

"If they were to sacrifice, as He had sacrificed; to continue, repeat, apply, the very Sacrifice which He had offered; to take into their hands that very Victim which was He Himself; to bind and to loose, to bless and to ban to receive the confessions of His people. and to give them absolution for their sins; to teach them the way of truth, and to guide them along the way of peace; who was sufficient for these things but an inhabitant of blessed realms of which the Lord is the never failing Light?

"And yet, my brethren, so it is. He has sent forth for the ministry of reconciliation, not angels, but men : He has sent forth your brethren to you, not beings of some unknown nature and some strange blood, but of your own borne and your own flesh, to first strokes of the bell. Mournful and preach to you.

"The priests of the New Law are

men, in order that they may 'condole with those who are in ignorance and error, because they too are compassed with infirmity. Had angels been your priests, my brethren, they could not have condoled with you, sympathized with you, have had compassion on you, felt tenderly for you, and made allowances for you-we can ; they could not have been your patterns and guides, and have led you on from your old selves into a new life, as they can who come from the midst of you, who have been led on themselves as you are to be who know well your difficulties, who have had experience, at least of your temptations, who know the strength of the flesh and the wiles of the devil, even though they have baffled them, who are already disposed to take your part, and be indulgent to ward you, and can advise you most practically and warn you most seasonably and prudently.

" Among the preachers, among the priests of the Gospel there have been apostles, there have been martyrs, there have been doctors-saints plenty among them ; yet out of them all, high as has been their sanctity, varied their graces, awful their gifts. there has not been one who did not begin with the old Adam : not one of same rock as the most obdurate of reprobates ; not one of them who was not fashioned unto honor out of the same clay which has been the material of the most polluted and vilest of sin ners; not one who was not by nature a brother of those poor souls who have now commenced an eternal fellowship with the devil, and are lost in hell. Grace has vanquished nature, that is the history of the saints."—Catholic Review.

The Missionary En Route.

Rev. Samuel B. Hedges, C. S. P., in Dona-hoe's Magazine.

Sometimes a sight greets you from without that awakens interest and sets you thinking. I believe it was some where in Nebraska that our train came to a stop at what had been once

a town. There was one street with tumble down wooden houses on both sides of it, and not a half dozen of them occupied. The little wooden shed. once the depot of the place, was in an advanced state of dilapidation; even the platform was stripped of most of its boards. There was the wreck of a huge grain elevator nearby, with grain-spouts broken off, and the door hanging by one hinge. Across the track one could see that streets had been laid out for a town of some magnitude, but they had never been

built upon and were now grass-grown. Opposite the depot, however, there was one building, resplendent in a new coat of paint, and over the door, in gilt letters, was the sign "Saloon Tom's Place." Behind it was a neat two-story cottage, likewise newly painted, with a yard in which were flower-beds, bright with blooming geraniums. It seemed to me as if that saloon had sucked away the money, the industry, the prosperity, of the entire place; that it had settled down on the village like a cancer and had eaten away its very life. "A boom town with the boom fallen out," said some one. Ferhaps so, but to my mind the evil of that place was before my eyes, and out came my notebook. That picture would illustrate a point in a tem perance lecture some day.

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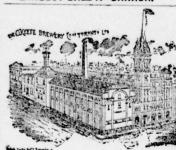
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