

CONFESSIONS OF THE FAITH.

"THE EXILES OF SIBERIA"—SUFFERING OF POLISH PRIESTS IN THE SLAVE-GANGS OF THE MUSCOVITE MEMOIRS OF AN ESCAPED CONVICT.

A series of interesting biographical memoirs of the one hundred and sixty Polish priests exiled to Siberia by the Russian Government, appears from the pen of one who escaped, in the *Souvenirs de la Sibirie*, from which we make the following extracts:

"Words fail to sufficiently extol the virtues of the distinguished captive ecclesiastic, the abbe Onufry Syrwid. He is an old man, past the age of three score and ten, but from his appearance one would readily take him to be at least twenty years younger. He is mild, peaceful and amiable and his reputation for learning (he was educated at the University of Wilna) seems but to increase his remarkable humility. A few incidents of his life will better serve to make known the reasons for the esteem and admiration in which he is held by all who have the happiness of knowing him.

"In the year 1863, at the time of the Polish insurrection, he filled the post of the parish priest at Wasliczek, department of Lick, and read publicly from his pulpit the ordinance of the National Polish Government, which enfranchised the serfs and constituted them the owners of the land which they then occupied. For this act he was arrested by the Muscovites, tried by a court-martial and condemned to be shot. The abbe Iszora had already been sent to his death for a similar offence. The news of his condemnation spread throughout the country, and coming to the ears of a noble fellow, named Kilmotowicz, one of the insurgents, who had formerly been a captain in the Muscovite army, he determined to save the Abbe's life at all hazards. He therefore presented himself before the court and confessed that it was he who had compelled the Abbe, under threat of instant death, to publish the ordinance of the National Government. This heroic action roused the indignation of the court, and both of their lives were spared and their sentence commuted to imprisonment with hard labor, for life. In the meantime his parishioners unaware of the commutation of sentence and believing that their beloved cure would be led to death according to the order of the court, gathered together to the number of 4,000, peasants and land-owners alike, so much were all attached to their pastor and waited on the road with the intention of attacking the Russian escort and freeing the Abbe by force. They remained in their ambush many days and nights, and refused to disperse until assured that their pastor was not to be put to death. After the new sentence of perpetual imprisonment was imposed on him, the Abbe was loaded with chains, and having his head shaved bare, according to the Russian law, he began his weary way to exile and suffering, clothed in the garb of a criminal.

"On the arrival of the convicts at St. Petersburg, the Governor-General, Count Shouvaloff, (the present ambassador to England) wished himself to inspect the exiles on their journey, and for that purpose visited the prison where they were confined. He had scarcely entered the door and cast his eyes on the holy man, then he was unaccountably struck with the angelic expression of his face and figure and expressing the greatest indignation, he immediately ordered the men to be struck off and forbade any one in the future to put on him the indignity of shaving his head. Arrived at Akathia the abbe was driven with the rest to their daily tasks, but his companions in suffering did not long permit such a terrible humiliation, and after much exertion they obtained from the authorities that in place of laboring with the rest, they should be employed in the secret. Among his menial duties was that of sweeping the dungeons, and although his companions wished to relieve him of this task and do it themselves, he would never permit it.

"All the sufferings and humiliations to which he is constantly subjected do not draw from him either complaint or reproach. To witness the heavenly serenity of his countenance, one would suppose that the severity of his exile, caused him no pain or sorrow. He is accustomed to courage and cheer the despondent, often using such arguments as the following: "Let us be firm and courageous and all our woes will be changed into joy; by our sufferings we do honor to our beloved country, for they only prove that we have decided to bear anything and everything, rather than betray her."

"There is also at Funka another priest very much like the abbe Syrwid in disposition; in fact the abbe Kochanski and the abbe Syrwid are the two guardian angels of our exile; their prayers call down upon us, abandoned by mankind, the benedictions of heaven. Their behavior, full of affection and resignation give us courage to support our many sorrows."

"I will bring these memoirs to a close by saying a few words of two other venerable priests, condemned, like the others, to perpetual banishment, to which, indeed, death would be far preferable. One, the abbe Antoine Kawczyk, who was a beautiful and noble man, had been the cure of a beautiful and prosperous parish in the diocese of Malow; the other, the abbe Augustin Lape had been the successor of the first named in the same parish, and the manner of his succeeding to the charge of both that I here relate the circumstance. M. Lape was the curate of M. Kawczyk, who was nominated to depart for his own charge when his pastor thus addressed him: "Listen my dear friend, why do you leave us? have you not been happy and contented in my companionship? Are you not conversant with the people and the affairs of this parish and everything that concerns their well fare? I know that the Archbishop has promoted you as a recompense for your zeal, very well; but what prevents you from being parish priest and at the same time remaining here? As for me, I am old and the duties of a pastor begin to weigh heavy on my shoulders; believe me, I have made but an indifferent pastor while you have been the best of fathers. Take therefore my place and give me your curate." The abbe Lape, after serious reflection, and in order not to be separated from his friend, consented to the proposition and the Archbishop was induced to ratify the charge. Not long after these two holy men were arrested and condemned to perpetual labor and imprisonment, and were sent to Funka as a place of detention where the abbe Lape, the parish priest is employed in the manufacture of cigars, and the abbe Kawczyk mends old garments."

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GLADSTONE ON THE CHURCH.

THE ENGLISH WRITER MAKES SOME REMARKABLE CONCESSIONS.

In the October number of the *Contemporary Review*, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone has an article on "The Sixteenth Century arranged before the Nineteenth." It is a reply to the Abbe Martin's article, "What hinders the Ritualists from becoming Catholics?" which appeared in the August number of the same periodical.

Mr. Gladstone, in his contribution, makes certain concessions in favor of the Catholic Church, and states some objections he has against it.

He first takes a general view of it with the following result: "In her vastness, in her continuity, and in the close cohesion of her clergy, she has great and telling advantages. These, let me add, are enhanced by the aspect of unity and standard of zeal, which in this country, existing as a small and marked sect, she exhibits even in her lay members. Beyond all doubt, partly as fact and partly as idea, she makes a most powerful appeal to the imagination, by the side of the little fenced-in 'Anglican paddock,' as Mr. Dowden has happily denominated the system which resulted from English action on Church matters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Gregory VII, Innocent III, Thomas a Becket, are great and imposing figures to us all; but Archbishop Laud, who was the Gregory VII, or the Innocent III, or the Thomas Becket, of our little paddock, seems to take hold of nobody's imagination, and is not set down by Macaulay before his millions of readers as an individual truly contemptible." (P. 429.)

"Perhaps 'the cohesion of her clergy' and her 'unity' stand out all the more strikingly when contrasted with the dissensions and differences and utter want of those good qualities so evident in these days. Mr. Gladstone's Anglican readers, who are more remarkable than this. One of the Catholic doctrines which the Reformers and their disciples have ridiculed most heartily is that of Purgatory. We may imagine, therefore, that the following passage from Mr. Gladstone's pen will not be much rebuked by his co-religionists: "The strong and just reaction from the Purgatorial system prevailing in the Latin Church of the period, went far to account for, and even excuse, that stark and rigid conception of the effect of death on the state of the human being, which led to an abandonment of the uniform practice of the earliest ages of the Church as testified by the Liturgies, in the commendation of the faithful departed to prayer for an increase of their rest and peace. But what caused, may even what might excuse, the violence thus done to nature, as well as to religion, did not frustrate its mischievous effects in narrowing the range of Christian sympathies, and establishing an anomaly in the general doctrine of prayer. With the obscuration of a universal truth, in the end, indeed, manifold confusions of doctrine; the final judgment, with its solemn import, seemed to have no place left for it when the immediate state of souls had been reduced almost to a cipher. Worst of all, the new standard appeared to be in hopeless conflict with the wisest and best of the past. The entire work of disincarnated prayer, so fully accomplished on this side the grave; that every soul passed away into the unseen in a state of ripeness for a final destiny of bliss or woe. But violence begets violence. Within the last twenty years a reaction has arisen, under the force of which a crowd of Protestants, and even many who deem themselves to be of the truest of Protestants, have adopted ideas of trial and purgation, even to the grave which vastly exceed in latitude anything ever taught by the Church of Rome." (P. 435.)

Two important points stand out very clearly from this passage: the acknowledgment that the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory dates from the earliest ages, is a beautiful expression of Catholic sympathy, and is an essential part of the general doctrine of prayer; and also that Protestant teaching veers about and changes with the opinions of men.

"Again if it be true that, in the current doctrine and practice of the Eucharist, the sacrificial idea had, before the Reformation and not for the best purposes, been allowed to assume an undue and erroneous prominence over that of eucharist, to be depressed on the Protestant side, this was almost effaced from the common mind. This could hardly be done without a serious dislocation of the historical relations between that great sacrament and its historical types. Nor, again, without seriously lowering the general conception of Christian life and worship as a true sacrifice to God, which had the Eucharistic sacrifice for its central point. St. Paul seems to lift upward the whole fabric of Christian observance, when he exhorts the faithful to present their bodies a living sacrifice unto God, which he says is 'your reasonable service.' And, if so, whatever tends to impair the efficacy of that idea, tends in like degree to lower the Christian obedience from the level of the final towards that of the servile standard." (P. 435.)

We cannot omit to cite, also, what Mr. Gladstone says respecting the interpretation of Holy Scriptures as independent of tradition. It is worthy of special notice that he calls the Protestant theory a "superstition." "The bald announcement of a co-ordinate authority in dogmatic traditions, even to the sacred volume, the wide door thus laid open to arbitrary assertion, and the unlimited use thus made of Church authority against human freedom, provoked the reforming parties into the total rejection of that authority, and the substitution of the invisible for the visible church. It thus became alike a logical and practical necessity to lay upon Scripture the entire stress of defining and proving itself, and to hold the Almighty pledged, as it were, to every letter forming part of its corpus, with a particularity and rigor hardly known to former ages. It has become long since evident that this was a straining of the truth; and that the superstition thus engendered might, when it were cut and disappeared, make room for scepticism. It can hardly be doubted that the Christian world is, in our day, suffering seriously from this cause. Diminishing, by an arbitrary process, the aggregate of testimony which the wisdom of God had supplied for the establishment and determination of the Gospel, and finding the shores, when this diminished, to be insufficient, we impeach Revelation itself for a want which is due only to our improvidence." (P. 436.) It would be difficult to imagine a more direct pointing out of the evil consequences of a rejection of Church authority. The transition from the rejection of Church authority to scepticism is inevitable, though Mr. Gladstone would not go so far as to say so.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUFFERING.

We should unite our sufferings with those of our Redeemer. The saints desired to suffer or to die, for suffering is the right life of those who wish to follow their Divine Master.

There can be no evil where there is no opposition to the Divine will. A story was told of a hermit who wished to know what real happiness was. He was directed to go to the door of a certain church. There he saw a poor old beggar, blind, paralytic and a cripple. The hermit asked him if he was happy. "Yes," he replied, "I am the happiest of men, for I see in everything the will of God." "How can you be happy with these afflictions?" he asked. "They come from God; it is His Blessed will that I should suffer; all comes to me from the will of God. I look with pleasure on the sun, the rain, the storm and the tempest; they are all come from the loving Providence of God, and I bless Him! and am happy." What a lesson for us! If we could thus bring ourselves to receive all pleasures, pains and sufferings from the merciful hand of God, and make the same use of them as did this poor blind beggar!

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RIPPLES OF LAUGHTER.

A cure for sleeplessness is to imagine you have to get up.

"Raising the wind" is now denominated more classically, "besetting the fanned Eolus." Grant has left Paris for Algiers. He heard that a soldier of the legion lay dying in Algiers, and he went to see about it.

The Mohawk Register puts it thus delicately: A young lady visitor, without teeth, arrived yesterday under the care of the family physician.

But then, if Edison's electric light is generally introduced into our houses, what is Bridget going to light the kitchen fire with?

"Will you settle that old account of yours this morning?" said a saloonist. "No, sir; you are mistaking in the man; I am not one of the old settlers." "Is that dog of yours a cross breed?" asked a gentleman recently of a countryman. "No, sir, was his reply. "His mother was a gentle, affectionate creature."

"What does 'Good Friday' mean?" asked one schoolboy of another. "You had better go home and read your 'Robison Crusoe'" was the wretched reply.

"We never saw a man," says an exchange, "who thought it a sin to steal an umbrella." Then you never saw a man whose umbrella had just been stolen.

"Inquire" wants to know if a man is necessarily considered polite if he "bows to a decision." That depends on whether he does it with "good grace" or not.

A German farmer disputed his tax bill. He said: "I pay the State tax, the county tax and the school tax; but by tan! I pay no total and never had any."

Bob Ingersoll is said to have made \$600,000 out of his lectures on hell. Hell has not yet commenced on Bob, but will get in its work later.

"So you prefer my medicines to those of Dr. Pillsbury?" Mrs. Malignant—"Oh, in dink, do, doctor dear, yer a dale better than the other old humbug."

"Beg pardon, sir, but I think you've made a mistake. This is a half penny?" Old Gen (grandy)—"Oh, dear no; not at all! I never give less!"

There is something nice about the balance of trade. A worthy farmer who comes into town loaded with new wheat almost every day goes home loaded with old rye.

The man who steps on a grape-skin and sits down on the flag has one chance out of thirty-two millions of discovering the person who ate the grapes.

There are many articles which can be ground up into fish bait. One of the most desirable is the man who smokes a filthy pipe on an excursion for ladies.

When the trees leave out in spring, they have a new dress; when the leaves turn in fall, they have another new dress; and when the leaves are gone they have a nude dress.

BISHOP DUPANLOUP ON IRELAND.

"Be it well understood, there is in the heart and bosom of a priest and a bishop something more than in the figures of science. In the account of belief, let others be for me, at least where sympathy; I am whole and entire for the wounded and dying. My place, allow me to say, is at the ambulance. Neither do laurels console me for the blood shed in the battle-field, nor do reasonings reconcile me to the cries of hunger and despair. I see those who are banished—I hear the cry of those that are outraged—I gather my tears—I stretch out my hand to the poor and desolate. I am not a seraph, an economist; I am a minister of Jesus Christ. Leave me entirely to my ministry, and if I shock your theories, be not scandalized by my compassion. You shall reason to-morrow; but men suffer, men weep, men hunger, men are dying. To-day I even hold forth my hand to those who reason for those who weep. I do not blame science, but I feel pity. Science, I shall leave thee to theorize; but leave me to act, to speak, to intercede for those who suffer; leave me to infuse into the hearts of all, in favor of Ireland, pity, tender compassion, active charity, which alone can exceed and assure thy blessings. Allow me to send to Ireland, if not the millions which are not in my power, at least where exile may have flung them—in the forests of Australia, or at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, or in lands of the mighty ocean, to tell them all my love, to bring them a consolation and an encouragement, and, at the same time, a hope. Yes, gentlemen, a hope! and by this word I wish to console your hearts also, that I have saddened so much. Yes, I hope a future more favorable for Ireland; and already do I think I see in the distant horizon signs that portend better times and prophesy a deliverance."—From his Lordship's Sermon, for the Poor Catholics of Ireland, preached March 25th, 1861.

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