

and his death nearer. One day he fell into a deadly faint, and for hours showed no signs of life. Full of grief, the good priest had given him up for lost, when, contrary to all expectation, the dying man rallied, and sent for him. As soon as he entered the room, 'Sir Priest,' said he, 'I am resolved to follow your advice. I desire to be a Catholic; and if I die, as I expect, I wish to be buried in your church of St. Joseph.' Surprised and overjoyed at this sudden change, the servant of God lost no time in teaching the sick man the most prominent mysteries of the faith and in receiving him into the Catholic Church. He confessed and received absolution. After which he begged the priest for Holy Communion in these words: 'Now I believe with my whole heart in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and I regret that I so long rejected this belief; nevertheless I have this consolation, that I have never caused at any time an injury to the Most Holy Sacrament.' With deep devotion and lively faith he then received Holy Communion.

Thomas Acton lived some hours longer in the full use of his faculties. His longing desire for Holy Communion revealed to others that something extraordinary had taken place in him. The parish priest begged him therefore to disclose this last secret. The sick man replied, 'At the moment when I sank into a faint I saw through the window of my room an angel appear before me, with what seemed to me to be a note of debt in his hand. A second angel followed him with a bouquet of most lovely flowers, which he gave into my hand with these words: "If thou wouldst enjoy true happiness, thou must enter the Catholic Church." Now I understood that the note of debt referred to the fifteen dollars which I one day gave as an alms, and without the least intention of doing honour to the Blessed Sacrament; I understood further that those pieces of money which I had given with a good heart were represented by those flowers, which flowers were a loving invitation to me to enter the blooming pastures of Paradise. My resolve was taken; and I promised God without delay to become a Catholic.' So spake the dying Thomas Acton, his words being often broken by acts of contrition, desire for heaven, and love of God. In these pious dispositions he gave up the ghost.

E. M. SHAPCOTE.