

"A priest, Philippe! I never dreamed of such a thing! Thank God! Thank God!"

Philippe tried to say something, but no words came out and the summer twilight fell and deepened they sat hand in hand, silent motionless. Perhaps half an hour had passed, perhaps only a few minutes, before the gate was opened and three or four young people came toward the gallery. Madame de Voucouleurs rose hastily.

"I am going to slip away before they see me," she whispered. "I want to go to the church for a little while." Sudden tears filled her eyes and she added quickly, "It isn't that I'm not grateful to God, and proud of you, Philippe, and happy—very happy; but I—I must accustom myself to it all. Your father and I thought that—and I hoped that you and I would always be—but you'll write to me often, won't you, Philippe? And then some day you will see your first Mass, and I shall be there! To think that I shall be there, my son!"—Florence Gilmore, in "The Rosary."

CONVERSION OF A SCOTCH BOY

AND SOME OF ITS RESULTS
By "Nemo" in the Missionary

It may be very truly said that every human soul is a separate creation of the Almighty. Hence it is the unanimous testimony of missionary priests that no two conversions ever came or were led into the Holy Catholic Church for exactly the same reasons. The roads which lead to Rome are indeed manifold and varied to an extreme degree. In the present article I wish to offer to the readers of The Missionary a true and most accurate account of the conversion of a Scotch boy and some of its results. The lad has now grown to mature manhood and I have known him well for the most of his life. I can conscientiously vouch for the strict truth and accuracy of what I shall relate, even in smallest details.

As for perfectly legitimate reasons he does not wish his name to be published, we shall call him Andrew, after the patron saint of Scotland. Andrew was the eighth of sixteen children of Scotch Presbyterian parents. As his parents were by no means rich, it can easily be imagined that they had their hands full, especially the mother, and that the children who could to a certain extent look after themselves were gladly allowed to do so. Andrew was among the latter category. This does not mean to say that any of the children were neglected—they were well fed, well clothed, at times well whipped, and brought up, or rather allowed to grow up, like Topsy, as good Presbyterians.

But as we are dealing chiefly with Andrew, let us confine ourselves to him. At the age of six he was sent to a very genteel and select private day school, where many subjects were taught and very little learned. In any case, in four years he had learned to read quite well and had a particular liking for history. He remembers to this day his utter surprise at finding out that Scotland was not the only country in the world. Other and greater surprises were in store for him, as we shall see.

At the age of six also his religious instruction began, not in his home, but in school. Here his tender and simple mind was crammed with the doings of Adam and Eve; of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of Moses and the burning bush and the brazen serpent. But on his soul's honor, he was taught absolutely nothing about the meek and gentle, loving Saviour of Mankind, the sweet Jesus, lover of little children, and for a few years after his going to school he did not even know that he was, or was supposed to be, a Christian. At home, his religious instruction consisted in his being told every now and again to be a "good boy," in his being told also to "say his prayers" (which he had never been taught), and in his being sent every Sunday at 11 o'clock to one of the most gloomy, dreary and forbidding churches in Edinburgh. It was a vast building, with no interior decoration whatever. It contained a high pulpit, with steps leading up to it on either side.

From this pulpit he heard sermons read every Sunday for several years. They lasted for an hour to an hour and a half; but he never understood what they were about, and to this day he does not remember a single phrase or thought that ever went to his heart from a Presbyterian pulpit. One part of the service, however, impressed him—the beautiful and correct singing of hymns. It was in a Presbyterian church that he first heard Cardinal Newman's immortal "Lead, Kindly Light," and he was always glad when it was sung. That "Kindly Light" was to lead him in a few years, where it led Newman.

When Andrew was about ten years of age three things happened which have influenced the whole of his life:

1st. He went for the first time into an Episcopal church and heard the people with the clerical men in the sanctuary declare that they "believed in the Holy Catholic Church."

2nd. In his history class he came to the period of the reformation in Scotland.

3rd. He found out that his grandmother was and his father had been a Catholic. Some forty-odd years ago a Presbyterian Church service in Scotland was a very different thing

from what it is now in our day. All was gloom and there was no brightness or cheerfulness. Holy David's dictum, "Serve the Lord in joy," seemed unknown. And the people who went to the service seemed all to have a solemn, gloomy facial expression. They carried very bulky Bibles and a hymn book. On entering the church they were conducted to their gloomy pews by a gloomy usher, who would sometimes be alive enough to remark, "It's very cold," or "It's very hot." On entering the pews the gentlemen remained standing for a few minutes, hiding their faces by their tall hats, their hands and ludicrous headgear which the Scotch boys call "chimney-pots;" the ladies sat down and bent their heads and closed their eyes. Then preparations were made in the shape of scent bottles and peppermints against falling asleep during the sermon. The old Scotch Presbyterians, like modern Americans, believed in "preparedness."

These details, which might seem to the reader trivial and unimportant, are not mentioned in any printed account of the religious practices of others. They are mentioned because Andrew noticed them all minutely. Children notice details which adults frequently ignore. Thus when Andrew went for the first time into an Episcopal church, and later on into a Catholic one, he noticed other details, as we shall now see, which left a vivid impression on his tender mind and heart. Thus, for example, in the Episcopal church in Edinburgh to which he went for the first time, when about twelve years old, the stained-glass windows, the surpliced choir, the exquisite chanting of the psalms, the bowing of the head at the Holy Name, the beautiful hymns—all these things impressed him deeply. He instinctively felt and enjoyed the beauty and helpfulness of exterior religion. What a difference from the utter gloom of Presbyterianism! To him it was like getting one's feet into a nice warm foot bath after a long walk in tight shoes.

We come now to the event which was perhaps the most important one in the development of his young mind in religious matters: his study of the history of the Reformation in Scotland—a history and an explanation of it given by a conscientious and strict Presbyterian teacher. Andrew was taught that he was a Protestant, that Scotland was Protestant, that John Knox was a guiding light—the chief one in Scotland—to deliver the Scotch people from the darkness and idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church. Some of the doctrines of the Catholic Church were gone into in detail. Transubstantiation was denounced in forcible language. Andrew remembers the teacher remarking that it was a "mystery how anyone could believe such a doctrine, even in our day." Andrew asked "who still believed it." The answer of the teacher was at least honest and straightforward: "All Catholics in Catholic countries, and of course the few Catholics who are still in Scotland." Andrew said no more then, but he started thinking. And here he allows me—may, he even requests me—to relate faithfully a religious, psychological experience of his child life. He felt instinctively an inward attraction and fascination for everything Catholic. The very words "Roman Catholic" had a peculiar fascination for him. The word "Protestant" left no impression whatever.

At the end of one of his school years about this time he received two prizes, two books, one called "Guiding Lights," the other "Phillip Walton," both magnificent diatribes against everything Catholic, and loud-sounding praises of the glories of the Reformation. Why or how he cannot explain, but to this day he is as sure of the fact as he is of his own existence: all the love and enthusiasm of his whole being went out towards the Catholic religion which was denounced and maligned in these books, and the praises of Protestantism left him as cold as the North Pole. With the aid of a dictionary he found out the meaning of Catholic words, such as pope, altar, Mass, crucifix, rosary, penance and others. One day he noticed his aged grandmother holding a small string of white beads in her hand as she walked up and down her room, seeming to be speaking to herself. He asked her what she was saying and what the beads were for. He was told, as children so often are, "not to ask questions." But this answer only excited his curiosity all the more and he began to watch his grandmother more closely and to go more frequently to her room, in which she remained for the most of the day, not even taking her meals with the rest of the family.

One day Andrew found his old grandmother kneeling before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, weeping bitterly. This picture she always kept covered with a veil. It was an old picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succor. On this occasion he learned for the first time that his grandmother was a Catholic. She had left a Catholic country after having suffered terribly on account of the revolution from which so many countries suffered in 1848. Taking refuge with her son in Scotland, she found him married to a Presbyterian, bringing up his children as Protestants and himself living as a Protestant. She had also been forbidden by her son to speak about religion to any of his children. She obeyed this unjust command most faithfully until she began to be pined with questions by her favorite grandson, Andrew. Probably settling with herself the point that she had a per-

fect right to do what was just without permission, she taught Andrew the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Commandments of God and of the Church, the names of the seven sacraments, and the Angels.

This was all his spiritual equipment before he set foot, for the first time in his life, in a Catholic church. Although forty years have passed since Andrew first saw the inside of a Catholic church, the impression which this sight made on his mind is as vivid today as it was then. He does not know how it happened, whether permission was given or simply taken. But one day he was out taking a walk with his grandmother and one of his sisters, when they all three entered a church. There he saw things, and saw actions being performed, and people dressed such as he had never seen before. And yet he had the feeling of being happy and at home. The contrast between the interior of Presbyterian churches and Episcopal ones, the only churches which he had ever attended and the interior of a stately and beautiful Catholic church, was so great. And yet, now as it all comes to him, nothing that he saw appeared odd or strange, much less ludicrous. He saw and noticed the beautiful marble high altar, the statue of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier, the side altar of the Blessed Virgin, the fourteen stations of the cross, all in life size oil painting; the lamps and candles burning, and people taking holy water and making genuflections, etc., etc., and although it was all quite new to him, he saw nothing strange in all this, but loved the place and felt at home. The only thing that he really wondered at was that there was no service going on—no preaching, no singing—also, that people in this new and peculiar church did more or less as they liked. They sat, or knelt, or stood, or walked about. They were not pushed, like pigs in a pen, into pews. This his old grandmother got out of her place and walked up to the altar of the Blessed Virgin, knelt there a few minutes, and then came back again.

They all three then left the church and thus entered the first visit of Andrew to the only true "tabernacle of God with men." This first visit of Andrew to the most beautiful and devotional church of the Sacred Heart in Edinburgh was naturally followed by other visits, at very short intervals. He loved to go in and sit down and just look about. One day he took it into his head to go in the early morning, before going to school. For the first time in his life he saw a priest at the high altar saying Mass. He did not know or understand what was going on. He saw a man strangely dressed in white moving about very slowly and every now and again turning over the pages of a big book. Then he heard the tinkling of a bell, and the some twenty people in the church all knelt down. There were also two little boys at each side of the man at the altar. He longed to be among them, although it was all so mysterious to him. And indeed, as he learned later on, was it not the mystery of mysteries which was being enacted—the "mysterium fidei" of the new and eternal testament?

One day Andrew saw people going to confession. Among some of the lies which he had been told about things Catholic was the gigantic and incredible one that people paid the priest for absolution; so, wanting to find out whether this was true or not, he actually went up to an old gentleman who had just left a confessional and whispered to him most politely: "Please, sir, would you kindly tell me how much you paid?" The old gentleman was not in the least offended, but smiled sweetly and replied: "For what, my boy?" "For absolution, sir." "Oh, you are not a Catholic, then?" "No, sir, but I want to be one." And so in a brief conversation Andrew learned that when he had been deceived by those who ought to have known better on a most important point.

Soon after this occurrence he had the happiness of making the acquaintance of a priest, a saintly and well-known Jesuit, whom he met one day as he was walking about the church. This first meeting of Andrew with a Catholic priest is an event in his life which he has never forgotten. The man seemed to the child so extraordinarily kind and good, so genial, so loving. Of course the child did not argue in his own mind about these impressions. He simply felt them and enjoyed them, as a child breathes without knowing that it has lungs. Through-out his life Andrew has met many other priests whose special characteristic was simple, natural goodness and kindness, men always ready to take trouble about other people and help them and render their services whenever they were called upon to do so, men to whom people went when in trouble without any embarrassment whatever. He had been brought up a Presbyterian, but he had never in his life spoken with a Presbyterian minister, nor did he remember one ever entering his father's house.

As a tramp and an outsider he made acquaintance with a Catholic priest, and he found in him at once a sympathetic friend. The priest invited Andrew into his house and chatted familiarly with him in the little parlor. He invited him to come again whenever he liked, but held him silent to ask his parent's permission. This the child simply could not do. In the first place, it would have been useless, and as he was allowed to run the streets of Edinburgh alone, and to associate with all kinds of companions without let or hindrance, he saw no wrong in

going to churches, or going to visit a man like Father W.—

His case was quite exceptional, and Father W.—, with the prudence and insight for which he is famous, saw and recognized this. To make a long story short, Andrew was conditionally baptized by Father W.— and received Holy Communion from his hands within a year of their first meeting. We have treated of and dealt with the conversion to the one Holy Catholic Church of a mere child, whose whole bringing up and surroundings would, humanly speaking, have made such a conversion, if not impossible, at least highly improbable.

Yet this conversion took place by God's unspeakable mercy, and it led within very few years to the conversion first of Andrew's mother, who had been her whole life a staunch Presbyterian; then to the return to the Church of his father, who was reconciled by the same priest who had received Andrew; then by the conversion of two of his sisters, who had been teachers in a Presbyterian Sunday Bible class. These gloriously consolatory events were witnessed by Andrew's old grandmother, who said her "Nana Dimititis" with joy and was called to her rest at the age of eighty-eight. Who can tell? Perhaps her prayers, her sufferings, her exile, did the whole thing.

Andrew received the crowning grace of a vocation to the Holy Priesthood. He has had the joy of instructing others in the faith and of leading more or less into the "one Fold of the one Shepherd." Should these lines ever be read by any sincere and conscientious non-Catholic, Father Andrew urges them, for their own sakes, to consider well the Catholic claim.

ARCHBISHOP DOWLING

ON PRESENT DUTIES OF CATHOLICS

Archbishop Dowling of St. Paul successor in the See of the great Archbishop Ireland, recently delivered a remarkable sermon in the presence of 8,000 men of the Holy Name Society in the Holy Name Cathedral of Chicago on the duty of the hour for American Catholics.

The following striking extracts from the Archbishop's sermon should be read and pondered by every thoughtful Catholic:

"On an occasion such as this, it is well for us Catholics to be honest with ourselves, to confess our faults, if we are at fault, and to be our own sharpest critics. Christ, we know, should not fail us, but we in any way through over-confidence or through boneheadedness falling His Church?"

"We must usually to praise ourselves, to exclaim at our own greatness and to marvel at our growth. Yesterday we had nothing, we were nobody. Today, as in Tertullian's words, we discover that we fill the land. We are millions; we are firmly established; we are deeply rooted; our churches are everywhere; our schools are being multiplied; our institutions are legion. No Church in the land can assemble such crowds, can marshal her men in such thousands, can count her children in such millions. It is the theme and the tone of our frequent jubilees.

"Yet, I venture to say to you that so far we Catholics of the United States have done little or nothing which gives us the right to think or to say that the future of the Church in this country is assured. Up to this, the faith of American Catholics has been largely a derived faith, the faith of the immigrant, whether Irish, German, Polish, French, Italian or whatever the country of its descent may be. It has been strengthened and sustained by the memories of other countries, by the language, the customs, the traditions of the Old World. It has thriven in this soil. It has surprised the enemies of our religion. It has quickened our resourcefulness and produced results which are the admiration of the world.

FAITH BROUGHT FROM EUROPE

"It thus remains true that whatever may be the virtue or the defects of the various groups of our Catholic people in the United States, their determining characteristic is still largely something which they brought with them, or talked to bring with them, from the old countries of Europe.

"Moreover, it is not surprising that the prodigious growth of the Church in the United States has been brought about by an enthusiasm, a loyalty and a generosity which laid more stress on material development than it did on the spiritual and intellectual. Church building and the erection of all other kinds of buildings, necessary for our work, have been matters of prime importance with us. We found ourselves without a place to worship, without a school or charitable institution, and we set ourselves to the task of providing them in the shortest possible space of time.

MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT NOT SUFFICIENT

"Here everything was to be done at once; done by the poor, for the poor. Our conditions have thus unduly emphasized the role of the parish unit, which, however necessary, is ordinarily a principle of exclusion and of narrowness.

"But as in this country almost the entire income of the Church has been derived from parochial sources, it has been in consequence unduly stressed and holds a position of importance in our Catholic Church

in the United States, which, while distinctly strong in parochial organization, is lamentably weak in national influence.

INADEQUATE LITERARY EXPRESSION

"Thus the literary expression of Catholic thought being outside the range even of the best regulated parish, is desultory, uneven, inadequate. Nobody who examined the publications which appear on the tables of the public libraries of Chicago or any other large American city in whose vicinities millions of Catholics live, would judge that the Catholic body was anything but a timid, touchy and a surely negligible group of citizens who were not yet acclimated.

"Yet without an adequate literary expression, how can we be sure that our present state of mind will be that of the next generation?"

"There is scarcely a great daily in the country which does not employ Catholics as editorial writers, yet, so negligible a body are we that not even the sharpest eyes could detect a distinctly Catholic thought in them which is not either disputed or patronized. Wherever you go in the country, you find the same conditions, prodigious parochial activity and supreme indifference to the general needs of the Church. As a consequence, Catholics where they are strongest, are isolated, out of touch with the community, exerting no influence commensurate with their numbers, their enterprise or their splendid constructive thoughts.

MUST ABANDON PAROCHIALISM

"How long can this condition last? Does not the Almighty seem to provoke us out of our Ghetto like isolation by the stir and the commotions which those whom we consider our enemies raise about our ears by charging us with all sorts of unthinkable machinations?"

"How long will an omnipotent State, if it ever comes, suffer us to be its only rival in the matter of education?"

"Has it a code of morals efficient enough to build up the shattered character of many of its charges? Has it a grasp of fundamental principles firm and complete enough to insure its right handling of the delicate problems of correction and relief?"

"So negligent or so indifferent indeed are the most of us to the discharge of our duties as citizens that almost any law may be put on the statute book without arousing us from our slumbers.

CONSTRUCTIVE CATHOLIC INFLUENCE

"What we fail to realize, however, is that now is the acceptable time, if ever, for us to take our stand as a formative, constructive influence in the community that we can only exert a beneficial Catholic influence by comprehending our world program as distinguished from our parochial, and that methods of publicity and of education that have advanced the cause of every wild system among us are open to us in our advocacy of the principles and the policies which, as they underlie the Christian civilization we know, must be the most effective restoratives of its declining powers and its departing faith.

"Christian men, can there be a more inspiring apostolate than that of bringing this salutary avangal to the land we love and live in? Lift up your eyes and behold the whitening fields. Dare we let the harvest rot which ripens only once?"

"If we as representatives of the Christian tradition, are to hold our own in this country we must reverse our policy of timidity, of caution, of perpetual apology. It is a policy for the young and the strong and the intelligent to enter into the vital thought of the day, to shape, to control public opinion, through the exposition of our teaching and the wholesome debatement of our arguments, so that living in a country where Church and State are to be forever separate we may so work that the State may never be set up as a false God against the God of our fathers."

HOME AND SCHOOL

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO IS ESSENTIAL

No one desires a boy's success in his school training more earnestly than the mother and father, and yet strangely, no one is more capable of hindering the boy's progress than the parents themselves. Many of them think it sufficient to put their boy under Catholic teachers, and then consider all further personal responsibility at an end.

To the average Catholic boy, his parents are models of every good exterior of universal perfection. Instinctively he will compare his teachers' advice with the counsels of his mother and father; the spirit of work inculcated by the teacher with the proportion of work and pleasure observed by the folks at home; the acts of devotion performed at school with the customs of his own people. That is not all. Upon the comparison depends the effect of the teacher's words, and not unjustly so. For certainly what use is it to tell him to study in the evening if every body else is out having a good time? What can it avail to exhort him to fulfill his religious duties if there is no one at home to set an example?

It is impossible to secure efficiency in any branch of endeavor where several influences converge, except by co-operation. It is likewise impossible to make your young people genuine Catholics if the influences of home and school be divergent or contradictory. The strength that is born of unity is lost; and the boy

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