

Dr. Pusey and the Oxford Movement.

THE publication of the first instalment of the life of Pusey by the literary executors of the late Canon Liddon has once more turned men's thoughts to that ever fascinating subject, the Oxford Movement. The tides of religious thought and action are deeply interesting to the masses of men, because they give expression to, and illustrate feelings and sentiments common to so many. Philosophical movements are "caviare" to the multitude, but theological movements, because they find expression not only in treatises or essays, but in the actual church-life of the people, are, in the proper sense of the word, popular.

This is pre-eminently true of the Oxford movement. There is probably not a single Anglican church in the world that does not in the form of its services reflect its influence. It not merely created a new type of High-Churchman: it restored churches, it revolutionized ritual, it revived sisterhoods and brotherhoods, missions and retreats. It aroused a genuine enthusiasm for the Anglican Church, it kindled a flame of zeal amongst both clergy and laity, that is still burning with a steady glow in the breasts of thousands. Even those most hostile to its principles have felt its power. Bright, cheerful, hearty services are no longer the monopoly of any party, but they are the outcome of one phase of the Oxford movement.

Of this movement in its earliest stages two men were the soul, viz., Newman and Pusey. The correspondence of Pusey now published shews that, after his accession to the party, whilst Keble and others were frequently consulted, Pusey and Newman were together at the helm, until the entrance of the Romanizing tendency amongst the younger men gradually separated them, and finally wrecked the ship. It was entirely due to Pusey that the "flotsam and jetsam," scattered amidst the turbulent ocean of popular animosity and alarm, was gathered together, re-constructed, and the vessel again sent afloat on a somewhat altered mission, but upon which it still speeds with all sails spread.

Edward Bouverie Pusey was born on August 22nd, 1800. His parents were of good family, his father being an inflexible Tory, his mother "a typical lady of the days of Fox and Pitt. She was tall, slim, with long hands and tapering fingers. She commonly wore a watered silk dress, very plain, with large lace collars and ruffles. She rarely or never would lean back in her chair, and she used to say that to stoop was a sign of a degenerate age." She was devoted to duty, affectionate to her children and charitable to the poor. From the first Pusey exhibited what was perhaps the most marked feature of his character, viz., industry. Even in sports he excelled through his industry. It is hard to imagine the future Regius Professor of Hebrew a good shot and a cross-country rider, yet the gamekeeper who taught him to shoot said: "Master Edward is a better shot than young Mr. Pusey" (his elder brother Philip); "he do take more pains about it," whilst his biographer tells us he was accustomed to ride to the hounds.

At the preparatory school to which he was sent he added to industry the virtue of accuracy. "Mr. Roberts was a schoolmaster of the old race, and as such believed more in the efficacy of corporal punishment than of moral influences. To drop a pen-knife was a serious offence; and Pusey was once flogged for cutting a pencil at both ends. But the one crime which was never pardoned was a false quantity." Before he was eleven he could have passed the Oxford "Little-go," so proficient had he become in classics. "Both my boys," their mother used to say, "were clever; Philip had more talent, but Edward was the more industrious."

Pusey was always thoughtful, but not at first conspicuously religious. His spiritual nature seems to have gradually deepened and ripened along with his other faculties. There was never anything eccentric or abnormal about his religious views or habits. At Eton a schoolfellow testifies that he was "very grave and thoughtful, and I cannot recollect that he ever joined in any of our sports." Although Canon Liddon says that he appreciated humour, there is scarcely a trace of it in his biography. Grave and thoughtful as a boy, so he continued throughout life.

In 1822 Pusey took his degree, and, after a continental tour, returned there, and was, in 1823, elected a Fellow of Oriel College. He was well-fitted for the society in which he found himself. "The distinctive characteristic of the

Oriel mind was exactness in thought as the basis of exactness of expression." Here were Whately and Hawkins, Newman and Keble, whilst Arnold and Hampden had only recently ceased to be Fellows. Newman had already met him, but they now became intimate. "At that time," says Newman, "I had the intimacy of my dear and true friend, Dr. Pusey; and could not fail to admire and revere a soul so devoted to the cause of religion, so full of good works, so faithful in his affections."

In 1825, Pusey took a step fraught with momentous consequences. He had come into contact with unbelief in the person of a friendly correspondent. Germany was the headquarters of rationalism, and Pusey determined to study the relations of faith and scepticism, of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, on their own battlefield. At Göttingen he was introduced to learning of a different kind from that of Oxford. At Oxford there was fine scholarship, keen logic, bright wit; at Göttingen Pusey found encyclopedic learning. Canon Liddon has given us most interesting sketches of Eichhorn, Tholuck, with whom Pusey throughout his life sustained an unbroken friendship, Schleiermacher and others. As he listened to the destructive criticism and ingenious theories of Eichhorn, it flashed upon his mind that all this would "come upon us in England, and how utterly unprepared for it we are!" From that time he determined to devote himself to the Old Testament "as the field in which Rationalism seemed to be most successful."

The fruits of this resolution were seen in his appointment to the chair of Hebrew at Oxford, his catalogue of Arabic MSS. in the Bodleian Library (a task of enormous labour), his commentary on the minor prophets, and his lectures on Daniel. Pusey never had the slightest leaning to German criticism, although at this time and for some years later he held less rigid views of inspiration than subsequently. His quasi-championship of German theology against the narrow ignorance of Rev. H. J. Rose excited a mild flame of prejudice against him that was not entirely extinguished for years.

But it is time to come to the Oxford movement. The causes which combined to produce this movement are variously described by different writers. "To no small degree," says Pusey's biographer, "it was a result of reaction from the negative temper which had preceded and created the great French Revolution, and had been felt in every country in Europe. When the flood-gates of human passion had been opened on a gigantic scale, in the horrors of war and anarchy, men felt that religion and a clear, strong, positive religious creed was necessary if civilization was to be saved from the ruin." Prof. A. V. G. Allen, in a recent article* of great interest, says that it was "primarily a reaction against the rising consciousness of nationality which had been stimulated by the French Revolution, as also by the rise and fall of Napoleon. The attempt of the French Emperor to remake the map of Europe at his pleasure, as if national distinctions or boundaries had no inherent meaning . . . was followed by a vigorous assertion of the national idea, such as had not been seen since the sixteenth century . . . England shared in the deepening consciousness, which she had done much, also, to create, of the sacredness and grandeur of nationality. Under its inspiring influence she proceeded to purify and elevate and strengthen her national life by the accomplishment of needed reforms. To this end it was proposed, among other things, to reform the Church by getting rid of what had come to be abuses in the ancient establishment."

Here the Oxford movement is seen in the unfavourable light of opposition to the rising tide of English national life, and the suspicion and dislike with which it was regarded by the State, and the scanty interest of High Churchmen in the affairs of the State, afford a sufficient justification of this view.

Various propositions for the reform of the Church were promulgated early in the thirties. It has not pretended that reform was unnecessary; objection was raised to the spirit which animated the reformers. Canon Liddon's words on this subject must be taken with some caution, for he regarded it strongly from one point of view, but, no doubt, there was a spirit of crude latitudinarianism abroad. In addition to foes without were dangers within. "Not only was it said that some bishops were favourable to changes in the

* "Dean Stanley and the Tractarian Movement." *The New World*. March, 1894.