

Archbishop O'Brien's Pastoral.

(Continued.)

In our last issue we gave a synopsis, with copious extracts, from the remarkable Pastoral Letter of the gifted Archbishop of Halifax. We reproduced his striking account of the Creation of man, and his still more illustrative comments on the beginning of the Gospel of St. John. We will now continue the subject, leaving almost all of the words of the Archbishop, but simply condensing certain portions for the sake of space.

Having quoted from St. Paul, St. Luke and St. Peter to show from Scripture the certainty of eternal punishment for those who do not spend this life in harmony with God's law and God's will, the Pastoral letter thus proceeds:

"We are, therefore, still in danger of losing our souls, of being condemned to eternal separation from God, of enduring all that this entails in a place which we call Hell. Its unfortunateness may be diminished to the ear of the unthinking by calling it 'Shool,' or some other fancy name, but assuredly its sufferings will not be mitigated thereby. The question which concerns us is not the name, but the nature of the place. Serious men should avoid childish contentions when discussing a serious topic. Moreover, not in the Old, but in the New Testament, are we to seek the fulness of divine revelation. From its teachings we are to learn the means to be employed in 're-establishing all things in Christ,' (Eph. 1: 10), so that 'Christ may be all in all.' (Col. III. 11.)"

That we must have Faith, and that Faith must come to us by hearing are plain facts that need not be supported, at this moment, by all the Scriptural evidence adduced by His Grace, but from that evidence he draws the following clear-cut doctrine:

"Therefore there must be preachers of God's word to the end of time, but the Apostle adds this important remark—'And how shall they preach unless they be sent?' No one, therefore, is to assume the office of preacher of Christ's message unless he be duly commissioned and 'sent' by Jesus Christ. 'As the Father hath sent me so I send you.' They 'sent' others who in due course 'sent' still others, and thus a living line of successors, an unbroken chain of senders, and sent from Christ the Eternal Head of His Church, to our day has been verified. As we know from history, countless millions have accepted, during the intervals, His revealed word as taught by 'the Church, and much has been effected towards 're-establishing all things in Christ.'"

The old and new tactics of the Enemy of mankind are then set before us, and it is wonderful how the same evil end is sought to be attained by means so different.

"But the enemy who brought through sin, disorder into the world, has never ceased to use all efforts to thwart, or retard, the accomplishment of this great purpose. Through all the centuries of Christianity they were, alas, together with heroic deeds of virtue, and a general observance of God's law, many acts of violence and crime. But these were rather individual than national, rather outbreaks of passion than the effects of a settled policy. The saving root of justification, faith, was ever alive, though at times, perchance, asleep in the individual consciences, and generally grievous transgressions were followed by exemplary penance and reparation. There was no thought of putting God out of the world, either in school or university, in private life or public policy. Many sins of passion there were, but few, or none, of malice. Such evil doing as existed was against the person and property of the individual, not against the eternal welfare of his soul.

"In more recent years, however, the enemy of God and man has employed new methods in his warfare or rather has gone back to the one first used in Eden, viz., that of corrupting the intelligence. Now, as then, he promises knowledge as the reward for disregarding God's will; and now, as then, his success is very great. 'No, you shall not die the death,' but when you shall have set up your own will as the standard of right and wrong 'your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' (Gen. III. 4, 5). The great sin of to-day is not strife and bloodshed; it is not any form of violence against property or

person; it is the more deadly one of a revolt of the intellect against the revelation of God. The world, impatient of control, does not wish to recognize a ruler who exacts obedience of the intelligence and of the will, because the forbidden things are 'fair to the eyes'; hence it begins by disobeying, and ends by denying this authority. A settled policy is then adopted of excluding God from private as well as from public and civic life; and souls, not bodies, are attacked."

Having warned the faithful of not allowing themselves to be deceived by a refinement less cruel than in barbarous days, for it is the dry rot of unbelief that permeates the laws, literature and administration of public affairs of the day.

"When all this is considered there is good reason to fear lest this great perversion may be, as it were, a foretaste, and perhaps the beginning of those evils which are reserved for the last days; and that there may be already in the world the 'Son of Perdition' of whom the Apostle speaks—(Thess. ii., 3). Such, in truth, is the audacity and the wrath employed everywhere in prosecuting religion, in combating the dogmas of faith, in brazen effort to uproot and destroy all relations between man and the Divinity. While, on the other hand, and this, according to the same Apostle, is the distinguishing mark of Antichrist, man has, with infinite temerity, put himself in the place of God, raising himself above all that is called God; in such wise that although he cannot utterly extinguish in himself all knowledge of God, he has condemned God's majesty, and, as it were, made of the universe a temple wherein he himself is to be adored. 'He sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.' (II. Thess. ii., 2.)"

The Archbishop then tells us that "the unthinking may smile at this; the unbeliever may deride it; but men who look below the thin veneer of our civilization, men who place the eternal above the temporal, the good of souls before worldly advantages, will recognize the truth of the picture, and the timeliness of the solemn call made by the Pope to all lovers of true peace, to endeavor to bring as many as possible to the 'majesty and empire of God.' But this can be done only through 'means of Jesus Christ,' for 'other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid which is Christ Jesus.' Cor. ii., 11.)"

Having quoted the words of wisdom of the Holy Father, regarding the open confession and profession of the Faith of Christ, the Pastoral thus closes:

"According to those weighty words, the first aim of men, whether as members of a Catholic organization, or as private citizens, shall be to sanctify themselves by leading a true Christian life. Let us, therefore, dearly beloved, during the Lenten season, seriously ask ourselves—Am I living in Christ? Does Christ reign over my soul? Am I truly reconciled to God through Him? I shall not help forward, effectively, the work of bringing others back to God, unless I also retrace my steps, and go to Him. We need not point out to you how this is to be done. You have learnt it in childhood, and you know the treasures of grace that are stored up in the Sacraments. Perhaps your Faith has grown weak, by contact with an unbelieving, but good-natured world, and by frequent perusal of works in which religion is treated rather as a superstition of the uncultured, and weak-minded, than as the revealed will of God put in practice. If so, read carefully, and in a prayerful mood, the New Testament. The story of Our Lord's life and teaching, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of those, the noblest of earth's heroes, who, poor and weak, and despised, waged war on error and darkness, conquered a proud and cruel world, and bore the Cross to victory, but at the cost of their own blood. Read the glorious deeds, in every subsequent age, of the Saints of God's Church. Procure a few good Catholic books, and bring into your homes well-written Catholic papers and other publications. We trust the members of Catholic Societies will aim at something higher, and more profitable to their souls, than the making of their

Halls mere places of amusement. Let them lend a cheerful aid in all works which concern the interests of God, and souls, but, as the Holy Father warns them, not according to their own views, but always under the direction and orders of the Bishops."

If the times are evil, there are many signs of a large restoration of things in Christ in the near future. A false knowledge of what has been wrongly termed "science," and which led captive many intellects, amongst them some Catholic ones, is dying, and dying in bankruptcy, its supposed treasures of wisdom having been shown to be counterfeit. Only the shallow graduates in scrappy text books, now hold to it; learned men have rejected nearly all its conclusions. So shall every error vanish before the one, unchangeable doctrine of Him who is the true light, and who lives and speaks in His Church to-day, as really as he did in the streets of Jerusalem. Therefore, be strong in Faith because, 'This is the victory which overcometh the world, our Faith,' (I John v., 4.)"

THE BLIND SISTERS.

A person may have lived long in Paris and may be even well acquainted with its religious orders, and yet not know the one which is the subject of this sketch. It is unique in the fact that it is the only one of its kind in the world.

Almost opposite the observatory is the long street, Rue Denfert-Rochereau, so full of religious houses that in the olden days it was given the name of the street of Charity or Paradise. Most of these convents have branch houses in many countries. One there is that, while doing a work not so much as attempted by any other religious order in the world, is yet so unassuming in its quiet usefulness that its existence is known to very few.

At the far end of the Rue Denfert-Rochereau (No. 88) we arrive at the long gray wall that incloses the convent of the "Blind Sisters of St. Paul."

The object of this Order is to offer to those who are blind, and who wish to give themselves wholly to God, the happiness and help of the religious life; for to those whose eyes are closed to all the beauties of this life there is often given an especial love for the God to whom their infirmity rendered them the dearest, and for whom the life of a nun is more suited. Before the sightless eyes of the blind there hangs a veil that forms a life-long cloister.

At St. Paul's there are about 66 nuns, half of whom are blind. All these Sisters, Les Soeurs Voyantes, those who have their sight as well as the blind, follow the same rule. On those who have their sight devolves the greater part of the manual work, the work in the kitchen, the service of the meals, the cleaning and care of the house and the care of the blind children. The blind devote themselves more especially to prayer, and so bring down blessings on the convent.

They have, however, plenty of useful occupation. Some have classes of music, reading or even writing. They take their turn in reading aloud in the refectory, at the time of the meals, and so well have they mastered the art of reading with their fingers that the most distinct of all the voices are those of the blind Sisters. Many occupy themselves in printing journals and books for the use of the blind.

Very close is the union between those Sisters who have their sight and those who have it not. It is a Soeur Voyante who conducts her blind Sister to the holy table, where, kneeling, they together receive Holy Communion. But it is often the blind Sister that leads the way to the tribunal of that loved God to whose service they have both consecrated themselves, for it has been remarked that when a blind Sister dies it is almost always a Soeur Voyante who is next to follow.

The little blind children learn from the Sisters how to endure patiently and with courage, for the sake of the good God, the trials and the necessary afflictions of their dark lives. This courage sometimes manifests itself in a most unexpected manner. One little child, during a terrible operation which was performed on her eyes, begged not to be chloroformed, but that instead that the Superior would let her hold in her hand a crucifix. For a long quarter of an hour the little one suffered without so much as a cry, and when the operation was completed the crucifix was found bent from the pressure of the little fingers convulsed with pain.

There are little altars of Our Lady in all the rooms, and in the workshop where blind women of all ages

employ themselves in making nets or brushes, or in knitting. There is an especially beautiful altar in the novitiate, where there are both Soeurs Voyantes and those who have lost their sight. It is difficult to explain to those who have not witnessed it how sheltered and sweet are the lives of these blind religious.

Except the holy Mass, that, perhaps, is the happiest hour of the day when, kneeling in the darkened chapel, they say their last words of love and gratitude to Him who through the whole day has never been far from their thoughts. Who can say what acts of love and devotion go up then from these blind Sisters, who yet have their inward sight so clear. Then all together in the dim light they leave the chapel in procession and pass up the stairs chanting the "Miserere."

Very solemn is this passage of the nuns from the chapel to their cells. The rigorous silence has begun that will not be broken until after Mass the next day. As each cell is reached the occupant detaches herself from the procession and enters, leaving the others to pass on.

At this convent they take in as boarders young women who are blind and who have not an assured position in the world. Little blind girls are also received from the age of four years, some of whom remain all their lives in the house. They also give a Christian education to a limited number of poor young girls. They also provide a home for blind women. These women are served in their own rooms, and the Sisters endeavor to enlighten their lot by reading to them, by conversing with them, and by a thousand little attentions and delicate cares inspired by Christian charity.

TEMPERANCE THE BEDROCK.

Under the chairmanship of the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of the city, the annual meeting of the members and friends of the Father Mathew Memorial Hall, says the Dublin correspondent of the Catholic Times, Liverpool, was held on Sunday. Every part of the spacious building in Church street was crowded, and the proceedings from first to last were characterized by great enthusiasm. His Lordship, who has been identified for upwards of thirty-five years with the movement, said he was proud that the first public meeting at which he had the honor of presiding as Lord Mayor of Dublin was one in furtherance of the great and glorious cause of temperance. He thought his connection with this movement had a good deal to do with his occupying the position he now so proud to fill. The temperance and the Gaelic movement were now great forces in the country; year after year their influence was becoming greater; they were teaching the people lessons of thrift, of industry, of self-respect, and of perseverance. The day was not far distant, he thought, when the people of Ireland, irrespective of class or creed would be ruling its destinies.

Considerable progress has been made during the past year in the onward march of temperance, both in the provinces and in Dublin. In view of the fact that so much depends on the rising generation, it is indeed gratifying to learn from the annual report which was read at Sunday's meeting by Mr. Mooney, that temperance has found a firm foothold among the youth of Dublin. "We have on our side," it says, "the rising youth of the city, who, through the revived and right spirit of nationality and patriotism, fostered and cultivated by the Gaelic League and kindred societies, take a high and noble view of the duties they owe their country, and who place temperance and total abstinence as the bedrock and foundation of their labors for the uplifting, advancement and nationalization of their motherland." The action taken by the Archbishops and Bishops has no doubt done much to bring about this happy state of affairs. For many years past they have administered the total abstinence pledge to all children about to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation with the result now evident on every side. Their wisdom has been abundantly proved. The school children of to-day will in a few years hence be the men and women of the country. At the present rate of progress it looks as if in a short time we should realize the ideal of one of Ireland's patriotic sons: "Ireland sober; Ireland free."

ST. BRIDGET'S NIGHT REFUGE.

Report for week ending Sunday, 20th March, 1904: Irish, 154; French, 130; English, 31; other nationalities, 23. Total, 338.

IRISH LITERARY CRITICISM.

BY "CRUX."

Some short time ago Mr. W. B. Yeates, the Irish litterateur and critical lecturer, delivered an address in Toronto in which he reviewed all that he and his companions, or associates had done for the advancement of Irish letters and of Celtic influence. In all that he set forth there was perfect truth, and I am even inclined to believe that he allowed his personal humility to prevent him from claiming all the credit that he and his co-workers deserve. In the course of his lecture, however, he endeavored to show to his audience the respective merits of the earlier Irish writers and their influence upon their own times, as well as upon subsequent years. In the course of his remarks he spoke of the "Young Ireland" movement in the "forties" and he assigned a place to Thomas Davis the founder of the "Nation," poet, essayist and political guide and inspiration of that band of young men who created a revival in Ireland's literature and aspirations. The lecturer said: "Davis was not a great writer, nor a great poet, but he gave all he had to the cause"; and he proceeded to explain that Davis was an exceptional man at that time, but left us to infer that his work was not to be compared to that which has been subsequently done. It is not for an humble individual like me to try and judge between Davis and his critic, nor to establish a comparison between their respective works, but I will simply say that nearly sixty years have elapsed since Davis died, and he only wrote for three years, and yet his name and works have still a powerful sway over the Irish race, and his influence and the effects of his writings are still felt. I will allow others to speak—men who knew him, labored with him, and were in a position to do him justice.

CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY.—There is no need for me to tell the story of Duffy's connection with the Young Ireland party, with the foundation of the "Nation," with the revival of Irish literature in the mid-nineteenth century, nor of his subsequent exceptionally grand career. It suffices to know that no man ever lived who was in a better position to properly estimate Davis and his work. On Christmas Eve, 1845—three months after the death of Davis—Duffy wrote as follows:

"It is not death alone, but Time and Death that canonize the patriot. 'We are still too near to see his proportions truly. The friends to whom his singularly noble and lovable character was familiar, and who knew all the great designs he was bringing to maturity, are in no fit condition to measure his intellectual force with calm judgment. The people who knew him imperfectly, or not at all—for it was one of the practical lessons he taught the young men of his generation, to be chary of notoriety—have still to gather from his works whatever faint image of a true great man can ever be collected from books. Till they have done this, they will not be prepared to hear the whole truth of him."

"All he was, and might have become, they can never fully know; as it is, their unconsciousness of what they have lost impresses those who knew him, and them, with the pitying pain we feel for the indifference of a child to the death of his father. Students who will be eager to estimate him for themselves, must take in connection with his works the fact that over the grave of this man, living only to manhood, and occupying only a private station, there gathered a union of parties, and a combination of intellect that would have met round the tomb of no other man living, or who has lived in our time. No life—not that of Gutenberg, or Franklin, or Tone, illustrates more strikingly than his, how often it is necessary to turn aside from the dias on which stand the great and titled, for the real moving power of the time—the men who are stirring like a soul in the bosom of society. Such a one they will speedily discover Davis to have been."

HIS BIOGRAPHER.—The foregoing quotation from Duffy should suffice to show that, for some reason or other, Mr. Yeates has miscalculated the importance of Davis and his work and has failed to properly appreciate him. I now take a couple of extracts, from a preface of his works, written in April, 1846, by

"T. W.," his subsequent biographer. His appreciation runs, in part, as follows:

"The momentary grief of the people for his loss was loud and ardent enough. I have heard some touching instances of the intensity with which it manifested itself in thousands, who had never seen his face, or heard his voice,—to whom, indeed, his very name and being were unknown, until the tidings of his death awoke in them the vain regret that they had not earlier known and honored the good great man who worked unseen among them."

Speaking then of his great humility and even lack of confidence in himself and his retiring disposition, until the hour of action came, when he burst forth in all his power and glory the writer says:

"There is no assurance of greatness so unmistakable as this. No power is so overwhelming, no energy so untiring, no enthusiasm so undomitable, as that which slumbers for years, unconscious and unsuspected, until the character is completely formed, and then bursts at once into light and life, when the time for action is come. This was the true guarantee of Davis' greatness—a genius which was equal to any emergency, which would have been constantly placing itself in new aspects, overcoming new difficulties, and winning fresh love and honor from his countrymen and from mankind. A character so rich in love and hope, as his, and at the same time so suited for public life, is a rarity in history."

Then he adds: "Apart from his want of leisure, and his early death, his poems above all must not be judged without a reference to his aims and his mode of life. I do not believe that, since the invention of printing, there has been a volume of such sincere effect, and varied power, produced under like circumstances."

Then commenting upon that which the modern critic seems to look upon as a weakness, the same author says: "True, the great man will often shun society and court obscurity and solitude; but let him withdraw into himself ever so much, his soul will only expand the more with thought and passion. The mystery of life will be the greater to him, the more time he has to study it; the loveliness of nature will be the sweeter to him, the less his converse with her is disturbed by the thoughtless comment of the worldly or the vain. Let him retire into utter solitude, and even if he were not great (as Davis was) that solitude—if nature whispers to him and he listens to her—would go near to make him so; as Solikirk, when after his four years of solitude, he trod again the streets of London, looked for a while a king, and talked like a philosopher. For a while, since, as Richard Steele ably tells the story, in six months or so, the royalty had faded from his face, and he had grown again, what he was at first, a sturdy but common-place sailor. But nature herself haunts incessantly the really great man, and nothing can vulgarize him."

And I give just one final quotation out of the two hundred pages of similar tributes:

"Men, true to their own convictions, and prompt in their country's need, but knowing well the hived sweetness that abides in an unnoticed life—and yet not shrinking from responsibility, or avoiding danger, when the hour of trial comes; it is such men that this country needs, and not flaunting histrionists, or empty platform patriots. She wants men who can and will work as well as talk. Men glad to live, and yet prepared to die. For Ireland is approaching her majority, and what she wants is men. Such was Davis, for his works are a Palear of Nationality, in which every aspiration of your hearts will meet its due response—your every aim and effort encouragement and sympathy, and wisest admonition."

I might fill two large volumes with like tributes to the genius and the greatness of Davis, all from those who knew him, and who had seen and felt his influence upon the people. I place these few, however, side by side with the opinion of Mr. Yeates, that 'Davis was not a great writer, nor a great poet,' and side by side with his opinion of the limited character of Davis' influence: I leave the reader to sit in judgment upon the issue.

CHAPTER

It was the feast of Heart, and the altars of where Agnes had received Holy Communion two years brilliant with flowers and pers. The great church ed with people from every the city, for to-day's celebration was such as had seldom Sisters from different parts there, several from the lum, and among them was Bernard, who anticipated pleasure of hearing her Agnes, sing a beautiful honor of the Sacred Heart been composed for (the a member of the order.

It had been a little over since the return of the Virginia, who had continued the winter to spend her in study, had been admitted Catholic Church early in but her first Communion Iferred until the day before for home. Could Alexia the fervor with which she the holy table she would herself well rewarded for her own life to the service Creator, but still she was norance.

Several times since Agnes had been to the Virginia only once, and then been unable to see her co had intended that day to of her conversion, but wo her learn the news from o than her own. When Agn the celebration which was pared for, she said, "Mam has had happiness enough sent in seeing me entirely why not keep your secret the feast of the Sacred H 'Let it be as you say, said Virginia, and this she did not make a second Sister Agnes Bernard that the miracle that had formed for Agnes, and the her cousin must have seen would have some effect u and vainly did she await of it. Once she said "What does your mamma your cure?"

"Oh, Sister," was the ply, "it has made her so l "Poor Virginia," was th mental comment, "the gra has not yet touched her h it had Agnes would know would certainly tell me," said, "Let us continue to her, Agnes."

"Yes, Sister," was the twinkle of her eyes esc notice of her companion. Alexia's next question w hasn't your mamma calli your return?"

Once, Sister, but you were she has been too busy sin will call again."

Alexia's prayers for her co redoubled, and she left her care of the Sacred Heart that the approaching fea bring some grace to her.

Mrs. Hurley in the mean busy preparing for the event she and Agnes made in honor of the Sacred He attended Mass, each with a fervor in which each seemed excel the other. The day w in study, hearing Agnes pr hymns, and working on the she was to wear. Instead ly robe of satin and silk lace Agnes had worn at her fir munion, the one chosen fo occasion was of simple whi the plainness of which wa only by a blue sash and fricate lace at the throat an Virginia on the happy mo cupied a front seat on the directly opposite those rese the participants in the proce only two seats behind her vral of the Sisters of Mercy; though unconscious of it at she could not have chosen where her cousin could have her more closely.

The convert having said a prayer, had taken her seat b Sisters entered, and Alexia that she was sitting wh around her knelt. But at t of the organ she saw her fal kness and she thought she sign of the cross, but put it only the effect of her imagin Now the long procession w way slowly down the aisle, t