

was most near and dear to him. His was a great soul, possessed of the finest feeling and endowed with a most resolute will. He was indulgent, yet rigorous, exacting, yet liberal, prodigal when God's glory was concerned, yet sparing to a degree of parsimony where charity well-directed would permit the lessening of individual comfort. He had very many trials in life. But the certain calm of one who "knew in whom he trusted" reigned over his whole career, and diffused itself in such serene tranquillity around his death-bed that, as St. Bernard says of St. Malachy's departure, no one could know which was the repose that stole over God's servant, that of sweet sleep or that of the grave.

Now that our journalist is dead, a spirit of greater justice will be evinced in estimating his true place among the Catholics of America. In the history of the United States Mr. McMaster will ever hold a prominent place. His name, doubtless, will live when many who bore high political, ecclesiastical and financial titles are forgotten.

"His dome-like brow and towering form" says the *Catholic Union and Times*, Buffalo, Feb. 22, 1887 "his aggressive personality through many militant years; the chivalry with which he championed every cause he had espoused; his splendid courage in days that tried men's souls; his varied learning and fiery zeal in behalf of the Church; the bitterness of his rebuke, the fierceness of his invective, and the heartiness of his applause; his valor as a man, his humility as a Christian; but above all, the tenderness of his great loving heart, had long made the dead Nestor of the American Catholic press a man of conspicuous mark, and given him a commanding influence through varied and far-reaching channels."

Such will the following chapters reveal the life of James A. McMaster to have been a life instructive and edifying for every class or society.

As to the defects of the work we hope that the sincerity of our good intent, and the desire of spiritually and temporally benefiting society in general, will be a sufficient reason for an indulgent criticism from our generous and considerate fellow citizens of the United States.

We will conclude with the candid statement that the Reverend Father M. Mueller, C. S. S. R., (confessor of the late James A. McMaster) has by his long and patient labors supplied us with most of the material to edit this life of our distinguished American Catholic Journalist.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH OF JAMES A. McMASTER.—HIS CHILDHOOD AND EARLY MANHOOD.—HIS SCHOLARLY ATTAINMENTS, HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SEMINARY.—HIS VENERATION FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN.—HIS CONVERSION TO CATHOLICITY, 1845.—HE IS DISCARDED BY HIS FAMILY AND WORLDLY FRIENDS.

James A. McMaster was born on April 1, 1829, at Danesburg, Schenectady County, New York. He was the youngest of seven children, John Crawford, Erasmus D., Algernon Sydney, Joannetta Helen and Rebekah. He himself was called after his two grandfathers, Benjamin Brown, James MacMaster. He was baptised in his infancy according to the Presbyterian rite. His father was an eminent Presbyterian minister, who traced his descent from the stern Scottish Covenanters. The Rev. Gilbert McMaster was a scholar of the highest order, a believer in the Edinburgh traditions of the immense value of classical learning. At about the age of four his father and mother having occasion to go to the City of New York, the latter promised him that on her return a few days later she would bring him something if he knew by heart our Lord's "Sermon on the Mount." He accomplished his task in that short space of time, much to her satisfaction. He often spoke of the long talks he would have with his mother, of the elevation of mind, the purity of heart, the sweetness and gentleness of character which she possessed. She used to tell him he was indeed his father's Benjamin in more than name, that his brothers had never dared to take the liberties he took with him. And yet the tender, sensitive heart of James A. McMaster yearned for the outward manifestation of the affection which his father felt for him, but of which his grave and stern exterior gave no sign.

He would say to his own children, when pouring out his soul to them in loving words: "My father never caressed me, and his nearest approach to familiarity was when he called me 'my son.' At other times he used my full name, Benjamin Brown James. Oh! how I used to wish he would say, 'my dear son!'" And yet his sister Helen wrote to him after his father's death