

"He'll miss her when she goes home, won't he?" went on the voluble George. "With you gone and all. She's a mighty nice girl, Miss Bentz is. And ain't she pretty, Mr. Barlow?"

Life flowed back into the stone in Jimmie's breast. "If you think they're in George, I believe I'll try again," he said smiling. A great light had dawned upon him. Wasn't it just like Uncle Fen, trying him out like that? And Rita—Rita, the little rascal!

It was a merry, quizzical, radiantly happy face that he thrust in Mr. Fenlon's door.

"Last act!" he called gayly. "Exit the little waitress!"

Enter—"he stared accusingly at the two confused conspirators—"the future bride of Mr. James Barlow—"Jimmie!" cried Rita involuntarily.

"Ah-hah!" uttered Uncle Fen in manifest surprise.

Well, to make a long story short, that's what came of Mr. Fenlon's innocent little masquerade.

DANTE'S SIXTH CENTENARY

Ravenna has guarded Dante's mausoleum throughout six centuries. The exiled seer laid down his cross September 14th, 1321, in this peaceful haven of the Adriatic. The Exaltation of the Saviour's Cross was a fitting day for his second passing into the spirit world.

Florence recognized his worth too late and has vainly sighed for his hallowed dust. Dante's tomb on the Arno is still empty, but the Baptistry he loved is being restored to commemorate the six hundredth anniversary of his death.

Responding to the call of the Vatican and the Quirinal, all Italy honors her distinguished son. But Dante's admirers dot the universe. Ruskin's "Central Man of the World" is acclaimed by Pope Benedict the "pride of humanity." All the Nations of the earth are lauding his Trilogical, and the Church of Dante leads this chorus. Ireland chants his praises with a passion truly Celtic; Belgium, France and Catholic Spain have taken up the dominant note; England and America are vying with them in paying tribute to the immortal Florentine. Dante's sixtieth anniversary has awakened responsive chords afar off, even in pagan Japan and China.

Those outside Catholic Unity are cheered by our poet and deem themselves privileged to accompany him through circled Hell, terraced Purgatory and spheric Heaven. But Dante is the "Master-poet of the Catholic Faith," to quote the late Cardinal Manning. We salute him as one of ourselves amid this world-acclaim. Dante is ours, writes the Holy See to the Catholic World. Dante has crystallized the Catholic thought of the Thirteenth—the Greatest of Centuries. Dante is the apotheosis of our faith, Catholic in life, Catholic in verse, ours by every right and title. Though all do not share his tongue, Dante's faith is our common heritage. The faithful find a peculiar charm in his masterpiece, the Trilogical that has merited to be called Divine.

One ought to be conversant with Italian to enter fully into Dante's mind. His verse loses much in translation, but by no means all. It is advantageous to read him in another tongue rather than be deprived of him wholly. Raphael's copies exhibit many of his masterly touches though wanting his coloring. It is well to view a replica of the Transfigured Christ or the Sistine Madonna when one cannot see the original. Dante is inspiring in any idiom. His thought is majestic. His knowledge is vast and deep. He has no peer as a learned historian, profound philosopher, and a sane theologian. The Divine Comedy is more than a mediaeval romance. It is the greatest motion picture the world has known.

It is a matter of regret that Dante publications of the last century flowed from the pens of Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Lord Macaulay brought Dante into prominent light and assured him a place in English literature. Dean Church added impetus to Dantean study by a classic essay wanting only the poet's faith. This lacuna blemished his appreciative tribute. It caused the Dean to underrate Dante's devotion to the Church, the Mother he revered while carping her faults. Cary and Longfellow had previously given us poetic versions of the Divine Comedy. The former is very popular with students. As a prose translator Butler disputes the palm with Norton. Both versions are admirable. English works have commendably multiplied within the pale in the past score of years. Following in the wake of Dr. Hogan and Dr. O'Donnell, the Irish reviewers, our own Dr. Zahm and Dr. Rivard have graced our libraries with able commentaries. The late brother Azarias lectured often on Dante. Dr. Walsh and Dr. Thomas O'Hagan have earned the respect of Dante lovers by their writings and their spoken word. Those of a philosophical turn of mind are favored that Ozanam has been translated from the French. Dr. Hettinger surpasses all German writers and Father Bowden of the Brompton Oratory has placed his classic before English readers in an attractive style.

With Cary for a text and these orthodox guides, the Catholic can enter into the spirit world through the dark circles of Inferno, up the narrow terraces of Purgatorio, and onward to the glories of the Paradiso. Adoring God's justice, blessing His Mercy, and catching a glimmer of happiness to come, the reader must disdain with Dante the passing show of time and matter.

'Tis no easy task to enter Dante's Holy of Holies. One must breathe the poet's religion to command the "Open Sesame." Non-Catholics miss much of Dante's meaning in spite of commendable efforts to grasp it. Acknowledging the debt we owe many of them, we wish them the grace of faith. Right interpretation of the Divine Comedy presupposes Catholic doctrine, a certain familiarity with the Art and Ritual of the Church that inspired it. Others may enthuse over brilliant passages, but they cannot view them in their proper setting. The more the Catholic cons the cantos, the more he reveres their second only to the Bible. Faith guides him through Hades with a firmness of conviction that knows no wavering. It strengthens his belief in the Middle State and exhorts him to pray for the Holy Souls. It raises him up to the Empyrean with the rapture of St. Paul. Dante believed in the reality of joy, the resignation of suffering, the joy of glory. He gives out to others his intrepid faith his abiding hope, and his consummate love. His love for his childhood's religion grew with maturity into a passion. He respected the Church, her dogmas and her practices. He loved her ceremonies and time-beaten institutions. He cautioned the new against vain conceit. He pitied those who would be tossed about by winds of doctrine. He named the remedy and sure refuge of peace: "You have the Old Testament and the New, and the Church to guide you. With this rule of faith all should rest content and work out salvation manly yet securely."

Dante was born in 1265 and lived fifty-six years. His was preeminently a Catholic age. Men lived the same faith, recited one creed, and breathed a common religious air. The Church extended her mantle over all and enthused her children to unparalleled perfection in science and art. Dante was the personification of that epoch which built the Gothic Cathedral, moulded Catholic Philosophy and produced the Miracle and Morality Play. The age of Aquinas and his erudite "Summa" gave posterity Dante and his Divine Comedy. Our poet commingled with the learned of his time, with the poets and painters, the sculptors and architects, the saints and scholars of cultured Europe. He embalmed their best in his wonderful poem, he holds the key to the Middle Ages. Minor blemishes may be traced to their sources, his innate pride and per sonal spleen, but they do not destroy the worth of his work. His rancor and resentment make it all the more intensely human.

An imperfect knowledge of the Church has often led Danteists into devious paths with no Virgil to warn them. Partisans have floundered through his pages in quest of their own views. Wrenching lines away from their content, they have imagined Dante unorthodox. These have been framed to prove him the Precursor of Luther and Calvin. He has been hailed as another Mazzini, a hater of the Church and such columns have been repeatedly confuted. Fairminded men like Dean Church of Oxford and Principal Caird of Glasgow University have been foremost to vindicate Dante's orthodoxy. They have called upon students to solve difficult passages with another key, leaving his faith undisturbed.

The Church on her part has no reason to deny that her poet was fallible and at times resentful. Pride and bitterness were self-confessed faults of his giant intellect and indomitable will. The Florentine nursed the decree of exile from his natal city. He held Church politics responsible for his banishment. Dante anathematized papal peccability but held to the dogma of infallibility. One of his works was placed on the Index as tainted with dangerous views of the Empire, but the Divine Comedy was never aspersed. Dante assailed Pope Boniface VIII, through personal pique. Party strife was rife at the time. The Guelf of Florence was swept by adversity into the Ghibelline camp. One cannot deal with the poet's aberrations in this article. Monsignor Hettinger and Frederic Ozanam have explained them away and vindicated Dante's purity of faith. They do not deny that he erred under keen provocation. His language betrays the rancor of his heart and is minatory against abuses in high places. The Catholic shudders as he picks these passages, and Dante wailed it. But the Divine Comedy should be read in its entirety, not in isolated lines. Though the poet descends upon fitful gusts that shook Peter's Barque, the fact that the Papacy weathered the storms proves that the Divine Pilot was at the helm. Dante remains the "Master-poet of the Catholic Faith." It would be an easy matter to quote the Divine Comedy upon every point of orthodoxy. It breathes Catholicism from beginning to end. The Church alone could engender the poem. Dante had a clear insight into her past and an almost prophetic view of development. His artistic ideals

were modelled by Giotto, his philosophy was drawn from the Angel of the Schools, his mysticism from the Seraphic Doctor. He knew the Sacred Word of God and was an astute Theologian. This fact caused Dr. Hettinger to remark: "Were all the libraries of the world destroyed and the Scriptures unhappily lost with them, the Catholic system could be reconstructed out of the Divine Comedy."

The great Raphael was of the same mind, and accorded Dante an honored place near the Altar of God in his famed "Disputa." The laurel-crowned Florentine stands among the galaxy of saintly Pontiffs and learned Doctors. One can almost imagine him lisping his faith, repeating his confession of Paradise's gate. Aubrey de Vere attributed his conversion to the study of Dante. Viewing the Trilogical from outside the pale, he was charmed by Dante's pilgrimages with Virgil and Beatrice. He was moved by the depth of Divine Justice, the breadth of Divine Mercy, and the height of Divine Love. And he said to himself: "If I wish to dwell in a world where my gaze shall look upon beauty, I must enter the Catholic fold, the Church that inspired Dante, the Prince of Poets."

What affected de Vere may influence others. In answer to honest enquiry today why not quote Dante upon vexed problems like the Eternity of Hell, the Efficacy of Prayer for the Dead, the Veneration of the Virgin Mother? Dante casts a halo over Holy Writ, and witnesses unto Catholic Tradition. If resentment impelled him to impeach some occupants of the Papal See, he respected their Office. As parent pardons a prodigal child, Peter has condoned his wayward steps. Pope Pius IX. placed a laurel wreath upon his tomb at Ravenna. Leo XIII. knew Dante by heart and admired him as the "Ornament of Christendom."

Our reigning Pontiff has endorsed the Divine Comedy in all cultured minds. Benedict in a sense has placed the Seal of the Fisherman upon him whom Carlyle called the "Saint of Poetry." The Hero Worshipper chose Dante for his "Hero Poet." None may question Dante's orthodoxy since Peter has spoken, since our hero has received commendations without number from the Heads of the Church. If the poet fell more than once under the cross of exile, the Church has absolved the man "beaten down by adverse fortune." Dante remains the most eloquent "singer of Christianity."

The late Brother Azarias, two decades ago made stirring appeals in Dante's behalf. He pleaded with Catholic Reading Circles to place the Divine Comedy foremost in their programmes. His admiration for our poet was unbounded and contagious. He used to contend that a relish for Dante is the hallmark of culture:

"The human intellect has no sublimer truths to feed upon than those growing out of the Divine Comedy. Language contains no sweeter tones than those that Dante sings betimes. Human concepts were never more clearly unrolled, human genius never soared into higher regions."

Thanks to his lectures still speaking in print, Dante is abandoned and forgotten no longer. The American Hierarchy—Archbishop Dowling, Bishop Burke and the Right Reverend Rector of the Catholic University—has endeavored by efforts in this revival. The Master-poet of Cardinal Manning is now being studied in Catholic Colleges and Academies. Literary Circles are devoting years to the unearthing of his treasures. The writer of this article has directed one for the past three years and will lead the same members through Dante's Trilogical three winters yet to come if God so wills. Apt to repel rather than attract at first view, the Divine Comedy repels the casual reader. Admiration waxes into enthusiasm when reviewing the poem in its proper setting, the age that produced it. Russell Lowell was charmed by successive readings, and counselled his class to peruse Dante for the fiftieth time as he had done. Dante demands supplementary study of contemporaneous history, the influences that thrilled his Italy and all Europe. Dante's message from the unseen world glows brighter the more it is gazed upon. Some stop at the Inferno, others wend their way through Purgatorio, but stop at the gates of Paradiso. The poet has given warning that the last is the most difficult:

"All ye, who in small bark have following sail'd, Eager to listen, on the adventurous track Of my proud keel, that singing cuts her way, Backward return with speed, and your own shores Revisit, nor put out to open sea, Where losing me, perchance you may remain Bewildered in deep maze. The way I pass Ne'er yet was run." (Par. ii. 1.)

Those only may follow Dante who are consecrated to patient study and research:

"Ye other few, who have outstretched the neck, Timely for food of angels, on which they live, yet never know satiety; Through the deep brine yet fearless may put out Your vessel; marking well the furrow broad Before you in the wave."



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The Divine Comedy is a living poem. It forces open the memory, the reason and the will. It inspires loathing of evil, pity for repentance, and joy over victory. It incites a real passion for the good, the beautiful and the true. Dante is more than a poet, he is a consummate artist. His mind is so versatile and his style so condensed that novices should only scan his lines with an able commentator. Like a vast Cathedral—St. Peter's or Westminster—the Trilogical must grow upon the beholder. Its beauties do not strike the superficial, but the patient student finds new perfections, freshness and vigour at every turn. The shallow may read the newspapers and novels, but one must probe beneath the surface to work his way into the greatest mediaeval poet.

Dante should receive earnest attention from more centres of higher education. Pope Benedict's call to the cultured world is both a reproach and an invitation. Those of his household must no longer allow strangers to translate and commend the poet that is ours. "Alighierus noster est," writes the great White Shepherd. Dante is the Catholic Religion set to music. Carlyle naively called him the "Saint of Poetry." Our Pontifex Maximus has approved in a way his poetic "anointment." The Church has given him the laurel crown "Dante is ours—the Supreme Catholic Poet." The immortal singer is our glory and our pride:

"Among her sons, not one more full of hope, Hath the Church Militant." (Par. xxv.)

REV. A. O'LEARY, D. D., Toronto, September, 1921.

"THE LITTLE FLOWER"

SOLENNLY DECLARED "VENERABLE"

The announcement that Pope Benedict on August 14th solemnly declared Sister Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face Venerable, will be joyously received by the great number of her devout admirers throughout the world.

The "Little Flower" as she has become known, died only a few years ago, but she has already gained fame comparable to that of the greatest saints and has rapidly achieved a position as one of the most remarkable and potent personalities in the Church in modern times.

So great has been the spiritual favors attributed to the power of Sister Theresa that a special magazine was published simply to record them. Catholic colleges and institutions were placed under her patronage, great missionary enterprises such as the conversion of Wales, and the cause of the diocese of the Alaska were confided to her protection. Devotion to the Little Flower has grown to such proportions in our day that it is hard to realize that she has been dead less than a quarter of a century.

Her life before and after she entered religion was marked by extreme simplicity. She was born at Alencon, France on January 2, 1873, entered the Carmelite Order

in 1888 at the age of fifteen, and died of consumption on September 30, 1897 at the Carmelite Monastery at Lisieux. She was born of pious parents, and it is recorded that her mother prayed that she might have many children, and that all might enter religion.

Of the nine children who were born to them four died in infancy and the other five all daughters became nuns. Teresa the youngest manifested from infancy a strong desire to devote herself entirely to God in the contemplative life. Notwithstanding almost insuperable difficulties she succeeded in receiving from Pope Leo XIII. permission to enter the Carmelite Monastery at Lisieux at the early age of fifteen.

She was distinguished in religion by her simplicity, her humility and her fraternal charity. No terrifying penances marked the life of this winsome fragile nun. She found her sanctification in meeting the daily and hourly little crosses, with the heroic self conquest that is the essence of true sanctity. Shortly before her death she composed at the command of her superior that exquisite autobiography, the History of a Soul, translated into English under the title of the Little Flower so familiar now to Catholic readers. Within three years after her death her book had been translated into many languages, and to the convent Lisieux came letters from populous centers and from remote missionary stations describing prodigious cures, and spiritual favors obtained by thousands through intercession to Sister Teresa. These facts led to the institution of the cause of her Beatification in 1911, and it has proceeded so rapidly that the Little Flower is now by the act of Pope Benedict entitled to be called Venerable.

Sister Theresa, the Little Flower of Jesus, as she called herself, desired to leave this life for the free and more powerful life of eternity, because the Holy Spirit had made her understand that she would come down again to do good on earth, or to use her own words, "that she would shower upon souls on earth a rain of graces, a shower of roses from on high."

She whose life was so hidden, who was unknown beyond her own cloistered community has influenced the Catholics of our generation to a remarkable degree. The cause of the Little Flower and the increase of devotion that will spring from the latest step in her canonization, is one of the most remarkable manifestations of Faith and of the use of supernatural graces that has been known in modern times. And her life teaches that truth so important in these days that unless we become as little children doing our Father's will in things little as well as great we cannot enter into our Eternal Home.—The Pilot.

THE TIES OF CENTURIES

When Alphonso XIII, King of Spain, pays the long expected visit to Rome the ties of centuries between the Vatican and the Spanish Royal Family will be strengthened. Not one of the heads of European countries is so profoundly attached to the Holy See as is King Alphonso and none has a history more intimately bound up with the Papacy as he. In 1887 Alphonso XII, of Spain died at Madrid at the age of twenty-eight. Six months after his widow, Maria Cristina of Austria, gave birth to a son. Just as Pius IX. was profdfather at the Baptism of Alphonso XIII, so Leo XIII. now became god-father to the little orphan, and he had Mons. Mariana Rampolla del Tindara (afterwards the celebrated Secretary of State) represent him at the baptismal font. The ceremony was performed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo (and the font used was the same in which St. Dominic was baptized 700 years previously) amid the rejoicings of all Spain. The Spaniards at once gave the orphan prince the name of the

"Little King." But, until he reached the age of sixteen Maria Cristina acted as Regent, so that not until 1902 did his coronation take place. In 1908 he married Princess Ena of Battenburg, niece of King Edward VII. (amid the fury of English bigots) who became a Catholic.

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