

FEBRUARY 17, 1900.

A HOLY AMERICAN BISHOP AS A BOY.

Dr. Faust's Early Recollections of the Venerable A. Neumann.

Boston Pilot.

The Ave Maria is always so good, so bright, so opportune in its topics, and so judicious in its treatment of them, that it is hard to praise any one number as better than the rest. Still, in its issue of Jan. 27, it surpasses itself in the interest and variety of its topics.

The initial article is "My Recollections of Bishop Neumann," by A. J. Faust, Ph. D.

Dr. Faust is one of the faculty of St. John's College, Washington, D. C., and a contributor to several religious and secular publications. His name is identified with the Church News of Washington, for his admirable "Under the Library Lamp," one of the regular features of that journal.

Dr. Faust has some very early recollections of the saintly fourth Bishop of Philadelphia, whom we are already privileged to call "Venerable John Neponemune Neumann," and to honor as one of the glories of the Church and of the Redemptorist Order in America.

We quote: "I was privileged as a boy to understand, with the average intelligence of a boy, a great and noble character in whom this threefold life was clearly manifest even to casual observers. In recalling impressions, rather than recollections, of the Right Rev. John Neponemune Neumann, who died as Bishop of Philadelphia, on Jan. 5, 1860, I am constrained to mention a few facts personal to myself for the reader's appreciation of the individual influence of one of the most saintly of our American hierarchy. My mother, an ardent Episcopalian, was left a widow in my childhood; but she continued after the death of her husband, who was a devout Catholic, to keep open house—as it was called in those days—for the Catholic clergy serving the mission of Carlisle, Pa., then attached to the parish of Chambersburg, and at a later period to that of Chambersburg.

Carlisle was then, as it still is, the seat of Dickinson College, founded by the Presbyterians in the last century. In the days of Bishop Neumann the parish belonged to the Diocese of Philadelphia, and during this period its strength was numerically increased by Catholic officers and soldiers then stationed at the United States Barracks, a school of cavalry practice situated in the suburbs of the town.

"The man is clearly before me as I write. In stature, he was below the average height. His presence had none of those commanding aspects which sometimes repel children, and which are usually associated with leaders in Church or State. His features were decidedly of the German type, and its features were saved from what we Americans call homeliness by an expression so placid, so benign, that it carried with it even to childhood's fancy, the thought of great goodness. The boy instinctively felt that there was nothing about the man to awe into timidity. The fatherly gentleness of face and manner invited confidence, and the boyish response was always more than half way. Bishop Neumann's head was remarkable for its size and conformation. And I remember thinking as a boy, and perhaps saying to him, that his hat would be safe among numberless others at a public function requiring their removal; for it would cover the face as well as the head of the average mortal.

"The room set apart for good Bishop Neumann in my mother's house would be regarded as rather antique in these days, when the remains of old style architecture are rapidly disappearing before the spirit of the present enterprise.

It was a great cause of wonder among the servants and younger children why the Bishop never occupied his bed at night, but seemed to make use of chairs arranged by himself for sleeping purposes. Self-mortification, so little known among non-Catholics, was first taught to me by the example of him, who, we all trust, may soon find his place with the beautified of Holy Church. Childhood's experiences cannot fathom the needs nor the modes of self conquest; for the dominion of evil is only complete when habit fixes in its iron grasp the victim of desires. Habit comes with years, when the will is a tenant of the brain, ready to vacate its supremacy in the day of conflict.

"While Bishop Neumann was a general man in the best sense of the term, I can remember no mere talk for talk's sake. Badinage, the delight of some of the saints, had no place in his mental makeup. I can clearly discern now a fixed purpose in his conversation with the clergy, which was to direct its topics into a higher range than the mere play of opinions, literary or theological, he had the grace of exquisite humility, which appeared to be a normal intellectual trait of character rather than a result of acquirement.

"In the centre of our garden, which was a large one, my father had built a beautiful summer-house, the delight of his children. It was covered with honey suckles and grape vines, which entwined themselves in its lattice-work, making a fragrant bower secure from the rays of the sun. This secluded spot served as a smoking-room in mild weather. Thither the clergy retired after dinner, with now and then an army officer from the barracks, to enjoy their cigars. Bishop Neumann, as I remember, did not smoke, but he usually went with the

smokers to their outdoor retreat, seemingly enjoying the delicious odor of vines and flowers rather than that of the best cigars. An old family dog named 'Brandy'—why I know not—followed him about in a winsome way, and reclined at his feet, when the Bishop was seated. Animals and little children instinctively turn to those who notice them, and become friends with the kind and the gentle, illustrating the truth of Shakespeare's words, that 'love lends a precious seeing to the eye.' I wish I could recall more definitely the conversations in the old summer house, now among the things that were; but many of the subjects discussed were quite beyond the reach of boyish apprehension. The picture of the scene lives, but, as I have remarked, in impressions rather than in recollections.

To have seen and to have known a saintly prelate like John Neponemune Neumann is in itself an abiding influence, adding to the responsibilities of life's privileges. May the influence of that saintly example remain with all the freshness of the dews of the morning!

A VOICE FROM AFRICA.

Bishop Angouard, C. S. B. - Letter From the Centre of the "Dark Continent." - II. Ferocity of the Bondjoes - Their Tricks.

Dublin Irish Catholic.

All this is little in comparison with the ferocity of the tribes around us. The narrow passes of the rivers are most dangerous. Each evening we had to come ashore for firewood for the next day to work the steamer. Coals are unknown in Congo, and steamers are worked by wood fire, and wood is plentiful all along the rivers. But it was with our guns ready, in case of attack, that we had to go for our supply of firewood. Notwithstanding the most active vigilance, those ferocious Bondjoes under cover of the darkness of night managed to get on board the steamer whilst we were at anchor, and made off with two rifles belonging to soldiers on the two "Leo XIII." Happily the night-watch was left at his post, for the chief object of such nocturnal sorties is to catch "flesh that speaks"; if that bit falls, those cannibals take whatever falls under their fingers, and so they took the rifles.

Another day, at night fall, things looked very suspicious, and we kept prepared for a night attack. We were not far out in our surmise; the cannibals repeated that they began to climb upon deck than they were received by our militia men, soldiers, with all the honors of war! Another evening, just as we were engaged in getting our firewood for the next day, one of our men escaped by the skin of his teeth, death by an assigay, which he brought back with him as a trophy and a compensation for the fright he got. A boat sailing ahead a little before us was attacked and one of the crew was made a prisoner and eaten; however, the cannibals lost three men in a sortie to repulse the enemy. In these wild countries a human life is often killed very little; a poor slave is often killed for a trifle. In many villages human flesh is almost the only meat on sale. When we retrace our steps, they simply say that it is not so bad as we imagine, but it is very good, and add that we do not know how good it is. The craving of the cannibals for human flesh is such that their audacity to procure some stops at nothing. At the risk of life they come by night into an encampment where a caravan halts. If an alarm is made, if the least noise is heard, the intruder simply pretends to belong to the caravan and lies down snoring, and no man of the camp will suspect the poor black fellow "quietly sleeping"; but in the morning his "sleeping partners" will miss all sorts of things which have disappeared during the night. The caravans begin to be wide awake to this Bondjoes trick. At any moment in the night the men may be roused to be identified, and show that none but "honest sleepers" are in the camp.

These clever Bondjoes have recourse to cleverer dodges still. Fancy for a moment what we lately found out to be a frequent trick of theirs. The rivers carry down to the sea all sorts of wrecks, debris and detritus, to which nobody scarcely ever pays attention; they seem floating by a broken calash. Well, we saw to drift near to a small skiff on board of which a watchman had left his gun. Suddenly, the calash seemed to float by, it raised itself a little, and a man's arm cleverly seized the gun, and instantly disappeared under the water. A Bondjoes had simply concealed his head under the broken calash and made away with the object he coveted. The watchman fired after him, but he only came for a second to the surface now and then for air, and swam off out of reach, making good his escape when he found himself out of danger. These savages show also great cleverness in setting fire to the thatching of huts at a distance. They tie to the end of their arrows a kind of touchwood, which ignites as it fires through the air and they set fire to huts at seventy yards distance. Life, as you see, is not always so jolly with us in the Obanghi; neither is navigation the "no plus ultra" of the missionaries' happiness when we remember the reefs and the marauders. But I trust that our colleague in the seafaring capacity, Saint Peter, will keep a true note of our hardships, to lay the same before our chief Captain on the day of reckoning. If his knowl-

edge of our modern, especially our African steam navigation be not quite up to date, we will not fail to bring any overlooked point under the notice of the Great Fisherman of Galilee.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE EVANGELIZATION OF CITIES.

"The deepest students of our civic problems look to the Catholic Church for the regeneration of city life. This is the concluding sentence of an article under the above title in the Catholic World for February.

Those who thus look to humanity's God-given guide, are those who, whatever religious belief they profess, realize one great truth—that social regeneration, to be effective, must be from the heart on. They know that the Catholic Church directs all her efforts to the hearts of men that she may win them for God and righteousness.

The Catholic Church, with its ever open doors, its succession of Masses in the early morning hours of the weekdays, its sodality meetings and benevolent dictions in the evenings, its impressive Sunday services, its annual retreats and occasional missions, its temperance societies, its benevolent and literary associations; above all, its schools—the centre, not only of the spiritual life, but, in a sense, of the social life of its attendants, and a promoter of good citizenship vastly more effective than any agency moved by fear or by mere utilitarian advantage could possibly be.

Cardinal Manning immeasurably advanced the spiritual and social progress of the Catholics of London—and of the Protestants also—by his policy of multiplying comparatively small and inexpensive churches and schools throughout that vast city, rather than by concentrating time and money on one great architectural expression of Catholic devotion.

While the press from time to time echoes the dismal story of the "unchurches masses," and the steadily decreasing attendance at the Protestant houses of worship—magnificent edifices in fashionable localities unused save for a couple of hours once a week—the Catholic churches in every part of every one of our great American cities are taxed on Sundays beyond their accommodation, despite their from three to six services for the Protestants' one; and often show at week day services what would be in the Protestant churches a respectable Sunday gathering.

Take four typical churches—outside of the great Cathedral, in New York City—St. Stephen's, St. Francis Xavier's, St. Alphonsus' and St. Paul the Apostle's centres of spiritual, intellectual and charitable activity, fountains of grace, bulwarks of law and order. We might as easily match these with four in Boston. Or we might tell of the rapid and most necessary multiplication within the past decade of auxiliary churches in Boston's suburban parishes, each of which soon became the very forward bud of a new parish church.

These examples are not lost upon thoughtful non-Catholics, as we see by attempts to improve bad conditions through census taking, house to house visitations and sundry sensational methods, which, as the Catholic World writer truly says, "savor very largely of the futile and fatal struggle for life."

The Protestant churches cannot draw the people as the Catholic churches draw them, until they give them what the Catholic churches give. And how shall they give what they have not received?

The spirit of the world in its American form, the shadow of our luxurious civilization, impatience for wealth at any cost, eagerness for pleasure, and all the rest, tempts and misleads Catholics as well as Protestants. But the Church meets with the Mass, with the Sacraments, with daily prayer, with her fasts and fasts, with her fearless priests who preach the Word of God and the penalties of moral transgression, to the despairing admiration of thoughtful Protestants, and not domestic not art nor literature nor domestic topics like "the joys and sorrows of moving," which preachers fall back on who are "called" of man, not "sent" of God.

Our churches, on the material side represent not often the easily spared offerings of the rich, but the sacrifices of humble and sometimes poorly requited labor.

They are "Credos in stone" or in brick or wood, as the case may be. They mean faith, for they are built primarily for the Blessed Sacrament. They attract faith, they send faith forth. Put the altar, the Mass and the Real Presence into any of the deserted temples of our separated brethren, and they will not be able to contain the multitudes seeking their portals.

Catholic faith alone can contend successfully with the paganism and irreligion of our day.—Boston Pilot.

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