

St. John told us that this revelation was reserved for the age when the world would have grown lukewarm, and when it would stand in need of some extraordinary means to bring it back to its first fervor.

Evidently that lukewarm age has come. The world of the hearts of men, the only world that in final analysis God cares for, has really grown cold. An icy wave of indifference and infidelity has rolled over it and chilled the souls of millions of the human race, obliging God to furnish them a more than ordinary source of warmth.

This source of warmth is devotion to the Sacred Heart which He wishes all men to study and to practise. "He made known to me," wrote Blessed Margaret Mary in one of her revelations, "that the great desire He had to be perfectly loved by men, made Him form the design to manifest His Heart to them. He promised me that He would shower down abundantly His choicest gifts on who would honor it; and most important of all, that this devotion was to be the last effort of His love that He wished to make in these later ages."

"Without a doubt," wrote a biographer of the Blessed, "the revelation of the Sacred Heart is the most important revelation that has been given to the Church since those of the Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist. It is the strongest ray of light sent us since the day of Pentecost. Blessed Margaret Mary even went so far as to declare that the Heart of Jesus would be a new Mediator in the Church."

Needless to say this distinguished writer does not insinuate that any addition had been made the deposit of faith, rather that the revelation of the Sacred Heart was an important development of the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Divinity of Christ. But does not this solve the mystery of the long eclipse? If the great light was so long hidden, it is because the fulness of time had not arrived for the new mediation when Christ was to flood the world with the waves of His inexhaustible light and love. His Vicar of earth declared that modern society had no better support than the Sacred Heart of Jesus; it alone would cure all the evils that afflict human society.

"Preach this devotion everywhere," exclaimed Pius IX, "it will save the world." And Leo XIII. asserted that, in revealing the devotion to His Sacred Heart, Christ wished to bring back an erring world to Himself and make it taste anew the fruits of Redemption.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, then, is the remedy for the indifference, irreligion and infidelity that meet us on every side in the present age. It has made many conquests already both in society and in individuals; but while it has effected a renewal of fervor in millions of hearts, there are other millions of hearts still to subdue. There are millions of men who do not know all that we know about this new revelation, and who, through ignorance of its existence, have never felt its vivifying influence. For example, to speak only of those of the household of the faith, there are thousands of men and women, once fervent Catholics, who have allowed themselves to drift with the stream, thousands who have lost the strong grasp they once had of the truths of religion, thousands who do not realize that when their belief in dogma has gone, they have no foundation on which to build their spiritual lives. Those people are practically lost to the Church unless charitable hands take the trouble to raise them out of their unhappy state.

hardened hearts will sooner or later yield to their importunate entreaties, and that when the objects of their zeal feel themselves being enlivened with God's grace, which never fails, they will be the first to thank the benefactors of their souls. For the most part it is not the lack of good will but the lack of knowledge that keeps men hardened; they have only to be shown the right path and they will start to walk. Even though a Promoter should succeed in merely placing in some lukewarm Catholic home a copy of our Lord's promises to Blessed Margaret Mary or a picture of the Sacred Heart, or a Messenger, that is already the thin end of the wedge; other acts of daring will be followed by other developments and other victories, until at last the Morning Offering, the Daily Decade and the Monthly General Communion will be accomplished facts in the lives of thousands. This work is being done quietly but steadily by our Promoters and readers in many of our Canadian centers. What they are doing can be done by others. A little zeal for the glory of God is all that is needed, and the army of worshippers of the Sacred Heart will be increased in strength and in efficacy.

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

REMINISCENCES OF A CONVERT

Sir Henry Bellingham contributes to the Catholic Truth Press an account of his conversion from Protestantism to the Church. It was, he says, the most momentous decision of his life, and the growth of his convictions having been so gradual, he finds it hard, he adds, to express himself in words. He says he got his earliest ideas about Catholicism in Ireland, where he was born and where he passed the first seven years of his life. His mother was a deeply religious woman of the Low Church type, and her convictions were those of the severest type, not indeed, far from Calvinism. She believed that the Pope was the Man of Sin, and that he was the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. No Catholic was in her service and all Catholic ideas were abhorrent to her. She always inculcated internal piety rather than external reverence and disliked ritual of all kinds. Young Bellingham was therefore brought up in an atmosphere of anti-Catholic hate, and abuse of "Papists" was the fashion in his home and social circle. Nevertheless, he says, the early impressions received from his mother really prepared his way for the ultimate belief in the Church, for, he says, his mother's teaching, though clothed in Evangelical Protestantism was really based on Catholic doctrine. He knew his Bible well, but only began to understand it when he had witnessed the Ober-Ammergau play.

In his young days in Ireland, the Protestant clergy were persons of far greater importance than is now the case. They claimed, he says, to be legally masters of the souls of those who lived in their parishes, although on Sundays he could only count a few parishioners where the priest could count hundreds. Such days as Good Friday, and Ash Wednesday, with the hot-crozzens and the ashes, began to puzzle him as being really "kept" by the Catholic parishioners and only "kept" in a half-hearted and imitative way by the non-Catholics. Even as a child, he says, he often made his masters and parents angry by asking them questions which they found it hard to answer. Accordingly, when he visited England and went to school at Harrow, he was puzzled from ever to find that the scores of sects he found in England were all more or less imitative of some fundamental community, altho' each sect claimed to be the real reformed Church. He decided, therefore, to find out for himself what was the fundamental religion they imitated and why they had "reformed" themselves. Enquiry among the non-Catholic sects left him convinced that the bulk of English churchgoers were content to accept any religion provided only it was not Catholic. This he found was the result of the superabundance of "schools of thought."

On enquiry for himself, he found that Christ and His apostles insisted in all their discourses and teachings on the absolute necessity of unity; in his own Church he looked in vain for unity in any place or upon any principle. Outside his own Church he could see it only in one church and that the Catholic. Accordingly, and as a good scholar and mathematician he became immediately interested, since unity in a vast system like that of the Church must have the advantage of being without difficulties in regard to the teaching of the young—a pivotal advantage. It was Bossuet who enlightened him more especially on this point, for that celebrated divine stated:

(1) Christ, in order to impart and secure visible unity to His Church, founded it on the Primacy and supremacy of Peter's Chair. His doctrine is contained both in Holy Scripture and in the clear and unbroken tradition of all Christian antiquity.

(2) Episcopal authority is intended to give unity to particular local churches, but the unity of the whole Universal Church flows from the supreme authority of the See of Rome—at once its root and center.

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In the course of his investigations the baronet found in the British Museum some two hundred and thirty seven publications bearing on the matter, and wondered why all these works should have been needed if there were any doubts on the question. Indeed, Sir Henry says that had he remained in Ireland, he is not sure that his eyes would ever have been opened. He admits that even the least educated Irish people with whom he used often to argue could always "beat him laughing" when it came to settling controversial questions. They had no doubt; he always had, and there was no difference with his Protestant friends. Nevertheless, placed in his special social surroundings (he says), he might never have gone farther than argue matters. When at Harrow he heard of a work called the "End of Controversy" by Milner, but although he agreed that the simple logic of this work convinced him that there could only be one true Church, he was gravely taken to task by his masters for reading a work which purported to maintain such a proposition. This episode, he says, made him think very hard.

When at Oxford, a tutor of his threw up a Fellowship worth much more because, as he declared, it could not see any truth in the incoherent and discordant principles of Protestantism. Again, young Bellingham began to wonder. The recusant Fellow was the future Father Richard Clarke, S. J., who eventually started a hall to Catholics in Oxford. The baronet sought him out and asked many questions, and learned many new things which amazed him. He was introduced to Monsignor Capel who gave him the advice to visit Catholic countries. On his return from abroad, he realized the "insularity and insignificance" of the High Church and also the "Calvinistic Irish form of Episcopalism." He began to make friends with Catholics and realized the true devotion and zeal of the Catholic clergy. In vain his friends introduced him to a Protestant minister who had once been a Catholic priest. The young man was not edified, as he tells us. This experience was unmeasured in his abuse of every Catholic, and he found that the very congregation to which this pervert minister did not trust him. Eventually, and as a young man still, he entered the Church, since when he says, "I have felt at peace—a peace which the world can neither give nor take away."—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

WHEN THE CURE OF RAMBOUILLET BEAT NAPOLEON

By E. P. Ryder. During Napoleon's sojourn in the town of Rambouillet, France, there were many days when no hunting, no concerts, no plays, relieved the monotony of the work in which he was engaged with his ministers. To compensate for this dearth of amusement, the evenings were spent in playing cards, chess, checkers, etc. Great tables were arranged in the nine square salon of the palace—one in the centre being reserved for the Emperor himself, should he feel disposed to take part in a game. One evening he happened to approach a table on which had been placed a set of chessmen.

"Come, Duroc," said he to his Grand Marshal, "are you anything of a chessplayer?" "No, sire." "Well, see whether you can find among these gentlemen one who is, and request him to give me a game." Turning to a general officer with whom he had been talking a few moments before, Napoleon resumed the interrupted conversation. Duroc in the meanwhile inquired on all sides for a chess-player, but among those present not one had the least idea of the difficult game.

On reporting his want of success, the Emperor asked whether the Mayor of Rambouillet was present. "Yes, sire," answered Duroc. "I saw him a moment ago." "Ask him to come here." Duroc went off, and soon returned with the Mayor. "Mayor," said Napoleon, "have you not in your own town some one who plays the game of chess?" "Sire, the pastor of our parish understands the game, but I cannot answer for his skill." "Never mind! He will do. Is he a good sort—companionable and patient?" "Sire, he is a very worthy man, venerated and loved by all the townsfolk, especially the poor." "I must make his acquaintance," said Napoleon; and, in obedience to

his order, the Grand Marshal left the salon. A quarter of an hour later there entered a hale, white haired old man, whose frank, open countenance was as venerable as it was prepossessing. It was the Cure of Rambouillet. On being presented to the Emperor he bowed respectfully and turned a little compliment quite in keeping with his age and profession. "Monsieur le Cure," replied Napoleon, "hear that you are a good chess-player, and I would like to try my skill against yours. Come, sit down here, and play like a brave champion. Don't spare me if I make mistakes." "Well, well, sire! I once played the game passably well, but now I am out of practice. When one neglects an art, one soon grows incapable."

"Yes, but chess is not an art; it is a real science. Come, come! All rusty as you think yourself, I am sure that you will recall a move or two." "Let us begin." The Cure seated himself opposite the Emperor. Napoleon put his hand in his waistcoat pocket, drew out some twenty franc pieces, and placed one of them on the table, saying: "We must make the game interesting, but not ruinous. We will play only a 20 franc game. My dear Cure, your money is the patrimony of your poor, and I would not have you risk the least portion of it at play. You and Duroc here shall be partners; and your shares of stock will be quite equal,—you giving your skill, and he his money." "But, sire," replied the pastor, "the Grand Marshal has perhaps a less favorable opinion of my skill than you have. He who has the honor of being your companion in arms must know better than any one else that your opponents never triumph."

This compliment, arising so naturally from the subject, and pronounced with perfect candor, flattered Napoleon far more than the most extravagant eulogies of his courtiers; and he smilingly replied: "Monsieur le Cure, both Duroc and I are your parishioners at present. You should not try to spoil either of us." The game began. It was indeed a strange spectacle, the powerful Emperor engaged in a playful contest with a modest old priest. The great conqueror then in the zenith of a glory that seemed destined never to fade—he who with a word could set half a million of men marching from one extremity of Europe to the other—was soon deeply meditating the movements of a few knights across a chess-board.

Napoleon was completely routed by the Cure, who won five successive games. At the end of the fifth game, Napoleon laughingly arose and said to his adversary, in his most amiable manner: "My dear Cure, you have given me a capital lesson, and I will profit by it. I have learned more about chess to-night than during the past twenty years that I have played the game. You have beaten me unmercifully." "Your Majesty is invincible on every other field," answered the pastor; "the least you can expect is to be beaten at chess. Moreover, sire, you owe your defeat to the rapidity of your play. That style is successful sometimes, but it is not always fortunate when one has an adversary who is slow, patient, and experienced."

Without intending it, the good priest had given Napoleon another lesson in strategy. The great personages who had surrounded the Emperor's table during the game made no comments on the result. The Cure took the five gold pieces, and, approaching Duroc, said in a half whisper: "Of this sum your share is 50 franc; the rest is for charity." "Keep them, I beg you, and distribute them for my intention among your poor." "It shall be as you wish," said the Cure. In the meantime Napoleon had been explaining the causes of his defeat to the bystanders. Turning again to the priest, he remarked: "Monsieur le Cure, you have given me a charming evening, and I thank you for it. But I hope to get even with you the next time we play." Then, changing his tone, he went on: "How old are you?" "Seventy-two, sire. For forty-five years I have prayed for France in the exercise of my ministry." "Well, continue, my dear Cure, to pray for France and for me." They did not meet again. The pastor of Rambouillet died in 1813, and the Empire was then near its downfall.

There is a big difference between a wish and a dogged resolution.

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