AFTER THE STORM

It is surprising how readily the most fixed ideas will undergo a revolution in the minds of those who hold them, especially in time of danger, and more particularly if they are founded on falsehood or bigotry. As an instance of this the following illustration will afford some amusement to our readers:

Not many years ago a rich Englishman, whom we shall call John Smith, although that was not his name, was travelling between Kamarska and La Malbaie. It was in the month of November, and the weather not of the best. He had confided his precious existence, precious in his own eyes at least, to Baptiste Riverain, master of the shallop Marie Alice, which her captain firmly believed to be the finest little craft in the world. In himself he had no pride—not even dwelling on the thought that but for his skilled management of his bark she might be as apt to come to grief as many another, equally fleet, trim and beautiful, which had gone to destruction in the hands of less confident navigators.

Not so with Mr. John Smith, a retired grain merchant, whose fortune was due to hard work and a lucky combination of circumstances. He had a high opinion of himself, and a correspondingly low one of other people, especially those whom poverty had destined to hard labor, whether on sea or land. In his eyes poverty was criminality. His eye swept the figure of the humble mariner with an expression almost of contempt as he exclaimed, in a tone of authority:

"Baptiste, I wish you to take me to la Malbaie by the shortest route. I am to dine and sleep to-night with my friend, the Hon. M. Nairue, and it is not my habit to make my hosts wait for me. I will pay you the usual sum. Come, now, to the quay at la Malbaie, by six o'clock. It is a bargain."

"I will do my best, monsieur, but it will depend upon the winds and the waves and the will of God. Just now the breeze is pretty stiff. One can never tell, though, at this time of the year."

"You Canadians are very superstitious," said Mr. Smith. "You always bring God into everything; why suppose that He will intervene in so slight an affair as a little trip on the water, which you make perhaps three times a week? Your priests should see to it that you have a little more education!"

Without making any reply to these sarcastic remarks, Baptiste went on with his preparations for the trip.

In the twinkling of an eye everything was ready, and the Marie Alice with all sails spread was on her way. They had not proceeded very far when Mr. Smith began as follows:

"And how is the Cure, Baptiste?"

"He is very well, monsieur," answered the sailor.

"And so he ought to be. He lives on the fat of the land. He does not thing but receive your tithes and those of your comrades as you pay them. Tithes, I said; that was a mistake. The word does not cover his emoluments. You give him the greater part of your earnings, under the pretext of Masses, indulgences and I know not what beside. That is so, is it not, Baptiste?" queried Smith, with an ironical smile.

"It is not so, monsieur," replied Baptiste, gravely, but without anger. "I assure you that if you were in his place you would not be satisfied with what he receives. It is more often pennies than shillings, monsieur. However, we consider it our duty to support him who has devoted his life to us, and we do it, as well as we can." Then, assuming a tone of solicitude, he continued: "It is not with us as you Protestants, who, I judge from what you say, do not support their ministers."

"You are entirely wrong, Baptiste," answered Mr. Smith, with asperity. "We do pay our ministers."

"Ah!" replied Baptiste, quickly; "in that case, you are also expected to provide for their wives and children, monsieur. That goes without saying, and I will engage that they and their families cost you a great deal more than does our lonely Cure —and, furthermore, that you are not nearly so well served."

"Perhaps that is true, in one sense," said the Englishman, who was not entirely destitute of the spirit of fair play upon which his race so vaunt themselves, and who was, moreover, somewhat taken aback at having unexpectedly met in the poor boatman a foeman more worthy of his steel than he had thought possible in so benighted a race as those French-Canadians. "In some respects we may not be as well taken care of, Baptiste," he continued, "but we certainly pay them no more, nor as much, as you do your cures. They ask nothing from their congregations to defray the expenses of miracle-working. They do not profess to sell us graces from Paradise. We do not put money in their palms for the release of our departed friends from the flames of Purgatory. We pay nothing for the supposed forgiveness of our sins. Our ministers as well as our people are intelligent and our religion was made for the intelligent."

"Ah, yes," responded Baptiste, his hand on the tiller, so that the Englishman did not observe his heightened color or flashing eyes; but his voice was under perfect control as he went on:

"Miracles seem impossible things to you; moreover, it is hard for you to believe in them; but, as our Cure very proudly and sensibly says, the whole world is a miracle, and as difficult to understand as what you are pleased to term miracles. I have heard that you Protestants have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in His death on Calvary, His resurrection from the tomb and His ascension into heaven. If you guarantee the truths of the Gospel on these points, why can you not also believe in other miracles?"

Mr. Smith was considerably nonplused. And he had no answer to this argument, he replied: "My poor Baptiste, you cannot help it if you are ignorant. These things are too deep for discussion with a man like yourself who has never been taught the real truths of religion. It would be a work of time. I assure you, for one thing, that you are throwing money away when you have Masses said. Tell me, have you ever obtained one favor thereby?"

"And so you do not believe in the virtue of prayer, monsieur? I thought all Christians did. I see that you are disposed to be prejudiced no matter what I say. If I told you I had obtained graces and favors you would not believe me. So it is not worth while to discuss the subject any longer, for we can never come to an understanding, and you are only wasting time in trying to change my opinions. I place much more confidence in M. le Cure than I do in you, monsieur. Besides, just now I have no time to argue further, for I see a great cloud on the side of the Cap-a-l'Aigle, which tokens a severe storm. Excuse me, monsieur."

Mr. Smith was not a brave man; he became alarmed. The cloud was certainly there, and growing larger every moment. The wind began to blow with great violence, and the rain to fall in torrents. The captain of the Marie Alice put up it to keep his vessel in her course.

"Baptiste, do you think there is any danger?" inquired his passenger, from under the shelter of the heavy oilskins which the boatman had thrown him for protection from the storm.

"There is always danger in a gale like this," answered the mariner between his teeth.

"But is it imminent? If your boat fit to weather this tempest?"

"I hope so, monsieur," was the response; "I will do my best."

The waves rose higher, the winds waxed fiercer, the brave little bark strained every fibre against the fearful odds that threatened to engulf her. Smith shrunk farther and farther into the shelter of the waterproofs. We know not whether he prayed; at any rate he was silent. At last the storm began to abate, the waters subsided, and the passenger, more dead than alive, ventured to put forth his head as he inquired, in a feeble voice:

"Do you think we shall get there all right now, Baptiste?"

"I hope so, monsieur; but I cannot say. The sea is nasty, and the weather may take an ugly turn again. It is a real miracle that we have gotten this far along," he continued, with a cruel emphasis not lost to his hearer; "we are in the hands of God, monsieur, who does sometimes interfere in such little things as a sudden squall at sea, we Catholics believe."

"Baptiste," said the other, after a moment's silence, "what do you usually do in such an emergency as this?"

"You see very well, monsieur. I govern my boat as best I can. It needs all one's energy and all one's senses, as you perceive."

"Yes, I know. But are you not accustomed, in time of danger, to promise some Masses? Why did you not do that to-day?"

"Mr. Smith, this is not the time to ridicule my superstitions," said Baptiste, in a tone in which indignation and reproach were mingled.

"Baptiste, I am not ridiculing your belief in the least. I asked the question seriously, and I now repeat it."

"Very well, monsieur, since you wish to know, I will tell you. When the sea behaves as it did just now I commend myself to God and make an act of contrition with the hope of saving myself, but also with the resignation to die—if it be the will of God. Where do you suppose a poor devil like myself would get the money to offer for Masses?"

"It seems to me that if for no other reason than that your family needs you it would be your first thought to make such a promise."

Baptiste said nothing; he was too much occupied with his boat at that moment to give his attention to anything else. Smith moved uneasily, hemmed and hawed—and finally said: "Listen, Baptiste; promise a Mass—two, a dozen if you wish—and I will pay for them."

Baptiste, still busy at the helm, waited an instant before replying.

"Very well, that is understood, but on one condition—that you never again ridicule the religion of Catholics, Monsieur."

"I never will," said the Englishman.

An hour later the Marie touched the quay of la Malbaie and Baptiste bade adieu to his passenger, who was entirely changed; he had become modest, gentle and grateful, where he had been self-assertive, loud-voiced and arrogant, and it is to be presumed that on this evening he had not much appetite for his dinner.

But Baptiste carried in his pocket a double fare, besides an offering for Masses, which would be quite welcome to the poor, hard-worked Cure, to whom the delighted boatman gave it at the first opportunity.—Mary B. Mannix in Dominicana.

Keep a Scrap-Book

(From "Books and Reading" in March St. Nicholas.)

You may make for yourself an interesting book by constructing a scrap-book devoted to one subject. One young girl with a strong interest in the life of Mary Queen of Scots has collected from magazines and other sources articles, illustrated or not, as it happens, verses, pictures of buildings and localities, and portraits relating to this heroine, and has put them into a single scrap-book, making a volume in which she obtain a printed copy of an extract takes much pride. When she cannot she wishes to add, she does not hesitate to copy it out neatly upon the pages of her book—which is merely a large "composition book."

The educational value of such work is by no means slight, since to know one thing well one must needs learn much of many others. Indeed, it has been said more than once that to know one thing completely we should have to know all things.

There is a good suggestion here. You will be surprised, if you begin to gather material upon some topic, to see how much is printed about your favorite subject. One word of caution. Do not choose too wide a subject. Make your limits narrow enough to be within your scope. Your scrap-book need not be upon history or literature, but it should be concerned with something worth the time you mean to spend upon it.

The Crick in the Back.—"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," sings the poet. But what about the touch of rheumatism and lumbago, which is so common now? There is no poetry in that touch, for it renders life miserable. Yet how delightful is the sense of relief when an application of Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil drives pain away. There is nothing equals it.

FIRE IN TURIN LIBRARY

Loss of the Bobbio Manuscripts—The Monastery of St. Columbanus.

At an hour after midnight on Tuesday morning, 26th January, some belated wayfarers in Turin, passing along the Via Vasco, saw smoke issuing from the windows of the second floor of the University, in which the "National Library" of Turin is housed. The library was on fire. After the alarm was given the firemen appeared on the scene, and also Professor Chieoni, Rector of the University, and the Librarian Cavalier Carta.

What particularly concerns other nations in this fire is the destruction of the Bobbio manuscripts, which is its most disastrous consequence. This is the place, to which Saint Columbanus came—the great Irish missionary of the sixth century, who was repelled "by the incorrigible barbarism of those Germanic populations," as Alphonse Dautier describes it, "who, being displeased that the monks should evangelize and clear the country, accused them of putting to flight the game of the forest." Here, under the permission of the early Longobard Kings, he establish ed this Monastery of Bobbio which afterwards became so celebrated. It is situated in the Valley of the Trebbia, a river noted for the abundance of its fish; and the whole valley around is rocky and barren. Here stood an ancient church half in ruins, which Columbanus rebuilt and near which he constructed a monastery.

Bobbio was the ancient centre of learning in this part of Italy, and held that high reputation for many centuries. Amongst the treasures it possessed at one period of its history was a series of palimpsests, which were writings on parchment that had been scraped and erased, and the parchment thus cleaned was turned to account for later writings. Early in the 19th century Cardinal Angelo Mai, Librarian of the Vatican, discovered a means of restoring the original script, and thus he discovered some of the long lost treasures of classical learning. It is, I believe, accepted as a truism that all existing palimpsests came originally from this monastery of Irish monks founded so many centuries ago at Bobbio.

Much of the learning of the middle ages found a resource in Bobbio. However, dense was the darkness that overhung Europe in that saddest of ages, the 10th century, the school of Bobbio continued, nevertheless, to shine, as Dautier says, as well as the other conventual schools of Italy. "By a singular phenomenon," he continues, "the light which enlightened all the cloisters, on this occasion came to them from the extreme West, where it seems to have been concentrated during the most sombre period of the Middle Ages."

A manuscript catalogue of that period—the catalogue of Bobbio in the 10th century—tells us what were the works that served for the library labors of the monks of Bobbio. These works are not only commentaries on the Sacred Scriptures, the works of the Fathers of the Church, or lives of the saints and ascetic writings which continue the foundation of this library. Profane antiquity lives again in this learned retreat, and the works of the great writers of Greece and Rome were reproduced in a very large number of copies—a method of showing how highly they were esteemed. Demosthenes and Cicero, Virgil and Horace, Aristotle and Lucretius and Ovid and Juvenal are found repeated often on the list. The very unusual abundance of treatises on grammar and prosody indicates what use was made of these works for the requirements of the schools held at Bobbio.

At the Exhibition of Sacred Art in Turin in 1898, I had an opportunity of seeing a considerable group of the manuscripts from Bobbio, of which, it is reported, at least two-thirds have perished in Tuesday morning's fire. One of these was a palimpsest, which originally contained a fragment of the oration "Pro Ni Tullio of Cicero," as it is described in the official catalogue. It is written in capital of the 3rd or 4th century, over which were written in the 8th century the "Collatium cum Maximino Arrianorum episcopo" of St. Augustine." Another palimpsest has the Exposition of the Creed, the work of the 15th century hand, over an earlier Irish manuscript of the 7th century, containing the Gospels. A 6th century manuscript of the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Matthew, written in uncial letters, also comes from the Monastery of Bobbio. So do a work of St. Cecilius Ciprianus, of the 6th or 7th century, and another 7th century work in two little volumes bound together, the first containing the "Carmen Paschale," and the work "De Christi Miraculis" of Sedulius; and the second the "Libellus contra Maximinum" of Cercalis. The scribe who copied these in rather rude uncial letters was named "Abundantius."

Works by St. Augustine of the 7th by S. Leo the Great of the 8th century, and by St. Columbanus "Regula Monachorum" of the 9th century—this last in very beautiful small letters written by the calligrapher Boniprandus—are also from the famous Irish monastery. The "Lives of St. Columbanus and his Disciples," of the 10th and 11th centuries, by Jonas, is an interesting document. "The first part," says the official catalogue, compiled under the supervision of the librarian, "with the Life of St. Columbanus and other brief writings (amongst which is a rhyme in honor of St. Columbanus, commonly attributed to the Blessed Notkero Balbulo, who died in 912), is not later than the beginning of the 10th century. The second part with the Lives of the Disciples, is of the 11th and 15th centuries. In the first part the grand, many-colored initials interlaced are quite noteworthy, and are besides very elegant. Even the small writing of the text is of great beauty." And then follows the constand note: "It comes from the Monastery of Bobbio—(National Library of Turin)." There are several more bearing the same indication of their provenance which I do not mention for want of space.

This is what makes the fire at Turin such a world-wide disaster. The destruction of many, indeed, of almost all the works, it contains, might in a certain way be made good from existing sources. But the loss of the Bobbio manuscripts cannot be made good. At the beginning of the last century a great misfortune overtook Bobbio and its library, which the efforts of studious monks during centuries had raised to the greatest value. The French revolutionists were almost as detrimental to the religious and educational life as M. Combes is to-day, after a century of renewed civilization. The convent had been suppressed—how familiar the word seems, even to-day!—and the final and lowest humiliation was reserved for the venerable library. On the 18th of June, 1803, all that it contained in the way of printed books and manuscripts and furniture, shelves and cases was sold off to the highest bidder in the tiny village of Bobbio under the supervision of M. Longuet, a Frenchman, assisted by Paolo della Cella, a citizen of Bobbio. The six hundred and sixteen volumes, which are described as in a bad state and ill-paged, were adjudicated to "the citizen Buthler (Butler?) of Bobbio" for the sum of fifty-three francs—about two guineas in English money! A large bookcase, with one of the feet broken, was sold to the same citizen for 6 francs, and the others for 21 francs and a half to three purchasers.

In Italy the memory of the wholesale thieving carried on by the soldiers of the French Revolution and afterwards by Napoleon I., is still remembered; and when one learns here and there that the present ruin and want of the original possessions date from the French invasions, one readily understands why the people still declare that Napoleon was the greatest thief in the world—"il piu grand ladro del mondo!"

The Composers and the Pope

Some controversy has been raised in Paris over the "motu proprio" of the Sovereign Pontiff relative to sacred music. It was begun by M. Bellaigue, musical critic of the "Temps," who strongly hinted that reformation in the matter of religious music was needed in some of the Paris churches. This was taken up by the Very Rev. Vicar Jouin, of that most fashionable church, St. Augustin's, who is himself a composer. The Vicar was well able to show the critic that he never allowed any profane music in his church. If he took anything from the leading composers, it was only whatever was of a deeply religious character. M. Theodore Dubious, who succeeded that estimable man and fine composer, Ambroise Thomas, as Director of the Conservatoire of Music and Declamation, says that as far as he can see the Papal "motu proprio" is not directed against modern sacred music. He says that when he was at Mass at St. Mark's, in Venice, two years since, the Patriarch, now Pope being present, he heard Gounod's music. M. Dubois says that although the Sovereign Pontiff seems to condemn "Soli," his Holiness would probably remove the interdict in the case of such a finely religious solo as the "Panis Angelicus" of Sesar Franck, the Belgian composer. The same may be said of the Nativity Oratorio of Camille Saint Saens. M. Dubois, on the other hand, condemns the famous "Stabat Mater" of Rossini, which is invariably heard on Good Friday in the Church of St. Eustache. It is a fine piece of work, but the Director of the Conservatoire holds that it does not belong either to the category of "sacred" music, or to that of "religious" music. For all that many good Catholics in Paris would be disappointed if the favorite "Stabat," which M. Dubois refuses to acknowledge as fitting for a church, were abolished at Saint Eustache and left to the Sunday and Holy Week concerts of M. Colonne or M. Chevillard. There are many old associations connected with the "Stabat" of Rossini as well as with Mozart's "Twelfth Mass." M. Vincent d'Indy, another composer, agrees with the Sovereign Pontiff and with M. Dubois, and points out that the "Schola Cantorum" founded in Paris by himself and others, prepared their programme in 1894 in exactly the same sense as the "motu proprio," for they aimed at the restoration of the Gregorian chant, of Palestrina's music, and of vocal counterpoint. Just as M. Dubois objects to Rossini's "Stabat" for a church, M. Vincent d'Indy objects to Beethoven's "Mass in D." This, by the way, is a favorite Mass at the Church of St. Augustin above referred to. "It is magnificent," says M. d'Indy, "but it is no more Church music than the "Enfrance" of Berlioz. It is worth noting that this composer says that the Gregorian and Palestrinian music can be easily learned. He taught both with success, not only to choiristers in Paris church, but also to the chanters in country places. Finally M. d'Indy says that the Palestrinian music has been a great success at the Church of St. Francis Xavier, although the clergy there were at first afraid of it, and also at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Montmartre.

Chamberlain and Campbell Bannerman

Damaging Revelations as to Former's Connection with the Boer War.

London, Feb. 6—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's speech yesterday, in which he resumed the debate on the war report, was marked by an incident which has inflicted irremediable damage on Mr. Chamberlain, who with a lack of discretion which went far to justify the impression widely created by his speech that whatever the cause he has lost some of his alertness, gratuitously referred to a conversation he had had with "C. B. on the 10th of June, 1899. His object was to prove that even then, four months before the war, "C.-B." had been privately apprised by him of the preparations the Government were anxious to make and their desire to obtain the concurrence of the Opposition to send out some 10,000 men to the Cape. This was a reference to a private and confidential conversation which "C.-B." had always studiously refrained from alluding to. He now jumped up and very cleverly asked Mr. Chamberlain as he had given his version of what had passed by word of mouth and by letter, whether he ("C. B.") would also be absolved from the condition of secrecy which surrounded the transaction. Mr. Chamberlain, though taken aback, realizing no doubt the blunder into which one of his customary pieces of unscrupulousness had led him, could not refuse his consent, and he gave it with a frigid smile.

Yesterday, in a very full House considering the early hour, "C.-B." rose to reply, and he gave his account of what had occurred. The Colonial Secretary had seen him by arrangement in his room at the House of Commons, had proposed to him the despatch of the large force of men, and "C.-B." expressed his surprise that such a provocative measure should be taken. "You need not be alarmed," said Mr. Chamberlain; "there will be no fighting. We know that these fellows won't fight. We are only playing a game of bluff!" This astounding revelation was punctuated by uproarious Opposition cheers, and Mr. Chamberlain, turning a livid color, seemed to shrink within himself with chagrin. It explained everything of course—the want of preparation which led to the disasters and the enormous loss of life and money that marked the campaign. Mr. Chamberlain, inspired by his friends, the Rand Mine owners, and Mr. Cecil Rhodes, believed that the Boers would not fight. The effect of this disclosure on the House was indescribable. It led to one of those buzzes of excited conversation which only mark an incident of capital importance. All eyes were turned on Mr. Chamberlain—it was felt on all sides that a crisis of supreme importance had arisen for him.

Mr. Chamberlain felt bound to attempt to minimize Mr. "C.B.'s" statement; but he showed a strange lack of confidence, and all he could say was that he could not charge his memory with the word "bluff." It was not a word he was in the habit of using; it was not a word to his taste. Mr. Chamberlain, of course, is a purist in such matters, and could not be vulgar even if he tried. But "C.B." was ready for this evasion, and knew that it was needfull to be prepared to face it. He said that the expression, indeed the whole conversation, made a deep impression upon him, and coming straight into the House, he told what had happened to a colleague—it being understood that he should consult the other Opposition Leaders. That colleague was now in the House, and his recollection tallied precisely with his own as to the word "bluff." Mr. Chamberlain wriggled again—but the House laughed at him. His prestige had been shattered.