

OCTOBER 1, 1895.

CONVENT PORTRESS.

When the Door, Not the Countess Most.

BY BOYLE O'REILLY.

The high walls of Oakhurst... busy life of the city; an recession of carts and a drags filling the air with a while on every side burians too engrossed to sliding trees and the twilight on the other side of the steadily verifying the city up to the very gate which the secluded estate from lonely country all about; confiding walls guard; convent life from the rule outer world.

A strong wind swept about the house rattling in the casements, or screaming in the chimneys, and Sister Katharine, as she slipped the bolt in the great door, thought with loving pity of the world's homeless one on such a bitter night.

Sister Katharine went slowly to her cell, but not to rest. A strange anxiety fitted her gentle mind with vague misgivings, and every unfamiliar sound started her into a strained listening. Often she told herself that nothing could be amiss, for had she not lived thirty happy years within these walls?

"Ah me!" thought Sister Katharine, "I am growing old and anxious; I will try to sleep;" and even as she blew the candle out a pungent odor floated into the little room. One moment she stood wondering, the next saw her running noisily down the long corridor, which was filled with a strange haze. From room to room she ran with but one thought—to reach the great bell in the sacristy. In two long steps stretching on either side lay the sleeping household who must be awakened. Thicker and more stifling grew the smoke, making her gasp and stagger as she ran, and now the sharp crackling of the painted wood was followed by a shower of sparks that lit upon the ample folds of her long dress. All unconsciously she gathered up her robe and shook it before wrenching open the sacristy door revealing a well of fire, through which she dashed to where the long bell rope hung against the wall.

One spring she made, being but small and light, and a loud clamor burst on the still night air. Again and again she pulled the heavy rope, already alight with sparks, until she felt the very dead in their graves on the hillside must have heard the brazen summons.

Then, muffling her head in the long veil, Sister Katharine hid back as she had come. Already the convent was in commotion, lights flashed from room to room, Sisters with white, scared faces ran about with armfuls of books and precious papers, while the superior and some few assistants marshaled the pupils to a place of safety. All night the household clung together terror-stricken in the rooms farthest from the flames, listening to the dull pumping of the engines and the short, sharp cries of excited men; and when morning dawned one wing of the great building was in ruins. But all were safe, all save Sister Katharine, who lay with bandaged hands and closed shut lips from which no moans would come, despite her efforts.

"We should be truly thankful," said Mother Anna to her household; "and yet it was a splendid wing, and I have not the money to rebuild."

So excitement was followed by a calm, and after many days Sister Katharine went about the house smiling as of old, although she knew her hands would be maimed and helpless for all her future life. If her lips trembled, it was not because of envy in her heart. With loving kindness she was given the old duties simplified and lightened to suit her infirmity, and while the door was opened by a stranger, the one-time portress still sat in her low chair, under the great picture, ready to act as guide to visitors down the long corridor. Here one day there came a stranger asking for Sister Katharine, who smiled gently as she bade him welcome; and because he was unused to convent rule, he asked with strangely excited look:

"Will you tell me your surname, Sister?"

"Excuse me, sir," she answered, blushing slightly; "I will conduct you to the Mother Superior."

"Pardon me," he exclaimed, bowing, and followed her silently. "Be seated, sir," said the stately superior when the stranger named himself. "I have forgotten Sister Katharine's surname, but if you wish I will send and ask her;" and at the summons Sister Katharine came. "My name was Dallan, Mother," she said simply. "Exactly!" cried the stranger springing to his feet. "Do you not know me, Kate?"

WHO IS TO DECIDE ABOUT ANGLICAN ORDERS?

London, Sept. 4, 1895.

To Catholics it seems curious that Anglican Orders should be so ardently defended by Ritualists. From the Catholic point of view it is not a primary question whether Anglican Orders are valid; the primary question is, "Are Anglicans within the Unity of the Church, in Authority, in Worship, in Faith?" For this reason it was that the Holy Father, in his recent invitation to English Protestants, did not allude to the subject of orders. Had His Holiness alluded to the subject, he must either have said, (1) Anglican Orders are valid, or (2) are not valid, or (3) may possibly be valid or not valid. Had he said that they were valid, he would have contradicted the teaching of his predecessors for three hundred years. Had he said that they were not valid he would have insisted superfluously on what the Church, by her action, has always ruled; while he would have had to verify matters of fact which would have needed a vast digression into historical and theological details. Had he said that Anglican Orders were doubtful, he would only have said what every Anglican knows, especially the Ritualists who "defend" them; their doubtfulness being proclaimed by three centuries of contention both inside and outside the Church of England. Indeed, this doubtfulness is a stronger argument against the validity of such orders than would be any amount of evidence from hard facts. Doubtfulness as to every Episcopal consecration; as to every ordination of priest or deacon; as to every "receiving of the Holy Communion"—and this too without sacramental confession—as to the validity of every material act from the Elizabethan era to the Victorian era, is so appalling a prospect that it seems to Catholics impossible—impossible, consistently with the divine honor.

The recent publication by Dom Adrian Gasquet, the famous Benedictine historian, of a Bull and a Brief of Pope Paul IV.—found by the learned father among the Regesta which are kept in the secret archives of the Vatican—has naturally exercised the minds of Ritualists in regard to their authoritative value. The Pope decided, in the reign of Queen Mary, that all clergy who had been ordained by the Edwardian ordinal should be ordained *de novo* and unconditionally. Cardinal Pole was instructed to show a wise liberality in regard to all secular consecrations; but as to Holy Orders the decision was absolute: the new Protestant rite is of no value.

The Ritualists are now trying to escape from that decision, by affirming that the being ordained "in forma Ecclesie"—which was the precise expression used in the Papal Bull—leaves the question as to which form undecided. Yet Cardinal Pole answered the question by his acts; by allowing only the validity of those orders which had been conferred according to the Roman Pontifical. The Canterbury Register also tells us of the clergy who were deposed "ob nullatenus consecrationis"; that is, through having been Protestantly ordained. And the question is answered in the same way in the present day, when every Anglican clergyman who becomes a Catholic priest is ordained, unconditionally, in forma Ecclesie.

Yet the regrettable thing is that the Ritualists will cling exclusively to the question of the Apostolic Succession; ignoring the truth that the possession of true orders would be no proof that they who possessed them were members of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

TRUE ORDERS DO NOT MAKE TRUE CATHOLIC PRIESTS.

If they did, then would the Arians and the Nestorians, and all the priests who were condemned by the General Council, have had the right to return to the Catholic Church. And it is really incredible that a few French ecclesiastics, who are but feebly informed upon the subject, should have come forward as champions of Anglican orders of course only in regard to their succession, well knowing that such historical succession would be no more than one of many "necessaries." We all remember what great harm was done by the writings of the apostate Contrayer; and recently the Abbe Gustave Delage has published his *Validité des Ordinations Anglicanes*, in which work he rushes through historical blunders, even stating that the denial of Anglican episcopacy is based on the story of the "ordination of Parker at an inn;" whereas that story was not talked of till 1550, and Anglican Orders were declared null in 1555. It is more than a pity that superficial French writers, from a mistaken desire to "smooth things over," should induce Anglicans to rely on a fictitious succession, instead of urging them to escape out of schism.

As the question which is now uppermost with the Ritualists is the certainty or the uncertainty of their orders, it may be interesting to examine into the Anglican attitudes, in approaching that very delicate question. And the first fact which must strike us is that no Anglican thinks of his orders in connection with their Catholic authorization; but only as to their historical aspects. And the second fact which strikes us is that each individual Anglican shrinks his own personal responsibility and waits for a movement of his Church, before he shall make up his mind. Let me say a few words on each fallacy.

THE FINAL ARBITER AS TO ANGLICAN ORDERS IS THE HOLY SEE.

Here it is that all Anglicans break down. They will consult with themselves, instead of consulting the Living Authority, and will argue where they ought simply to obey. They have indeed, in an *Ecclesia Doctus*, but on the condition that they may decide what it was, and may interpret its teaching for themselves. Let me take, as a quite recent illustration, a charge of the Anglican Bishop of Argyll, on the subject of the reunion of the Churches. The Bishop said: "Doubtless there must be a closer approximation to ancient ways and modes of worship, both on our side and on the side of Rome, before any unity between us and them could be a reality." Now here we have the claiming for individual Anglicans the power and the authority to dictate to the Catholic Church, as well as to the Anglican Establishment, what should be the "closer approximation to ancient ways and modes of worship." Living authority is repudiated by the Bishop; the private whims and caprices being set up as the *Ecclesia Doctus*. And the Bishop, seeing that such a belief is the mere worship of private judgment, tries to escape from the dilemma by declaring that the Church of England "appeals authoritatively to primitive antiquity;" whereas everyone knows that this "appeal" is really made to the private interpretation of primitive writings, and is, therefore, an appeal to oneself. It is this denial of the existence of living, infallible Authority which renders the settlement of any controversy impossible; and it is this denial which now clouds the vision of all Anglicans, when considering the question of their orders; because they will judge for themselves whether their orders are valid, instead of submitting to the judgment of the Holy See.

AN AWKWARD DILEMMA.

"One of the funniest and yet the most embarrassing things that ever happened during my ministry, said a clergyman yesterday, "happened while I had charge of a church in a small town. One Sunday I had for a guest a clergyman who had removed from our town to a distant city about ten months previous. As he was a very popular man with his townsmen I asked him to occupy my pulpit that Sunday morning. It happened that just at the time this clergyman left town a young man, who had only been married a short time, lost his bride and was completely crushed by his loss. Fears were entertained for his reason, and every one in the town, including my friend, the clergyman, felt the deepest sympathy for him. Well it happened that while he was escorting his wife's remains to her former home he met a most charming young lady and in less than six months they were married. But the clergyman knew nothing of all this, and when on that fateful Sunday morning he stood in the pulpit and saw before him the young widower, as he supposed, he naturally thought of his bereavement. So it was that during his prayer the congregation was amazed to hear him begin to pray for this young man. He said: "There is before you, Lord, a young man who has suffered a recent and terrible affliction and for whom we ask your special blessing. Be near and comfort him in his last affliction, keep him safe in life and be near him when death shall remove him from his great sorrow."

"Just think what that poor young man and his new wife must have felt sitting through such a prayer as that, the whole congregation gasped. —Indianapolis Sentinel.

Heaven on Earth.

A well-known priest had preached a sermon on the joys of heaven. A wealthy member of his church met him the next day, and said, "Doctor, you told us a great many grand and beautiful things about heaven yesterday, but you didn't tell us where it is."

"Ah," said the Father, "I am glad of the opportunity of doing so this morning. I have just come from the hill-top yonder. In that cottage there is a poor member of our church. She is sick in bed with fever. Her two little children are sick in the other bed, and she has not got a bit of coal or a stick of wood, or flour or sugar, or any bread. Now, if you will go down town and buy \$50 worth of things, nice provisions, fuel, etc., and send them to her, and then go and say, 'My friend, I have brought you these provisions in the name of God,' you will see a glimpse of heaven before you leave that little dwelling."

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