

A MARTYR-MISSIONARY OF SCOTLAND.

The Countess of Courson in Ave Maria.

Walking close to the Father, on his way to execution, was an heretical minister, who expressed great grief at seeing the prisoner throw away his life. "Just as if my life hung on my own free-will!" retorted Father Ogilvie. "I am condemned for high-treason." "Give up the Pope and Papistry," exclaimed the minister, "and you shall be forgiven." The Jesuit having feigned incredulity, the minister went on: "I speak with certain authority. My Lord the Archbishop has commissioned me to promise you his own daughter in marriage, and the richest prebend in the land as her dowry, provided I found you willing to step over from your religion to ours."

Father Ogilvie seemed much struck by this speech, and when they reached the foot of the scaffold he asked the minister if he was willing to repeat aloud what he had just said. "By all means," replied the unsuspecting dominie; and, addressing the people, he said: "I promise to Mr. Ogilvie life, the Lord Archbishop's daughter, and a very rich prebend, provided he is willing to come over to our side." "Do you hear this?" then said the Father. "And will you confirm it as witnesses when it shall be needed?" "We have heard," cried the people; "and we will confirm it. Go down, Mr. Ogilvie! go down!" The prisoner then went on, addressing the crowd: "There is no fear, then, that I shall be held hereafter as guilty of high-treason. I stand here, therefore, a criminal on the head of religion alone." "Of that alone!" responded the people. "Very well!" exclaimed Father Ogilvie, in triumphant accents. "On the head of religion alone I am condemned; and for that I would willingly and joyfully give up a hundred lives. Snatch away that one which I have, but my holy religion you will never snatch away from me."

During this strange dialogue between the priest and the people the Catholics present were in an agony of suspense and terror. At its close they raised their heads in triumph; while the minister, who had thus unwittingly proceeded, was beside himself with rage. In his fury, he commanded the executioner to dispatch his prisoner as quickly as possible.

It was noticed that the martyr's step was slow and faltering as he walked up the steps of the platform upon which the gibbet had been erected. He had been without food since the previous day; and, though his high courage remained unshaken, his physical exhaustion was apparent. On reaching the platform, he knelt down and kissed the gibbet. The Archbishop, fearing the effect of his words on the people, had given orders that he was not to be allowed to address the crowd; and, in spite of what had just passed, a minister had the audacity to proclaim that he was condemned to die as a traitor, not as a priest.

The martyr tried to show by signs that this statement, which he was not permitted to contradict, was absolutely false. Abercromby, who had kept close to his friend, strove to calm his righteous indignation. "Never mind, John," he said.

"The more you suffer undeservedly, the greater will be your reward." At this the Archbishop's servants brutally flung the good man from the platform. He fell with such violence that he would certainly have been killed, if he had not chanced to alight on the closely packed crowd instead of on the ground below.

The prisoner, indignant at this cruel act, was heard to say: "I am astonished at your way of acting. You forbid me to speak for my cause, and meanwhile you misrepresent the same cause and myself also to the people." He then went on to repeat, in clear and distinct tones, that he contested only the king's spiritual jurisdiction, and finished by a mysterious statement that seems to point to some signal service rendered by the Scotch Jesuits to King James.

The witnesses of his martyrdom have recorded his words: "I and another Scotchman have done more among foreign nations in the service of His Majesty (and, being questioned, he replied that he meant Father Crichton) than you or all the ministers of Scotland could do; and for him I am prepared to peril my life. I am delivered up to a death, then, for religion alone." A minister present having asked him if he did not fear to die, he answered with a touch of his old playfulness: "No more than you fear the dishes when you go to supper."

The executioner bade him ascend the ladder, from which he was to be thrown off; his hands were tied tightly behind his back, but he continued to pray in a loud, clear voice, both in Latin and in English. He prayed for his enemies, and was heard to repeat the Litany of the Saints, first in Latin, then in the Scotch dialect. When the halter was fastened about his neck, he cried out: "Mater Gratia, ora pro nobis! Omnes Angeli, orate pro nobis! Omnes Sancti Sanctoque, orate pro nobis!"

The executioner, struck by the Jesuit's courage and patience, seems at the last to have hesitated to discharge his office; and eye-witnesses tell us that it was only after repeated commands from the sheriff that he "reluctantly and with great compassion" cast the martyr off the ladder. He was left hanging for the space of a few minutes; then the executioner cut the halter, and the body fell heavily upon the platform below the gallows. Life was completely extinct: the brave spirit of Father Ogilvie had gone to its rest!

A long murmur then arose from the crowd. The sight of the martyr's courage and serenity, his youth (he was only thirty-four years), the remembrance of his gallant bearing in the midst of the most excruciating torments, his cheerfulness and ready wit, his loyalty to his friends, and also the evident bad faith and wickedness of his enemies—all these things moved the people deeply. They expressed "their detestation of the cruelty of the ministers and especially of the Archbishop, and prayed that God would repay the vengeance of the martyr's innocent blood at the source, and hold the people guiltless."

The popular feeling in favor of Father Ogilvie was so strong that the barbarous dismemberment of his body, prescribed by the law, did not take place. His holy remains were hastily thrust into a coffin, and buried, with those of other criminals, in a cemetery situated to the north of Glasgow cathedral. His grave lies against the wall of the edifice; and the pilgrim will easily recognize the square green plot of ground, where, in all probability, the bones of our Jesuit martyr still repose.

Attempts seem to have been made to rescue these precious relics from their obscure resting-place. The contemporary account from which we have made so many extracts tells us that in the evening of the 10th of March, only a few hours after Father Ogilvie's death and burial, a number of men horseback were seen hovering near the cemetery. The next day the magistrates, having heard that the Catholics had carried off their martyr's body during the night, visited the spot, and ascertained that the coffin had not been removed, although the earth had been slightly disturbed. In the process of beatification our hero's friend, William Sinclair, stated that reports were current of his body having been carried off by the Catholics. Unfortunately, these reports have never been substantiated; and it appears most probable that the remains of the noble martyr were left undisturbed in their original resting-place.

Before closing this sketch we must mention a touching incident connected with our hero's last moments on earth. Among the multitude assembled round the scaffold, at the place called the Cross at Glasgow, on that memorable afternoon of the 10th of March, 1615, was a young Hungarian nobleman, Baron John of Eckersdorf, who was travelling in Scotland. He happened to be in Glasgow at the time of the Jesuit's execution; and, following the crowd, he found himself close to the scaffold. He was a Protestant in name, but in reality absolutely indifferent on the subject of religion. At first he watched the scene with a feeling of mere curiosity; but when the martyr appeared, his sympathy was aroused by Father Ogilvie's noble countenance, gallant bearing, and extraordinary serenity. When the executioner proceeded to bind his hands, the martyr was observed to fling his rosary among the crowd; the beads struck the young stranger on the breast, then fell on the ground, and were instantly seized upon by the Catholics present, who divided the precious relics.

But the rosary had done its work. The young Hungarian went home a changed man. The vision of the martyred Jesuit continued to haunt him, and the touch of the rosary seemed to have pierced his soul. He was constantly pursued by thoughts of religion, and by anxiety on the subject of his salvation, until, at last, after a long struggle, grace triumphed and he became a Catholic. In after years John of Eckersdorf was made Governor of Treves, and became the friend of Archduke Leopold, brother of Ferdinand III. He related the story of his conversion to a Jesuit, Father Boleslas Balbunis, who in turn mentioned the fact in his writings. "I attribute my conversion," he used to say, "to the martyr's rosary,—to that rosary for the possession of which I would give any thing upon earth."

In Rome, where Father Ogilvie's manuscript, detailing the history of his glorious career, arrived soon after his death, it produced a deep and lasting impression. In the archives of the Congregation of Rites are the documents which were collected with a view to John Ogilvie's beatification. They consist of a letter from Father Cepari, the Postulator of the Cause; and of the testimonies of the Scotch witnesses, who had been our hero's companions and personal friends. One and all bear testimony to his zeal as a missionary, his regularity as a religious, his cheerfulness in suffering, and his ardent love of God.

Even James II., the false king, who is responsible for the blood of so many martyrs, seems to have felt a certain shame when he heard of the glorious death of one on whom such cruel treatment had been inflicted. He told the Marquis of Huntly that Spottiswood had urged him to consent to the Jesuit's death; adding uneasily: "It is not my fault." It was, perhaps, in consequence of his tardy remorse that the sentence of death passed on our hero's companions was commuted into a sentence of perpetual exile.

At first Spottiswood appeared to reap to the full the reward of his iniquity. In consequence of the valuable service he had rendered to the king, he became Chancellor of Scotland and Archbishop of St. Andrews. But if God's justice was slow, it was not the less sure. Father Ogilvie's cruel persecutor died in exile, of a horrible and strange disease, which, says a Scotch history, caused "his skin to peel off his body and his flesh to rot and putrefy." Adam Boyd,

the martyr's betrayer, was subsequently imprisoned for theft, and died a miserable, lonely man, shunned by his fellow citizens. It was noticed also that many of the judges who had taken part in the trial met with violent deaths.

Such was the brief life, bitter passion, and heroic end of the worthy descendant of a warlike race—one in whom the soldier-saint of Loyola must have recognized a kindred spirit. Many of our English martyrs have been raised to the altars of the Church by the reigning Pontiff, Leo XIII. Surely the day will come when the solemn process of canonization begun two hundred years ago will be resumed and brought to a happy conclusion; and, in her turn, the Church of Scotland will be permitted to honor publicly her glorious son—brave and bright John Ogilvie.

THE END.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CATECHISM.

The end of Catholic education being the training of the will and the heart upon the motives and principles set forth by the Christian religion, it follows that the most important of all textbooks for the young is the one embodying the doctrines of Christ's Church, and that the noblest work in which any one can be engaged is the inculcation and application of the saving truths of His Gospel.

The last instructions of Pope Pius IX. to the clergy of Rome were that they should redouble their zeal in teaching the catechism to the little ones; for "the child that grows up unconscious of the duties of religion will ignore the duties of man." All the evils of the day may be traced to the ignorance of Christian doctrine. If one fall away from the Church or abandon the practice of their religion, it is because they were never carefully instructed in the faith, or because their lives and conduct were not seasoned with Christian principles. Weak faith and lack of faith, worldly lives and corrupt lives, are generally the consequence of apathy or criminal neglect on the part of parents or religious guides.

If the importance of the Little Catechism were everywhere recognized, and the obligation of parents and pastors to impress its lessons on the minds of children were fully realized, the folly of considering this an easy task, to be accomplished during an hour's teaching in a Sunday-school, would be less general than it is. The decay of faith in the present generation of Catholics, the elasticity of conscience, impiety, indifference, and other evils so widely spread, are the bitter fruits of this folly, which is by no means restricted to our own country.

A young man who has been well grounded in his faith may be trusted on leaving the paternal roof to live up to it; or, should he yield for a time to the seductions of the world, to return to the faith once dear to him. But in the case of one whose religious instruction has been neglected little is to be hoped for. Renegades of this class swell the ranks of unbelievers everywhere.

About forty years ago a number of families, related and living in the same neighborhood, emigrated—some to the United States and others to certain of the British colonies—from one of the most Catholic of all countries. Of the former band not one remains a Catholic. The parents had never been taught the Catechism, and they did not teach it to their children. The faith has simply died out among them, to the surprise and scandal of their relations in Australia and the mother-country. There are thousands of Italians in South America who not only never go near a church, but are among the avowed enemies of the Catholic religion. Their ignorance of Catholic doctrine is such that it was an easy matter for infidels and sectarians to seduce them; and as soon as they began to neglect religious practices they were lost.

There is one happy sign of a more general appreciation of the absolute necessity of teaching the catechism thoroughly as a safeguard of the faith. We refer to the attention at present bestowed upon the production of the important little book. It is now more carefully edited than formerly; and there are editions in all languages; some with words of one syllable for the youngest children. A happy sign indeed.

Those conscientious priests, devoted Catholic teachers, and dutiful parents, who teach the catechism to children, trying to impress its lessons deeply on their minds and hearts, are doing more to stop the leakage of which we hear so much, and to bring about the conversion of non-Catholics, than all the authors, editors, and lecturers with whose doings everyone is made acquainted. Religious books, papers, and lectures are important, of course; and all rejoice to see their influence extended. But what is of incomparably greater moment is the religious instruction of our children, and to provide teachers trained in a Catholic spirit, as well as in the knowledge of their religion, to impart it.

Let us be persuaded of the paramount importance of the Little Catechism, recalling the words of a great Pontiff: "The child that grows up unconscious of the duties of religion will ignore the duties of man."—Ave Maria.

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IN THESE THINGS WE GLORY.

Professor Lodge of the Columbian University (non Catholic) in Washington, delivered a remarkable entertaining lecture recently on the work of Catholicity in the general civilization of the world. Among other things of interest Doctor Lodge said:

"It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of the historic function performed by the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages."

"She unified the education of Europe. The instruction of youth was cast in molds of her make. She was the conservator of the learning, culture and civilization of antiquity. She was the ark in which was preserved the forms of literature when all Europe was submerged beneath the surging tide of barbarism. She lifted her aegis above the poor, the weak and the helpless. She stood between the over-burdened tax-payer and the extortions of the emperors."

STEMMED THE TIDE.

"She strove to transform the barbarian hordes who had poured like an invading flood over the sunny plains of Gaul and Italy into citizens of the commonwealth of God. She held up before the multitude high ideals of Christian life. She sought to fire the heart with noble ambitions, to enrich the mind with the culture of past centuries and to lift the life to a plane of loftier activity."

"Her history during this period is made resplendent by the heroic deeds of many a saintly character. She threw the whole weight of her great influence on the side of law and order and civilization, when these were engaged in a death struggle with the forces of barbarism. When disintegration was everywhere else, the Catholic Church was striving to integrate the thought, the life and the culture of Europe. More than this, within the bosom of that Church itself, the principles of free self-government were allowed very considerable play. From the monks of the chapter who elected their abbot, to the college of Cardinals, who chose their Pope, free election characterized the government of the Church."

HER SPLENDID SERVICE.

"Nor when we look through long tracts of history and see what splendid service this Church has rendered to God, and to humanity, and to civilization, however great may be the divergencies between our theological opinions and the opinions recognized by that Church, we are bound to speak the truth of history and award the meed of praise where honor is due."

"Personally, as you well know, I hold to views which are separated by the whole diameter of thought from Catholic doctrine, but my studies have for years compelled me to live in closest intellectual comradeship with many of the greatest minds that ever adorned that organization. I have learned to admire them, to reverence them, to love them. Saint Francis d'Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Saint Francis de Sales, Fenelon, Pascal, Malebranche and scores of other names that rise to my lips, seem to me to be among the grandest souls of all the centuries. I refuse utterly and absolutely to join in a sweeping, indiscriminate and ignorant denunciation of the Catholic Church."

HER INSPIRED WRITERS.

"If the spirit of Christ be not breathed forth from the pages of Fenelon, Pascal and Malebranche, then I have totally mistaken my Master's thought. While, therefore, I most strenuously object to very many articles of Catholic theology, I refuse to shut my eyes to the glories of the Church's history, and to the magnificent martyrdoms with which her children have adorned the history of the race. I have, moreover, a profound admiration for the statecraft which has guided her history. Her leaders have known how in every age to change her line of battle as the front of battle changed. She always presents her face to the foe. She has a wonderful power of adjustment to meet the exigencies of the situation. Profound wisdom has directed her entire development. I can think of only one other example of political wisdom worthy to be compared to her, and that is the Senate of Rome, which, for century after century, under kings, republic and empire, controlled the

destiny of the Roman state in its ever-widening development."



Thomas A. Johns.
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