

MARY OF THE NATION.

In that admirable publication conducted by the Dominican Fathers, "The Irish Rosary," appears a most interesting memoir of Sister Mary Alphonsus Dowling, of the Third Order of St. Dominic, better known to the world as "Mary of the Nation." Our readers are certainly familiar with the beautiful poetic effusions of this charming Irish poetess. "The Old Castle," "My Own," "The River Lee," and scores of other equally lovable and patriotic poems flash upon the mind at the mention of "Mary of the Nation." According to the present biographer she must have been very young when her sweet lines charmed the Irish people; she was born in 1828, and as early as 1842, some of her best and most popular productions appeared in the "Nation." Still very little has been generally known by more modern readers concerning the life and tending of this young contributor to that mighty revival of Irish literature. The article, therefore, in "The Irish Rosary," comes like a revelation to us and possibly to thousands of others. Like Griffin, "Mary" spent the principal years of her short life in a religious community and to God consecrated the muse once inspired by the patriotism so intense in the Irish heart. This may account for the comparative oblivion into which she had fallen. But as long as the "Spirit of the Nation" survives, so long shall "Mary's" poems charm the lover of Irish literature and the student of that wonder-working movement inaugurated by Davis, Dillon, and Duffy. It would simply be repeating for our readers that which they mostly all know to quote the poems which from 1843 till 1848, flowed from the pen of "Mary." She was one of the brightest stars in that galaxy which spanned the sky of Ireland's literature; with Mary Eva Kelly, Speranza (Lady Wilde), and the other inspired female writers of that day, she occupied a place by no means secondary, and in many instances foremost.

But it is to the closing years of this gifted Irish girl's life that we will refer; possibly many of our readers will be as surprised as we were to learn the story of "Mary of the Nation." According to the reverend Dominican who writes the short memoir before us, Ellen Mary Dowling was born in Cork on the 19th March (Feast of St. Joseph), 1828; she died in the same city, on the 27th January, 1869. Forty-one years of life, prolonged beyond expectations by fully twenty years, sufficed to build up a glorious reputation in the world of letters, and that which is far more important—a magnificent career of sacrifice, piety, suffering, devotion—all for the love of God. She was certainly one of the most attached clients of St. Alphonsus.

"When about twenty years of age, her health which was always very weak, gave way completely." At that period she came under the spiritual direction of Father Pius Leahy, O.P., afterwards Bishop of Bromora, and into contact with the works of Saint Alphonsus. This was the turning point of her life. When comparatively restored to health she dedicated her future to God and her chosen patron saint. The first little volume she published after the period of her entry into religious life was dedicated to Saint Alphonsus.

"She entered the Presentation Convent in Cork on the feast of St. Teresa, 1849; she received the habit on the 29th of May, 1850, and chose as her patron her beloved Saint Alphonsus." Now she was Mary Alphonsus, and this name she retained to the end of her life.

Unnecessary to follow the lengthy account of her humility and fervor, her devotion to her sacred calling and her constant desire to suffer for the sake of Our Lord. Soon, however, she received a large share of His Cross. Her health again gave way,

and it became absolutely necessary that she should leave the Convent. She had the consolation of a hope that she might ultimately recover and return to the house of God. She was carried to her mother's home in September, 1850. She had still eighteen years of life before her—years of mental anguish and physical sufferings of the most acute kind. Her maxim was: "To wish always to please God perfectly, but let Him choose the way."

When eventually it became certain that she could never return to religious life, she begged for the habit of a Tertiary of Saint Dominic, and having received it, she led a life as closely in accord with religious rules as is possible for one not actually in a community. Her love of prayer was intense, and her affection for the angels was one of the holiest passions of her pure life.

"We said she was born a poet. For several years it seemed as if she had lost the gift; it was owing to her almost continuous illness; but she considered it a punishment, because of the use she had made of the gift. Hence, when her spirit began to revive, she prayed to God: 'Give me my early gift, and then no more for earth that gift shall be. Make me a minstrel once again. That I may sing sweet songs to Thee.'

"Well did I know the gold was Thine. And only given in trust to me. Yet, laid in many an earthly shrine. So much, there's little left for Thee."

"If I had songs of countless store, For Thee they'd charm the souls of men; But if my silence please Thee more, I'll never wish to sing again."

Cardinal Cullen once said that he wished to see her little volume "Voices of the Heart," in every household.

In 1860 she lost her good mother, and for her years her sufferings, as she battled with ill-health, a harsh world, and un congenial surroundings, cannot be described, nor even adequately imagined. In 1868, her physician, who was a father to her, had her removed to the hospital of the Sisters of Mercy. The account of her last year of endurance and torture is one of the most edifying and inspiring pages we have ever read. During her last days, the late Archbishop Kirby, Rector of the Irish College in Rome, obtained for her of Pius IX., the Apostolic blessing. He also procured a triduum of prayer for her before the altar of our Lady of Perpetual Succor, in the Church of Saint Alphonsus in Rome. The days fixed for the triduum were the 23rd, 24th, and 25th January, 1869. On the morning of the 26th, all pain left her; towards midnight a great change came over her, and at 2 a.m. on the 27th, she deliberately closed her eyes and gave up her pure soul to God.

"If we consider carefully the life of Sister Mary Alphonsus, we shall easily conclude that one who so generously embraced our Lord's Cross, her, now enjoys his reward in heaven. Many of her poems were the expression of her daily hopes and daily prayers."

Such is the account new to us, of the earthly career and sublime ending of "Mary of the Nation." Yet when we read over her early poems in the light of this information, we feel that the pure and noble effusions of her youth must have added to, rather than detracted from, her great sanctity of life. Her love for Ireland, and the consecration of her primal muse to the sacred cause of her fatherland, will preserve her memory green in the hearts of her fellow-countrymen for generations to come; while her intense love of God, and the dedication of her more mature genius to His honor and glory, most reap their reward in the mansions of unending peace.

opportunity of positive confession. It is not at all likely that they will all accept the grace; nevertheless, they must have some great merit on the solemn day when the general reckoning will be made up by God's Recording Angel.

Last week, and again this week, reference will be found in these columns to the extraordinary writings of Mr. Mallock. Here is a man, who has a lucid conception of the Catholic Church, and who does not hesitate to make them public. Even should he never go one step towards personal acceptance of the Church's doctrine, he decidedly is opening the eyes of hundreds and thousands of non-Catholics upon the reasonableness and stability of Rome's teachings.

Another of this class of writers is H. D. Sedgwick, jr., who contributes to the Atlantic Monthly, an article entitled "Trend towards Rome." There is a special section of this article which deals with the Catholic Church and the laboring classes, and to which we may have occasion to refer in the near future. For our present purpose we merely take a few extracts from the opening of this contribution to illustrate our contention that, despite errors and misconceptions, such writings tend to awaken a Romeward spirit in the domain of Protestantism. Mr. Sedgwick thus opens:

"The democracy of American institutions will be no hindrance to the Church of Rome, for that Church has been the greatest democratic power in the western world. With a few exceptions, the Popes have always been elected; and the Papacy has always been open to every Catholic, regardless of his birth. Popes have been chosen from all ranks of society. In the most vigorous period of the feudal system the great councils of the Church, were great representative assemblies; their members came together from all Christendom. The Church has always taught the spiritual equality of rich and poor. The great monastic orders practiced equality. The Order of Jesus has always set the degree according to talents."

Not a bad start for a non-Catholic; but follow the author in these remarkable paragraphs:

"It may still be objected that the Roman Church is not modern, and is not adapted to the nation which more than any other lives in the present; it is said that age and youth cannot live together; that young America will find the aged Church lame and slow; that if any Church shall have influence it will be one untrammelled by tradition. The contrary may have a greater share of truth. This ancient institution has acquired a toughness and deep roots which give it enduring strength. Generations have grown up in its shine or shadow. It encompasses the horizon, and every man has adjusted his course by it, every nation has been affected by it, every nation has framed its government and laws in fondness or fear of it. Antique custom has a thousand clutches. One may love the Alps or flood the Desert of Sahara, but the very people who shall benefit must first be overcome. Men will not suffer you to destroy their deities or their deities. In its long life the Church has learned means to supply the needs of all—of the pious, the wayward, the ambitious and the meek, the libertine, and the anchorite, the sceptic and the believer, the active and those that do nothing. Those old hands have a strength, and their softness a touch beside which the young are

made and incapable. History announces that no man can safely say that the Church is unequal to the requirements of latter-day success. A generation ago after Victor Emmanuel's army had marched into Rome, general belief among Protestants was confident that the Papacy had fallen; but during the pontificate of Leo XIII., it has been stronger than it had been for a hundred years. So it has been through history. Anti-Popes and Babylonish captivity, rebellion and reformation have shaken the great edifice, but have left its foundations seemingly as strong as ever."

Dealing with the question of Catholic dogma—the most difficult one that arises as a barrier in the Romeward path of learned Protestants—Mr. Sedgwick says: "To an outsider the separate dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church are no more difficult of acceptance than the dogmas which she shares with the Protestant sects. The fall, the atonement, the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, the clauses of the Apostles' Creed, are longer and more exacting beliefs than the authority of the fathers, the immaculate conception of Mary, the infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals. To the outsider the dogmatic Protestant seems to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

Still more important is the following peculiar explanation of the dogma of the infallibility:

"Now that dogma has little to fear from its enemies, its success much depends upon its friends. The particular dogmas of Catholicism have no hindrances greater than those which stand in the way of any hitherto unaccepted dogma. The doctrine of Papal infallibility is commonly presented by Protestants in the gross form that a man by virtue of an elective office shall be able to ascertain absolute truth. The true foundation of the doctrine is this: In the life of many a man comes a moment when he sees a vision; the grossness of his members falls from him; he hears a voice. At that moment his nature stands a-tiptoe; he has come nearer to something larger than himself than ever before. He will not let the memory of it die, but embodies it in some belief, so that his enthusiasm may not be lost. In like manner, when Catholic Christendom feels a sentiment of larger life than is its wont, and recognizes the presence of its creator, it will not suffer that moment to pass, its spirit to fade away, but through the Pope, who by his position is sensible in all the movements of Christendom the Church embodies the noble sensation in a form which, in spite of the inadequacy of human symbols, is most able to preserve it. A new truth is proclaimed in order to help all Catholics remember their best selves."

We are not here going to enter into the details of these subjects, nor to discuss the theological merits or demerits of Mr. Sedgwick's statements; we merely wish to indicate the influence—indirect, if you will—which such works must have upon the great reading public—rather the great body of the thinking public. The foregoing is sufficient to suggest to some non-Catholic minds the possibility of the reasonableness of Catholic dogmas; the suggestion may engender doubt as to the anti-Catholic teachings; that doubt—in an honest mind—will rarely lead to investigation; and investigation must necessarily lead to truth. The sole question, then is the existence or not of the grace to accept the truth when in face of it.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO.

FROM FYLES OF THE TRUE WITNESS, YEAR 1877.

A very large congregation was present at Midnight Mass at St. Patrick's Church, at which Rev. Father Dowd officiated. Miss Anne Crompton rendered with much taste the "Adeste Fideles." Hady's Fourth Mass was given by the choir, under the able direction of Prof. J. A. Fowler, and the soloists were Miss B. McNulty, Miss Fanny Fallon, and Messrs. T. C. O'Brien and James Shea.

Mr. Edward Murphy lectures under the auspices of the Young Irishmen's L. and B. Association this evening January 5.

Saturday's newspapers announced Dr. Hingston's decision not to continue to occupy any longer the position of Chief Magistrate of this city. This will be a matter of general disappointment; but the reasons given by our worthy Mayor satisfies the citizens that it would be unfair to force him to continue to occupy a position which requires so large a demand upon his time, and we believe on his purse. There is no denying Dr. Hingston has during his time

of office, done more than his share of serious work.

The Irish Catholic Union held its first concert on January 16, in the City Concert Hall, Bonsecours Market. The attendance was large and the sister societies were well represented. During the evening, Mr. B. Devlin, M.P., delivered an address upon the importance of thriftiness, and the power of combinations. He spoke of the value of penny-banks; and suggested that the officers of all the Irish Catholic societies should meet, as a Grand Irish Council, every quarter, and discuss questions affecting Irish interests.

There are 84 notaries and 256 lawyers practising in Montreal.

We are pleased to notice among the list of gentlemen who have been successful at the recent examinations for practice at the Irish Bar of the District of Montreal, the names of Charles J. Doherty, of Montreal, and John S. McDonald, of Prince Edward Island, two sterling Catholics.

There are 22 Roman Catholic

churches in Montreal, 10 Protestant, 17.99 Methodist, 4 Congregational, and 4 Baptist.

On Sunday January 14, a highly interesting event took place at the Grey Nuns' establishment, Guy St., which will long be remembered by those who took part. It was the annual feast provided by the St. Vincent de Paul and other societies for the destitute old men and the little children of the institution. His Worship Mayor Hingston was present. More than 100 persons representing all ages sat down and regaled themselves from the well-supplied tables. Children of two years of age affiliated with grandfathers of 90 and upwards, the oldest being 102 years of age. The feast illustrated how much happiness can be achieved with a very little sacrifice on the part of those able to afford it.

PERFECT METAL JOINTS.

Perfection in manufacture is what all live manufacturers are striving for. Perfection. Years ago ornamental glass was put together with lead and lead only. Since the Luxer companies commenced with their electric system in copper without cement, others have striven in every way to make as perfect a joint at as low a cost. The result is a number of weak systems of glazing which look strong, but require only a fair trial to show defects. In the Luxer electric system the whole series of joints become one piece—so made electrically—and it is wonderful how strong a panel so put together becomes. No method of glazing has yet been devised that gives at once a joint so neat and strong. Door panels so glazed can be seen at the office of the Company at 1838 Notre Dame Street, and every one knows the liability of ordinary door panels to fall to pieces.

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A STRONG UNDERCURRENT.

The conversion to Catholicity of such men as Austin Adams, Do Costa, and others mark a decided progress on the part of the Church; but there seems to us to be another, a less conspicuous, and yet powerful—decourant—often unnoticed by the general readers of to-day—which is being irresistibly like a gulf stream—vast sections of Protestantism towards the centre of Christendom. We refer to the multitude of non Catholic writers, all deep thinkers, profound students, and serious as well as sincere men, who fill the pages of the most important publications with admirable articles, upon the Church of Rome. It is true that they nearly all give expression to

some erroneous theories, but these are generally the result of non-Catholic training, and in no wise take from the fair-mindedness of those writers. While some of them are not ever likely to accept the truths of Catholicity and to enter the one fold, still their works have set thousands thinking seriously, and are calculated to lead thousands of future subjects into the Church. Although not possessing the grace necessary to acquire Faith, these writers are doing a glorious work, they are "making straight the way of the Lord," they are performing the work of Christ; and we have an intimate conviction that sooner or later each of them must be afforded an