

POPE NIGHT.

An Anti-Catholic Celebration of the Puritanical Days.

The liberal American people of the present enlightened century cannot fully appreciate the condition of things during the first years of the history of this century. The Puritans, who crossed the ocean ostensibly to procure religious freedom, immediately commenced to deny that privilege to those who differed from them and enforced their fanatical laws with a cruelty that surpassed anything that had been meted out to "dissenters" in the old world. Quakers were hanged. They were whipped from town to town; their ears were cut off; they were branded and sold as slaves. Every diabolical punishment was resorted to on the plea that these men and women in their plain garb were Catholics "in disguise," and if a real, live "Papist" had shown his face in Boston or Salem one can only imagine what a pleasant reception he would have received. In Chandler's Criminal Trials the reader may find many illustrations of this tyrannical intolerance, but he who reads will scarcely feel that he can agree with Mrs. Hemans, who has said:—

"Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod;
They have left unstained what there they found,
Freedom to worship God."

In a recent essay George Parsons Lathrop says: "Their zeal made them morose, intolerant, often unjust and tyrannical. It even tainted the devoutness of their attitude toward God. For, in their hatred of the Catholic faith of their forefathers, they actually abolished the observance of Christmas. Think of a body of people professing to be Christians and to believe the divinity of our Lord, yet allowing their hearts and minds to become so warped by human resentment, that they actually dishonored and ignored the natal day of Christ on earth." But if the Puritans could abolish the joys of the Christmas celebration they were glad to accept and continue the observance of Pope Night, on the 5th of November.

This anti-Catholic celebration was instituted in England early in the seventeenth century. When the charge of actuating the "gunpowder plot" was brought against the clergy, the people gave vent to their bigoted sentiments by a gigantic demonstration. Whittier describes the scene on that occasion in an interesting manner. "Popes, bishops, and cardinals," he says, "in straw and pasteboard, were paraded through the streets and burned amid the shouts of the populace, a great portion of whom would have doubtless been quite as ready to do the same pleasant little office for Henry of Exeter, or His Grace of Canterbury, if they could have carted about and burned in effigy a Protestant hierarchy as safely as a Catholic one."

The charm of Pope Night, as it afterwards came to be called, was so out of the ordinary that the celebration was continued, and in each year, on the night of November 5, England, from shore to shore, was lighted by the anti-Catholic fires. Since George Gordon led his "no Popery" mob through the land the celebration has been neglected, and it is not generally known that it is carried out to this day in America.

The Puritan youths were not slow to appreciate the advantages of Pope Night. The May pole, "with its flower wreaths and sportive revelers," had been frowned upon by the grim bigots of the New England colonies, but, as Whittier says, they "recognized in the grim face of Guy Fawkes' anniversary something of their own lineaments, and smiled complacently upon the riotous young actors, and opened their close purses to furnish tar barrels to roast the Pope, and strong water to moisten the throats of his noisy judges and executioners. For one night in the year the youth of the New England towns ran at large and the fun and mischief was properly accepted by the staid colonists and accorded as strictly appropriate as an extravaganza of Pope Night."

Nearly every town and village in New England had its own celebration, and this was continued until the time of the revolution when it was stopped, out of respect "to our Catholic allies from France." In 1774, according to Coffin's History of Newbury, the town authorities passed an ordinance that "no offiages be carried about or exhibited only in the daytime," and this was the death-blow to the hopes of the boys who had always looked forward to the celebration with such delight. Previous to this time, however, the demonstration was presented in a most elaborate manner, all of its original features having been introduced from England. There were the figures representing the ecclesiastical authorities who were to be burned, and behind them came a man dressed to impersonate the Prince of Evil. Robed entirely in red cloth, with huge ox horns on top of his head, he carried a pitchfork in his hand, and with this he made "exceedingly free," to the great amusement of the crowds that had gathered.

When the fires were lighted and the figures were consigned to the blaze the boys danced around the circle that the heat suggested, loudly singing such songs as the following:

"Look here from Rome
The Pope has come,
That fiery serpent dire,
Here's the Pope that we've got.
The old promoter of the plot;
We'll stick a pitchfork in his back,
And throw him in the fire."

"Lay up the fagots neat and trim;
Pile 'em up higher;
Set 'em afire;
The Pope roasts us and we'll roast him!"

When James the First the sceptre swayed
This hellish powder plot was laid;
They placed the powder down below,
All for Old England's overthrow.
Lucky the man, and happy the day,
That caught Guy Fawkes in the middle of his play."

"The 5th of November,
As you remember,
Was a gunpowder treason and plot;
And where is the reason,
That gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot?"

"Hark! our bell goes jink, jink, jink;
Pray, madam, pray, sir, give us something to drink;
Pray, madam, pray, sir, if you'll something give,
We'll burn the dog and not let him live.
We'll burn the dog without his head,
And then you'll say the dog is dead."

While the rhymes offend every metrical law, they must have proved delightful indeed to the old Puritans, who, for want of real "Papist," inspired their souls by burning images of pasteboard and straw. Considering their feelings toward the Church, one is not surprised at the immediate and long continued popularity of this "Pope Night."

Those were not the days of true poetry. A people who could appreciate the verses of Anne Bradstreet, who was known as "the Tenth Muse," probably, as Mr. Lathrop explains, because "no one would ever have recognized her as having anything to do with the original Nine," could not have had a very high poetic ideal. Here is a sample of her work, in the subject of the "Four Ages of Man":

"Lo, how four other set upon the stage,
Childhood and youth, the Manly and old Age;
The first, sun unto phlegm, grandchild to water,
Mostable, supple, cold and moist 's his nature,
The third of fire and choleric composed,
Indicative and quarrelsome disposed.
The last of earth and heavy melancholy,
Solid, hating all lightness and all folly."

From these lines it may be seen that the Pope Night rhymes were fully up to the standard, and no one can deny that they were expressive enough to suit the Puritan character.

Although in one sense of the word Pope Night is no more, the fact still remains, however, that even now it is celebrated in a modified form in a number of the New England country villages, notably near Newburyport in Massachusetts. Of course the parade has disappeared. No longer the boys march through the streets with fire and drum bearing their mock ecclesiastics that are to be given so joyfully to the flames; but the flames are there still, and the blaze that lights the country from many hilltops is all that is left to remind one of bigotry's glorious celebration. Long before the night of November 5, the boys commence to procure their supply of wood. Barrels and tubs and all kinds of combustible articles that can be borrowed, begged or stolen from the farm houses or the village stores, are carried to some place of concealment in preparation for the great bonfire. Then when the proper time comes the match is applied and the glory of the autumn scenery is illumined by the huge fire.

From the days of the first colony this celebration has come down to the present generation. In many instances even the name of "Pope Night" has been forgotten, and the majority of those who remember it have forgotten what it signifies.

Yet in its transit it has retained its interest for the student of American history, for it is the one remaining relic of the old "Pope Night."—J. R. Meader, in Catholic Columbian.

PRINCE BECOMES PRIEST.

A Royal Catholic who Chose to Give his Life to the Service of the Church.

Much comment has been made in Germany, more particularly in Protestant Saxony, of Prince Max of Saxony, a nephew of King Albert, not yet twenty years of age, having entered the cloister of Eisenach as a monk, at his urgent desire to retire from the world. The step was more surprising as the Prince was hitherto a lieutenant in the dual regiment of grenadiers, his intended career being a military one. His royal highness is the third son of Prince George. His second brother, John George, has just been betrothed to Princess Maria Isabella of Wurtemberg.

The Prince was quartered with his regiment in the town of Ischatz. He is young, talented and highly educated and had just taken his degree as a doctor with unusual honors when he resolved to devote his life to the services of the Church. It is thought that Prince Max owes his decision to become a priest to Bishop Wahl, who, in the last lauding, demanded by special request from the Vatican the repeal of the law of 1870 respecting the Catholic Church in Saxony. He did not succeed, but is very active in the service of the Church, and Prince Max's renunciation is, it is believed, one of the propaganda. The princely priest, who, it should be mentioned, is a Catholic, like all the members of the Saxon royal house, has been already appointed by the Pope, in spite of his youthful age Apostolic Vicar of Saxony.—Chicago Post.

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THE NARROW PATH.

A traveller from a distant country found himself at nightfall near the entrance to a vast forest; he could neither go back nor yet remain where he was; necessity compelled him to advance through the darkness. As he was about to bury himself in the dreadful obscurity, he perceived an old shepherd, of whom he inquired the way.

"Alas," said the shepherd, "it is not easy to point it out to you; the forest is cut up by a thousand pathways, which turn and cross in every direction, and all, except one, end in the abyss."

"What abyss?" asked the traveller. "The abyss that surrounds nearly the whole forest. But this is not all; it is not safe; it is infested with robbers and wild beasts. There is one enormous serpent, which makes frightful ravages; few days pass without our discovering the remains of some unfortunate travellers who have become its prey. The climax of the evil is that it is absolutely necessary to cross the forest in order to arrive at the place to which you are going. Moved with compassion, I have taken up my station at the entrance of this dangerous passage, to instruct and protect travellers; at intervals along the way are my sons, who, animated with the same benevolent sentiments as myself, discharge the same office. Allow me to offer you my services and theirs; if you choose, I will accompany you."

The candid air of the old man, and the tone of truth in which his words were uttered, gave the traveller confidence. He accepted the offer. With one hand the shepherd seized a lamp and enclosed it in a strong lantern; with the other he took the traveller's arm. They set out.

Having journeyed on for some time, the traveller began to feel his strength decline.

"Lean upon me," said his faithful conductor to him.

The traveller thus supported, continued his journey. Soon the lamp began to shed a feeble light.

"The oil is failing," said he to the shepherd; "our light will soon go out; what will become of us?"

"Have courage," replied the old man, "in a little while we shall find one of my sons, who will put fresh oil in our lamps."

He was not deceived. A light soon appeared at a short distance. It shone in a little cabin by the road side. At the well-known voice of the shepherd, the door was opened. A seat is offered to the weary traveller; some simple but substantial food repairs his strength. After a delay of three quarters of an hour, he continues his journey, accompanied by the old man's son.

From time to time the traveller meets with new cabins, renewed attentions, new guides; he walks thus the whole night. The first rays of dawn begin to illumine the eastern sky, when he arrives safe at the end of the dangerous forest. Now he understands, in its full extent, the service which had been rendered to him by his kind guides. Before his eyes, he beholds a frightful abyss, from whose hideous depths the dull roar of a distant torrent, breaks upon his ear.

"See," said the guide, "this is the abyss of which my father told you; no one knows its depth; it is always covered with a multitude of brambles, which the eye cannot penetrate." Saying these words, he heaved a deep sigh, and, turning aside, wiped away the tears which began to roll down his cheeks.

"What is the matter?" said the traveller. "Why do you appear so afflicted?"

"Alas," replied the guide, "how should I be otherwise? Can I look upon this abyss without remembering the many unhappy victims who are every day lost in it? My father, my brothers and I, offer our services, but few accept them. The greater number of those who walk a few hours under our guidance, accuse us of wishing to frighten them with vain alarms; they despise our advice; they leave us, but very soon they lose their way, and perish miserably. Some are destroyed by the great serpent, others again are buried in this abyss. The only way across the abyss is this little bridge, before us, and we are the only persons acquainted with the road which conducts to it. Pass over with confidence," said he, "turning, and tenderly embracing the traveller, 'in a little while you will have the broad daylight; yonder is your city.'"

The traveller, filled with gratitude, thanked his kind guide, whom he promised never to forget, and advancing at a rapid pace, quickly crossed the little bridge; a few hours more, and he reposed tranquilly in the bosom of his beloved family.

Are not you, also, dear readers, travellers from a distant country? This forest is the world, or the present life; these robbers, are the enemies of your salvation; this dreadful serpent, the devil; this dark and fatuous abyss, hell; all these paths, which traverse the forest in so many different directions are the roads—alas! too numerous—which conduct to eternal misery; the only way, which terminates at the little bridge is the narrow way to heaven.

As for the charitable shepherd who waits at the entrance of the forest, and who offers the assistance of his arm and his lantern to the traveller, you easily understand that he represents the Divine Pastor, who descended from heaven to succor and enlighten every

man coming into the world; the sons who aid the generous old man in this charitable work are the ministers of the Lord, devoted to the care and guidance of the traveller; the lamp which is borne by the Shepherd and his sons, is the light of faith, which according to the expression of St. Peter, shineth in darkness. It is unnecessary to explain to you what is meant by the persons who accept the advice of the old man and his sons, and by those who reject it.

Let us then, like the traveller, walk in the narrow path that leads to salvation, taking the counsels and the guidance of those ordained to give such, for it is written that "he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."

REV. JAMES KENT STONE.

Pen-Picture of This Learned Member of the Passionist Order—A Convert to the True Faith, He Has Brought Many Others into the Fold by His Teachings and His Pure Life.

A writer in the Boston Republic gives the following account of Father Fidelis (Rev. James Kent Stone), who read a paper at the World's Parliament of Religions:

A Bostonian by birth, he came of what is considered good old New England stock, and his father, who was an Episcopalian minister, had charge for many years of a church of his denomination in the classic city of Cambridge. The son, born in 1840, after making his preparatory studies, entered Harvard University in 1857, and graduated therefrom with honors four years subsequently. After quitting the Cambridge institution he studied for two years abroad, at Göttingen and Italy, and returning to his native land, his patriotism impelled him to volunteer for the defence of the union.

He served in the army for six months, when he was compelled by wounds to relinquish the field, and after his recovery he sought and obtained a professorship of Latin at Kenyon College, out in Ohio. He entered the army as a private soldier, but won the rank of captain by his bravery, and before taking his professorial chair at Kenyon college he was ordained to the Episcopalian ministry, in which position he has said of himself: "I defended the Anglican reformation with all my soul. I did so upon what I called high ground, in company with such sturdy Catholics (as I termed them) as Andrews and Bull and Hammond. I threw myself back upon the primitive Church, and upheld the doctrinal standards of the Anglican communion as faithfully reproducing the uncorrupted model. I loved the reformed Church, supposing her to be indeed apostolic, both in succession and creed, and not knowing an older and better. I gave her all my devotion (my eyes being blinded) as the mother and mistress of my soul; and I hope to die, as Bishop Ken declared that he did, 'in the holy Catholic and Apostolic faith professed by the whole Church, before the disunion of the East and the West—more particularly in the communion of the Church of England, as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovation, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the cross.'"

At Kenyon Father Fidelis quitted the Latin chair in 1867 to assume that of mathematics, and he was also chosen president of the college. The following year, however, he quitted Gambier, the Ohio town in which Kenyon college is situated, and went to Geneva, N. Y., to assume the presidency of Hobart University, to which the trustees and faculty had elected him. It was while he held this position that he hearkened to and heeded the call of Pius IX., already alluded to, and, following what he considered the only line of duty for him, severed all his Protestant affiliations and sought admission into the Catholic fold. This step on his part greatly displeased his venerable father and gave offence to many of his Protestant friends and acquaintances, but the man who took it was not to be deterred by such happenings from doing what he thought was right, and he went resolutely forward in his chosen way.

The Paulist community, which has always had special attractions for converts of Father Fidelis' stamp, was the organization which first secured him, though he had a strong desire, which has since been happily gratified, of joining the Passionists even then. The non-robustness of his health, together with the fact that the Passionist rule of life is an exceedingly rigorous one, induced the young convert to heed the counsel of those who advised him to join the Paulists, and, his petition being granted, he at once entered upon the study of Catholic theology at New York, and was, in due course of time, ordained to the priesthood and attached to the church of St. Paul, Fifty-ninth street. Soon afterwards he was honored by being appointed master of novices, in which capacity he endeavored himself to the young men who were placed under his care, and he was frequently employed in missionary work, a feature which, as is well known, characterizes in a signal manner the labors of the Passionists.

His old desire of becoming a Passionist never left Father Stone, and, his health improving greatly during the years that he wore the Paulist habit, he determined to carry it into effect, and the consequence was that several years ago he made formal application for admission into the Passionist body, and his petition being favorably acted upon, he left New York and betook himself to Pittsburgh, where in the monastery of St. Paul, he entered upon his novitiate. That

period of probation ended, he was favorably received into the order; employed for some time in missionary work, for which his oratorical abilities especially fitted him, and finally sent to Rome to be perfected in the spirit of the order.

Not so many years ago the American Passionists were imperturbed by their brethren in South America to send some English speaking priests down there to minister to the increasing number of English speaking colonists who were settling in the principal centres of population. In response to this appeal, Fathers Fidelis and Edmund, the latter, like the former, being a convert, his name in the world having been Benjamin D. Hill, were sent to Rio Janeiro, where they labored for some time, but subsequently went to Buenos Ayres, where they succeeded, after long and patient labor, aided materially by contributions forwarded to them by friends in this country, in organizing the congregation which worships in the church situated on Calle Caridad, which is now one of the most popular places of worship in the Argentine capital.

For quite a number of years past Father Fidelis has been engaged in this field of labor, and the periodical reports which reached this country of the success attending the Passionist missions in Buenos Ayres were flattering to the zeal displayed down there by him and his associates. It now appears that he has been recalled from the South American missions, and that for some time to come at least, his field of labor will be in this country, a fact that is highly pleasing to his countless admirers in the United States, who have always been eager to welcome Father Fidelis whenever he visited their neighborhood to delight them with his splendid oratory, instruct them by his profound learning and edify them with his sincere and unaffected piety.

From the day that Father Fidelis severed his Protestant connections and joined the Catholic Church, his eyes have never turned back to the places he abandoned save in pity for those whom he was forced to leave behind him in their ignorance of the truth and the error of their ways. For himself, his mind has never wavered in its acceptance of Catholic teaching, nor his will in allegiance to Catholic authority. He is unquestionably one of the most valuable and valued acquisitions which Catholicity of recent years made in this country, and the influence of his conversion has led many another Protestant into the true fold. Father Fidelis is admittedly one of our best Catholic pulpits orators, and his appearance is any church is sure to attract an immense audience, eager to listen to him. He is a writer of peculiar charm and force, and we have few more interesting Catholic works than those that have come from his pen since his conversion. His associate on the South American mission, Father Edmund, is also a writer of admitted ability, and he excels particularly in religious versification, many of his poems appearing of late years in various American Catholic publications. Father Fidelis' paper made an excellent impression at the World's Parliament of Religions.

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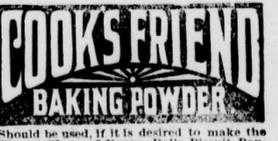


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