

THE SHEPHERD'S CLOAK.

A STORY OF AN IRISH CHRISTMAS CRIB. BY DENIS A. MCCARTHY.

"If there is one memory of my childhood," said the Sergeant, "which I hope will always remain distinct, clear-cut, and unimpaired by the rude hand of time, it is the memory of Christmas; and if there is one memory of Christmas which I wish to have more deeply engraven on my mind as the years go by, it is the memory of the Christmas crib at the Friary Church in my native town."

father had been killed on a skirmish with the yeomen in '98, and partly because I was looked upon as a bit of a scholar. Anyway, thus it was as the season of Christmas approached that year. "Now from the time I was eight or nine years of age I had been an altar boy at the Friary. Two or three years prior to this momentous Christmas, however, feeling myself, as the lay-brother ironically expressed it, 'too much of a man' to be on the altar, I had ceased to be a regular server, though always on Christmas Eve out of friendship and regard for Brother Anthony I went to the church to help in the construction of the crib. It was I who carried the figures down from the store-room in the belfry where they lay packed away carefully from Christmas season to Christmas season again; and it was I, under the old lay-brother's direction, placed them in the group which was so strikingly pathetic and effective in the eyes of the congregation at early Mass on Christmas morning.

those engaged in erecting and arranging the crib. "The lay-brother kept up a good-natured scolding of me for my tardiness as he led the way up to the crib, but once having got me within the circle of light, his manner changed; and turning upon me a keen eye, he said: "Frank, my boy, you were never so late as this before. Take care of yourself. You are young, and may be led into wild ways. The one in whom you are most confident may be the one to betray you. Take an old man's advice, and don't put your neck in a halter!"

this way. Oh, I know they are coming for you. Run! Run! Oh Frank—"The agonized voice broke into sobs. I opened the door and clasped the hands held out to me. It was not the first time I had clasped those hands but it was destined to be the last. Before I could say a word the lay-brother was speaking: "Mary," said he, for he knew the girl also, 'go home out of this like a good girl. Go home, child, go home. These are troubled times and people should be inside doors at such an hour of night. Go home, now, child, and God bless you. And don't fret about Frank. I'll take care of him for you, never fear, and save him with God's help!"

heard the heavy tramp of the men as they entered. They were very respectful to Brother Anthony. Most of them were Catholics and came there to Mass every Sunday. But their sergeant was firm. They had information that the man they wanted was here and they were determined to find him. There was a cordon of police around the church. It was impossible, they said, that I could have escaped. I must be here. The lay-brother said nothing. Once indeed he had retorted to some question of the sergeant: 'If you think he's here, find him!' Then he knelt down and began to say his beads, as if the midnight visit of a squad of police was a mere incident in his life.

Doings in Germany.

On October 12 the Catholics of Hesse held a great meeting at Mainz, those of Nassau at Wiesbaden on October 13, to meet their leaders, deliberate on the burning questions of the day and devise ways and means of defence against the ever-growing attacks of the enemies of the Church. From among the addresses made at Wiesbaden we single out that of Dr. Koren, member of the Reichstag, who spoke on the duties of Catholics in political life. "Religious antagonism," he said, "has become so acute that if it continues it will be impossible for us Catholics to live in peace in our country. The outrageous insults that are scattered broadcast by our enemies will only make those who love the Church cling closer to it, yet we must meet these falsehoods and calumnies, for by so doing we at the same time fight the modern anti-Christian spirit. Our enemies attempt to invent a distinction between religious and political Catholicism, but the two can never be separated from each other. 'Ultramontanism,' as they choose to dub political Catholicism, which upholds the interests of Catholics in public life, is a thorn in their side. Nothing is so hateful to them as the serried ranks of the Catholics, our self-conscious strength and the clear aims for which we are striving." The speaker claims for the Catholic clergy the right and the duty of taking part in the public life of Catholics, for it is surely their duty to defend the Church.

In this connection we are happy, by way of illustration, to repeat the report which Father Benno, the eloquent and popular Provincial of the Capuchins in Bavaria gives of an audience he had with the Holy Father. "My son," said the Holy Father to me, "do you go into the meetings of Catholic societies?" I said yes, and at that moment I felt very happy to be able to say yes, for I should have sunk under the floor with shame, if I had been obliged to say: 'No, Holy Father, I only go into the church and for the rest I abide in my cell.' 'You do well,' said His Holiness, and continued: 'Some French bishops visited me lately and I said to them: Tell your clergy that they must not only preach, but must go among the people, seek the people where they are still to be found, gather them in Catholic societies, and thus restore Catholic life.' And the Holy Father dismissed me with these words: 'My son, you may repeat my words everywhere....'

Bigotry in Australia.

Sir Edmund Barton, the Prime Minister of Federated Australia, in a befitting one in his position, a gentleman of broad views, and when during his recent trip to Europe he paid a visit to Rome, he was introduced to the Holy Father by Cardinal Moran, of Sydney, and had an interesting audience with His Holiness, by whom a medal was presented to him. Having returned to Australia, he met with hearty greetings from the bulk of the New South Wales population, and a meeting was held at the Sydney Town Hall on October 18th to tender him a formal welcome. The enlightened Orangemen of the colony had read of the interview with the Pope and were up in arms. A large body, consisting of members of the lodges, endeavored to break up the meeting, and when the attempt failed interrupted the speeches in a disgraceful way. They are now organizing a political agitation against him. It may be taken for granted that the agitation will not only fail, but bring discredit and discomfiture on those who support it. If the obscurantist and intolerant views of the Orangemen were to prevail, the state of affairs which prevailed in Europe during the disastrous wars of religion would be renewed in the twentieth century.—Liverpool Catholic Times.

PROTEST AGAINST DIVORCE.

A petition against the Divorce Bill, signed by 3,500,000 Roman Catholics, was presented to the Italian Chamber on Dec. 5. The petition occupied 177 volumes.