

## A FRIEND OF GREAT MEN.

The following chat between the late Father Fox, O.M.I., and a Boston interviewer, will be read with mournful interest by the many Manitoban friends of the dear departed priest. There are, however, a couple of points in this report which stand in need of gentle rectification. The interviewer must, surely, have misunderstood Father Fox when he makes him say that O'Connell was "inclined to be short and stout." The immortal Dan's commanding height is dwelt upon by all who knew him well. The recently published "Irish Literature" says: "His was a massive and imposing figure." Moreover, with all due respect to Father Fox's memory, we who conversed with him and heard him preach very often, cannot help thinking that he was not a good judge of the presence or absence of the brogue in others, for the simple reason that he had unconsciously acquired a decided touch of it himself and had completely lost the English accent of his early years—a fact which endeared him to the Irish people, since it showed how completely he had become one of them. This explains how he may very well have imagined that Father Tom Burke "had not a trace" of the brogue, a very startling statement for the New Yorkers of 1873 who revelled in his delightful brogue.

Says the Boston interviewer:—

Friend of Newman and Manning, Wiseman and Faber, an intimate or an acquaintance of half the great Englishmen of the nineteenth century the venerable Oblate, Father Fox, now in his eighty-fifth year, is living his last years on memories and hopes in a sunny little room at the novitiate of his order at Tewksbury, Mass. His wide acquaintanceship with famous men and his stirring memories of days which are historic in this generation, make this old priest one of the most interesting characters one could journey to see in this country. He is a cheerful octogenarian, nimble-witted and active, and the little room in which he spends most of his days makes a fitting frame for his bright personality. It is filled with singing canaries and brilliant mounted butterflies, curios gathered from all the odd corners of the earth, books, flowers, and a rustic shrine to the Blessed Virgin made with his own hands. He sits in the midst of them, the young twinkle in his eyes belying the wrinkles and the thick white beard.

Father Fox is a convert from the Society of Friends. He is a native of Devon, England, and in his boyhood's home was a friend and companion of Charles Dickens, then just growing into manhood and carving his way to fame.

"The pet name Dickens first used, by the way," said Father Fox, in a recent chat with a Boston interviewer, "was the pet name he gave the younger fellow. He always called him 'Boz.'"

"He was very fond of his younger brother and one day as he was leaving for the city said to him: 'Boz, I'm going to publish a book, and I'm going to put your name on it. I shall call it 'Sketches by Boz' and the people will think it you.'"

"The little fellow told him not to be foolish, but a short time later a beautifully bound book came to him from London. It bore the title 'Sketches by Boz,' and the lad was delighted.

Dickens told me to look him up when I went to London, and on my locating there as a dentist, I called early one morning for breakfast unannounced. He had quarters near Regent Park, and a delightful meal we had. Many times after that I called; usually others were there, and those meals were brilliant, and perhaps more enjoyable than the great banquets we sometimes read about. Some great people used to call there, such as the Landseers, artists then beginning to be known, and their sister, also very talented with the brush; Dan Maclise, the Irish artist, was another of the set. He, poor fellow, was a marvel with his pencil.

"Personally Dickens was a lovable man and Mrs. Dickens was a fine woman. A finer pair you'll never meet, kind, amiable, bright, but somehow they couldn't get along, so they just agreed to live

apart. They were always friends, though, and each respected the other. I never knew what it was, for Dickens was a good living man. I suppose you'd call it incompatibility of temper. I always regretted his American book, for I am afraid it gave Americans a wrong idea of the man.

"In those days I was a member of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, as you may call them. My parents were very devout, and the bringing up of the children you may believe was very strict. A wave of unrest was going over religious England, and, coming much in contact with Catholic clergymen at the home of a relative, I decided to embrace that faith, into which many of the clergy of the established church had but recently been received, some of them enduring bitter poverty for their change. I, too, had a bit of trouble, for my professional hopes went with my change of faith, and I was very unsettled and unhappy. Father Faber, the great historian, and his works, settled me, however, and I soon after decided to enter this order. I afterwards saw much of this great man, my last talk with him being shortly before his death.

Others of the oratorians I knew well, including Cardinal Newman. He was a wonderful man, a great talker and leader. I last saw him after His Holiness had bestowed the red hat upon him, at the home of the Duke of Norfolk, where he greeted me most kindly. Later he helped me in my labors as a missionary.

Retiring from London, I went back to my home country of Devon, settling at a watering place called Torquay. There I met the Duc de Bordeaux, claimant to the throne of France, whom the Legitimists always called Henry V. He was a poor king then. In Torquay he worked hard as a geologist, and I helped him in getting together a good collection.

"Soon after this I was ordained, and my first Mass was said at Abbotsford, the historic home of Scott where, because John Hope Scott, a great manufacturer, who had married Sir Walter's granddaughter, had given the order at home, one of our number said Mass once a week for the family. The old home of Scott, you know, he sold to pay the creditors of his publishing firm, and the Scottish people bought it back for him on certain conditions, one of which was that whoever should come into it through marrying the heiress of the family, should take the name of Scott. That is how the manufacturer took that name.

"John Hope Scott was a fine man and very devout. He once told me that the great Gladstone at one time seriously thought of becoming a Catholic; so seriously that, with some others, he arranged a meeting with Father Newman, later Cardinal Newman. All of the party but Gladstone called and were converted. His sister, an eccentric woman, had earlier been converted, and it was said her eccentricity in dressing in colors according to the feast days, bright red one day, purple or white the next, and so on, caused him to hold back.

"About this time I got to know Doctor, afterwards Cardinal Wiseman, very well. His great characteristic, aside from his piety, was his love for children and animal pets. They were always with him, especially in later years. Truly, he took the Master's injunction as to children very much to himself.

"In Ireland I met the most lovable and the finest man I ever met—Father 'Tom' Burke. Laughter and wit just bubbled out of him, he could no more help radiating good nature and good cheer than he could breathe. He would joke from morn to night, save when he was at the altar or in the pulpit, though for many years he suffered intensely from cancer of the stomach, which finally killed him. He hid his sufferings behind a smiling face.

"I heard Parnell many times, but I did not know him. He was an able man, a great leader, but no orator, I did know his great predecessor, Daniel O'Connell, inclined to be short and stout, he had a great voice and great power of language. Somehow he would seem to hurl his voice at you like a brick and in the next breath

talk in a whisper hearable in the farther ends of an immense hall. The carrying power of his voice was equalled by that of but one other man I ever heard, Father 'Tom' Burke. Like Burke, he was magnetic. But how he did like to use the brogue. Father Burke, unlike him, hadn't a trace of it.

"I enjoy life here. In the summer I have my little garden and my flowers—some of these here—the birds and the butterflies. The butterflies in that case I caught in the garden. In winter I stay indoors, of course.

"The mornings I am able to, I celebrate mass at 4 o'clock.

"I am not the oldest of my family, though, by any means. My brother, two years older than I, walks ten miles a day at his home in England for exercise."

"You have many treasures here, Father," said the interviewer.

"Lots, lots of them. There is a cable from Cardinal Merry del Val, extending the late Holy Father's blessing and congratulation at the time of my golden jubilee. In this tiny case are relics of one of our fathers who died in sanctity, but who has not yet been beatified. Then this rosary. That was sent me by Pope Gregory XVI. before I was converted, a friend in audience with him telling of my case. Some of my friends rallied me about it, asking what use I could have for the rosary, as I wasn't a Catholic, but I told them the Pope, being infallible, knew what was going to happen. At any rate, I was a Catholic six months later."

## A CITY SHOE TAX AND CATHOLICS

W. P. in the Catholic Home.

If there were a city shoe tax that supported a city shoe shop that turned out shoes for the city taxpayers—two pairs of shoes a year, gratis; and if that city shoe shop should turn out nothing but No. 10's year after year, and your measure was 11, what would you do for shoes? Would you hobble about in 10's? Or would you, even after being forced to pay your shoe tax, go and pay a second price for a pair that would fit you? We think you would do the latter. This is just what the Catholics are doing for an education. They pay the education tax, but the education they get for it is not good enough for them. So they pay a second price to have what is good enough for them. The tax they pay and do not profit by goes to diminish the expenses of those who are satisfied with the common education. And yet we hear some of these people whose school bills the Catholics are helping to pay, we hear them abusing the Catholics as the great enemies of education. If a man paid your shoe bill as well as his own, would you say he hated shoes? Would you say that he went barefooted himself and was trying to force everybody else to do the same? And yet this charge would have as much truth, reason and gratitude in it as there is in the charge some people make against the Catholics as being the enemies of education.

## WHY INGERSOLL GOT IN

From the Argonaut.

Some years ago Phillips Brooks was recovering from an illness, and was denying himself to all visitors, when Robert G. Ingersoll called. The Bishop received him at once. "I appreciate this very much," said Mr. Ingersoll, "but why do you see me when you deny yourself to your friends?"

"It is in this way," said the Bishop, "I feel confident of seeing my friends in the next world, but this may be my last chance of seeing you."

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