

rapidly completed, he had read every book of the library of the college chaplain, and by his peculiar power of mental assimilation and excellent memory, he could tell you the contents of those books. They who were at college with him tell us, that when he had finished his course, he had given to himself by his own readings a far better education than the one he had received from his professors. The same was true of the years he spent at the seminary; in more senses than one, the student by his talents and his stock of information, surpassed his masters; and, even at that early period, the monk was visible in the seminarist." The first idea of Dom. Guéranger was to embrace the monastic life at Monte Cassino, but Claude de la Myre, the venerable Bishop of Le Mans, with whom he for some time resided, opposed his wish, and it was not till his earnestness and devotion had been proved by many trials in his own country, that he was allowed to proceed with some companions to Rome, and there with them after due probation, he was professed as a Benedictine monk on the 26th of July, 1837, at the Abbey of St. Paul beyond the walls. In a future number we hope to narrate the history of his wonderful success in re-establishing the Order in France; an enduring success, even though during the past month his numerous disciples have been driven from the monasteries of which he was the revered founder.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MONASTERY AND COLLEGE OF ST. GREGORY THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.

STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

To those who are watching at St. Gregory's the development of the good work on which the Community is engaged—the increase in the number of the students, the extending of its borders, and the gradual growing up of the new buildings and the magnificent church now in progress—it cannot be without interest to listen to something regarding the early origin of the College, and the history of those who had to sow in weeping the seeds, of which the harvest is now being gathered in with thankfulness and joy. Our Catholic colleges in England are now, thank God! great realities. They are flourishing, they are in full vigour, they have

weathered storms, but have kept their ground, and are now producing fruit. They had small beginnings; nor were these beginnings smooth, easy, and encouraging. Like every good work, they have had their share, and a very abundant share, of hard struggling, and have had to resist adverse influences which would have checked at the outset all further progress, only that it was God's work that had to be done, and, therefore, God's blessing was upon it. Each college had its "struggle for existence," and an acquaintance with those struggles will endear our colleges still more to every Catholic heart. Just as a mother is oftentimes known to have a greater love for the child whose birth and earliest days of infancy had caused her the greatest anxiety, so may we, with that sympathy and unanimity of feeling which is our privilege as Catholics, love, for the Church's sake, those fond objects of her solicitude over whose first days she has watched with so great an amount of fostering tenderness. A consideration of the causes of these early struggles will not be uninteresting.

The first cause was the determined opposition that set in against the Catholic Church with the Reformation, and the resolution to stamp out, if possible, the old faith. One step that was taken towards this end was to forbid Catholic education. We are now having an instance of a similar determination in poor, unhappy France, where, under the pretext of demanding authorization on the part of religious orders, colleges and convents are being closed and suppressed. One of the English penal laws enacted that if a Catholic kept a school, he was to be punished with imprisonment for life. If he sent his child for education abroad, he was outlawed and punished by the confiscation of all his property. What was to be done in this dilemma? We may imagine many a good Catholic, either priest or layman, looking back upon the happy time that he had spent at Christchurch, Charterhouse, Eton, or Winchester, and lamenting the loss of such institutions to the Church; for the rising generation of Catholics were now necessarily excluded from them. And yet something must be done. Boys were growing up, and how were they to be educated? If they went to the apostate schools, they were placed in the proximate danger of apostacy; if they were sent abroad, confiscation was the penalty. If they were taught at home, their opportunities of a good education were very scarce. If, however, they had a vocation to the priesthood, confiscation must be faced, and a foreign seminary was their only resource. Here was one difficulty in the way of Catholic education.

Next, there arose the question of principle. Could a Catholic be justified in those days in sending his son to a Protestant school? There were then, as there will always be, Catholics and Catholics. Some were lax, some were strict, some were timid. The lax could make up their conscience by taking things easily, and sending their children into the midst of the danger, because it looked liberal, and it was too much trouble and very uncomfortable to send them elsewhere. These soon swelled the ranks of deserters from the good old faith. Far different was it with the strict. They knew that it was a time for martyrdom; that God demanded sacrifice from those who would be faithful to Him, and that the sacrifice must be made. Like the children of Israel, who, when they could not worship according to their law in Egypt, went forth from that house of bondage, these good parents in some cases emigrated with their whole families, or, in other instances, sent their sons at a great risk abroad, to prepare for a career which ultimately was to take its course at home, and very probably lead to prison and to death. The timid would shrink from such sacrifices through fear, not through a want of loyalty; everyone cannot be a hero, and some, though good and faithful, were not heroes then. They did as well as they could, and hoped for better days, which they were not spared to see.

It was through the conduct of the good, brave, strict Catholics that our foreign colleges came into existence, and that the seed of our present harvest was sown. *Euntes ibant et flebant.* It was a trial, of course, to flesh and blood, to leave home and parents and kindred, and to go into a stranger land. Many an aged Jacob might be found, lamenting the loss of his Joseph and Benjamin; and many a Rachel mourning over her lost children. But they were the children of saints, and would not be degenerate. They made their sacrifice generously for God's sake, and to Him they looked for comfort and support. The harvest-time would arrive in due season; and in recompense for the tears and sorrows which were now their lot, they looked forward hopefully towards the time when a race of apostolic missionaries would spring up who would reap in joy what they were sowing, and would carry home their sheaves in triumph and success. Thus would the royal prophet's expectation be fulfilled: *Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos.* And the harvest-time did come. Not only did individual priests come over to labour in supporting and propagating the faith in the country so dear to them, from which they had gone forth, willing but sorrowing

exiles, in the days of their youth; but seminaries were founded and organized, and a system of education was established which soon began to show its fruits.

Thus sprung up our system of college education among Catholics. Education was forbidden and made impossible at home; there was no alternative but to seek for it abroad. On one point both friends and foes agreed. The system must be exclusive. Mixed education was out of the question. Foes would not allow Catholics to be educated in England, unless they submitted to tests which were nothing else but open professions of apostacy from the Catholic faith, and thus their schools were positively closed against orthodox Catholics. And friends equally insisted upon a separate unmixed education. Orthodoxy is of its very nature and upon principle exclusive. Truth cannot go half-way to meet error. It stands still, keeps its ground, and commands error to keep at a distance. But if error insist upon advancing, and puts forward a claim to fellowship and fraternity, truth follows the law of repulsion: it shrinks from the contact, and by its retreat shows its self-respect and its determination to preserve its integrity. *What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?* exclaims St. Paul. It is this love for truth, and a resolution to keep it secure, that is the secret of exclusiveness in the Catholic system of education. When we can have securities at home, we gladly avail ourselves of the advantages which home affords. When we cannot, we must go and seek them elsewhere. Thither did our ancestors go; and thus it was that our colleges, which are now flourishing at home, began their career under a foreign sun.

By the change of religion in England, and the persecution and exile of the orthodox followers of the old faith, the first and the greatest sufferers, as usual, were the religious orders. None could have felt more keenly than those devoted to a conventual life, what it was to be driven away from the home which they had fondly hoped, at the time of their profession, was to shelter them till the end of their days. What Cardinal Newman, in his "Apologia," says of his leaving Oxford, when the great happy change came over his destiny, each of those poor monks may have said also. Writing to a friend early in 1846, so says the Cardinal, then a neophyte in the Church: "You may think how lonely I am. '*Obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui,*' has been in my ears for the last twelve hours. I realize more that we are leaving Littlemore, and it is like going on the open sea." And

speaking of his earliest days at Oxford, he says: "There used to be much snap-dragon growing on the walls opposite my freshman's rooms there, and I had for years taken it as the emblem of my own perpetual residence even unto death in my University." If a disciple of Eton or of Winchester in those days of religious revolution would have had occasion to mourn on seeing the dismal change to which his Alma Mater had been subjected, the poor silent contemplative Carthusian must surely have shed hot tears upon hearing that the solemn cloisters of the Charterhouse were turned into the noisy playground of boys who were to be brought up in contempt and hatred of the faith which he knew and loved so well.

But it was the Benedictines who had in many respects the deepest and greatest cause for lamentation. England was pre-eminently their vineyard. See what they had done for it! For nearly a thousand years they had been identified with the glories of the English Church. Their ancestor, St. Augustine, had founded the primatial see of Canterbury; and everywhere throughout the kingdom their monasteries were existing and were spreading blessings around. Westminster, St. Alban's, Glastonbury, St. Edmund's, St. Mary's of York, Evesham, and many other greater abbeys; Canterbury, Durham, Winchester, Gloucester, Worcester, Bath, and other cathedral priories, and besides many other smaller priories and convents, stood as witnesses to their activity and their identification with the Catholic Church in England. And they were now to be robbed of everything, driven into exile, or put to death. What a return on the part of ungrateful England for all that the children of St. Benedict had done for her! Apostles had been sent by a Benedictine pope to bring the faith into the country, and to organize its church. Successors of these apostles had continued the good work so happily begun, and had scattered themselves, bearing blessings with them, throughout the length and breadth of the land. And now they were to be driven away, and go and seek a shelter and a home in the land of strangers.

To say nothing of the glory which such saints as Dunstan, Anselm, Thomas of Canterbury, Oswald, Wolstan and Wilfrid had shed around the English Church, we may, as bearing more directly upon the subject of education and of our colleges, allude to the part which the religious orders had taken in the advancement of learning. We cite the authority of Collier, a Protestant historian: "The monasteries were the schools and seminaries of almost the

whole clergy, secular and regular; they bred their novices to letters, and for this purpose every great monastery had a peculiar college in each of the universities. A little before the Reformation many of the great monasteries were nurseries of learning." And Anthony à Wood, the learned Oxford historian, states that whereas before the suppression of monasteries there were in Oxford, besides the greater colleges, nearly three hundred halls or private schools, after the suppression scarcely eight remained. They used to be supplied with students from the monasteries, and every religious order had a place of residence or school where they prepared for their degrees. So great had been the attachment of the monks to the universities, that, upon the suppression of the monasteries, many of them retired quietly into some of the colleges at Oxford or Cambridge, and apparently escaped observation whilst they devoted themselves quietly to a life of study.

With such bonds connecting the monks with England, no wonder that they should long to bring about some plan by which they could continue a succession of labourers for the faith in a country so truly their own. The work of educating clergy for the English mission had already commenced, before the Benedictine Fathers attempted to found a college or monastery for that end. William Allen (afterwards Cardinal), Fellow of Oriel College, was the prime mover in the plan of educating abroad candidates for the priesthood destined to serve the English mission. Of this most worthy father, as he may well be called, of the Catholic Church in England, the compiler of the recently published "Douai Diaries" thus writes: "Divine Providence had prepared a man for this work, and endowed him with those peculiar gifts and graces which fitted him to accomplish it: a second Moses in meekness, prudence, and charity, as he was termed by his contemporaries, chosen by God to lead His people through the desert into the promised land. To him we owe it that England did not, like Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, fall utterly away from the Church, but that, through the long years of a bloody and crushing persecution, there was left in her a remnant which handed down from generation to generation the priceless heirloom of the Catholic faith." He left England for Flanders, and prepared for the priesthood at Louvain and Malines, in which latter city he was ordained priest in the year 1565. In the course of the year 1568, he repaired to Douai, where a new university had been founded some six years previously. He there drew together a few students, hired a large house, and inaugurated the well-known and much-

honoured English College, on Michaelmas Day, 1568. St. Pius V. was then pope. He approved of and confirmed the seminary a few months after its establishment; and thus this college is found to rank as first in point of time among the seminaries which the Council of Trent ordered to be erected in the different dioceses of Christendom. Never was the word *seminary*, which means a seed-bed, more fittingly applied to any institution. Its object was to raise a crop of missionaries, who, at the hazard of life, would devote themselves to the salvation of souls in their poor unhappy country. So fertile was the seed-bed, that within five years of its commencement it was able to send nearly a hundred priests into England, and within twenty years or so it was prolific enough to be able to send affiliations to Rome and Valladolid.

In the English College at Rome dissensions arose, into which it is not necessary to enter; but this circumstance caused some of the priests to leave, and to aggregate themselves to the Italian Benedictines, with the hope of still serving on the English mission. Cardinal Allen, with that greatness of mind which he had ever manifested, only wishing that good might be done, and less solicitous as to those who did the good, encouraged these postulants in their resolution. In a letter preserved in Weldon's "Notes" (a work which is now on the point of being published under the care of the Community of Downside), the good Cardinal assures Dom. Athanasius Martin, who had joined the Community at Cava, of his congratulation and his joy at the step which he had taken. "Let others think and say what they list of this most holy state of life," he writes, "I would have you persuaded I most heartily espouse your affairs, and mightily like this resolution you have taken of engaging in religion, and hope that you are taken from this wicked world to contribute to the restoration of this most holy Order, which formerly so flourished in our country." He proceeds to enumerate the saints and men of renown of the Order in England, its abbeys, priories, &c. At this same time some of the priests at Valladolid joined the Spanish Benedictines. Though aggregated to different congregations, these Italian and Spanish monks had the same object in view, namely, to labour for the good of souls on the English mission, and if possible to perpetuate the English Benedictine Congregation, which was almost extinct. Providence enabled them to realize their wish in the following manner.

In the year 1607 there was one surviving member of the glo-

rious old Benedictine Congregation. From the commencement of the suppression of monasteries by Henry VIII., some seventy years before, three hundred Benedictine communities had been dispersed. Some of the members suffered martyrdom, notably amongst them being the Abbots of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester; others died in exile, others again in prison, and many of want and private suffering. In the Gatehouse prison in London was known to be still living a venerable monk of Westminster, who had been professed during the temporary resuscitation of the Congregation by Abbot Feckenham, in the reign of Queen Mary. His name, to be held in perpetual remembrance, was Sigebert Buckley. He had been in prison for nearly fifty years. Some Benedictine fathers had now arrived in England from Italy, and they sent for two priests who had completed their novitiate to come over from Italy, in order that they might receive their profession habit, and make their vows at the hands of the venerable Confessor. On the 21st of November, 1607, the good work was achieved. The good old patriarch met them at the prison door, received their vows, and admitted them to all the rights and privileges of the old Benedictine Congregation, and thus the succession was secured, and remains so till the present day.¹ The 21st of November, in honour of this happy event, is always marked in the English Benedictine Calendar, as *Dies Memorabilis*. The next important move was the establishment of monasteries for the Congregation thus restored. This leads us to the introduction of the name of Father Augustine Bradshaw, founder and first Prior of St. Gregory's, of whose good work we shall tell in our next number.

THE FORMATION OF A COLLEGE MUSEUM.

It was observed by one of the most fascinating of English writers on local natural history, that if the natural productions of every district had their local historian, our knowledge of the fauna and flora of this country would become more perfect than by any other means; and everyone knows how agreeably and how perfectly the author of that sentiment carried it into practice.

¹ Similar to this happy event has been the providential resuscitation of the Scottish Congregation, lately aggregated to the English Congregation through the means of one surviving father, Dom. Anselm Robertson, sometime conventual at our new monastery of Fort Augustus, Inverness. See the "Album Benedictinum," p. 56.