A Sketch of the Oxford Movement

By Shane Leslie, B.A., Cantab.
Catholic Truth Society of Ireland No.ctsi0002 (1909)

Preface

Introduction by Sir Henry Bellingham, Bart., H.M.L., M.A., J.P., Vice-President Catholic Truth Society

The writer of the following article, has asked me, as a brother Irishman, a brother landlord, a brother University man, and a brother convert, to write an introductory preface. I would gladly have done so, in any case, to show my regard for him, but I do so with all the more pleasure, because the subject which he has chosen is one of extreme importance, and one that I have personally followed with the deepest interest.

Events pass so rapidly in these days, and are so quickly forgotten, that it is well for the interests of history, that reference to the past should be brought frequently before the public. The present day is an age of enquiry in the matter of religious opinions as of everything else. It is also an age of unrest, an unrest that may be found in members of all religious bodies, not excepting the Catholic Church and the various Oriental Communions, but is especially noticeable amongst the multitudinous sects of Protestantism, in all those countries where Protestantism prevails, of which Great Britain and the United States of America are, perhaps, the most conspicuous examples. Those among Protestants who are not sceptics, or absolutely indifferent to all religion, seem (as Cardinal Newman described them) to be in a fog, and never quite certain of the ground on which they stand. They feel the want of unity and discipline, and deplore their own want of it; they admire what they see in this direction in the Catholic Church, but they appear to be unwilling to submit to her authority and embrace her teaching.

One of the most striking features of present-day Anglicans (clergy as well as laity) is not only their desire for unity in their own communion, but their assumption that it already exists, a unity that can only be even nominally attained by a skilful avoidance of doctrinal points at their episcopal meetings.

This diplomatic but unreal procedure, leads of necessity to the enunciation of nothing but platitudes at their annual congresses; and naturally nullifies every pronouncement they put forward.

The encyclical issued last year by the Archbishop of Canterbury after the Pan-Anglican gathering, as spokesman for the assembled Bishops (some 250), is a very remarkable testimony of division instead of union, and it is amusing and instructive for outsiders to read the criticisms of the Press upon it, and to observe the indifference with which it was regarded.

The Eucharistic Congress, which was held in London a few months later (September, 1908), and attended by 6 Cardinals and over 100 Bishops and Archbishops, attracted far more attention. Every newspaper, both in London and the provinces, had leading articles about it, and special correspondents. Thousands of people frequented the vicinity of Westminster Cathedral, who

evidently took a deep interest in the proceedings, whilst photographs of the Papal Legate and the leading Cardinals and prelates, were exhibited in the shop windows. The Congress itself was one of the principal subjects of discussion in the clubs, and as it represented not only a National but the Universal Church, it was necessarily cosmopolitan, and included representatives of other races, such as Latin, Greek, Teutonic, and Slav.

The Pan-Anglican, as its very name denotes, held some few months earlier, was thoroughly insular, for though some prelates from other places attended, they were all English or American, or from English colonies and dependencies.

The newspapers gave much more publicity to the Eucharistic Congress than to the Pan-Anglican, which no one seemed to take seriously, except the Anglican Bishops, some of whom in their addresses, actually expatiated on the union and brotherly love that had existed at the Conference, when it was notorious to the outside world, that they could not even agree on the important question of divorce. The feeling of a desire for unity is without doubt spreading in every direction and we find evidence of this, not only amongst Anglicans and Episcopalians, but also amongst Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Wesleyans, and even to a less extent amongst Lutherans and Calvinists.

Within the last quarter of a century several societies have been formed, amongst which the "Society for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom" is, perhaps, the most worthy of notice, as it embraced, not only Anglicans and dissenters of various kinds, but those in communion with the Holy See, and members of the Roman and Oriental bodies.

The first and all important question has so far never yet been settled, viz., where the governing head is to be found, and yet a head must be found if all Christians are to be united. This is the great and crucial difficulty. The non-Catholics (agreed in nothing else) agree in objecting to acknowledge obedience to the See of Peter. Even in the East, where the Mass, the sacraments, and the ritual are substantially the same as those of Catholics, there is jealousy and fear of Rome, whilst amongst Protestants, besides the traditional hatred of Rome, most of the old Catholic creeds have been whittled away under the exigencies of private judgment.

A very remarkable movement towards re-union was made some six or seven years ago at a meeting held at Chicago, which was attended not only by Catholics, but by every variety of persons professing Christianity, such as Armenians, Greek and Russian members of the Orthodox Church, Lutherans, Calvinists, and other Protestant sects, but also by non-Christians, such as Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Jews, and Mahometans. Two Catholic Bishops, with the special sanction of Pope Leo XIII., were nominated to represent the Church. Invitations were issued to the heads, not only of Christian bodies, but of every known religion in the world, thus widening the original scheme. The invitations were all but universally accepted, the one exception being the head of the Anglican body. The Archbishop of Canterbury took issue with the wording of the invitation, and protested against the supposition implied in the programme, that the Church of Rome was the Catholic Church, and the Anglican body was not. The Conference, however, took place in spite of this refusal, and, as a matter of fact, was attended by some hundred Anglicans, though it was repudiated by their official head. Delegates to the number of 170, representing many million souls, came from every part of the habitable globe, and spent many days in discussion. The Conference testified to the universal desire that the whole human family should be united in the great duty of religious worship. This, of itself,

was satisfactory, whatever may be the practical outcome, and most writers admit that a great moral effect was produced.

In comparison with a vast scheme like this all smaller methods sink into insignificance; but, that there is a movement, and a growing movement amongst all religious bodies in the direction of unity, cannot be denied. From the Catholic point of view the union of the various Protestant sects ought not to be difficult, as the difference between them should be far less than between Protestant and Catholic, but the nearer the High Church section of the Established Church approaches to Catholicism, the greater, of course, is the difficulty between the Anglicans and the Dissenters. It is primarily, however, with this Anglican movement towards the Church that the writer of the following article is conversant, having himself passed through the various stages of Evangelicalism in which he was brought up, to an Anglicanism of a Puseyite type, and then from advanced Ritualism to the See of Peter.

It is so manifestly irrational to think that the system of Anglicanism introduced by Henry VIII., Edward and Elizabeth can be the same in any way with that religion which had been professed for some 900 years, by those who built the cathedrals and abbeys of England, and which the Reformers came only to profane and despoil, that one can only hope that many more like the author of this article, who have gone through the same stages as he has, may finally find peace as he has done, in the fold of the one true Church of God, that their forefathers unhappily deserted.

H. B.

Introduction

Irishmen fought the battle of the Faith some centuries ago. It is a matter of history how an entire nation chose exile and poverty rather than relinquish one claim to their freehold of the *Civitas Dei*. It is also a matter of history what choice England made at that time. Still the centuries brought their revenge, for they brought John Henry Newman and the Oxford movement and the furnace of theological anguish in which English religion is still being tried. The extraordinary evolution of the Anglican Church during the last fifty years of its history has seldom been understood in Ireland. It is hard for men to look for figs from thistles. But it was harder still for the conquering race to admit they were ever wrong and in cases even to adopt the creed they had decried. It would be idle to pretend that a large block of the English population had passed over to the Catholic Church or had shewn signs of so doing, but certain it is that ever since Newman's conversion an increasing number of educated men of the most varied stations and on the most varied motives have followed his example.

At the Universities there have been few thinking men who have not had the case of the Holy Church thrust before them in one aspect or another. She is there among the tombs of her former glory, no longer scorned and degraded, but living serenely beside her Anglican rival. Her claim to allegiance meets students of theology or science or philosophy sooner or later. It may be only to rouse a cynical reflection or to be brushed away in horror, to give an aesthetic soul a glimpse of veiled light, or as the result of a heart-breaking decision to bring a sterner mind to that peace which her warfare can claim. Still the riddling question comes, and like a Sphinx on the highways that lead from the Universities, into the world, the Church awaits her answer. It is in the varied answers of men during the last fifty years that the history of English religion lies. The answer of those who passed by, of

those who have entered the Catholic fold, and those who have tried to build another fold, in a barren and dry land where no water is. The conversion of Newman set a steady flow of converts into the Church on the one hand, and provoked a long ritualistic struggle among the Anglicans on the other. To Irishmen this twofold movement is one of confusion. An Irishman occasionally stumbles into a High Church in England or hears of a parson on holiday in Ireland attending the local Mass with the greatest devotion. To Catholics this latter is only a source of perplexity or amusement; to Protestants of blank anger and suspicion. The movement is worthy of examination from both sides of thought. It is true that it has had little scope in Ireland beyond occasional clandestine rites among Protestants and a few isolated conversions. But indirect results have certainly been felt. The widespread decline amongst proselytising missions is largely due to the force of High Church opinion, which has protested so vigorously against the attempts of some of her bishops to make converts in Spain and Portugal. The most serious results have been the steady drain of ordinands from Trinity College into the High Church of England. Educated on the poverty of Irish peasants, endowed with qualities that would soften their Church and enrich their country, they leave Ireland year by year a solid and an unredeemable loss. The Protestant Church of Ireland has always chosen to avoid the Oxford Movement as a poisoned spring, and has been repudiated by the most efficient and powerful branch of her mother Church for her pains. To them she is in probable schism. Her clergy appear in some respects Georgian and her ritual as bleak as Dissent. So much for the "Church of Ireland." It is the author's desire to follow out the workings of religion in England as the result of the lives and teachings of the Oxford Reformers.

However, shortly attempted, such a sketch can but arouse reflection amongst his fellow-countrymen. The spirit of God bloweth where it listeth. In the wake of that spirit all that is vast in the Nations has been conceived and brought to maturity in the past. It is the same spirit that influences modern thought and brings her in spite of herself to anguished accomplishment. The study of that spirit is the history of philosophy and religion alike. The arena of that spirit is the soul of man.

The Anglican Church Before the Oxford Movement

The Church of England, as by law constituted, was in a poor way toward the close of the third century of the Lutheran era. In spite of the immense spoils that had accrued from the Catholic Church, in spite of her uncontested possession of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and in spite of the nominal adherence of the English people, whose zeal at that period to convert the mere Irish would have led one to expect a condition of fervid and Apostolic Christianity in their midst, in spite of all this, Sydney Smith could assert in 1794, that the clergy of England had no more influence on the people of England than the cheesemongers. Bishop Horsley spoke of a general indifference about the doctrine of Christianity during thirty years. Sydney Smith described his own parish as aliment for Newgate and food for the halter. William Wilberforce found no Sunday service at Brigg at all, the people merely lounging in the street. In 1829 Samuel Wilberforce wrote that the church would fall within fifty years, while Dr. Arnold wrote in 1832 that the church as it then stood no human power could save. One is tempted to ask if the anti-Catholic spirit evoked in the Gordon riots had no counterpart of Protestant devotion, or why the crowds would not patronise the church in whose street interests they had shewn such zeal.

As a matter of fact a Protestant mob need not contain a single Christian, and religious indifference need not be a hindrance to membership in the Anglican Church.

The New Spirit at Oxford

When spiritual matters were at their lowest ebb a new spirit arose at Oxford which was destined to have far-reaching effects on every type of English religion. A spirit which both Anglicans and Catholics have eagerly attributed to the very breath of God. It rose unknown and unheralded, a cause that seemed lost before it was born, yet which made ground by its very novelty and simplicity. Religion certainly existed in Oxford in those days, and when the church was threatened by the reform movement, her champions could be felt stirring pompously behind the College gates. There were two parties, the old high and dry, who combined scholarly and worldly pursuits, and the Evangelicals, who at this time presented a rather spent enthusiasm, fervid in their belief, but possessed of a thin and monotonous theology. Neither were worthy to rule Oxford much less to inspire a nation. Certainly neither were called to lead the new movement, for when it came neither were ready for it.

Besides these there was a liberal theological school largely due to the astute Archbishop Whately, who when not endeavouring to upset the faith of Irish peasants, was undermining what little he could find in the minds of English undergraduates.

Newman and His Circle

Amongst those who felt bitterly the danger and impotence of their Church, and who vainly sought for some Divine armoury in her theology were a group of brilliant young men, who without a deliberate plan of action gradually gathered a new school and fostered a movement that has not ceased in its effects to-day.

It began with three men, John Keble, a quiet unambitious scholar, the fearless Knight-errant of the movement, who was destined to die on the very threshold of the Holy Church, and John Newman, the glory of the Church that nursed him and of the Church that crowned him. The Church that he brought to new life in his fighting days and the Church he illuminated in the days of his peace.

They lived in days of fear and uncertainty, when the trumpet gave an uncertain call to battle. By sheer power of thought and enthusiasm they arrived at the conclusion that without Catholicism England and her Church could not be saved. When one looks back at those days of Academic darkness, one wonders how these three men, almost unaided, could light such a beacon as they did. Froude was Keble's pupil, and young as he was to die, he accomplished a lasting work, for he brought Keble and Newman to understand each other. He has often been compared to Pascal in the sweet pleasure he took in irony and dialectic, in his self-discipline and in his early death. He was the first of the three who was really anxious to do justice to Rome, and herein lay his Knight-errantry. He was the first to dream of the Catholicism rejuvenated by the love of the poor. He died in the soul of the Church, by far and away the most advanced thinker at Oxford. He was ahead of Newman, for in 1828, he said of the future Cardinal that he liked the more, the more he thought of him, but he would give a few odd pence if he were not a heretic!

The Assize Sermon of 1833

The Reform Bill had gone far towards unsettling the minds of men. Newman himself was imbued with liberalism. Dr. Arnold of Rugby had proposed uniting the various sects to the established Church by an Act of Parliament, which seemed plausible enough to those who referred the doctrines of the Church to a Parliamentary tribunal. There were many new proposals in the air, some of which have been repeated in recent years. Some desired the abolition of the Athanasian creed, others went a little further and suggested that all mention of the blessed Trinity should be eliminated.

When the Premier told the English bishops to put their houses in order, the mob took him at his word and burnt down the palace of the bishop of Bristol. Parliament had no scruples in suppressing Irish sees. In 1833 it was that Keble preached his famous Assize sermon on National Apostasy, and the Tractarians, as they were later called, gathered into ranks. Even at this early date it is interesting to note certain types which have continued to this day. There is the slow convert type, the timid who stops half way, the bold who moves quickly but stays short on the threshold. It is incomprehensible to many why men who are so rapidly imbuing themselves in Catholic thought should not go to the fountain-head at once to slake their thirst, why some take years, and some never manage to do so. The reason lies in the Anglican mode of conceiving and realising theology, which is never other than slow and stubborn. The varied results within the Anglican Church have been a means of perplexity to all save themselves. Anglicanism is sometimes interpreted as comprehensivism. It has certainly an unequalled power of including the flotsam and jetsam of religion. Within its household can be found all the preparatory stages to Catholicism. Besides the lower strata of Protestantism there is room for educated Erastianism, respectable indifferentism, and an advanced criticism that has undermined theology herself. In and about these twines the *via media*, on which so many tread without knowing, that like many roads, it must lead to Rome. Still when we remember the national and insular feeling which has extended in the Church, we can understand how it is that so many who have adopted all they require of Catholic ritual are reluctant to pay the price of Catholic submission.

Among the first tractarians was Isaac Williams, the devoted follower of Newman as long as the battle was carried on in the quiet. With the coming stress he grew timid and retired into the country. Another was Charles Marriott, who readily sacrificed his scholarship to the cause. He was one of those who can hope against hope and be content with desolation. How often his type reappears in the ranks of the High Church. Even Newman was provoked by the optimism with which he clung to worn-out theories. The first rift had barely shewn, and for thirteen years this strange party kept together in the face of unsparing hostility. They evolved a theory, and it is well to understand on what they held their ground. It was simply this, that unbeknown to herself the Anglican Church was the inheritor of Apostolic succession with the same right and jurisdiction in England as the Pope in the Eternal City. The Church of England was really a branch of the Catholic Church, though her bishops and clergy had chosen to forget it. As conscientious laymen, it was their duty to bring them back to their Apostolical senses. A lay synod was held at Hadleigh by a small group to consider the two methods in the field. Firstly the one proposed by Palmer of Trinity College, Dublin, of working quietly in the form of private corrective, secondly the bolder policy of the men of Oriel College of carrying on a warfare of tracts.

The Tracts for the Times

Tract warfare has been largely discredited, but when it was wielded for the first time in its history by men of first rate ability in what they believed was the cause of God, it became extraordinarily effective. They were not written with a view to rhetoric or scholarship. They were heart-searching and intense. They have been described as the short utterances of men in pain. Newman, fresh from his orange boat in the Mediterranean, opened the series with a trumpet cry. Sincere and whole-hearted as he was in the cause of Anglicanism, there must have lain some faint irony in his mind when he called on "the presbyters and deacons of the Church of Christ in England" to come forth from their "pleasant retreats and to contemplate the condition and prospects of our Holy Mother." Sweeter still is his call on the episcopate. "Is it fair," he asks, "to suffer our Bishops to bear the brunt of the battle? None of us would wish in the least to deprive them of the duties, the toils, and the responsibilities of their high office, yet we could not wish them a more blessed termination of their course than the spoiling of their goods and martyrdom." One can imagine the bishops of the time reading this hitherto unknown exaltation of their office with feelings of pleased amazement, though perhaps a little nervous at the idea of any martyrdom as its price. This is still a note in the High Church of to-day, when enthusiasts seek to invest their prelates with a sanctity they shrink from, and powers that they know very well they do not possess. The appeal to the clergy was equally startling for that epoch — "Is it not our very office to oppose the world, how can we make the way of life easy to the rich and indolent, and bribe the humbler classes by excitement and strong intoxicating doctrines? Exalt our holy fathers the Bishops and magnify your office." One of the holy fathers on carefully reading the tract on Apostolical succession said he could not make up his mind whether he held it or not, another cynically declared that it had gone out with the non-jurors. However, enthusiasts are not to be gainsaid, and though the bishops refused exaltation, the tractarians turned round to the magnification of their own office. The tracts came steadily on accompanied by John Keble's melodious verse. By his honeyed pen the parson was gradually transposed into the priest, the bleak communion tables were gradually regarded as altars of mystery, and the service which the clergy shared three times a year with their church wardens, became the Eucharistic feast of olden days.

Evolution of Anglicanism

It must not be considered that Anglo-Catholicism was entirely sown in the fertile brains of the tractarians. However illogical their future development was to become, still they had a very solid piece of theology to appeal to, and in one sense they could be said to know their own church better than the pompous and ignorant men who were just then raising a cry of treason.

Strange to say all through the era of strong public Protestantism, such theology as was written bore a marked Catholic stamp. It is true that no efforts were made to diffuse this learning beyond the libraries of the Universities, but when they were arranged a very fair case could be made for a Catholic interpretation of the Prayer Book, which as a compromise between Catholic liturgy and Protestant prejudice, must always be the type as well as the source of Anglican confusion.

On this structure was laid the *via media*, and for a time no one trod this path more surely than Newman. He regarded it as the proper mean between Methodism and Popery, and the latter as the refuges of those to whom the Church stinted her gifts of grace.

On those lines a manual was prepared and submitted to the Archbishop, who like the true Anglican that he was, decided that there was no objection against it, but that official sanction must be denied to it on general grounds. In other words he was afraid. Meantime Dr. Pusey, a scholar of immense learning, had joined the tractarians, and the tracts were beginning to shew the effect of his well-trained mind. As yet there had been practically no thought of Rome, except in the excited minds of their Puritan opponents, but their path was becoming less peaceful. Besides the Evangelicals the Liberals had declared war on them on grounds of dogmatic severity, and to complete the array of righteous indignation, their asceticism brought out the strong hostility of the "two-bottle orthodox" as they were called. The storm was loosed by Dr. Arnold in the pages of the *Edinburgh*. No words were sufficient to express his opinion of the "Oxford malignants." They were "Children of the mist and veiled prophets." Dr. Whately pleasantly described them as "Thugs."

Men's minds were stirring in every direction in Oxford, and the tractarians felt they were not entirely alone. In their first theological battle they actually found themselves on the winning side when all parties united to proscribe Dr. Hampden the new regius Professor of Divinity. Lord Melbourne had elected him, apparently attracted by the liberalism of thought with which he asserted that all creeds were invested by ignorance and prejudice with an authority that was without foundation.

As long as Newman held the pulpit of the University Church the tractarian doctrines made headway. He spoke as an apostle. His influence and his teaching were such that no man could gainsay him. His opponents watched sullenly while the great movement was built up whose party names were in a few years to be known all over the world "to the police of Italy as well as the backwoodsmen of North America."

The Roman Question

When a pastoral epistle appeared purporting to be addressed by his Holiness the Pope to certain well beloved members of the University of Oxford, the tractarians only smiled, but in the mind of Newman at least the Roman question had begun to form. "It has come," he said, "like a summer's cloud." Here we are from long security, ignorant why we are not Roman Catholics.

The most gifted and the most patient mind in Oxford was beginning to feel that fierce controversy which has lashed the English Church ever since.

The minds of his followers turned to him with an almost passionate belief. The reasons that he gave for staying in the Anglican Church have been the reasons commonly given ever since, and the reasons he gave for leaving her have been on the lips of all who followed since. *Credo in Newmanum* is not yet an obsolete creed. Rome seemed very far off in those days. To join her was like taking up one's abode in a new planet. After all the Anglican Church was in possession. However soothing Rome might be, was she sound? Patriotic theology, if properly manipulated, could yield a moral evidence, if not an authoritative definition in favour of Anglicanism. So Newman held on, but in 1839 he descried the ghost on the wall, and once seen a ghost is not forgotten.

The Monophysite controversy and the Donatists came to trouble him. Still he struggled on. As long as there was any prospect of a restoration in the Anglican Church, so long he felt bound to stand by her. He had stripped her of her falsehoods and tempered her blade. It remained to be seen if she could bear the brunt, and whether her metal would soften in the fire. How far could she be

considered a real Church? Were her defects beyond remedy? In his keen and untiring desire to test his Church, Newman never flinched for a moment. He was prepared to set his friends and all chance of preferment aside. He never wavered when his Bishops and his University declared against him. In 1843 he resigned St. Mary's Church that he might face the inner storm. He had to endure a period of heart-rending wait.

He was no longer leading the movement. A new generation had sprung up at his side and shewed signs of outstripping him. Men like Ward, Faber and Dalgairns had already thrown up their old love and reverence for the Anglican Church. Their tendency was already Romeward. They cared not for the name of the Church of England. But Newman loved his own to the end.

Tract 90

Two things must be taken into consideration on the tendency of Newman's mind. Firstly, the decided Roman drift amongst his younger friends which was surely reaching on him. Secondly, the hopelessly short-sighted policy of the authorities. They were totally unprepared to meet Newman on his own ground. They could not conceive that men should be eager to sacrifice themselves for the beauty of an idea. They met the movement with jokes in its earlier stages, and with blank hostility at its close. Their own religious views permitted them to send a mixed body of men to the Sacrament on stated occasions, and to fine others for non-appearance. The Bishops for the most part held their peace being uninstructed in their own theology. The Bishop of Oxford contented himself with alternate messages of praise and warning. Bishop Sumner let loose the vials of episcopal bigotry when he alluded to the movement as the work of Satan. The unfair spirit which was raised is shewn by the blind anger meted out to Keble's beautiful tracts for no other reason than that he used the words "Reserve" and "Mysticism" in their titles. (On reserve in communicating religious knowledge, and the mysticism of the Fathers in the use and interpretation of Scripture.)

The result of this feeling was, no doubt, to drive Newman to take an extreme step, certainly it accounted much for the famous tract 90. But in the hurricane of angry panic and lost temper, Newman never acted other than his ideal gentleman, eager never to give pain, and merciful to the absurd. The theology of the tract was, simply that as Lutheranism tended to Rationalism, and Calvinism to Socinianism, Anglicanism could be made to evolve into Catholicism. He made a supreme effort to snatch the thirty-nine articles as a weapon from the hands of the Protestants, and to employ them in the armoury of the *via media*. It was the daring blow of an intellectual giant. It roused more than anger and hatred, it caused utter fear amongst the heads of the Colleges. Their reply was that of men in a panic. They avoided coming to close quarters and sent round a notice to every college buttery to label Newman as dishonest. It had only the effect of rallying Newman's friends with a greater devotion than ever. In the general stir, Ward could not help running in, and adding a Roman flavour to the bitter pamphlet war that followed. Dr. Faussett sprang into the fray and then caused some amusement by retiring as rapidly on a rumour that tractarian votes might lose him his fellowship. Newman alone was entirely calm and when the storm broke over him, he accepted the scorn of the Church that rejected him. In his monastic retreat at Littlemore he waited for the illumination of God, a matter that hardly entered into the thoughts of his opponents.

After Tract 90

The movement could never be the same after Tract 90. The bulk of the tractarians were sincerely loyal to the Anglican Church, but sheer exasperation drove many to look Romewards. The great doctors did no more than blunder in the heated strife, with the bravado of men who do not realise their own position. Dr. North of Magdalen was the only one who could show theological learning. Most of them descended to scurrilous abuse like Dr. Close, who declared that he would not trust the author of Tract 90 with his purse. They were hampered from effective action by their own uncertainties. Whately's school had been undermining the Athanasian creed, and the Evangelicals had serious difficulties about the baptismal office.

The Defeat of the Tractarians

The tractarians now endured three heavy blows, one of which broke their leader. Williams was standing for the professorship of poetry, and would most certainly have got it, had not Dr. Pusey thought good to recommend him for the Christian side of his character. When it was brought to mind that Williams' Christianity included fasting and a vague love of sacraments, all qualification of verse or metre was forgotten. The University determined to have a Protestant rather than a poet, and they carried their determination to success.

Secondly came the question of the Jerusalem Bishopric, which politicians had arranged to fill by alternate elections from the Anglican Church and the German Lutheran body. To many tractarians this came as the last straw, and Newman confessed that it had been nigh the means of breaking him. While he was on his Anglican death-bed at Littlemore, the University followed up their attack by trying and condemning Dr. Pusey for heresy. The trial took place in secret before the Vice-Chancellor and six doctors. The sentence of suspension from the University pulpit was pronounced, but not a word of accusation. It was ignoble in the extreme. In vain did Lord Justice Coleridge and Mr. Gladstone send their protest; it was promptly returned by the hands of the Vice-Chancellor's bedel, to mark the indignation of the authorities.

Mr. Ward

The rejection of Newman and Pusey left the battle to their younger followers. Of these none was more brilliant than Ward, a mathematical tutor. He lacked the gentleness of Newman, and moved swiftly to extremes. For the authorities he had little respect. The epigrams and the daring conclusions he produced could only be the herald of a catastrophe. His treatment of the twelfth article was typical. He allowed that it was distinctly on the Evangelical side, but its natural sense could be explained away, and he himself held it in its non-natural sense. He worked from Roman and not Anglican authorities the whole time. Newman had found the articles the production of a non-Catholic age. Ward found them the essence of an anti-Catholic age. As regards justification, he considered it was on a par with Atheism to separate faith from morality. Christian practise must depend on a careful moral discipline, and he was not slow in thinking in which church that moral discipline had reached perfection. He refused to see those dim and beautiful notes of evanescent Catholicism which Newman's straining eyes still detected in Anglicanism. He would hold nothing less than the whole Roman cycle, and it was this insistence that gradually broke up the party. With an unwearied logic he was always calling on Newman to sanction extreme ideas that for the party's sake had better been kept in abeyance.

There is no doubt that he hastened Newman's mind in his last stage before Catholicism. Newman was not afraid where his thoughts carried him. Ward was fearless even where his words led him.

The Conversion of Newman

Ward now took upon himself to fight in the *British Critic* with a keen brutality that equalled the violence of his opponents. His general view of religion was too anti-English to attract men, but he did much to hold men's imaginations in a leash towards Rome. He was very light-hearted over it all. He showed no resentment when he was deprived of his mathematical professorship on a theological score. It was a case of Ultramontane met Ultramontane, and he was ready to respect what he would have done in reversed circumstances. He shared little of Newman's sensitiveness for the opinions of others, nor had he any scruples where he led others. Newman spent hours of anguish thinking of the chivalrous followers he was leading into the dark.

Ward brought the crash when he fulminated his challenge in his "Ideal of a Christian Church." "Three years," he said, "have passed since I said plainly that in subscribing to the articles I renounce no Roman doctrine, yet I retain my fellowship, which I hold on the tenure of subscription, and have received no ecclesiastical censure in any shape." The challenge was quickly taken up and the book condemned. By a foolish piece of bigotry, Ward was deprived of his University degrees, and reduced to the state of an undergraduate — a position that must have amused him immensely. The Protestant party tried to carry their victory further and to stigmatise the author of Tract 90, but they overreached themselves. The proctors used their right of veto, and in John Henry Newman's favour cried out — *"Nobis procuratoribus non placet."* The tractarians breathed again, and rallied round their leader with an enthusiasm that passes into pathos when we remember that their leader was breathing his last as an Anglican. All this time he was working at his doctrine of development in the seclusion of Littlemore. Even as he wrote he knew that his mind's journey was at an end. In a few days it was known that he had at last proved sound the Church whose soothing power he had known long before. In periods of eloquence and sadness, he has described the trend of his heart, but no one, not even himself, can ever adequately describe the generous suffering he accepted, how in his own agony he thought and prayed for his trusting friends, as they rallied round the flag that faded in his hand, and fought for the leader, whose keen sword was soon to pass among them, and divide father from son and brother from brother.

The Birth of Ritualism

When Newman and a handful of his followers gave up their fellowships for the Kingdom of God, the College authorities breathed again. They little imagined that their short-sighted policy had sapped the most religious influence in the University, perhaps the only one that could have helped them to weather the coming tide of Liberalism, or that by crushing the Anglo-Catholics in the University they were driving them to raise a hundred new centres in London and the provinces, and gradually change the ritual and sometimes the creed of their Church.

At Oxford, men had wearied of theology, and they turned to reform their University to suit the scientific thought of their age. Outside Ritualism, the practise of pre-reformation ceremonies, began quietly amongst men who had heard Newman preach. Illogical as such a movement seems, it was more than natural to men who were yearning for better things. The sparks that fell from Oxford caught fire in obscure little hamlets and vicarages, and led to a flame in the dry bones of the

establishment that no resistance has been able to put out. Newman himself had never conducted Communion at St. Mary's other than in the old-fashioned manner. His scattered following were determined that the Eucharist should be visible by the beauty of rite, and that the Mass should be the Mass indeed. Armed with invincible enthusiasm, they chose to take their stand into the poorest and most miserable quarters of the great cities. Mid haunts of unredeemed vice, and scenes that belie description, they raised their early altars, with possibly more anxiety in the direction of their Bishops than of their rough neighbours. The East End of London offered a field of paganism, at this date, that would have defied a Dominic or a Francis Xavier.

A certain Father Lowder started a mission at St. Peter's, London Docks. Others followed into the city of dreadful night. The wide success that followed in latter years is built on the sufferings of these pioneers. The times were not kind to their theories. The surplice alone was sufficient to produce a mob-riot. The great cholera outbreak came as a boon to the High Church. It frightened away the mobs and left them alone with the dying poor. Sisterhoods of devoted ladies were introduced, and under the grim auspices of the plague, the religious habit went unimpeded. Once started, matters moved quickly. Already churches, like St. Barnabas and St. Alban's, claimed the Sunday High Mass of their fathers. Riots followed in protest, but still the High Church held their own. The Bishops were once more getting uneasy, when in 1860 the attention of the whole Church was violently distracted by the appearance of "Essays and Reviews" by seven clergymen. From the turmoil which engaged round the publication of this book, the Broad Church party were evolved, which has followed at one time or another almost every form of Modernism that the Church has ever condemned. As the High Church have played with orthodoxy, so the Broad Church have played with heresy. As a whole, they aimed at a creed without dogma. There was no line of criticism they were not prepared to welcome, provided it enlarged the Church, or rather loosed the stakes of dogma. High and Low were content to join against these heresiarchs, but their struggle was futile, the Modernists remained Anglican. One even became Archbishop of Canterbury. Meantime, under cover of the tumult, the High Church made astonishing progress. Societies, like that of the Holy Cross, of a semi-secret nature, began to honeycomb the Church. Vestments and lights were gradually transferred from private oratories into public churches. Strange scenes were witnessed in quiet hamlets, as well as in the backwaters of the slums. Attempts were made to revive the early church penances.

We hear of people lying in ashes with tapers in their hands. One amateur confessor forbade a penitent to enter a church for twelve months. An East End curate claimed to have raised a girl from the dead by means of a relic of the true Cross. Truly, the Church of England was in motion. Her comprehensiveness extended every year, for now she embraced in her bosom twin societies, each claiming passionately to be her devoted sons, to the exclusion of the other. One was the English Church Union, which worked steadily for the restoration of the Mass. The other was the Church Association, which believed the other to be composed of priests of Baal, and to be treated as such.

In 1866 Pusey joined the Ritualists, whom he had hitherto regarded with suspicion. Over Keble's grave the Tractarians and Ritualists cemented an alliance that Parliament was unable to destroy.

The progress of Ritualism was thoroughly well assured, but the Episcopate were soon to play a part with the most far-reaching effects. Disraeli had selected Tait — a Scotchman of Presbyterian tendencies — for the Chair of Canterbury. Much as he disliked their ecclesiastical attitude, he recognised the work of the fathers and sisters among the poor, and declined to prosecute them. For a time the Bishops contented themselves with an attitude of frightened observation. Meantime, Lord

Shaftesbury, a sturdy Protestant, as the result of a visit to St. Alban's, had come to the conclusion that the worship of Jupiter and Juno was being surreptitiously introduced into the establishment. He promptly introduced a Bill on the subject of vestments. Lord Derby, at Bishop Wilberforce's suggestion, cleverly turned aside the blow by appointing a Royal Commission as a salve for the British conscience. Two months of deliberation declared in favour of restraint (not prohibition) being exercised on revived vestments in the Church.

Persecution of Ritualism

The High Church were destined to meet persecution from another quarter. The Church Association had determined to employ every possible redress before the Court of the Arches, with the possibility of appeal to the Privy Council. At a cost of £80,000 the old legal machinery was set in motion, and sixty condemnations were obtained against the Ritualists in the course of years of desultory warfare. Legally a triumph, the plan was a great failure, for it gave the High Church an opportunity to declare their non-allegiance to the secular courts, and to continue their practises under the halo of martyrdom. "Father" Mackonochie, of St. Alban's, endured years of litigation with a pathetic heroism that often converted his opponents. When he died, broken down by his twofold battle against secular vice and ecclesiastical law, his cause lived on and multiplied. An interesting case was that of Mr. Purchas (not without a touch of humour either). He was condemned, in 1870, for no less than 29 illegal practises, before the Court of the Arches, but he was allowed to retain the Eastward position before the altar. This did not satisfy his opponents, who carried it before the Privy Council, and obtained the condemnation of the thirtieth point, besides the entire costs on Mr. Purchas. That "priest," however, having fortunately not advanced as far as clerical celibacy, made over his money to his wife, and continued his ceremonial as though nothing had happened, until his death a few years later.

Men began to realise that the Church possessed no central authority in her Bishops or in the tribunals, the secular power employed in her service.

We find Mr. Bennett prosecuted for teaching the "real objective presence" in the Sacrament. Strange to say, this truth was permitted by the Court of the Arches and upheld by the Privy Council on appeal. For a moment Pusey triumphed, and the Church Association was driven back. No one remembered then that Pusey had been condemned by his University for teaching the same doctrine twenty years before. In the momentary triumph, no one felt the irony of the situation. A doctrine which the theological faculty had rejected was now restored by a secular tribunal.

The High Church were winning ground, and men who are winning do not care to see too clearly. Still the stream of conversions never slackened; whole sisterhoods sometimes passing into the Catholic fold. So confident were they at times that they petitioned their Bishops to provide for the education and choice of qualified confessors in accordance with Canon Law. This had the effect of rousing Protestant feeling through the country. As Wilberforce was now dead, Tait thought the time was ripe to use the secular power. Accordingly, the Bishops introduced a Bill to deal with ritual. In the heated debates which followed, they were informed by Sir William Harcourt, for their pains, that they were no more than Church inspectors, and the articles had been defined without if not against clerical advice. The Bill appeared in the form of a Public Worship Regulation Act. It immediately provoked the defiance of the militant High Church, who laid down the six points which they were determined to fight for: — 1. Eastward Position; 2. Vestments; 3. Candles; 4. Mixed Chalice; 5. Unleavened bread; 6. Incense. Imprisonments followed, but the congregations

were loyal enough to refuse a successor. A glamour of martyrdom gathered round the imprisoned clergy, and they generally left their cells with the honours of war. Tait gradually realised the utter failure of his Bill, and he died before he could calm the storm that followed in its wake. For several years the High and the Low fought hand to hand. When men left the angry field for the City of Peace, the blame could be thrown equally on the bigotry of the Low as on the imprudence of the High. When men left for Rome, their places were filled up from the seminaries of Cuddesdon and Ely. The Oxford traditions still roused the enthusiasm of men at the universities. Pusey died writing on behalf of imprisoned curates. There was no lull in the conflict. Tait had summoned a power that did not tend to peace. In vain, eighty clergy of position wrote to the Primate to express their view that the evils that the Church was suffering from could be remedied only by the living voice of the Church. Still no voice came. At one time Disestablishment seemed the happiest solution. Finally, the Bishop of Lincoln was arraigned on a charge of illegal practises in his own diocese. In 1885 he appeared before Dr. Benson, his Metropolitan. The trial came to an end after two years. The result of endless research was a series of compromises. The mixed chalice was not forbidden, but the wine and water could not be mixed during the service. Ablutions were allowed, provided they followed the service. Lights were legal on condition they were not lit during the service. It was a real compromise, and the Bishop submitted to it as such. The anger of the Protestant party was excessive, and they appealed to the Privy Council; but in 1892 the Privy Council upheld the Archbishop on every point. Thenceforward the Church Association was reduced to editing tracts or publishing black lists of the 9,600 odd clergy who indulged in treasonable ceremonies.

Development of the Broad Church

The Broad Church were not idle all this time. They occupied themselves in extending the dogmatic limits of the Church as far as possible. Some of them made a strange combination of mysticism and free-thinking. Very few of them thought of leaving the Church that gave them scope to follow out their tendencies. Jowett, their Oxford leader, prided himself on being religious, though he avowed he could not bring himself to pray. He had a good deal in common with Renan, but never thought of parting from his position. His non-dogmatic sermons at Oxford had no little influence at Oxford. At one time he undertook to write a life of Our Lord, substituting a purely ideal Christ for the historical character. He eventually gave it up, because he said God had not given him the power to do so. Possibly not. The other champion of the Broad Church was Stanley, Dean of Westminster, whose well-intentioned ambition to widen the Christian fold did not prevent him from offering his pulpit to any stray heretic, or giving Communion to a Unitarian minister. He disliked agnosticism and dogmatism equally. He distinguished himself by leading a crusade against the retention of the Athanasian Creed. To such an extent was public clamour roused against the damnatory clauses, that not a Bishop dared withstand it. Dr. Liddon and Pusey then announced their decision to leave their Church if the creed was obliterated. For a moment there was a prospect of a schism towards the "Old Catholic" body, but in the end everything remained as it was.

The Broad Church are strongly represented to-day. Their only aggressive member is Canon Hanson, who is fond of denying the Virgin birth in his pulpit. Many of Stanley's type have dropped out of the Church or ceased to take orders. Rev. Mr. Green, who relapsed into secular life, gives a characteristic account of his curates. "One," he says, "is a 'Catholic.' He breakfasts at 12.30 in a cassock and biretta. The second is an Anglican, who spends his day organising petitions to the Lord

Primate. The third is a musician, who sets the general confession to operatic music. The fourth is a litterateur, who reads Balzac all the week."

The Appeal to Rome

As the followers of Jowett and Stanley inevitably moved towards scepticism, the followers of Pusey found themselves nearer to Rome. At first many, like Dr. Littledale, displayed a violent antipathy to what they considered "the Roman schismatics in England," but far-sighted men like Lord Halifax yearned for union with the most stable and the most perfected church in Christendom. Believing to the full in the Apostolic succession of his Church, he considered that the revived ritual placed her on an equality with Rome, which the recognition of her orders would bring to speedy reunion. Lord Halifax obtained some favourable audiences at Rome, and as a result, his followers were wound up to a pitch of great expectation. It was generally agreed that a basis of reunion could be found in a declaration on the subject of Anglican orders. Ill blown as his hopes were, they were to be bitterly disappointed. The Holy See made a most searching inquiry, and found the orders were null and void. This authoritative statement from the Chief Bishop of Christendom encouraged many to look for a large secession, but, following their leader's example, the great bulk of the English Church Union remained as they were. For years they had been schooled to disobey their own Bishops. They were not likely to hear the voice of Peter now.

This temporary repulse on the threshold of the Holy See led the rowdier Protestant section to initiate a series of public disturbances. Under the leadership of a Mr. Kensit, some noisy and foolish depredations were committed, which tended rather to turn public opinion to the other side. Eventually their leader was killed in one of his liturgical brawls. His protests were sufficient to provoke public inquiry, which Mr. Balfour, following Lord Derby's precedent, diverted into a Royal Commission. After some years' session and after hearing the evidence of a number of amateur spies, several bulky volumes appeared bearing on the irregularities of the clergy. The letters of accused clergy were also published, and displayed an extraordinary variety of militant opinion in the Church. The Commissioners, who included such high dignitaries as the Archbishop, were treated with ridicule, anger, and even with accusations of disloyalty themselves. To all purposes the Report was the triumph of the Oxford movement within the Anglican Church. A further triumph of the High Church was the introduction of a branch of the Cowley Fathers into the sacred precincts of Westminster, at the hands of the Bishop of London himself. One of the oldest and most successful of the many monastic communities set on foot, it claims to live by one of the strictest rules in Christendom. It has for years been a tower of strength to the Church in Oxford, and has supplied preachers of a high order to the Catholic as well as to the Anglican Church.

The Present Situation

It is very hard to describe the actual situation. The enthusiasts for the branch theory of Christendom have turned their attention to the East, and some desperate efforts have been made to induce stray bishops of the Greek Church to attend Anglican services. The attitude of the Easterns has not been encouraging, for they decline to treat with the Anglicans, except as a portion of the Church of the West; and the Church of the West has found them null and void. Most of the Bishops have followed Tait's example, and accepted Ritualism as inevitable and even preferable to the stagnation of a status quo. In the Newcastle Diocese we find an Erastian Protestant who was sent to change the religion a few years ago. Regarding himself as the paid representative of the State, this good man reckons to

change the whole spirit of the diocese in fifteen years, but his clergy, who are largely High Church, have settled down in their livings, determined to outlive their Bishop and so preserve the Faith. Truly a quixotic position!

The monastic development has taken a very rapid turn in the last decade. Most of the Orders in the Catholic Church have found their dim reflexions. We find Anglican Benedictines singing Latin Mass in the ruins of an old abbey. The Cowley Fathers emulate the missions and retreats of the Society of Jesus, while the Franciscans are represented by the Society of the Divine Compassion, a heroic group of men living in East London, who combine the Divine Office with an advanced Socialism. They recently headed a procession of unemployed, clad in habit and cowl. The most striking of all is the Community of the Resurrection, which aims openly at the Irish model of drawing the people's priests from the people themselves. After struggling through many difficulties, they received the approbation of their Primate, and are on the point of launching their first "priests" into the world. These orders have now a settled position in the establishment, but at one period they had a chequered course. A certain Father Ignatius felt a mission to restore the monastic life in the early days of Ritualism. After ceaseless strife with the Bishops and the world, he adopted the Benedictine rule in the restored Abbey of Llanthony. Seldom was a man of such enthusiasm wasted and harried by his ungrateful superiors. He was disqualified from the Anglican priesthood for wearing the habit, but he found a stray Oriental Bishop to confer on him what is probably a valid order. His preaching met with success all over England, though he was ruthlessly excluded from churches. The history of his Abbey was a varied one, and well calculated to frighten the Anglican Bishops, for, besides visions and wonders, Our Lady of Llanthony appeared, and is commemorated by a statue such as Catholics generally associate with Lourdes.

Influence on the Catholic Church

The Oxford movement was not without considerable influence on the Catholic Church in England. The stream of converts produced difficulties from the beginning. The old Catholics had lived in timid retirement for years, and were not at all prepared for an influx of enthusiastic Anglicans. Their whole life was passed in the shade. Their greatest object was not to give offence. The two parties met in the persons of Manning and Errington. The Holy See decided that the former was to dictate the policy of English Catholicism, and Manning decided that the Catholics were to come out of the bye-lanes and ditches and take their share in the National life. Since the restoration of the hierarchy the Catholic Church has prospered and grown side by side with Ritualism. Whether the latter is a hindrance or a preparatory school to the former, opinions differ. High Churchmen claim that by providing the whole Catholic ritual they are offering the strongest barrier to the spread of the Catholic Church herself. Still, for everyone that is kept back in Anglicanism, ten are educated in creeds and devotions that can only bring respect if not love of Rome. In a generation English opinion has been led to tolerate what she once could hardly speak of without disgust. Catholics must indeed be grateful to those who have stood the brunt of the battle, and by their patience and heroism paved the way in the great cities for a return to the Catholic Faith. They have spread the hated Catechism of Trent and made the symbolism of the Church known and loved. Though they have not come into the Promised Land themselves, they have showed others the way. It was with them in his mind that Aubrey de Vere asked: —

> "A tear For friends that thro' blind oceans pushed their prow, Self-cheated of a guiding light so clear."

And Newman, to whom the poem refers, could but look upon them as the children of his teaching. In their struggles he offered them his deepest sympathy, for he saw that a coming generation would be Catholic in truth. Perhaps a quotation from another prophet, H. G. Wells, may fitly conclude this sketch: —

> "There will be a steady decay in the various Protestant congregations. They have played a noble part in the history of the world. . . . but their formulae will wax old like a garment . . . . The rich as a class and the people of the Abyss, so far as they move toward any existing religious body, will be attracted by the moral kindliness, the picturesque organisation, and venerable tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. We are only in the beginning of a great Roman Catholic revival. The diversified countryside of the coming time will show many a splendid cathedral, many an elaborate monastic palace, towering amidst the abounding colleges and technical schools. Along the moving platforms of the urban centre will go the ceremonial procession, all glorious with banners and censer-bearers, and the meek blue-shaven priests and bare-footed, rope-girdled holy men."

Adveniat regnum tuum.
