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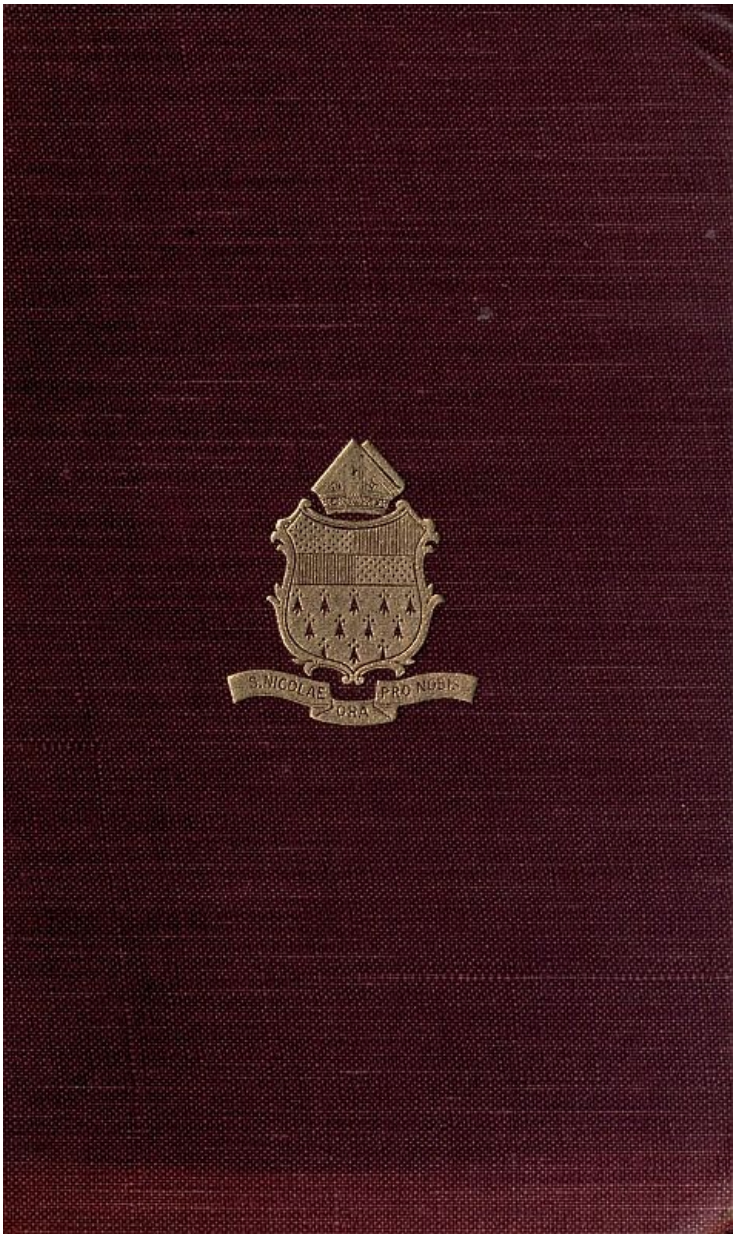
S. NICOLAE ORA PRO NOBIS

The St. Nicholas Series
Edited by the Rev. Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B.

BLESSED EDMUND CAMPION

"Go seek thy peace in war:
Who falls for love of God, shall rise a star!"
Ben Jonson

Nihil Obstat.
D. Beda Camm
Censor Deputatus

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Westmonasterii,
die 14 Januarii, 1908.

Campion reading an Address of Welcome to Queen Mary. ***p. 3.***

BLESSED EDMUND CAMPION

BY
LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

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1914

Campiani Fratribus
e Provincia Angliæ Societatis Jesu Tribus
opusculum suum
grato affectu
Scriptor

PREFATORY NOTE

THIS little book leans much, as every modern work on the subject must do, upon Mr. Richard Simpson's monograph: *Edmund Campion, Jesuit Protomartyr of England*. In many points supplementing or contradicting that splendid though biased narrative, the present writer has gratefully taken advantage of the researches of the Rev. John Hungerford Pollen, S.J. It may also be useful to state that the contemporary citations, when not otherwise specified, are from two invaluable witnesses, Parsons and Allen. The translated passages have been compared with the originals, and sometimes newly rendered.

L. I. G.

St. Ives, Cornwall: Epiphany, 1908.

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BLESSED EDMUND CAMPION

I

YOUTH: LONDON, OXFORD: 1540-1566

THE Campion family seem to have been both gentlefolk and yeomen, and to have been widely scattered over the land: in Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Essex, Sussex, and Devon. Nothing is definitely known, at present, as to which branch of the Campion family the Blessed Edmund belonged. Unlike many of the martyrs of Tudor and Stuart times, he was what is called a "born" Catholic: in more accurate phrase, a born heathen, as we all are! but baptized in his parents' religion soon after his birth in London, on the Feast of St. Paul the Apostle, January 25, in the year 1540, New Style. Edmund had two brothers, and a sister, none of whom played any great part in his after life. By the time he entered the Society of Jesus his father and mother were both dead: his written expression is that he had "hopes" they died in full communion with the Church; but evidently he did not know, being abroad, how it had fared with them in those terribly stormy days for Christian souls.

Edmund Campion, senior, was a book-seller, evidently in good standing, but not well to do. Some rich London guildsmen (probably of the Grocers' Company, for it was they who maintained him later), befriended the promising little boy at just the right moment, when his father was reluctantly going to apprentice him to a trade; and he was sent, at their joint expense, to a good Grammar School. Afterwards, under the same patrons, he entered Christ Hospital, then lately set up in Newgate Street (out of confiscated Franciscan funds and the generosity of Londoners), as the "foundation" of the sixteen-year-old king, Edward VI. Here the small Edmund, full of life and laughter, banded and belted, ran about in now extinct yellow petticoats, and one of the earliest pairs of those historic yellow stockings. He was thirteen, and quite famous already in the school-boy world of London for his learning and his attractive presence and speech, when Queen Mary Tudor, who had just succeeded to the English throne, entered her city in state. Out of many hundred eligible youngsters it was he who was chosen to stand up before her on a street platform, under the shadow of the old St. Paul's Cathedral, and shrilly welcome her in the Latin tongue. The Queen sat on a white horse, robed in gold-embroidered dark velvet, crimson or purplish, with the great sword carried before her by the boyish Earl of Surrey, with eight thousand mounted lords and gentlemen on either side, all the glittering ambassadors, and a bevy of beautifully apparelled ladies. On certain figures in that splendid and noisy pageant the child might have looked with pensive eyes, had he been able to forecast his own future; as it was, he cannot have failed to observe the Queen's younger sister, the thin, watchful, spirited girl who was known as the Lady Elizabeth. Another was there, of high office, though not of high descent, who was all goodness, piety and generosity, and may well have been drawn to notice Edmund Campion for the first time on that sunshiny afternoon in August, 1553. This was Sir Thomas White, then Lord Mayor of London, a staunch Catholic. He was an unlearned man and childless, who became, later, co-founder of the Merchant Taylors' School, and enricher of many towns. By 1555 he had opened his College of St. John Baptist, once a Cistercian house, at Oxford. The Grocers' Company at once approached him to admit their Blue-coat ward as a scholar; this he did, and conceived, almost as soon, a marked attachment to him; and two years later (when Edmund was not yet eighteen!) he made him a Senior Fellow. Campion's other early friends at the University were his first tutor, John Bavand, and Gregory Martin, a Foundation Scholar like himself. These two showed towards him a lifelong devotion.

Mary's troubled reign had covered the five most susceptible years of his youth, and restored to the country, despite its legal excesses, a definitely Catholic tone. Things were soon to change. War by statute against the Mass was first declared in 1559. Edmund Campion had left Oxford by the time that St. John's, deprived of President after President by the Royal Commissioners, was swept clean of all the dons who favoured, or in any degree tolerated, the jurisdiction of that Apostolic See which safeguarded the doctrine and honour of the Blessed Eucharist. But while he lived in his University world, he lived untouched. He was not looked upon as a Catholic. Nor was he such, if his heart could be fully judged by his outward actions. Buried in literature, philosophy, and pleasant tutorial work, he had become, in his cultured indifference, what St. Jerome's accusing vision called a "Ciceronian," and not a Christian: a skin-deep Ciceronian, however. There is only a bare possibility that, on proceeding M.A. in 1564, he escaped taking the wretched Oath of Supremacy, and thereby acknowledging the Queen as Head in spirituals as well as temporals within her realm of England. He stretched his conscience, as many were doing, thinking to help along the unity of faith, thereby defeating that unity for good and all. An almost unprecedented vogue at Oxford had served to blind him: he was so happy, so busy, so needed, so much at home there. Friends encouraged him; undergraduates flocked about him, and imitated his very gait and tone as they never have imitated any one else except Newman.

Campion was a famous Latin scholar; and he was a good Grecian and a good Hebraist: Greek and Hebrew were studies newly revived just before he was born. He spoke as well as he wrote. The flamboyant art of oratory, now almost extinct in our more quiet-coloured century, was then much studied and admired; and Campion was famous for debates and addresses and encomiums. When only twenty, he had been called upon to preach, though a layman, at the re-burial of poor

Amy Robsart, Lord Dudley's young wife, in the University church of St. Mary-the-Virgin; and this he did with great grace and animation, and with no small display of tact, for rumours of a murder with a motive had already got abroad. Such prominence may have come to Campion through Sir Thomas White's request: Sir Thomas had his associations with Cumnor. Four years later, Edmund Campion was able to put sincere love and sincere grief into a funeral oration (this time a Latin, not an English one) for the good and dear Founder himself, whose body was solemnly interred in the Chapel of his College.

In September, 1566, Queen Elizabeth made the first and happier of her two visits to Oxford. In the Queen's train was Dudley; also a quieter, plainer, less noticed man, but one out of all comparison with him for astute power: this was Sir William Cecil, the Prime Minister, afterwards known far and wide as Lord Burghley. There were farces and tragedies for the Queen at Oxford, there were musical performances, theological disputations, and other academic sports. In front of the vast assemblage stood forth Master Campion of St. John's, alone in his ruff, hood and gown. [8] As representative of the University, he welcomed smiling royalty, and Dudley, now Earl of Leicester, Chancellor of the University, and royalty's magnificent favourite. Campion shone, as well, in the absurd discussions in natural science which followed. The Queen and Dudley marked him, as they could not fail to do; for nothing could exceed the courtliness with which he had performed his task. The Chancellor sent for him in private, and expressed the Queen's good-will, whereby Campion might bid, through him, for whatever preferment he chose. But Campion, always truly modest and full of ironic humour as well, would ask of his patron nothing, he said, but his continued regard. The young bookman had a real liking for the vicious worldling, liked by several sensitively good men, then and since. Sir William Cecil also took instinctive interest in Campion and his eager dialectics. Altogether, there was no more popular man in Oxford or elsewhere. Campion was on the hilltop of professional and personal success.

In all this beautiful fountain-play of "the things which are seen," he was running the very [9] gravest risk of spiritual ruin. Perhaps he could not know, in his leaf-hung hermitage, what a tremendous muster of souls was going on, now that the ancient Church and a new statecraft were to fight it out in England. Queen Elizabeth's quarrel with the Pope was hardly more doctrinal than her royal father's had been: she, too, would have been quite content to live all her days as a Catholic, provided that Catholicism would prove her slave. The battle was not between two known religions. On one side was conservative England with a belief; on the other the strong spirit of secularism, plus a few fanatics formed not by the English, but the Continental Reformation. Religion in itself troubled the Court party as little as anything could possibly do. It was because the spirit of Catholicism seemed to them to threaten their particular kind of national pride, and to interfere with their particular kind of worldly prosperity, that Cromwell in one great Tudor reign, Burghley in the other, tried to put it down. They wished to get good citizenship [10] acknowledged not as an ideal, but as the supreme ideal, and they cared not how much else was shovelled out of the way. Their only use for religion was to bring it well under the authority of the law and the supremacy of the Crown. They had no objection to high respectability, but a most violent objection to the supernatural life, because that gives to those who practise it a dangerous independence. Elizabeth wanted unity and peace. Her subjects were to be forced by statute to pray less and to pray all alike; and to be thereby trained, somehow, to put Sacraments and Saints and the Papacy out of their heads. English humankind were to forsake their happy wild life, as it were, in the Church Universal, and all become, as if by magic, one large tame pet lying in a ribboned collar on the royal hearth. This is a vision which has appealed to many another head of a commonwealth as desirable, though unaccountably difficult! Some worthy persons have brought themselves to believe that nothing to speak of happened at the Reformation. But at the [11] time, everybody understood in the clearest fashion that an old moral system which would not come to terms had been dropped, and a more satisfactory one created. It was a working theory of that age, all over Europe, that a governor had the right to fix the belief of subjects. What was wanted in England was made to order, out of the rags of ruined doctrine and discipline. Foreign Protestants raged over its externals, as having too much of the old thing, but the bullying State, riding roughshod over Convocation and the laity, was perfectly at ease, knowing that there was more than enough of the new thing to colour the whole, and to colour it once and for ever. There was no affection for "continuity" in those days except among the "Romans." The attitude of their persecutors was that of men in a fury that any Englishman should dare to connect himself either with the world at large, or with his country's own disclaimed yesterday. The State Trials, for instance, bear this out in a score of places. Many an official answer resembles the one made to [12] that interesting character Blessed Ralph Sherwin, when he said truly that his coming back to his own land was to persuade the people to Catholic Unity. "You well know," so the Counsel reproved him in Westminster Hall, "that it was not lawful for you to persuade the Queen's subjects to any other religion than by her Highness's instructions is already professed." The "received religion," or, as it was quite as often called, the "Queen's religion," was simply the new idea of nationalism torn away from relationship to the arch-idea of nations, which is the law of God. It was, in practice, no adoring angel at the Altar, but a capable parish beadle at the door. Now this was never the Catholic conception of what religion has been, or is meant to be. Happily, many thoroughly patriotic Englishmen felt that no least jot of Christian revelation, however much it stood in the way of Cæsar, could, with their consent, be put by; and to keep it free they were willing to make themselves very disagreeable indeed to their revered sovereign, and to their more easy-going countrymen. With that rude definiteness which is ever their chief family trait, [13] the better Catholics threw their full force against the Oaths of Supremacy and Acts of Uniformity, as soon as they understood their meaning. The centuries passed since then prove that they succeeded in holding asunder what the Queen would join together. Was it unreasonable that she

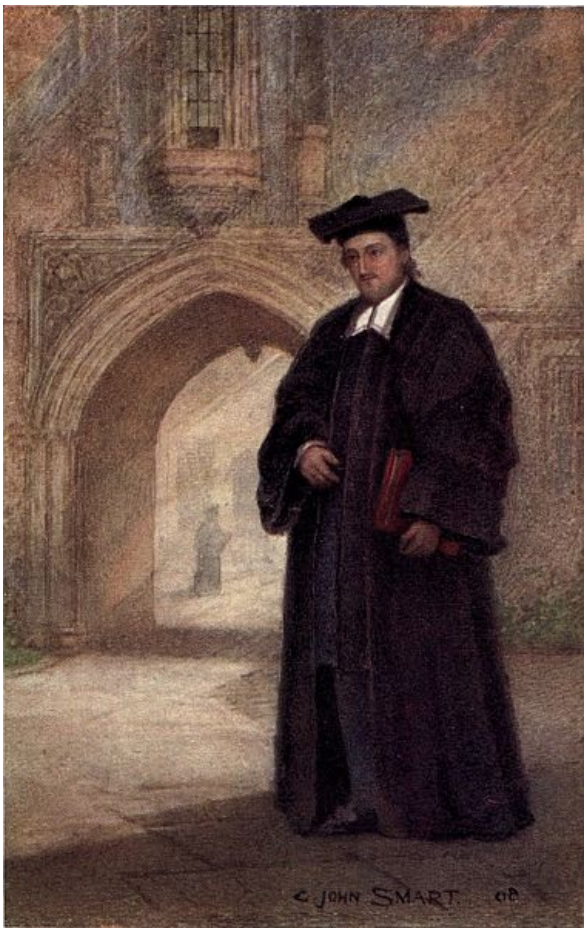
punished the men who tried to spoil her dream? And almost the chief of these men Edmund Campion was destined to be, though years were to pass before he lent his whole heart to the work God willed him to do.

II

THE HOUR OF UNREST: OXFORD, DUBLIN: 1566-1570

[14]

THOUSANDS who were comfortably placed in life, and conscientious, too, had a great deal to suffer until things were made plain. Edmund Campion began to fret, and argue, and ponder, and pray for light in secret, for several years going about “that most ingeniose Place” (as a later lover called Oxford) with heavy thoughts. Oxford itself, despite the Ecclesiastical Commission fixed there to worry it, was more Catholic in spirit than any other city in England. Nevertheless Campion’s temptation to conform was very great. We must remember that many of his first impressions and memories were Anglican. He was brought up during his early school life on the new Liturgy, which came into operation before his tenth year. He knew now, in manhood, that to [15] change about, and forsake the State religion for the only Church which is as exacting as her Master, would be to see the ruin of his happy career. His strong point, in the beginning, was not what is called brute courage. His was the nervous, Hamlet-like temper, natural to students and recluses, which, by a fatal error, puts endless thinking into what needs only to be done.



Bld. Edmund Campion in Proctor’s robes.
(Gateway of St. John’s College, Oxford, in background)

During these years Campion read a great deal of theology, as in his position he was bound to do, according to University rules. Where everything else except his inmost heart inclined him to heresy, the Fathers drove him back upon the fulness of revealed truth. The day which he spent with St. Augustine, or St. Jerome, or St. John Chrysostom, was a day on which (to catch up the phrase of his friend and biographer, Fr. Robert Parsons, himself a Balliol man) he was ready “to pull out this thorn of conscience.” But on the morrow returned the old spirit of obstinacy and delay. Meanwhile the Anglican influence was gaining for Campion’s dearest [16] friend of many, Richard Cheyney, the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, was drawing him on towards his own ideals, which were “Catholic-minded,” if not Catholic. The learned, gentle and lovable Cheyney withstood with zest the risen Puritan party, and in his hold on sound doctrine stood apart from all his colleagues on the Episcopal Bench. He had been brought up as a Catholic, and ordained according to the full Catholic ritual, in 1534. The reminder is sometimes needed that Protestants did not shoot up full-grown, that all original Protestantism was made up of human material once Catholic. From first to last, however, Cheyney could not be forced to coerce the Church which he had abandoned. In this he stood not, as has been stated, quite alone among the Elizabethan Bishops, for Downham of Chester and Ghest of Rochester shared his honourable abstinence, though in less degree. The moment Cheyney was out of the way, the Catholics on his diocesan ground, hitherto safe, were mercilessly harried. He had been made a Bishop against his will, displacing the true occupant of the See, when his [17] friend Edmund Campion was two-and-twenty. In most matters Cheyney followed Luther; Cranmer’s more heretical doctrines, which prevailed on all sides in England, he thoroughly hated. He longed always for a reconciliation which was never to be, and never can be. He longed to see the Catholics (against the well-thought-out and oft-repeated prohibition of their leaders, between 1562 and 1606) do a little evil to procure a great good: namely, smooth matters over, escape their terribly severe penalties, and in the end become able to leaven the lump of English error, by the mere preliminary of attendance at the service of Common Prayer according to law, in their own old parish churches. The Book of Common Prayer, as he would remind them, was expressly designed to suit persons of various and even contradictory religious views: Catholic; not-so-very Catholic; ex-Catholic; non-Catholic; anti-Catholic! Campion often rode over the hills to Gloucester to sit by the episcopal hearth-fire, book on knee, and hear such theories as this, and sympathize with the lonely old man who “saw visions,” and had little else in his vexed life to [18] content him. His strong double desire was to save by his own effort for the Church of England separated from Rome, that great body of ancient belief and practice sure otherwise to be lost in the flood of invited Calvinism; and to secure Edmund Campion himself as his intellectual coadjutor and successor, as one of high gifts likely to “drink in his thoughts and become his heir.” The two were together, not only in matters of dogma, but in all minor points. Cheyney shared with Campion dislike of politics, telling the Council that in such matters he was “a man of small experience and little observation.” He kept his old priestly ideals, and would never marry.

Campion, too, chose to be a celibate. If he gave his heart to either Church, he saw even then that it must be an undivided heart. To him, with his underlying tenderness towards the ancient faith, and his dream of peacemaking through compromise, which is so English, and just in these matters so mistaken, the mission thus opened out appealed. Half reluctantly, yet not realizing the [19] disloyalty of his act (as he himself tells us), he allowed himself to receive from Cheyney's hands Deacon's orders in the Church of England.

His interior struggle, from this day forth, went from bad to worse. With the unaffected simplicity of his character, he talked over his difficulties not only with Cheyney, but with any one at Oxford who seemed able to help him. As a consequence, the Grocers' Company, whose exhibition he still held, heard rumours, grew uneasy, and began to suspect him, ending in 1568 by inviting Campion up to London to save his credit by preaching at Paul's Cross, and publicly "favouring," as they expressed it, "the religion now authorized." He begged for time, and that being granted, for more time. He attended a court of the Company in order to plead engagements, and to say that he was not his own man, while deep in academic duties and at the service of undergraduates: "divers worshipful men's children," he calls them. He was Public Orator and Proctor, in fact, by now, as well as Fellow and Tutor of his College. (He never resided [20] long enough to take his Doctor's degree.) He exacted from the Company a written statement of the dogmas he was expected to avow; and finding it impossible to subscribe to the hot heterodoxy thus laid down, he cut his first tether by resigning his exhibition.

His most brilliant colleague at St. John's, Gregory Martin, who had protested in vain against Campion's diaconate (which was to cause the recipient extreme remorse for a long time), had become a convert to Catholicism, and sacrificed all his secular prospects. He wrote to his dear friend to warn him against ambition, and to urge on him escape from moral bondage. "Come!" the fervent letter cried; "if we two can but live together, we can live on nothing. If this be too little, I have money; and if this also fails, one thing is left: 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy!'" Such earnest words, though seeming wasted, had their share in shaking Edmund Campion's rest.

With the summer term of 1570 his Proctorate expired. He spent the Long Vacation in tutoring [21] the eight-years-old Harry Vaux, eldest son of Lord Vaux of Harrowden, who afterwards beautifully redeemed his childish promise. The end of Michaelmas term found Campion face to face for the last time with that life which he had so loved, and in which, with his scientific enthusiasm for letters, he had been such a wonderful inspiration to young men. There was no conscious motive in his heart deeper than a thirst for such freedom as had become difficult in a Puritanizing University, when he cut himself loose, slipped out of it for good, and took ship for Ireland.

In the new move he had the approbation of Leicester, and the companionship of a much-attached Oxford disciple, Richard Stanihurst, who is remembered by posterity only for his grotesque translation of Virgil. Campion may well have left home with the understanding that he should have a clear educational field in Dublin, but he arrived a little too late. The outlook had been very bright. Some good men then in power were eager for the revival of the extinct University of Dublin, an ancient Papal foundation, but ruined, as all the great Schools were (most [22] of them permanently, some only temporarily), by the religious changes. The chief supporters of the plan were enthusiastic, far-sighted, and most liberally inclined towards Catholics. Fear and prejudice therefore stepped in, in the person of Elizabeth's Irish Bishops. The Lord Chancellor, Dr. Weston, wrote privately to the Queen, deploring the popularity of the scheme, and begging her to take the unborn foundation "into her merciful, motherly care." She followed that advice. In token thereof, in due season arose Trinity College, Dublin, as a complete checkmate to the earlier project, quite safe for evermore from Papist blight. Thus was Campion cheated of a continuance of his natural vocation, in serving upon the staff of the new University. Two of his friends who had most concern in it were James Stanihurst, father of Richard, and Sir Henry Sidney, then Lord Deputy of Ireland, who had proffered it lands and money. Leicester would have provided Campion with a letter of introduction to Sir Henry, his own brother-in-law. The latter's young [23] son, Philip, was at this time a student in Oxford, where his governor, Thomas Thornton of Christ Church, afterwards Vice-Chancellor, had been constantly in Campion's society. Sir Henry Sidney always bore himself most kindly towards Campion. The latter lived, a more than welcome guest, under the roof of James Stanihurst, then Recorder of Dublin, and Speaker of the local House of Commons. Stanihurst was the head of an Anglo-Irish family not openly Catholic since Queen Mary's reign. Indeed, in his public capacity, he had often sided against Catholicism, although he was as friendly as Sidney himself to those who professed it. In the midst of this temporizing household, Campion, himself a temporizer, came during the winter to be doubted by certain bigots outside. Very possibly he was too free-spoken. Campion "came to Ireland believing in practically all Catholic dogmas, even in the Eucharist, and in the authority of the Council of Trent." The impression may have got abroad that his then unknown variety of Anglicanism differed little from the dangerous creed of times past, lately discovered to be the proper business [24] of the police! Whatever the reason, Campion began to be a marked man. Sir Henry Sidney told Stanihurst with heat, that so long as he was Governor he would see to it that "no busy knave of them all should trouble him," on Campion's account. Under this unpleasant circumstance of espial, added to the disappointment he had just undergone, the sensitive exile presently fell ill, and got a most affectionate nursing from the Stanihursts, till his strength revived. He started as soon to write a treatise on a subject of which his mind, up to now, had been full: the character and aim of the ideal youth at the Universities. This *De Juvene Academico* reminds us of a theme by another great Oxonian who was in Dublin three hundred years later, and had also to face the

heartbreaking failure of an Irish University dreamed of, and not to be. Campion afterwards recast his fine little work, and under its second form it is to be found among the few *Opuscula* published after his death. His comely face and gracious manner were quickly taken into favour in his Dublin [25] circle. While he was gaining a contrary repute on hearsay, the few who had access to him nicknamed him “the Angel.”

Meanwhile, hating idleness, and bent on redeeming what may have looked like a foolish absence from Oxford, Campion planned the composition of a brief *History of Ireland*. Friends helped him in “inquiring out antiquities of the land.” He was what we should call a thorough “researcher,” a bird by no means common in those early days. He went here and there among musty manuscript records of the city, and from library to library in the country, happily gathering in his materials for work. He had been some three months in Ireland when on a March midnight there came a sudden warning from the faithful Lord Deputy, who was on the point of leaving for England. Campion learned thereby that Weston the Chancellor had pursuivants ready to arrest him the next morning! The Stanihursts acted at once, and hurried their friend into the care of Sir Christopher Barnewall and Dame Marion Sherry, his wife, of Turvey House, in the parish of [26] Donabate, eight miles away. There, breathless with the sudden flight through the dark, the three devoted escorts left him in safety.

III

STEPS FORWARD: IRELAND: 1571

THE Barnewalls were in feeling both more Catholic and more Irish than the Stanihursts, and they showed Edmund Campion a no less tender hospitality. The great house was in a beautiful and remote situation. Running in and out of it was a horde of laughing children, including the eleven-year-old Janet who was to become Richard Stanihurst's early-dying wife. Campion loved the hearty Knight, their father, and their lady mother, whom he calls "in very sooth, a most gentle and godly woman." Though he mingled freely with the life of the family, he was considerately given the great garret to write in and hide in. Here he began his little *History*. First of all, though, he sent back a grateful missive in Latin to the men who had been so providently kind to him. To the Recorder, he says: "Was I not fortunate in such friendship and [28] patronage as yours? How good, how generous it was of you to take in an unknown stranger, and to keep him all these months on the fat of the land! You looked after my health as carefully as after Richard's, the son worthy of your love. You supplied me, too, with books, and made the best possible provision for my time of study: may I perish, if ever in this world, outside my room in Oxford, I had sweeter dealings with the Muses! . . . Up to this, I have had to thank you for conveniences; but now I must thank you for my rescue, and my very breath,—yes, breath is just the word! for they who succumb to these persecutors are wont to be thrust into dismal dungeons, where they inhale filthy fogs, and are cut off from wholesome air. But now, through you and your children's kindness, I shall live, please God . . . most happily." The stress laid, in this affectionate letter, upon the writer's appreciation of personal care, of the privacy dear to students, of good diet and pure air, tells its own tale of physical delicacy. Campion was slight in build, and like [29] many another tireless and quenchless spirit known to history, at no time really strong. He ends by asking that his St. Bernard may be sent on to him, and encloses a lively page for his friend Richard, recalling the service rendered in snatching him from danger, and conveying him to Turvey House. "Is it not hard," Campion breaks out, "that beholden to you as I am, I have no way of showing it? . . . Meanwhile, if these buried relics have any flavour of the old Campion, their flavour is for you . . . you and your brother Walter . . . you, up that whole night through, and he, summoned to us from his wife's side. Seriously, I owe you much. I have nothing to write about unless you have time and inclination for a laugh. Have you? Then hold your breath, and listen! The day after I came here, as I sat down to work, into the bedroom burst a poor old soul, coming on what business I wot not. She knew nothing of me, so seeing me suddenly at her left, took me for a ghost! Her hair rose on end; she went dead white; she stared aghast; her jaw fell. 'What is [30] the matter?' quoth I, whereupon she almost collapsed with fright. Not a syllable could she utter, but made shift to flounce out of the room, and pour into her mistress's ear how some sort of hideous spectre had appeared to her on the top floor! This was repeated to me at supper. They called the little old thing in, and made her relate her scare. We all nearly died with laughter; and I was established as quite alive."

The book, put together, as was almost all Campion's literary work, under highly disturbing conditions, is unfinished; and what there is of it is sketchy and out of proportion. One of its charms is its character-drawing, including the speeches with which, after the fashion of Livy, Campion fits the situation by putting them into the mouths of his personages. His was a dramatic mind. He knew both history and human nature: the latter knowledge crops up everywhere in all that he wrote, and spoke, and did, and supplied him with no small share of his power over others. [31] The outstanding charm of the *History of Ireland* is its style, crisp, arresting, bright with idiom: an idiom so noble and so much his own, that one understands the almost breathless admiration with which his generation looked up to him and listened to him. But this book, like the *View of the Present State*, written some seventeen years later by another gentle-hearted Englishman, the poet Spenser, is all wrong in its theory that to get any footing in the modern world the "mere Irishry" must be Anglicized. Campion did not know the Celts, their laws, nor their literature; he never came nearer to them than through chronicles written in scorn of them, or the daily table-talk, wide of the mark, of the English Pale. Yet, according to his opportunity, he loved the country and the people, and deplored that the descendants of a race of mediæval scholars should be cut off from education. Afterwards he felt that his rather helter-skelter pamphlet represented limited knowledge and unformed opinion; he speaks of it as "premature," and wished, when he lost the [32] manuscript, that it might perish rather than reach the public as it was. It bore a dedication to the Earl of Leicester, his "singular good lord," in the hope that it might "make his travel seem neither causeless nor fruitless," or, as he says again in plainer language: "I render you my poor book as an account of my voyage." It was first printed, without supervision from the author, in a very muddled, unsatisfactory way, by Raphael Holinshed in 1577; then in more scholarly fashion by Sir James Ware, in his *Ancient Irish Histories*, 1633. We all remember how useful Holinshed's pages were to Shakespeare: the twenty lines or so of the famous description of Wolsey in Act IV, Scene 2, of *Henry VIII*, is taken almost word for word from what Campion had written, and Holinshed had incorporated in his *Chronicles*.

Nowhere in this little book, begun and broken off at Turvey House, and purposely non-committal in its religious expressions, is there any sign that its author had already, as some have thought, returned to the Church. For Parsons, his earliest biographer, whose facts concerning [33] these years were supplied by Richard Stanihurst, says of Campion that his purity and devoutness in Ireland were marked, although he was not in the Church. Fr. Pollen, summing up the evidence of these written pages, considers Campion "near to the Church, but distinctly avoiding a confession of faith."

Chancellor Weston, a zealot of the most pronounced Protestant type, made a livelier pursuit after having been baffled by Campion's escape from Dublin. The latter found himself quite unable to lead any sort of orderly life, thanks to the restless hue and cry after him; and one day he recognized with a shock of horror the penalties to which he was exposing the generous friends, so far unmolested, who were giving him shelter. His conscience would not allow him to come out with a flat denial of Catholic tenets or sympathies. His only alternative, after a half-year in Ireland, was flight homeward. Here once more he was aided (though they were in great sorrow at [34] his decision) by his Anglo-Irish friends, those "dear friends which ever after he loved most entirely, and they him."

Richard Stanihurst, as private tutor to the children of the Earl of Kildare, had acquaintance with the Earl's steward, Melchior Hussey. This man (a character by no means admirable) was about to embark at Drogheda for a visit to England, and it was arranged that Campion should be disguised to pass as his Irish servant. Thus, in the month of May, putting himself under the special patronage of the national Saint, and adopting his name, Campion boarded the ship as "Mr. Patrick." Officers of the law promptly appeared on the track of the quasi-Papist, delaying the weighing of the anchor, annoying the crew, upsetting the cargo, and questioning every passenger on deck except the harmless-looking person who stood "in a lackey's weed" behind Hussey. Edmund Campion was a born actor. He put on and kept up a highly stupid expression, while he was praying with might and main for St. Patrick's intercession in his great danger! He had cause to thank his new patron in Heaven, although the party of searchers swooped upon his [35] bags below deck, and carried off with them the rough draft of his precious manuscript, that *History of Ireland* which he was to see no more for many a year.

The early summer of 1571 was ill-starred. Various startling events had conjoined like tidal waves to lift the misbehaving English Government up to its highest pitch of alarm. Chief of these was the Bull of Deposition against Queen Elizabeth, issued by the Holy See after consultation with many temperate English advisers. John Felton, a gentleman of Southwark, posted a copy of it upon the palace gates of the Bishop of London, on the morning of May 25, the Feast of Corpus Christi: by August he was to pay for the bold act with his life. The Queen of Scots had newly arrived in England. London, by the time Campion reached it, was in a ferment. "Nothing was to be found there but fears, suspicions, arrestings, condemnations, tortures, executions. . . . The Queen and Council were so troubled that they could not tell whom to trust, and so fell to rigorous [36] proceedings against all, but especially against Catholics, whom they most feared; so that Campion could not tell where to rest in England, all men being in fear and jealousy one of another."

Campion had not broken his old bonds, yet nothing interested him so powerfully as the things of religion. The love of God was lying in wait for him, and forced his hand. Of all possible places in London where he might have gone on the 26th or 27th of May, he chose Westminster Hall, in order to attend the trial of Dr. John Storey, former Principal of Broadgates Hall (Pembroke College) in Oxford, and that University's first Regius Professor of Civil Law. Dr. Storey was very feeble for his years, which were sixty-seven. By a wretched breach of international law he had been trapped at Antwerp, carried away from his wife and family to England, and arraigned for having "feloniously and traitorously comforted Richard Norton," his own friend, the old hero of the Pilgrimage of Grace. But the real cause of his arrest and execution was a much larger matter. [37] He was a troublesomely consistent person. He had spoken out in the House of Commons against the new Liturgy in the first Parliament of Edward VI, and against the Supremacy Bill in the first Parliament of Queen Elizabeth. He had been an Ecclesiastical Commissioner under Queen Mary. Foxe, in the famous *Book of Martyrs*, lies in the most reckless way about Storey's part in those sordid bygone persecutions, and Holinshed and Strype and many another historian repeat Foxe.

Storey was an honourable and even merciful man, but a man of his time. People were much of a piece in the sixteenth century when it came to holding to the grindstone the nose of the unwilling! There is this to be said, however: that the Marian courts dealt out death to heretics and malcontents, and candidly stopped there, and were not inspired to any cruelty more subtle; whereas Good Queen Bess not only dealt out death very much more liberally, but invented a poison for all the springs of life. Her statutes, terribly oppressive from the first, ended in what [38] Burke calls the most hateful code framed since the world began: Penal Laws which, especially from 1585 on, struck without mercy at Catholics in their rights of worship, property, inheritance, education, travel, professions, public service and private liberties of every kind. Another point to be noted in passing is that Queen Mary persecuted her subjects for changing their religion. Her more ingenious sister persecuted them for not changing it! Historians have not dwelt much upon the difference, but to a reader with some philosophy in him it will have no little weight.

Dr. Storey was executed five days after his trial, under even more horrible circumstances than were usual. Edmund Campion had then left England, after an exceedingly short stay. His standing watch in Westminster Hall had done more for him than many arguments and exhortations: it kindled a spark in him which made him, in Lord Falkland's phrase, "ready for the utmost hazard of war." There was a cause to which he could run home; there was a vocation to [39] which he could climb: these opened out before him as he stood in the surging indoor crowd. "He was animated by that blessed man's example," says Parsons, "to any danger and peril for the same faith for which the Doctor died." Edmund Campion lost no time. There had been enough of that sad old game, and he was thirty-one years old, with three quarters of his too brief life behind him. Now he was awake, and had touched, in the dark, his heart's long-patient Master. He set out at once for the nearest stronghold of apostolic souls, the English Seminary at Douay in Belgium.

IV

CHEYNEY AGAIN: DOUAY: 1571

[40]

INTERRUPTED sea-voyages were his fate. This time, half-way across the Channel, his ship was hailed by a Government frigate, *The Hare*, which demanded to be shown the ship's sailing papers, and the passports of her passengers. Campion had none. Moreover, as his religion was suspected, the dutiful Protestant frigate, homeward bound, promptly swallowed him, bag and baggage. His generous friends in Ireland had forced upon him money for his needs, and the captain who now kidnapped him found it convenient to keep the money, but kind-heartedly let his prisoner lose himself in the streets of Dover. Other friends quickly made the losses good. On Campion's second attempt to reach Calais all went well. He did not lack his secular epitaph, so to [41] speak, at Court. It was not then a legal crime, though it soon became so, for a Catholic Englishman to leave the country fast being made into a hell for him. The mighty Cecil treated this expatriation as quite voluntary. "And it is a very great pity," he chose to say, looking into Richard Stanihurst's gratified eyes, "for Master Campion was one of the diamonds of England."

The date of Campion's reconciliation to the Church is unknown. It seems unlikely to have taken place in Ireland. He may have been absolved from his schism in London, or else as soon as he had reached Douay. There was a busy trade in wool still flourishing at that time between Flanders and England, and in the thrifty, kindly towns of the exporting country refugees formed a considerable part of the population. Douay, properly speaking, Douai, was called "Doway" by its foster-children. The creation of its English Seminary was a master-stroke of Dr. William Allen, Canon of York, afterwards Cardinal, once of Oriel College, Oxford, and Principal of St. Mary Hall. [42] Indeed, "Oxford may be said to have founded Douay." Allen was aided by many men of mark, notably by his old tutor, Morgan Phillipps, and by the latter's bequeathed funds; also by the Flemish Abbots and layfolk. Campion seems to have been the eighteenth arrival in the newly established house of young, prayerful, enthusiastic men. He found there as Professor of Hebrew, his beloved Gregory Martin, and a learned colleague, Richard Bristow, late Fellow of Exeter College, the first of the Seminarian priests to be ordained: two props and pillars of the foundation. There also was Thomas Stapleton, late Fellow of New College, the most able Catholic controversialist of the age. Five of the twenty English students enrolled in 1571, joined the Society of Jesus. The College, destined to speedy and splendid development, was affiliated to the Douay University, established some eight years before it by Spanish munificence and a Papal Bull. Here, then, Edmund Campion came into his soul's haven, "out of the swing of the sea."

It was Dr. Allen's missionary policy that all his sons, before memory of them had grown dim at [43] home, should write to their more undecided friends in England, doing what they could to win them to the service of Christ in the Church Catholic. Campion sent a very long document to this end to his venerated and now ageing friend, Bishop Cheyney: a wonderful letter, in that live Elizabethan English, which was bold as surgery itself, yet charged with feeling. Associating his beliefs with Cheyney's as the writer does, he helps us to understand his own doctrinal position while in Oxford and in Dublin. He failed in both places, writes Fr. Morris, for the same reason: "the position was a false one, for it was an effort to serve two masters, and to live like a Catholic and teach the Catholic religion outside the pale of the Catholic Church." "There is no end or measure," he now tells Cheyney from Douay, "to my thinking of you; and I never think of you without being horribly ashamed. . . . So often was I with you at Gloucester, so often in your private chamber, with no one near us, when I could have done this business, and I did it not!" By [44] "this business" he means confessing Catholic truth, and urging Cheyney to return to it. "And what is worse, I have added flames to the fever by assenting and assisting. And although you were superior to me, in your counterfeited dignity, in wealth, age and learning, and though I was not bound to look after the physicking or dieting of your soul, yet, since you were of so easy and sweet a temper as in spite of your grey hairs to admit me, young as I was, to familiar intercourse with you, to say whatever I chose, in all security and secrecy, while you imparted to me your sorrows and all the calumnies of the other heretics against you; and since like a father you exhorted me to walk straight and upright in the royal road, to follow the steps of the Church, the Councils, and the Fathers, and to believe that where there was a consensus of these there could be no spot of falsehood; I am very angry with myself that I neglected to use such a beautiful opportunity of recommending the Faith: that through false modesty or culpable negligence, I did [45] not address with boldness one who was so near to the Kingdom of God. But as I have no longer the occasion that I had of persuading you face to face, it remains that I should send my words to you to witness my regard, my care, my anxiety for you, known to Him to whom I make my daily prayer for your salvation. Listen, I beseech you, listen to a few words. You are sixty years old, more or less" (Cheyney was really sixty-eight), "of uncertain health, of weakened body; the hatred of heretics, the pity of Catholics, the talk of the people, the sorrow of your friends, the joke of your enemies. Who do you think yourself to be? What do you expect? What is your life? Wherein lies your hope? In the heretics hating you so implacably and abusing you so roundly? Because of all heresiarchs you are the least crazy? Because you confess the Living Presence of Christ on the Altar, and the freedom of man's will? Because you persecute no Catholics in your diocese? Because you are hospitable to your townspeople, and to good men? Because you plunder not your palace and lands, as your brethren do? Surely these things will avail much, if you return [46] to the bosom of the Church, if you suffer even the smallest persecution in common with those of the Household of Faith, or join your prayers with theirs. But now, whilst you are a stranger and an enemy, whilst, like a base deserter, you fight under an alien flag, it is in vain to attempt to cover your crimes with the cloak of virtues. . . . What is the use of fighting for many articles of

the Faith, and to perish for doubting of a few? . . . He believes no one article of the Faith who refuses to believe any single one. In vain do you defend the religion of Catholics, if you hug only that which you like, and cut off all that seems not right in your eyes. There is but one plain, known road: not enclosed by your palings or mine, not by private judgment, but by the severe laws of humility and obedience: when you wander from these you are lost. You must be altogether within the house of God, within the walls of salvation, to be sound and safe from all injury; if you wander and walk abroad ever so little, if you carelessly thrust hand or foot out of [47] the ship, if you stir up ever so small a mutiny in the crew, you shall be thrust forth: the door is shut, the ocean roars: you are undone! . . . Do you remember the sober and solemn answer which you gave me when three years ago we met in the house of Thomas Dutton at Shireburn, where we were to dine? We were talking of St. Cyprian. I objected to you (in order to discover your real opinions) that Synod of Carthage which erred about the baptism of infants. You answered truly that the Holy Spirit was not promised to one Province, but to the Church; that the Universal Church is represented in a full Council; and that no doctrine can be pointed out about which such a Council ever erred. Acknowledge your own weapons, which you used against the adversaries of the Mystery of the Eucharist! . . . Here you have the most . . . apostolic men collected at Trent . . . to contend for the ancient faith of the Fathers! All these, whilst you live as you are living, anathematize you, hiss you out, excommunicate you, abjure you." Campion goes on to urge upon Cheyney an outward adherence to the Council which had discussed and resolved his own private [48] beliefs. "Especially now you have declared war against your colleagues, why do you not make full submission, without any exceptions, to the discipline of these Fathers? . . . Once more, consult your own heart, my poor old friend! give me back your old beauty, and those excellent gifts which have been hitherto smothered in the mud of dishonesty. Give yourself to your Mother who begot you to Christ, nourished you, consecrated you; acknowledge how cruel and undutiful you have been: let confession be the salve of your sin. . . . Be merciful to your soul; spare my grief. Your ship is wrecked, your merchandise lost: nevertheless, seize the plank of penance, and come even naked into the port of the Church. Fear not but that Christ will preserve you with His hand, run to meet you, kiss you, and put on you the white garment: Saints and Angels will sing for joy! Take no thought for your life: He will take thought for you who gives the beasts their food, and feeds the young ravens that call upon Him. If you but made trial of our banishment, if you but cleared [49] your conscience, and came to behold and consider the living examples of piety which are shown here by Bishops, priests, friars, Masters of Colleges, rulers of Provinces, lay people of every age, rank and sex, I believe that you would give up six hundred Englands for the opportunity of redeeming the residue of your time by tears and sorrow. . . . Pardon me, my venerated old friend, for these just reproaches, and for the heat of my love. Suffer me to hate that deadly disease; let me ward off the imminent danger of so noble a man and so dear a friend with any dose, however bitter. And now if Christ give grace and you do not refuse, my hopes of you are equal to my love: and I love you as passing excellent in nature, in learning, in gentleness, in goodness, and as doubly dear to me for your many kindnesses and courtesies. If you recover your [spiritual] health, you make me happy for ever. If you slight me, this letter is my witness. God judge between you and me: your blood be on yourself! Farewell, from him that most desires your salvation."

One phrase in this steel web of phrases from the pen of a rhetorician with a heart, shows that [50] Campion knew of Cheyney's sad and now complicated position in England. The letter was written November 1, 1571. A Convocation had met in the preceding April, on the heels of the Act of Uniformity, to which Cheyney was summoned in vain. It required the signing of the Thirty-nine Articles, and enacted, under Archbishop Grindal's leadership, many things equally hateful to Cheyney, such as displacement and defacement of Altar-stones—(a great symbol, this, and no mere act of pillage!), the abolition of Prayers for the Dead, the prohibition even of the Sign of the Cross in church. Cheyney, excommunicated for his wilful absence, afterwards sued by proxy for absolution, for the sake of averting temporal penalties: but he had nothing more to do with the hierarchy. "Now you have declared war against your colleagues," shows that Campion had heard accurate news of all this.

The moment may have seemed to Campion exactly favourable for such a strong appeal. One of [51] Cheyney's successors in his See declared: "It was certain he died a Papist." This was contradicted by a lesser authority, but yet a good one. If it were indeed "certain", at least Edmund Campion, to whom the tidings would have been most consoling, never knew of it. It seems as if Cheyney could not have answered that bugle-call of a letter. He is said, however, to have kept it always, and to have called it his greatest treasure.

How these many cries of "the heat of my love" must have haunted his ear! It is hardly in human nature to value such a document at all (and there are passages in it more ruthless, after the manner of the time, than any we have quoted), unless for the reflex reason that it does its intended work in the heart of the receiver. To have valued it either as a piece of literary cleverness, or as a monument of misdirected concern, would have been equally cynical, and clean contrary to Cheyney's known attitude towards his friend. He did not live to see Campion return to England. Shunning the bigots and the unprincipled men in power to the last, and sheltering the [52] Catholics all he could, he shut himself up at Gloucester, a whole High Church party in himself, wounded and at bay: and there in 1579 he died, and was buried in the glorious Cathedral, without an epitaph. The dream of his lifetime, as well as Edmund Campion's sonship, he had loved and lost.

V

THE CALL TO COME UP HIGHER: DOUAY, PRAGUE: 1571-1573

IN Allen's *Apology for Seminaries* there is a beautiful account of the ideals of Douay. "The first thought of the founders of the College had been to attract the young English exiles who were living in Flanders from their solitary and self-guided study to a more exact method and to collegiate obedience; and their next, to provide for the rising generation in England a succession of learned Catholics, especially of clergy, to take the place of those removed by old age, imprisonment, and persecution. Their design then was to draw together out of England the 'best wits' from the following classes; those inclined to Catholicism; those who desired a more exact education than could be then obtained at Oxford or Cambridge, 'where no art, holy or profane, [54] was thoroughly studied, and some not touched at all;' those who were scrupulous about taking the Oath of the Queen's supremacy; those who disliked to be forced, as they were in some Colleges of the English Universities, to enter the ministry; . . . and those who were doubtful which religion was the true one, and were disgusted that they were forced into one without being allowed opportunity of inquiring into the other." The spirit of Douay was not reactionary, but the best spirit of the English Renaissance. It had, besides, a character or atmosphere holy and bright, not formed by mere human culture: it was as "a garden enclosed, and a fountain sealed." Campion found there a peace such as he had never known. He had already, at Oxford, given seven years to philosophy, and six more to Aristotle, positive theology, and the Fathers. The study of scholastic theology was dead in Oxford: Campion now first took up the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. He arrived in June, and in August he bought a noble edition of the *Summa* for his own [55] use, in three volumes folio. This was discovered in 1887 by Canon Didiot of Lille, and it is now at the Roehampton Noviciate. Several features make it a particularly interesting relic: Campion's signature, with the date of his purchase, on the flyleaf; various beautifully executed little drawings, underlinings, and a host of marginal notes in Latin. By far the most touching of these relates to what St. Thomas quotes from Gennadius on the baptism of blood. Blessed Edmund Campion wrote in a tall, bold hand, over against this passage, the one musing word, "Martyrdom." Canon Didiot, with that intimate touch of French sympathy, calls it "*mot radieux et prophétique*."

For nearly two years Campion followed the course of scholastic theology, taking his degree of Bachelor in January, 1573. He then received Minor Orders, and was ordained Sub-deacon. All went happily for him at Douay. He was again at his old work, and, as ever, he won the highest opinions from those among whom he moved. In his Oxford days he had always held lofty [56] standards before his pupils: "never to deliquesce into sloth, nor to dance away your time, nor to live for rioting and pleasure . . . but to give yourselves up to virtue and learning, and to reckon this the one, great, glorious and royal road." But the feeling in the exhortations of his later life is tenfold deeper, and strikes a far more haunting note of duty towards England, and towards the Church. This is a passage from the revised *De Juvene Academico*, which had first been sketched out years before in Dublin. "Listen to our Heavenly Father asking back his talents with usury! . . . Behold, by the wickedness of the wicked the house of God is devoted to flames and to destruction; numberless souls are being deceived, are being shaken, are being lost, any one of which is worth more than the empire of the whole world. . . . Sleep not while the Enemy watches; play not while he devours his prey; sink not into idleness and folly while his fangs are wet with your brothers' blood. It is not wealth nor liberty nor station, but the eternal inheritance of each of us, the very life-blood of our souls, our spirits, and our lives, that suffers. See, then, my dearest [57] young scholars and friends, that we lose none of this precious time, but carry hence a plentiful and rich crop, enough to supply the public want, and to gain for ourselves the reward of dutiful sons." One of those who listened to these words was destined to become the proto-martyr of the English Continental Seminaries: Cuthbert Mayne, a dear pupil of Campion's, who as a Devon lad had come up to Oxford and St. John's, had first conformed to the new regulations, and served as College Chaplain, then awakened from his delusion, and fled over seas for conscience' sake, "not to escape danger, but to be prepared for it," in response to one of Campion's burning letters. This letter was intercepted, but its purport had reached him, and decided him.

In the spring of 1573, Campion found himself driven to a course he had not contemplated on coming to Douay. As he slowly saw his way, he followed it, to horizon beyond horizon. He had many steps to take, because in his thirst for perfection he had far to travel. He told Dr. Allen he [58] wished to leave his present life, go on pilgrimage, in the spirit of penance, to the Tomb of the Apostles at Rome, and there seek admission into the Society of Jesus. The mediæval Orders would have less attraction for Campion: he was an intensely "modern" man. Now this was a severe blow to Allen: hardly less so to others of Campion's circle. Campion, the pride, the example, the hope of the Seminary, to quit it for good, and to quit it in order to join the most recent of religious communities—one which as yet had few English members! It was inexplicable. But Allen, like the great-hearted and broad-minded commander-in-chief he was, let him go without protest. He little foresaw that far from losing his most promising champion, he was but lending him to better masters of the interior life than himself, and would receive his trained strength again in the English Mission's spiritual day of battle.

Campion set out on foot across the Continent for Rome, along that road "trodden by many a Saxon king and English saint, to the Apostles' shrine." His companions walked with him all the [59] first day; but the next morning he sent them back, and pushed on alone. Solitude was henceforth his choice, whenever duty permitted. He must have had many strange adventures during that spring journey. We know of one of them, though not from him. At some point of the route,

probably on the northern Italian border, he came face to face with an old friend, an Oxonian, and a Protestant. The horseman first rode past the poor mendicant on the highway, and then was prompted by some dim sense of recognition to return and speak to him. On realizing that it was really Edmund Campion whom he used to know “in great pomp of prosperity,” he showed much concern, proffered his good-will and his purse, and begged to hear how Campion had fallen into that ill plight. But the pilgrim refused aid; and the other traveller heard something then and there of the “contempt of this world, and the eminent dignity of serving Christ in poverty,” which greatly moved him: and “us also,” adds Robert Parsons of Balliol, “that remained yet in Oxford, [60] when the report came to our ears.” A strange tale it must have seemed to those who knew their Master of Arts and all his old fastidiousness! He was by now a saint in the making, and they were fast losing touch with him. Personal holiness is, so to speak, a mining country: its progress and its wealth are underground, unguessed-at by the careless passer-by. A saint is a mystery because he walks so closely in the shadow of God, who is the Great Mystery.

When Campion reached Rome, and had paid his devotions to the holy places, he went to call upon Cardinal Gesualdi, who, as he stated afterwards, “having some liking of me, would have been the means to prefer me . . . but I, resolved what course to take, answered that I meant not to serve any man, but to enter into the Society of Jesus, thereof to vow and to be professed.” With this intention, Campion sought out the newly-elected head of that Society, Father Everard of Liège, whose surname was generally Latinized into Mercurianus, from Mercœur, his native village. He was fourth in his office, having succeeded that great personality St. Francis Borgia, on [61] St. George’s Day, April 23, 1573. Biographers have represented that Campion had a half-year’s delay in Rome before he was able to apply for admission to the Society; but such was not the case. He promptly presented himself, and was received as Mercœur’s first recruit, and received not as a postulant, but as a novice. As Anthony Wood tells us, “he was esteemed by the General of that Order to be a person every way complete.” Four years later, Campion most affectionately thanked his own old tutor, John Bavand, for unasked “introductions, help and money,” which had been supplied since he came to Rome. He speaks of himself as “one whom you knew never could repay you, but who was at the point, so to speak, of death. . . . You were munificent to me when I was going to enter the sepulchral rest of religion.” The aid he would not accept for himself on his journey from one friend, he had accepted in the city (and spent, no doubt, in almsgiving) from another. Perhaps Bavand was abroad, and heard of that incident which came to pass on the road: [62] certainly, he was one from whom Campion could not in chivalry refuse whatever he chose to share with him.

The Society of Jesus had been founded only six years before Campion was born. It had as yet no English “Province,” that is, no members living under the English flag with a domestic government of their own. But Edmund Campion was already well known to the Provincials on the Continent, who had a warm contest over him, every one of them wishing to add such a promising soldier to his own wing of the army of the Lord. As it fell out, Bohemia won. Campion was sent as one of a company to Vienna, and then from Vienna to Prague, where the Noviciate was, with Father Avellanedo, Confessor to the Empress, a man of wide experience. He was so deeply edified by his companion that, he told Fr. Parsons long after, it had kept him all his life “much affectioned” towards England and Englishmen. Prague was in a miserable, godless state: the [63] Catholics were poor and few: the great University had perished: and all this was due to the ruin, moral and material, produced by the preaching, at the dawn of the fifteenth century, of John Hus. That Hus got his Socialistic ideas from Wyclif was a fact never out of Campion’s mind while in Bohemia: for he thought that England owed some reparation to a country which she had helped to spoil, and he was more than willing to pay his part of that debt.

VI

THE WISHED-FOR DAWN: BOHEMIA: 1573-1579

CAMPION stayed but two months at Prague, as the small Noviciate was removed to Brünn in Moravia, where the inhabitants were most hostile to Catholicism. The Bishop of Olmütz begged the Jesuits to help him so far as their Rule permitted. Novices were sent out among the neighbouring villages, to catechize and instruct the poorer Catholics; and no one had so instant a success in this little enterprise as "God's Englishman." At the year's end his Novice Master, John Paul Campanus, became Rector of the College in Prague, and took Edmund Campion back with him. The latter left a good deal of his heart within the gray and austere walls of Brünn, as two of his charming letters show. In the old garden, under a mulberry tree, he had had a wonderful vision: Our Lady stood there, smiling at him, and offering him a purple robe. He knew the portent [65] of martyrdom, but for long hid it in his heart. At Prague Campion continued and increased his Douay employments. He opened the October term with what was called a "glorious peroration". As Professor of Rhetoric, he wrote, in 1574, a beautiful little treatise on that subject so familiar to him. His duty was to be first in the house to rise and last to go to bed; he spent his recreation-time catechizing children, receiving converts, visiting the prison and the hospital, or helping the cook in the kitchen! In January, 1575, he set up at his College a branch Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, or Sodality of Our Lady, of which he became president. About the same time he made his first vows. He was continually called upon for great College occasions, and to pronounce public panegyrics. "Whatever had to be done," says his pompous but sympathetic biographer Bombino, "was laid upon him." On getting a fresh task he would ask his Superior, in a spirit of perfect humility and confidence, if he was thought strong enough to add that to the rest? [66] and if the answer were Yes, he shouldered the new duty at once, much to the wonder of others. "I am in a continual bloom of health," he writes gallantly to his "dearest Parsons," who had just entered the Society; "I have no time whatever to be ill in!" Two sacred plays (six hours did it take to perform each of them!) came from Campion's truly dramatic pen in 1577. One was on the Sacrifice of Abraham; one on the melancholy career of King Saul. It is a matter of much regret that these are lost. He seems also to have composed dialogues and scenes for his own scholars, and to have put together at this same time his spirited account of the origin of the English schism, in a narrative (in Latin) of *The Divorce of King Henry VIII from his Wife and from the Church*. It was printed by Harpesfield, long after Campion's death.

Meanwhile Rudolph II had succeeded to the imperial throne; and the "magnificently provided" Envoy who was sent to Prague, bearing the congratulations of Queen Elizabeth, was none other [67] than Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney's mind was set upon seeing his old friend Campion, and talking with him; but he managed only with difficulty to carry out his wishes. He went officially in the Emperor's train to hear his friend (not yet in priest's orders) preach, and on his return to England unguardedly spoke with delight of the sermon. Whenever Sidney visited the Continent he was supposed to become tainted with a hankering after Catholicism, though in all his public actions he was conspicuously Protestant. Campion, who knew him from boyhood and was not given to misjudgment, believed that he had almost won over the star of English chivalry: "this young man so wonderfully beloved and admired," he calls him in 1576; a testimony doubly interesting, when we remember that Philip Sidney was then but three-and-twenty, to the effect which his short life made upon all his contemporaries. "He had much conversation with me," Campion's letter goes on, "and I hope not in vain, for to all appearances he was most keen about it. I commend him to [68] your remembrances at Mass, since he asked the prayers of all good men, and at the same time put into my hands alms to be distributed to the poor for him; this trust I have discharged." He ends by hoping that some of the missionaries then going back to England from Douay will have "opportunity of watering this plant . . . poor wavering soul!" Fr. Parsons in his *Life of Campion* tells us that Sidney "professed himself convinced, but said that it was necessary for him to hold on the course which he had hitherto followed." Such was the sad answer of Felix to St. Paul.

Campion's thoughts had turned often of late to another friend, Gregory Martin, who had left overcrowded Douay for the Seminary newly founded in the heart of Rome, in the ancient English hospice for pilgrims. Campion longed to turn his fellow-priest into a Jesuit, for he loved his own Society in the extreme; but that was not to be. A letter to Martin, glowing with that interior fire which was shed out from Edmund Campion upon everything he touched, ends most tenderly. [69] "Since for so many years we two had in common our College, our meals, our studies, our friends and our enemies, let us for the rest of our lives make a more close and binding union, that we may have the fruit of our friendship in heaven. For there also I will, if I can, sit at your feet."

After years filled with literary and academic labour in two Colleges, and blessed with marked growth in holiness, Edmund Campion was ordained priest by the Archbishop of Prague. His first Mass was said on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, September 8, 1578. Following his General's express command, he dismissed the old unhappy scruple about his Oxford diaconate, and it troubled him no more. He was made Professor of Philosophy. "You are to know," he pleasantly says, "that I am foolishly held to be an accomplished sophist!" During the course of this year 1578, he wrote his last and most famous drama, now lost, on St. Ambrose and the Emperor Theodosius, which, when acted, made a tremendous stir. He became ever more and [70] more noted as a preacher, a "sower of eternity" in the popular heart, as well as the favourite orator when grandees died and were buried in state. But all this time his mind and heart were far away.

No one ever practised religious obedience in a more heroic spirit; yet he secretly longed to

throw his life and his labours directly into the balance for England's sake. He knew what was going on there, and his thoughts seem never once to have turned towards pikes, or any political remedy; his whole ambition was, as he said in one letter, to "torture our envious foe with good deeds," and in another, "to catch them by the prayers and tears at which they laugh." His long-dear Cuthbert Mayne, of whom he had lost sight for awhile, had given up his life for the Faith at Launceston, November 29, 1577. He had been captured near Probus; his wealthy host, Francis Tregian, was attainted of præmunire, and his children completely beggared. This young Westcountryman had a character all his own. He had been charged with nothing but the exercise [71] of his priestly functions, and was offered his life, on the day of his execution, if he would but swear that the Queen was Supreme Head of the Church of England. "Upon this," continues the chronicle, "he took the Bible into his hands, made the sign of the Cross upon it, kissed it, and said: 'The Queen neither ever was, nor is, nor ever shall be, the Head of the Church of England!'" Campion had only recently heard the news in the August of 1579. One can read between the lines of a passage like this: "We all thank you much for your account of Cuthbert's martyrdom; it gave many of us a divine pleasure. Wretch that I am, how far has that novice distanced me! May he be favourable to his old friend and tutor! Now shall I boast of these titles more than ever before." Within the next six months Edmund Campion was to see the beginning of his heart's desire.

Dr. Allen, the founder of Douay, was in Rome to organize the English College; and there he [72] brought all his persuasion to bear upon the General of the Society of Jesus and his consultors, that the English Jesuits might be allowed to join the English secular priests in the pressing redemption of their distracted country. There were the gravest reasons for and against the proposal, but the answer given to Dr. Allen was that the Society would do its best to supply missioners thenceforward, and that Robert Parsons and Edmund Campion should be sent first as forerunners of the rest. Allen was naturally overjoyed. While Mercœur, the Father-General, wrote officially to Campion's Superior at Prague, Allen wrote a moving letter to Campion himself: "My father, brother, son," he calls him, "make all haste and come, my dearest Campion . . . from Prague to Rome, and thence to our own England." . . . "God, in whose hands are the issues, has at last granted that our own Campion, with his extraordinary gifts of wisdom and grace, shall be restored to us. Prepare yourself, then, for a journey, for a work, for a trial."

The imaginations of Campion's comrades at Prague were touched to the quick by the prospect [73] opening before their happy brother. One of these bore witness to the fragrance of his own thoughts by painting a garland of roses and lilies on the wall of Campion's little room, just at the bed's head. A white-haired Silesian, Father James Gall, wrote in scroll fashion, by night, over the outer door of that same little room: "P[ater] Edmundus Campianus, Martyr." For such a romantic irregularity the old saint was reprimanded. He replied quite simply: "But I had to do it!" Poor Campion, who was shy, had seen both these things, before Campanus, the sympathetic Rector, gave him his marching orders to start at once for Rome. "The Fathers do verily seem to suspect something about me; I hope their suspicions may come true!" he said. "God's will be done, not mine." And then, adds that first English biographer who so well knew him and so much loved him: "Being scarce able to hold tears for joy and tenderness of heart, he went to his chamber, and there upon his knees to God satisfied his appetite of weeping and thanksgiving, and offered [74] himself to His divine disposition without any exception or restraint: whether it were to rack, cross-quartering, or any other torment or death whatsoever."

VII

A LONG MARCH: ROME, GENEVA, RHEIMS: 1580

FROM Prague to Munich, and from Munich to Innsbrück, Campion had the distinguished and very friendly company of Ferdinand, brother of the reigning Duke of Bavaria. Afterwards he went on alone on foot, as he was always glad to do, as far as Padua. Here he took horse for Rome, which he reached just before Palm Sunday, April 5, 1580, coming "in grave priest's garb," we are told, "with long hair, after the fashion of Germany." He was informed by the Father-General that he was to start for England nine or ten days after Easter. Campion begged "neither to be Superior of the expedition nor to have anything to do with the preparations," and that during the [75] fortnight he might be free from all except necessary cares, in order to make a more devotional [76] entrance upon the life ahead of him. "And the like did, for their part, and had done, all the Lent before, those other priests also of the English Seminary," says Parsons, speaking of many seculars afterwards martyred, "that were appointed by their Superiors to go with us in this mission. . . . All these together used such notable and extraordinary diligence for preparing themselves well in the sight of God . . . as was matter of edification to all Rome."

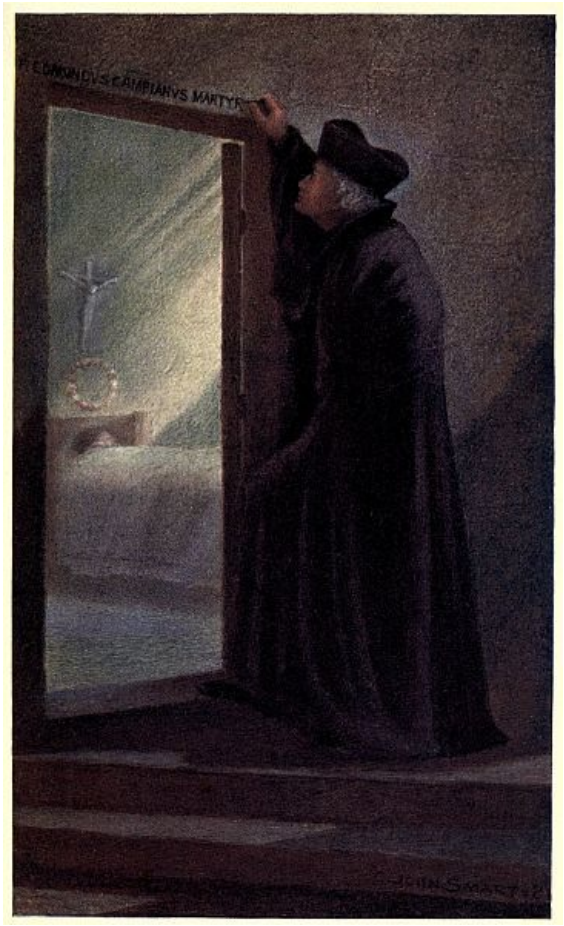
Rome was a most religious place at that time, not only in its enduring associations, but in the temper of the people. One in large measure responsible for its spirit of penance and prayer, and loving charity to the poor, was then living at San Girolamo, opposite the old English hospital, now turned into a College: this was St. Philip Neri, the most venerated and endearing figure in all the great city. He knew the successive little English bands; when he passed them in the streets, cheerful St. Philip used to smile tenderly, and give what must have been to them a thrilling [77] greeting: "'Hail, Little Flowers of Martyrdom!'" the opening line of the Breviary Hymn for Holy Innocents' Day. Parsons and Campion, and the secular clerics associated with them, may have originated the custom of going over to San Girolamo for a special fatherly blessing before setting forth to almost certain death. There is a tradition (mentioned by Newman) that one of that company did not care to seek St. Philip's prayers, and that afterwards he failed to persevere. This is thought to be the lay student, John Paschall, or Pascal, who was apparently of an unstable disposition, and is known to have forsworn the Faith, when his great chance came to profess it.

The Pope, Gregory XIII, showed untiring and fatherly interest in all the missionaries, and their travelling funds were his personal gift. He wept over them in bestowing his parting benediction. Campion set out this time with seven English priests, Ralph Sherwin, a former Fellow of Exeter College, among them; also with two lay brothers, and two students. Others joined them from [78] Rheims and Louvain, some of them advanced in years and well known. The party adopted the novel and almost daredevil fashion of going on foot; but, mounted and riding privately in advance of it, were its two eldest members. One was the holy octogenarian Thomas Goldwell, the Lord Bishop of St. Asaph, who had been offered by Queen Mary a transfer to the See of Oxford, and refused it. He was destined to be the last survivor of the deposed and scattered Catholic hierarchy in England, who had all but one refused the unheard-of Oath in 1559, and had all been deprived of their Sees that same year. Bishop Goldwell now, twenty years afterwards, was one of two who were living; and his colleague, Watson, Bishop of Lincoln, was in prison. The other senior missionary was his companion, Dr. Nicholas Morton, Canon Penitentiary of St. Peter's, who had done something already towards the making of English history. The first little Jesuit group of three was commanded by Fr. Robert Parsons, a born organizer, a man of splendid resources, afterwards celebrated, and much loved and hated. For convenience, as for safety, they [79] all put on secular dress. Campion, however, would buy no new clothes, but arrayed himself in an old buckram suit, with a shabby cloak. When rallied on his highly inelegant appearance, he remarked with the gay spirit so like that of another "blissful martyr," Sir Thomas More, that a man going forth to be hanged need trouble himself little about the fashion!

The roads were bad beyond any modern idea of badness, and it poured rain for the first nine or ten days. Campion, the least robust of the party, and the most poorly clad, fell ill under such combined discomforts, and while crossing the Apennines had to be lifted into the saddle of one of the very few horses which had been brought along for the sake of the infirm. As soon as he was well enough he resumed his daily habit of saying Mass very early, and of walking on, in the later morning hours, till he was a mile ahead of the rest, to make his meditation, read his Office, and say the Litany of the Saints, before he should be overtaken. He and his comrades planned their [80] spiritual life, day by day, with the most careful regularity. Their talk was always of souls: "the Harvest" was their word for England, or else "the Warfare." In the chilly spring twilights Campion would push on ahead again, "to make his prayers alone, and utter his zealous affections to his Saviour without being heard or noted."

The route lay through Siena, Florence, Bologna. In the latter city there was a week's delay, due to an injury to Fr. Parsons' leg. The band of twelve was entertained by the Cardinal Archbishop of that See, who was the historian of the Council of Trent: Gabriel Paleotto. Like Avellanedo, like many another Italian, Paleotto loved the English. "Were he a born Englishman, he could not love them more," wrote Agazzario to Allen, at that time when the national temperament was much more expressive and responsive than it is now. At Milan, in the early part of May, the future confessors and martyrs were to find another and a greater, also "much affectioned" towards [81] them, who received them most hospitably, and even asked the English College for other relays of guests in the future. This was the great Archbishop, St. Charles Borromeo. Bishop Goldwell, who had passed through Milan days before the walkers reached it, had been, in 1563, Vicar-General to St. Charles, and would have bespoken his

interest in the little party. The reverend host complimented Ralph Sherwin by asking him to deliver a sermon before him, and as for Campion, he was required to discourse daily after dinner. St. Charles himself, all the while, whether vocal or silent, was acting upon the pilgrims as a *Sursum corda*. “Without saying a word, he preached to us sufficiently,” says the ever-appreciative Parsons, “and so we departed from him greatly edified and exceedingly animated.” How charming is the forgotten use of the last word, meaning “souled,” or, as we still say, “heartened,” “inspirited!” Such indeed is the true function of the saints.



“P(ater) Edmundus Campianus, Martyr.”
p 73.

From Turin the little company made for Mount Cenis, and young, middle-aged and old lustily climbed it; and then among the torrents and boulders of that glorious scenery, they came down into Savoy. At St. Jean Maurienne they found the roads blocked by the Spanish soldiery, and at Aiguebelle ran across other disturbances, caused by the wars of religion raging in the Dauphiné. As there was nothing to do but abandon the direct route, they turned aside and entered Geneva, the hotbed of Calvinism, and the home of Theodore Beza, the learned apostate who had succeeded to Calvin’s leadership. There was a close community of spirit between Geneva and the English Reformation. However, Switzerland, then as now, had liberal laws, and any traveller, Catholic or Protestant, was free to pass, unmolested though not unquestioned, three days in the city. It looks decidedly like an alloy of mischief on the part of five of the English that they went to call in a body on Beza! They were admitted as far as the court by Claudine, his stolen wife, whom they had all heard of, and were not ill-pleased to see. When the famous greybeard came out they managed, after passing their compliments, to worry him with some telling controversial shots. Campion knew not how to be rude: but Sherwin found amusement, ever afterwards, in remembering how that honest fellow “Patrick” stood and looked and talked, cap in hand, “facing out” (such is Sherwin’s shockingly boyish language in a private letter), “the old doting heretical fool.” The celebrity so described behaved rather vaguely, and, in the course of nature, could not have been sorry to see the last of his besiegers, and of their wits, sharpened with life in the open air. He bowed them out with less abruptness than might have been expected—indeed, with a certain show of civility; and went back to his books. Later, Sherwin and two other youngsters, in a midnight discussion with some English Protestant students, actually challenged Beza and all Calvindom to a trial of theologies, with the drastic proviso that the defeated party should be burnt in the marketplace! Meanwhile Campion, in the *rôle* of “Patrick,” did his share of “facing out” other worthies in Geneva, besides finding an old University friend there, who “used him lovingly,” but reported that an alarm had been raised, and encouraged the departure of the paladins. These, halting on a spur of the Jura before nightfall, with Lake Leman spread beneath them, said *Te Deum* together, that they were safely out of the city. There seems to have been a good deal of curiosity or bravado mingled with their polemical zeal, and Campion’s always tender conscience would have readily accepted, if it did not suggest, a suitable penance for the raid. So off they trudged nine steep, contrite, extra miles (“extreme troublesome,” we are told they were) to the nearest shrine, that of St. Claude, over the French border.

[82] [83] [84]

They entered Rheims the last day of May, 1580, for in Rheims was the soul, if not the body, of the College now driven, partly for convenience, partly by force of trouble, out of Douay. That College was never re-formed: but the scholar-exiles lived close together, up and down the street still called *Rue des Anglais*. The travellers were rapturously welcomed by all, especially by the great Englishman whom the old narrative quaintly calls “Mr. Dr. Allen, the President.” Here at Rheims the venerable Bishop of St. Asaph fell ill of a fever. He was never again to cross the Channel. By the time he had fairly recovered, rumours of his movements had naturally got abroad, and the Pope was unwilling to imperil so important and precious a person. While still a convalescent at Rheims, Goldwell wrote to his Holiness in person, begging him to listen to no objections, but to anoint at once three or four new Bishops to shepherd their own needy Church; and he very touchingly assures the Holy Father, knowing that the question of a fitting maintenance for them would arise, that God had so inclined the minds of all the English priests whom he knew to put up with their penniless and hunted daily lives, and the vision of the gallows always before them, that any of these, once consecrated, would be entirely contented to go on as poorly as he had gone heretofore, like a Bishop of the Early Church. The application failed. “Etiquette and routine prevailed,” says Simpson, in summing up this incident.

[85] [86]

In truth, it was not that good-will was lacking. Nobody on the Catholic side believed that the new sad order of things in England was going to last, and consequently, waiting and postponing

in a matter of this sort, could not seem the disastrous mistake which it really was. The upshot, in any case, was that the good Bishop was recalled to Rome, and there died; and that for thirty weary years the poor flock struggled on without any qualified prelate to supply their crying spiritual wants and hold them together. Then the first provisional leader, known as the Archpriest, was appointed, and later came Vicars Apostolic. When finally the longed-for mitres were seen again in the land, they had been absent too long. The nominal link snapped; the great native tradition was broken; the titles of the ancient Sees, given up, as if in sleep, by their lineal heirs, were never reclaimed. So far as surface connection goes,—and it goes far indeed with people in general, who neither reason nor read, but get all their ideas from what they see and [87] hear, this was the most tragic loss which could possibly have befallen the post-Reformation Church. (The English Benedictines kept the thread of their own dynasty in their hands: but this did not affect the Catholic body, and the lay interest.) The stranger who could not destroy the life and blessing of the firstborn has had possession, for three centuries and a half, by royal grant, of his home and of his very name.

VIII

INHOSPITABLE HOME: 1580

[88]

SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM had a wonderfully well-organized spy-system: far superior, as Simpson remarks, to the attempts of the Spaniards in the same line. Therefore each of the missionaries was cautioned to travel under a name other than his own. Campion fell back upon his beloved alias of "Mr. Patrick," as he had done for the brief visit to Geneva. His friends made him drop it, as they neared the Channel; being Irish, it was doubly dangerous, since here at Rheims the home-goers got their first tardy news of the so-called Geraldine insurrection in Ireland, acted upon in July, 1579, and crushed almost as soon by the massacre at Smerwick in Kerry. It had been nursed by European feeling against Elizabeth's policy in Flanders, and her piracies on the high seas; and the great religious grudge found it a convenient opening. Dr. [89] Nicholas Sander, who was not a Papal Legate, but stood none the less for the Pope's active good-will in the matter, joined the expedition with James Fitzmaurice, Spanish soldiers, Roman officers, ships and supplies. That expedition did not, as we know, dislodge Jezebel from her throne, but it gave sufficient heartbreak to our messengers of the Gospel of Peace, who were now sure to be mixed up with it in the popular mind. The situation was certainly an awkward one. It gave unique plausibility to Walsingham's claim that (to quote Fr. Pollen) "the preaching of the old Faith was only a political propaganda." Father Robert Parsons faced the future, on behalf of the rest, in the spirit of a brave man. "Seeing that it lay not in our hands to remedy the matter, our consciences being clear, we resolved ourselves, with the Apostle, 'through evil report and good report' to go forward only with the spiritual action we had in hand. And if God had appointed that any of us should suffer in England under a wrong title, as Himself did upon the case of a [90] malefactor, we should lose nothing thereby, but rather gain with Him who knew the truth, and Whom only in this enterprise we desired to please."

Danger was a spur and not a bridle to Campion's devoted will. But he began to foresee little fruit from labours on his native ground, with so much fierce misunderstanding against him; and to fear that he had not done well in so gladly laying down what was, after all, steady and successful work in Bohemia. With this buzzing scruple he went to the President for advice. Allen replied that the work in "Boemeland," excellent at all points as it had been, yet could be done by any equally qualified person, or "at least by two or three" such persons, whereas in his own necessitous England Campion would be given strength and grace to supply for many men.

At Rheims, during his waiting-time, Campion preached one of his famous sermons to the students. It gave him a pathetic pleasure to be complimented upon his ready English, of which he had spoken little in private, and not a word in public, for eight years. His text is reported to have [91] been Luke xii. 49: "I am come to send fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it shall be kindled?" and at one point he cried out in so earnest a manner: "Fire, fire, fire, fire!" that those outside the Chapel ran for the water-buckets! But a careful reading of what was then spoken suggests quite a different passage of Holy Scripture as present in Campion's mind. His theme was the ruin wrought by the conflagration of heresy, now attacking a third generation of Christian souls, and to be put out, he says, by "water of Catholic doctrine, milk of sweet and holy conversation, blood of potent martyrdom." Isaiah lxiv. 11, runs: "Our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste." This very passage had been alluded to in one of Campion's former exhortations, and may have been a favourite with him. The whole trend, indeed, and every part of this Rheims sermon bear out the thoughts not of the Apostle's page, but of the Prophet's.

Bishop Goldwell and Dr. Morton, the highest in office of the missionary party, remained at [92] Rheims. Three Englishmen, a lay Professor of Law, and two priests, joined in, to fill up the gap, then another Jesuit, who had been labouring in Poland: this was Fr. Thomas Cottam, ordered home to restore his health, but destined, as were so many of his comrades, for martyrdom. The little band of fifteen divided, and sailed from different ports: Campion, with Parsons and one lay brother, Ralph Emerson, headed for Calais as their point of departure, going by way of St. Omers, "not a little encouraged to think that the first mission of St. Augustine and his fellows into [our] island was by that city." Here there was another Jesuit College. The Flemish Fathers croaked friendly warnings in their ears, for it was common rumour in St. Omers that the Queen's Council had full information of the appearance, dress and movements of the exiles, and had officers posted to waylay them on arrival. They had come on foot nearly nine hundred miles, and were not likely to give up the object of their journey. But they took precautions. It was decided that Parsons should go first, in military attire, accompanied from the Low Countries by a good [93] youth who passed as his man George; and that if Parsons got safely to Dover, he was to send for Campion and the faithful little soul Ralph Emerson. An English gentleman "living over seas for his conscience," brought Fr. Parsons his fine disguise: nothing less than a Captain's uniform of buff leather, with gold lace, big boots, sword, hat, plume, and all. Campion, when he had gone, sat down to write to the General of the Society about him, with his inevitably pictorial touch. "Father Robert sailed from Calais after midnight. . . . They got him up like a soldier: such a peacock! such a swaggerer! . . . such duds, such a glance, such a strut! A man must have a sharp eye indeed," he adds, "to catch any glimpse of the holiness and modesty that lurk there underneath it all." He goes on to explain how he is laying out money to buy numerous and silly clothes "to dress up myself and Ralph," whereby "to cheat the madness of this world." Fr. Parsons, like Campion himself in lesser *rôles*, must have been a dramatic genius, for arriving at [94] Dover on the 12th of June, and falling into the hands of the searcher, he so won him over, by the mere swagger and strut aforementioned, as not only to be passed without inquiry, but to be

helped to a horse to carry him to Gravesend. Thereupon the Captain was quick to bespeak the interest of so unexpectedly polite a functionary in his friend “Mr. Edmunds,” described as a jewel-merchant lying at St. Omers; and he gave the searcher a letter recommending London as a good market, to be forwarded post-haste to that gentleman, and to be shown to the searcher again by “Mr. Edmunds” himself when he came over. And by the reception of that letter Campion learned that Fr. Parsons was scot-free, and speeded on his way.

On the Feast of his old College patron, St. John the Baptist, “Mr. Edmunds,” followed by Brother Ralph, his supposed servant, boarded the vessel bound for Dover. At daybreak they stepped ashore under the white cliffs, and there kneeling a moment in the shadow of a rock, Campion renewed his offering of himself, without reserve or condition, to the God of Hosts, for [95] the dark “warfare” which lay before him.

Meanwhile, the dispositions of the searcher (who evidently put in no appearance) had undergone a forced change. He and the Mayor of the town had been reprimanded by the Council for letting Papists slip through their nets. Moreover, there had been furnished, by a spy, a detailed description of Cardinal Allen’s brother, who was about to pass through Dover on his way to relatives in Lancashire; and as Gabriel Allen and Edmund Campion looked very much alike, our jewel-merchant found himself instantly under arrest. With an accuracy which he was not in the least aware of, the Mayor charged him and the lay brother of being “foes to the Queen’s religion and friends to the old Faith; with sailing under false names, and with returning for the purpose of propagating Popery.” Campion offered to swear that he was not Gabriel Allen, but offered in vain. The Mayor held a hasty conference, and ordered a mounted guard to carry both prisoners up to Sir Francis Walsingham and the Council. All this time, Campion was praying to God for [96] deliverance, and earnestly begging St. John the Baptist to intercede for himself and his companion. They were waiting near the closed door of a room. “Suddenly,” wrote Campion himself long after, to the Father-General, “suddenly cometh forth an old man: God give him grace for his pains! ‘Well,’ quoth he, ‘it is agreed you shall be dismissed: fare ye well.’” After which the two Jesuits left without further notice or opposition, and travelled as fast as ever they could to London.

Fr. Parsons had reached the city not without adventure, but without mishap, a fortnight before. Yet as no word had been received since from him, Campion had no idea how to proceed or whither to go; nor could he inquire without arousing suspicion. Fortunately Parsons had given to some watchful young Catholics a description of the jewel-merchant and his man: Ralph Emerson was easily recognizable on account of his extremely short stature. Thus they had hardly touched the wharf at the Hythe before a stranger, Thomas Jay, stepped to the gangway, with a welcoming [97] gesture, saying: “Mr. Edmunds, give me your hand: I stay here for you, to lead you to your friends.” Under this guidance Campion reached London and Chancery Lane, where he was clothed and armed, and provided with a horse. He must have been astonished to learn under whose roof he was so safe and so comfortable: for it was none other than that of the chief pursuivant! Here was, indeed, a case of the bird nesting in the cannon’s mouth. St. Augustine warns us that we are not to think that ungodly men are kept in this world for nothing, nor that God has no good purposes of His own to fulfil through them. One cause of the miraculous preservation of the ancient Faith under Elizabeth lay in the fact that many an official, high and low, of that time-serving Government, was in the pay of the Recusant gentry. A strange situation it was, and by no means an infrequent one, when some of these, brought before the magistrates, would be discharged on the assurance of the bought-over official that the prisoner was “an [98] honest gentleman”: thus averting all suspicion from the latter for the time being.

The band of lay Catholics, some of whom Campion had known from boyhood, like Henry Vaux and Richard Stanihurst, were acting as friends, freely leagued together, as occasion arose, for the helping of priests, and the furthering of religion. Their time, their thoughts, their self-sacrifice, their purses, were at the service particularly of the Jesuits, persons habitually being described by Sir Walter Mildmay in the Star Chamber as “lewd runagates,” “a sort of hypocrites,” “a rabble of vagrant friars.” The leader of them all, in his inspiring zeal, though not highest in station, was George Gilbert, a rich young squire owning estates (which were confiscated in the end) in Buckinghamshire and Suffolk. He was a convert, a great rider and athlete, dear to many; but in secret a lover of apostolic poverty, living for others: in short, a saint. He spent himself to the last breath for the Faith as truly as if he had perished at Tyburn Tree. In banishment, he still [99] served the same cause by his forethought and his generosity in the use of such worldly goods as were left to him: for he became responsible, at Rome, for the series of paintings of the English martyrdoms which gave their chief historical standing to the Beatifications of 1886. Thus Gilbert, living and dead, was Blessed Edmund Campion’s availing friend and lover.

IX

SKIRMISHING: THE ENGLISH COUNTIES: 1580

[100]

THE devoted George Gilbert, his fellowship of young men, and those whom they gathered together, met on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, June 29, to hear, for the first time, Fr. Campion preach. It was no easy task to find a safe and suitable auditorium; but Lord Paget, one of their own number, was daring enough to hire from Lord Norreys the hall of a great house in the neighbourhood of Smithfield. All the servants and porters were turned out for the occasion, and gentlemen took their places. Within a few days, however, rumours about Campion's sermon and about Campion were flying over the city. There were a number of spies about, instructed by the Council, pretending to be lapsed Catholics or unsettled Protestants, and trying hard to bag [101] such new and shining birds as the Jesuits; but Campion had a friend at court who warned him, and therefore held only private conferences in friendly houses with those whom he knew. The missionaries were sent to strengthen the wills of the wavering Catholics, and not primarily to make converts. Personal dealings with would-be converts were never attempted except as supplementary to the action of the lay helpers, who took all the soundings, and gave any needful catechizing. When Parsons, who had been away in the country, got back to town, Mr. Henry Orton and Fr. Robert Johnson had been tracked and imprisoned, through Sledd, the apostate informer; and it became plain to the rest of the little band gathered about Parsons and Campion that, for reasons immediate and remote, both Fathers must be spirited away. Each went mounted, with a companion, Gervase Pierrepoint being Campion's guide; and at Hoxton, in July, the priests parted for their separate fields of action.

Just before that, however, there arrived as a deputy to them, Mr. Thomas Pounde of Belmont, [102] the best-known, perhaps, of all English prisoners for the Faith: he was committed to gaol sixteen times and passed thirty years in durance. Pounde had managed to bribe the gaoler of the Marshalsea to let him out for this short journey. Most anxious for the good repute of the Fathers, he rode post-haste to tell them that enemies in London were spreading the report that they had come over for political purposes, and that if in the midst of their apostolic work in the shires they should be taken and executed, the Government would be sure to issue pamphlets, as was its habit, defaming their motives, and slandering the Catholic body. Therefore he begged both Jesuits to write "a vindication of their presence and purpose in England," which, signed and sealed, might be given to the public, if things came to the worst. The certain accusation and its answer had been debated before, in council, by many clergy, who had contented themselves with agreeing to swear, when called upon, that they had no business whatever in hand but that of [103] religion. But Campion now drew up his own document then and there at a table, while the others were talking. In it, he declares that "my charge is of free cost to preach the Gospel . . . to cry alarm spiritual;" that "matters of state are things which appertain not to my vocation," and are "straitly forbid": things "from which I do gladly estrange and sequester my thoughts." And never thinking of himself, but fired with confidence in his cause, he goes on to beg leave for a public presentment of the Faith. He says, in the course of this splendid little philippic: "I should be loath to speak anything that might sound of an insolent brag or challenge . . . in this noble realm, my dear country." It shows completely the partisan temper of the time that his statement got exactly that name, and no other, fastened upon it. It was called everywhere "Campion's Brag and Challenge," and its modest author was contemned and ridiculed for the implication that his own powers were so very superior that he must of course get the better of others in any argument! [104]

Pounde took his copy, which Campion forgot to seal, back to London, read it in raptures, let it be seen, admired, talked about, and transcribed: this was his curious way of keeping a secret. The result was that what was meant to meet a particular crisis, and serve for a last will and testament, became as common property, beforehand, as any ballad sold in the streets. Lively measures were at once taken by the Bishop of Winchester; and the State, hypocritically urging "conspiracy," pounced upon a host of Catholic lords and gentlemen. Yet Campion's little composition, which bred all this fury, only asks for "three sorts of indifferent and quiet audience": one hearing before the Lords in Council, on the relation of the Church to the English Government; the next before the Heads of Houses of both Universities, on the proofs of the truth of the Catholic religion; the last before the courts spiritual and temporal, "wherein I will justify the said Faith by the common wisdom of the laws standing." Then he pleads in deferent and [105] almost affectionate words, for a special audience of "her noble Grace" the Queen. In his candour and fearless simplicity he believed that opponents had only to hear to be convinced, thus crediting them with that earnestness in religious matters which he possessed himself, and which only a very few of the best Protestants of that day shared with him. Campion closes his appeal with a wonderfully beautiful reference to the vowed Seminarian priests, and in a lofty music of good English, worthy to stand by any passage of like length in the great prose classics. "Hearken to those which spend the best blood in their bodies for your salvation. Many innocent hands are lifted up unto Heaven for you, daily and hourly, by those English students whose posterity shall not die, which, beyond the seas, gathering virtue and sufficient knowledge for the purpose, are determined never to give you over, but either to win you to Heaven or to die upon your pikes. And touching our Society, be it known unto you that we have made a league (all the Jesuits in the [106] world, whose succession and multitude must overreach all the practices of England!) cheerfully to carry the cross that you shall lay upon us, and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to be consumed with your prisons. The expense is reckoned; the enterprise is begun; it is of God: it cannot be withstood. So the Faith was planted. So it must be restored. If these my offers be refused, and my endeavours

can take no place, and I, having run thousands of miles to do you good, shall be rewarded with rigour, I have no more to say, but recommend your case and mine to Almighty God, the Searcher of Hearts: Who send us of His grace, and set us at accord before the Day of Payment, to the intent we may at last be friends in Heaven, where all injuries shall be forgotten."

Parsons' work lay in Gloucester, Hereford, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Derbyshire; Campion's in the more southerly Midlands. The wandering Levite with his attendant gentleman [107] would approach at evening, and with caution, the friendly roof, either Catholic or, though Protestant, containing Catholics, and be received at the door as strangers, then conducted to an inner room, where all who seek the priest's ministrations kneel and ask for his blessing. That night all is got ready, and confessions are heard, instructions given, reconciliations effected; at dawn there is Mass, preaching, and Holy Communion; and the travellers depart for the next household station. Most edifying accounts are given of the devotion of good married Confessors, who were scattered all over the land. The Jesuits met with many seculars, "whom we find in every place, whereby both the people is well served, and we much eased in our charge." These were the old Marian priests, active in obscurity. The "harvest is wonderful great": so many show "a conscience pure, a courage invincible, zeal incredible, a work so worthy; the number innumerable, of high degree, of mean calling . . . of every age and sex." "The solaces that are ever intermingled with the miseries are so great that they do not only countervail the fear of [108] what punishment temporal soever, but by infinite sweetness make all worldly pains, be they never so great, seem nothing," for the sake of "this good people which had lived before, so many ages, in one only Faith." Day by day, running in and out of all the busy heroic toil, is the fiery thread of danger and alarm. "We are sitting merrily at table, conversing familiarly on matters of faith and devotion (for our talk is generally of such things) when comes a hurried knock at the door. . . . We all start up and listen, like deer when they hear the huntsman. . . . If it is nothing, we laugh at our fright." Then there was calumny, a far more difficult thing to accept in the same gay spirit. "They tear and sting us with their venomous tongues, calling us seditious, hypocrites; yea, heretics, too! which is much laughed at. The people hereupon is ours." And again: "The house where I am is sad: no other talk but of the death, flight, prison, or spoil of their friends; nevertheless, they proceed with courage. Very many, even at this present, being restored to the [109] Church, new soldiers give in their names, while the old offer up their blood, by which holy hosts and oblations God will be pleased. And we shall—no question!—by Him overcome." These are extracts from Campion's letters, and give a clear idea of his life during his visitations of 1580-1.

There were then many more Manor-houses, kept up as such, than there are now; most of those which Campion visited had their hiding-place or "priests' hole," to which he could always fly when safety demanded it. He settled a host of weak Catholics in their religion, and also received a great many conspicuous converts. It will be noted that the little Jesuit mission was directed to the gentry. This was not through accident, or partiality, or snobbery. The gentry had most personal weight; they were better able to protect a hunted man; and they were naturally supposed to have stricter notions of honour: this last was a point on which everything depended. Moreover, the old spirit of feudalism was not so dead but that through them all workmen on their [110] estates, or connected by interest with them in the towns, could be reached and influenced. In a hurried campaign, every consideration of prudence and forethought would choose them, so to speak, as the outworks of the citadel.

The country districts north and south were all still favourable to Catholicism. London, the University of Cambridge, and some larger towns and seaports, especially in the West, were half Puritan or Calvinistic, half irreligious and indifferent. The ancient Faith, as was well said by Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, for the most part "still lay like lees at the bottom of men's hearts; and if the vessel were ever so little stirred, came to the top." A thoughtful living writer sums it up as his conclusion that England would have resumed the Faith with a sigh of relief, had it not been for the resentments bred by the Catholic "plotters." Considering the frightful circumstances of the body to which these men belonged, it is putting too great a strain, perhaps, upon human nature to expect smooth behaviour from every individual in it. The genuine "plotters" were few. Against [111] them stands the passionate loyalty of our persecuted minority, both all along, and in the one great crisis. When the deliverer loomed up in the shape of Philip's Armada, blessed and indulgenced like a crusade of old, where were they, supposed to be so sick of Queen and country? Hand in impoverished pocket, strengthening the national defences; cutlass on thigh, manning the English fleet.

X

MANY LABOURS: AND A BOOK: 1580

[112]

CAMPION passed four months of pleasant weather in hard and happy work, moving about Northamptonshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire. Some lovely little spiritual adventure starred his path, and the paths of others, wherever he went. He must have seen more than once, from some hilly road afar off, even if he never entered it,

"The towery City, branchy between towers,"

which was so dear to him to the last. In October of this year, 1580, he was bidden towards London as far as Uxbridge: farther he could hardly come, without the gravest peril, as the Privy Council were just issuing their third warrant for the capture of Jesuits. There he was joined by Fr. Parsons and several other missionaries. A conference was held: it was represented that Norfolk [113] and Lancashire were eager to claim Fr. Campion's ministrations, and it was decided that he was to go to Lancashire, preferable as being not only farther from London and also "more affected to the Catholic religion," but as having better private libraries. For they were now urging Campion to write again: this time something on the burning questions of the day, aimed particularly at the Universities (where his Challenge was still the staple of daily talk), and therefore to be written in Latin. We are not so sure, now-a-days, that controversy does much good, but one reason for that may be that we have few Campions to carry it on. It is well to remember that people then read nothing else, except poetry! Campion's work was his famous *Decem Rationes Propositæ in Causa Fidei*, or, as the title is given in its only modern translation (1827), *Ten Reasons for Renouncing the Protestant, and Embracing the Catholic Religion*. At first the author was for calling his thesis *Heresy in Despair: De Hæresi Desperata*. His counsellors agreed, amid laughter, that it would be [114] odd indeed to nail such a title as that to the mast, when heresy was so powerful and flourishing; but, according to Campion's own philosophy, there was no life in an argument whose only premisses, as he once said, are "curses, starvation, and the rack." Here we come back at once to his root principle, which modern research so fully justifies, in regard to the England of his own day. A "gentleman saint" who uttered many an ironic, but never a contemptuous word, Campion could not be persuaded that "the received religion" was a genuine thing. He believed that temporal interest alone led people to conform to the new alterations and restrictions; that the lay statesmen who were pushing things through were concerned not with doctrine, but only with negations of doctrine, and that on the other side, nothing was so promising, nothing so gloriously fruitful, as persecutions and martyrdoms. First and last, he had a strong dash of optimism. In this spirit he began his last treatise, writing it as best he could, depending on his memory, and on [115] such books as country squires might have in their houses, and putting it together in among the almost incessant journeys, duties, fatigues and alarms of the next few weeks.

The two Jesuit friends parted at Uxbridge, "with the tenderness of heart which in such a case and so dangerous a time may be imagined." Gervase Pierrepoint conveyed Campion into Nottinghamshire to spend Christmas at Thoresby, his home; thence into Derbyshire, where one of the young Tempests succeeded as guide; and the gentleman who directed the Yorkshire part of the journey reached in safety the house of his own brother-in-law, Mr. William Harrington of Mount St. John, near Thirsk, where the Father was received with open arms. Here he settled down for less than a fortnight at his desk, among his note-books, at peace. But to have him in the house at all was to risk the contagion of the things of God. The eldest of the large family, a wild boy, his father's namesake, was quick to feel the spell of this most attractive guest. "Not only his eloquence and fire," says Fr. Henry More of Campion, "but a certain hidden infused power, made [116] his words strike home." Some of these simple words of every day "struck home" to the young William Harrington, so that fourteen years afterwards he found the palm-branch of martyrdom growing green and fair for him on the public execution ground. At this very time of Campion's visit, the Lent of 1581, there was another lad of fourteen or fifteen, John Pibush, running about the streets of Thirsk, his native village, who may have gone to Confession to the strange priest at the Manor, and wondered at him, unknowing that he, too, was sealed as a future holocaust in the same immortal cause.

From Mount St. John, where he must have tasted much natural happiness, Campion travelled into Lancashire, under the protection of a former pupil and his wife. There he was affectionately welcomed and cared for in each of eight great houses, where himself and his spiritual conferences were still a glowing tradition, sixty or seventy years afterwards. He had to live, [117] think, write, in a crowd. The local gentry drove from great distances and slept in barns, only to hear and see him once. At Blainscough Hall, the seat of the Worthingtons, the pursuivants would have discovered him, where he was walking in the open air, had it not been for the cleverness and splendid presence of mind of a faithful maidservant, standing hard by. She ran up against him, in a pretended fit of temper, and shoved him into a shallow pond! The pursuivants, sent out by the terrible Huntingdon, President of the North, to apprehend a distinguished cleric and scholar, naturally never gave that mud-covered yokel a second glance.

Fr. Campion would have learned by now the fate of most of the enthusiastic band who had travelled in his company, from Rome or Rheims to England, during the preceding summer: five priests, including the lovable gay-hearted Sherwin, were languishing in cells and on the rack; Fr. Parsons, though hunted, was free. Following a suggestion of Campion's, he set up a private printing press, in order that the *Ten Reasons* and other Catholic works of defensive controversy [118] might be issued as they were needed. Publishing, like every other major industry open to the

Catholics, was outlawed; devotional and doctrinal books had to be brought out in this hole-and-corner fashion, if at all. Another of those lay associates of the mission, whose devotion and usefulness had been proved at every point, came forward to bear the brunt of the new enterprise. The young Stephen Brinkley, Bachelor of Civil Law, called by Parsons "a gentleman of high attainments both in literature and in virtue," volunteered to become manager and head compositor, and amid many dramatic and exciting interruptions, carried his task through. Machinery, types, paper, and the rest were bought with money supplied by the ever-helpful George Gilbert. Brinkley himself, to avert suspicion, had to buy horses for his workmen, and attire them like persons of quality whenever they went abroad. He quite knew what he was risking. After him, still another knight of letters in a far less perilous field, offered himself in the person of Thomas Fitzherbert of Swynnerton, then newly married (long afterwards a priest, and [119] Rector of the English College in Rome). His not undelightful duty was to verify the mass of references and authorities quoted in the margins of Campion's manuscript: this he did in a scholarly way, satisfactory to the scholarly author, who believed in research, and liked nothing at second-hand. Lastly, Parsons, as Campion's Superior, recalled him to London in April or May to see the little volume through the press, and cautioned him to put up only at inns on the way, where happily he might pass as "the gentleman in the parlour."

Thirty miles or so north of the great city, Campion had one of his ever-recurring narrow escapes. A spy, hungry for reward, had dogged his steps on his way from York. At a certain town not named, a little boy who knew Campion by sight overheard this man describing the Father to a magistrate, and calling him "Jesuit," a word the child had never heard. He ran straight to the tavern where the "Jesuit" had put up and succeeded in finding him and warning him! so the bird [120] was safely on the wing before the fowlers were in sight.

Campion came to Westminster and Whitefriars, and set to work, diligently as ever. With Father Robert he had frequent occasion to visit the Bellamys of Uxenden Hall near Harrow, a family under whose roof his old friend Richard Bristow had died in the preceding autumn. Their later adversities and annihilation were only too typical of Catholic domestic history under Elizabeth. Going to Harrow meant going up the Edgware Road, and in the mouth of that road, between waste lands (facing the spot across the street where the Marble Arch now stands), was the famous Tyburn gallows. This particular one had been put up new for Dr. Storey's execution, ten years before: it had three posts set in a triangle, with connecting cross-bars at the top. Once every week, without intermission, batches of criminals perished there. Even now, and with far greater frequency afterwards, holy and innocent men and women made up a large proportion of [121] the "criminals"; and remembering these dear souls, and conscious that there he was to follow them in confession of the King of Martyrs, Campion would always solemnly take off his hat and pause, in passing, to salute Tyburn Tree.

Meanwhile, in the quiet and seclusion of Dame Cecily Stonor's park, near Henley, and in the attics which she bravely set apart for the purpose, the *Decem Rationes* got itself safely printed by Stephen Brinkley and his seven honest men. Campion, with fine bravado, dated it from "Cosmopolis"; and the distribution of it was as audacious as the dating. The first copies bound, about four hundred in number, were hurriedly stabbed, instead of stitched, in time to go up for the Oxford commemoration, June 27th of that year. The church of St. Mary-the-Virgin was then used for all the "Acts," for the accommodation of which, a century later, the Sheldonian Theatre was built. When the company entered St. Mary's, the benches were found littered with the "seditious" books. Their dedication was "to the studious Collegians flourishing at Oxford and [122] Cambridge," and the youths in question were just in the humour to read them; and read them they did, then and there, instead of attending to the important annual function going on! This rudeness bred protest, and protest bred a lively scene. To understand it we must recall that the undergraduate element was then, by comparison, the conservative element. Heads of Houses, Fellows and Tutors, learned and popular men, had been removed wholesale by the Elizabethan settlement of religion in favour of new men concisely described as "extremists from Geneva, intellectually inferior to those who had been displaced, and representing a different spirit, and different traditions." The student body looked on them with scorn. Again, to quote another chief authority on this subject, "the young Oxonians did not bear easily the Elizabethan drill, and felt that if their liberty must be crushed they would fain have it crushed by something more venerable than the mushroom authority of the Ministers of the Queen. They were as tinder, and [123] Campion's book was just the sort of spark to set them in a blaze." The excited Government told off relays of clergymen to courtmartial and shoot it. Aylmer, Bishop of London, wished to commission nine Deans, seven Archdeacons, and the two Regius Professors of Divinity to punish the tiny offender; but the actual ammunition brought into the field was not quite so imposing as all this. The answers were duly published, dealing in the most unmeasured personal abuse of Campion. No attempt was made in any instance to rival either his religious fervour or his literary grace. His last labour with his pen made, in short, a very great and an extremely prolonged stir. Its fate was a romantic one from start to finish, for it was so quickly and thoroughly confiscated that not more than a couple of copies are now known to exist. Despite the outcry, or because of it, edition after edition was called for. There have been nearly thirty reprints in the original Latin, and many translations into modern languages, inclusive of three beautiful translations into the [124] good English common in 1606, 1632, and 1687, one of which should be re-issued. The *Ten Reasons*, written under such immense difficulties, had all of Campion's zeal and pith, and was "a model of eloquence, elegance, and good taste." Marc Antony Muret, the greatest Latinist of the time, called it *libellum aureum*, "a golden little book, writ by the very finger of God." Campion had gone, in his ardent, sensitive, rhetorical, compendious way, over the whole ground of the credentials of that Church which had had the allegiance of England for more than a thousand

years: Scripture, the Fathers, the Councils, the evidence of human history, are all drawn upon, in the best spirit of the new learning. The characteristic note of personal appeal to the Queen is not lacking here at the end. Campion's theme is the Church, and he quotes from the Prophet Isaiah: "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and Queens thy nursing mothers;" and he names as among the great monarchs whose joy it was to further the Church in their day, St. Edward the Confessor, St. Louis of France, St. Henry of Saxony, St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia, St. Stephen of [125] Hungary, and the rest. Then he cries out to "Elizabeth, most mighty Queen," to listen. "For this Prophet is speaking unto thee, is teaching thee thy duty. I tell thee one Heaven cannot gather in Calvin and these thine ancestors. Join thyself therefore to them, else shalt thou stand unworthy of that name of thine, thy genius, thy learning, thy fame before all men, and thy fortunes. To this end do I conspire, and will conspire, against thee, whatever betideth me, who am so often menaced with the gallows as a conspirator hostile to thy life. ('All hail, thou good Cross!') The day shall come, O Elizabeth! the day that shall make it altogether clear which of the two did love thee best: the Company of Jesus, or the brood of Luther!"

Hardly was the last of the original imprints bound and distributed, when the pursuivants in search of what was roughly, but significantly enough, called "Massing-stuff," pounced upon Stonor Park, and caught red-handed there, and carried off, the two gentlemen, John Stonor and [126] Stephen Brinkley, and four of the printers, one of whom, a poor frightened fellow, conformed, and was let off at once. William Hartley, ordained the year before, who had in person strewn the *Ten Reasons* over the benches of the University Church, and made special gifts of copies in various Colleges, was arrested a little later. His fate was not exceptional, like that of his comrades just mentioned, who were eventually released on bail. He suffered at Tyburn; and his mother, heroic as the mother of the Macchabees, stood by his young body in its butchering, and thanked God aloud for her privilege in so giving back to Him such a son.

Campion spent St. John's Day (marking the first anniversary of his return to England) at Lady Babington's, at Twyford in Buckinghamshire, a house not many miles from Stonor, on the other bank of the Thames. He stayed a little while at Bledlow also, and at Wynge, with the Dormers, his whole heart bent, every moment of the time, upon his Father's business. But his free days were almost done.

The outcry redoubled, now that he had again succeeded in catching public attention. Fresh and [127] monstrously cruel measures were therefore taken against all Papists. "Naught is lacking," wrote to Acquaviva the tender soul who too well knew himself to be the cause of many sorrows, "but that to our books written with ink should succeed others daily published, and written in blood." Fr. Parsons prudently ordered him back to the North. The two heard each other's confessions and renewal of vows at Stonor, and said good-bye, exchanging hats as a parting gift, after the friendly fashion of their time. Campion was to ride straightway into Lancashire to get his manuscript and notes, left behind, his former companion Ralph Emerson going with him; and he was then to betake himself to the fresh mission field in Norfolk. As it fell out, he soon spurred back after Parsons to tell him of a letter that moment received. It was from a gentleman named Yate, then a prisoner for his religion, earnestly begging Campion to visit Lyford Grange in Berkshire, the gentleman's own estate, hard by, where his wife and mother still were, together [128] with Edward Yate, and part of a proscribed community of English Brigittine nuns, driven back into England by troubles in the Low Countries. Fr. Parsons, knowing the house to be a conspicuous one, and already supplied with chaplains, was unwilling to grant the permission. But eventually he gave in, warning the two others not to tarry beyond one night or one day, and as a precaution, putting Campion under the lay brother's care and obedience. Parsons parted from him not without a rueful and affectionate word. "You are too easy-going by far," he said to his friend and fellow-soldier, purposely giving its least heroic name to that intentionally prodigal zeal for souls. "I know you, Father Edmund; if they once get you there, you will never break away!"

“We have not broken through here!”

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XI

AT LYFORD GRANGE, AND AFTER: 1581

ON the morning of July 12, Father Edmund and Brother Ralph, faithful to agreement, were in their saddles again, leaving the pious household refreshed, but lamenting. Of the two priests who formed part of it, one, Fr. Collington, or Colleton, escorted them some distance on their way. Campion had already been waylaid, at an inn near Oxford, by many friendly tutors and undergraduates, when up galloped the other chaplain of Lyford, Fr. Forde. He was a Trinity College man, who had entered Douay just after Campion's arrival there, and was to follow him closely to martyrdom. Forde brought news that a large party of Catholics had come over to Lyford to visit the nuns, and, distressed at missing Fr. Campion, were clamouring for his return. The Oxford group had been begging their old champion to preach to them, which he would not do [130] in so public a place; they now added their entreaties to those of the deputy of the strangers, and offered to join these at Lyford. Surely, he who had given a whole day to a few godly nuns, who needed him but little, could not refuse a Saturday and Sunday to so many soiled souls of every stripe and colour, "thirsting for the waters of life"? The suit was insistent; Campion was inclined to give in, but referred his admirers to Brother Emerson, as his provisional Superior. He, in turn, was overborne. It seemed much safer, after all, for the precious Father to be among friends, while he, Ralph, went on alone to fetch the books from Mr. Richard Houghton's in Lancashire. So back to Lyford Campion went, to the poor little lay brother's everlasting regret.

On the following Sunday morning, the ninth after Pentecost, Campion preached at the Grange on the gospel of the day, the peculiarly touching gospel of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, the changed and faithless city which stoned the prophets, and knew not, in her day, the things that [131] were to her peace. No one present ever forgot that heart-shaking sermon, laden as it was with pathos and presentiment. There was an audience of sixty, including the Oxonians. Unfortunately it included also George Eliot, a man of the most evil personal repute, an apostate and a Government spy, armed with plenary powers. He was then under a charge of murder, and was anxious to whitewash himself in the eyes of the Council by some conspicuous public service. He had once been a servant of the Ropers at Canterbury; and Mrs. Yate's honest cook, who had known Eliot there in his decent days, let him in without question, whispering what a treat was in store for him in the preaching of none other than Father Campion! Though the warrant for the apprehension of the Jesuit was in Eliot's pocket, he little thought to capture him so easily and so soon. A pursuivant had accompanied him to the gate; Eliot went back to this person, nominally to dismiss him, as a heretic, really to speed him to a magistrate at Abingdon for a force of an hundred men to arrest Campion in the Queen's name. Then he went piously up-stairs to Mass, [132] Edmund Campion's last Mass, so far as we know. That, and the sermon, passed by in peace, and Eliot himself left. Immediately after dinner an alarm was given by a watchman posted in a turret, who saw the enemy far off. Campion sprang up, and started to leave at once, and alone, saying that his chances of escape might be fair, and that his remaining would only involve the household in discomfort and danger. But they all clung to him, assuring him that Lyford was full of cunning secret passages and hiding-holes; and into one of these, in the wall above the gateway, he was forthwith hurried by Forde and Collington, who laid themselves down by his side, and crossed their hands over their breasts.

Back came Eliot with the magistrate, a civil squire, and the neighbourly Berkshire yeomen who loathed the work. He made them turn the whole house topsy-turvy, nor desist till evenfall; then, finding nothing, they withdrew. However, they returned almost in the same breath, egged on by [133] Eliot, who now would have the walls sounded. The Abingdon magistrate apologized to Mrs. Yate, not for the Queen's warrant, but for his associate, "the mad-man," as he called him, who was carrying it out. The lady was an invalid; thinking not altogether of herself, she railed and wept. The magistrate kindly soothed her fears, and allowed her to sleep where she pleased, undisturbed by his men and their din. She chose to have a bed made up close to the hiding-place. She was conducted thither with the honours of war, and a sentinel was posted at the room door. The tapping and smashing went merrily on elsewhere until late at night, when, by her orders, the sheriff's baffled underlings made a fine supper, and being worn out, fell asleep over their cups, even as they were expected to do. Poor Mrs. Yate was either by nature the silliest of women, or else her nerves were upset by illness and trying circumstance, for she sent for Fr. Campion, as well as for all her other guests who were in that part of the house, and requested him, as he stood by her bedside—of all possible things—to preach to them just once more! One could not in [134] courtesy refuse a hostess, however unreasonable, who was risking so much for him; nor would it have been like him to refuse. Allen tells us that it was his invariable habit to preach "once a day at the least, often twice, and sometimes thrice, whereby through God's goodness he converted sundry in most shires of this realm of most wisdom and worship, besides young gentlemen students, and others of all sorts."

Fr. Campion discharged his task. As the little congregation broke up, some one stumbled in the dark, and several fell; the snoring sentinel awoke; searchers, with lanterns and axes, swarmed up from below. There was nothing to be seen: Lyford was not honeycombed in vain with hidden passages. The men-at-arms had been fooled too often, and were angry with Eliot. Yet that functionary knew that something was still really afoot, that the alarm was not a false one. On going down the stairs again he struck his hand upon the wall over it. "We have not broken through here!" he said. A loyal servant of the Yates, who was at his side, and who knew it was [135] just there the refugees lay, muttered that enough wall had been ruined already, and then went deadly pale while Eliot's eye was still on him. The latter called, in triumph, for a smith's hammer,

and banged it into the thin timber partition, and into the narrow cell. And thus was Father Edmund Campion taken at Lyford Grange, at dawn of Monday, July 17th, in the year 1581.

He was quite calm, quite cheerful. With him were apprehended the two priests, seven gentlemen, and two yeomen. Forster, the Sheriff of Berkshire, hitherto absent, arrived. As he was an Oxonian, and almost a Catholic, and kindly disposed towards Campion, he waited to hear from the Council what was to be done. On the fourth day orders came to send the chief prisoners up to London, under a strong guard. Leaving the old moated house and its many occupants, now distracted with grief, Campion took horse at the door, and rode slowly off, Eliot prancing in triumph at the head of the company, though the common people saluted him as "Judas," all along the way. The first halt was at Abingdon; sympathetic Oxford scholars had come down to see the [136] last of the great light of the University under such black eclipse. Eliot accosted his victim at table: "Mr. Campion, I know well you are wroth with me for this work!" He drew out a beautiful answer, sincere, composed, half-playful: a saint's answer. "Nay, I forgive thee; and in token thereof, I drink to thee. Yea, and if thou wilt repent, and come to Confession, I will absolve thee: but large penance thou must have!" At Henley, Campion saw in the crowd Fr. Parsons' servant, and greeted him as he could, without betraying him: Fr. Parsons was near at hand, but was wisely kept indoors. A young priest, "Mr. Filby the younger," as he was called, a native of Oxford, is said to have here attempted to speak to Campion; he was at once seized upon as a traitorous "comforter of Jesuits," and added to the cavalcade. At Colebrook, less than a dozen miles from London, came fresh instructions from the Council. Sheriff Forster had treated his prisoners most honourably: they were now to be made a public show. Their elbows were tied from behind, their [137] wrists roped together in front, and their feet fastened under the horses; their leader was decorated with a paper pinned to his hat—Fr. Parsons' hat of late—on which in large lettering was inscribed: "Campion, the Seditious Jesuit." And in this guise he was paraded through the chief streets of the great city on market-day. The mob roared with delight; "but the wiser sort," says Holinshed, "lamented to see the land fallen to such barbarism as to abuse in this manner a gentleman famous throughout Europe for his scholarship and his innocency of life, and this before any trial, or any proof against him, his case being prejudged, and he punished as if already condemned." Stephen Brinkley somehow obtained, as a souvenir of a fellow-prisoner, that thick dark felt hat, which had been so ignominiously labelled in the cause of Christ. Years afterwards, when in Belgium, he put it into a reliquary, "out of love and veneration towards that most holy martyr of God, his father and patron." A piece of it is at Roehampton, in the Jesuit Noviciate.

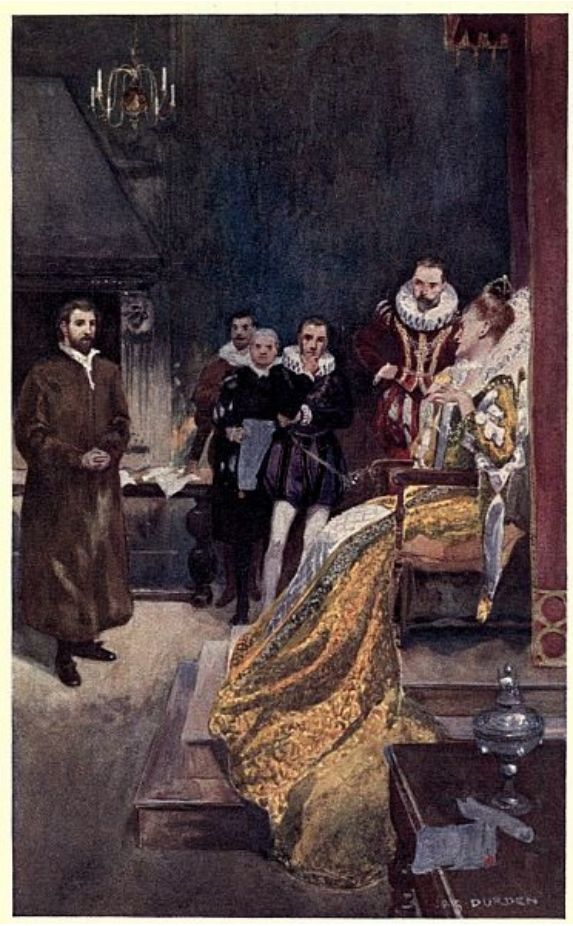
On reaching the Tower the Lyford captives were given up to the Governor, Sir Owen Hopton. [138] Taking his cue, he had Campion thrust at once into Little Ease, the famous Tower hole not high enough for a man to stand upright in, nor long enough for him to lie down in. After four days of this misery he was suddenly taken out, put in a boat at the Traitors' Gate steps, and rowed to the town house of the Earl of Leicester. This nobleman and Edmund Campion, who had seen so much of each other for several years, had been placed by events in silent conflict. There stood the Earl of Bedford, with two Secretaries of State; there stood Campion's host, who, for one reason or another, had never hounded Catholics with the fixed fury of Walsingham and Burghley, and thereby did not displease his irresolute royal mistress; there (a theatrical circumstance!) was that royal mistress herself, a gleaming stately vision in a great chair, head and front of a not unfriendly little inquisition. To the questions heaped upon him Campion gave frank answers. On the matter of "allegiance" he seemed to satisfy the company, who told him there was no fault in [139] him save that he was a Papist. "That," he modestly interrupted, "is my greatest glory." The Queen smiled upon him, and offered him liberty and honours, but under conditions which his conscience forbade him to accept.

When he was courteously dismissed, Leicester, probably with a kind motive, sent a message to Hopton to keep up the flatteries of the new policy. Hopton put on an almost affectionate consideration for his important prisoner; and so fast as he was prompted, by artful degrees, he suggested to him a pension, a high place at Court, and even the promise eventually of the mitre and revenues of the primatial See of Canterbury! Well did the Council know, all along, the value of these stubborn and unpurchasable confessors of Christ. To cap the matter, in Campion's case, it was publicly announced, both by Hopton and by Walsingham (who knew the untruth of their announcement), that the Jesuit was at the point of recantation and Protestant orthodoxy, and in full sight of the future Archbishopric, "to the great content of the Queen." It flew all over London [140] that he would presently preach at Paul's Cross, and there burn the *Decem Rationes* with his own hand. Eventually Hopton returned to first principles indoors, and inquired point-blank of Campion whether he would give up his religion, and conform. The reply is easily imagined. A continued course of wheedling was wasteful business. So thought the Council; and three days after his strange and sudden sight of the Queen's Grace at Leicester House, Edmund Campion, first kneeling down at the door and invoking the Holy Name for steadying of his manhood, was stripped and fastened to the rollers of the Tower rack. Blandishments had failed to move him; they would try mortal pain, and see what that could do. Torture, nevertheless, was as much against the laws of England then (though not against the laws of some less humane countries), as it is now.

XII

THE THICK OF THE FRAY: 1581

CAMPION, in between the working of the rollers, was asked his opinion of certain political utterances in the works of his old friends Allen and Bristow, and of Dr. Sander; also whether he considered the Queen “true and lawful,” or “pretensed and deprived.” He refused to answer. Physical anguish could be little worse than the ineffable boredom of these two never-quiet questions. He was then asked by the Governor, the Rackmaster, and others present, by whose command and counsel he had returned to England; by whom in England he had been received and befriended; in whose houses he had said Mass, heard Confessions, and reconciled persons to his Church; where his recent book was printed, and to whom copies were given; lastly, what was [142] his opinion of the Bull of Pius V against Queen Elizabeth? A letter written at the time to Lord Shrewsbury by Lord Burghley, and still extant, shows that nothing of moment could be got out of Campion. During the next fortnight, however, there was poured into the ear of the Government information regarding the second and third items in the above category. Houses were searched; persons of mark were apprehended, tried in the Star Chamber, and sentenced. Almost every manse or town house where Campion had been harboured became known, and even the names of those Oxford Masters of Arts who had followed him to Lyford. The Government gave out that he had confessed upon the rack, and implicated his too trusting friends. The alleged facts naturally became a general scandal, and bred grief and horror among the Catholics who, no less than Protestants, were thus driven to believe them. The secrets were probably given up, under panic, by three serving-men, and by poor Gervase Pierrepoint. It was a common trick of the time, [143] though not peculiar to it, to show a prisoner a lying list of names purporting to have been extracted from colleagues, so that he himself might be trapped into endorsing the suspicions held in regard to those names. But it is clear that Campion was brought to mention only a few who, as he was aware, were formerly known to his examiners as Catholic Recusants; and only after a solemn oath from the Commissioners that no harm could accrue to them in consequence of such supplementary mention. Even this he had every cause to regret. The gentlemen and gentlewomen on Lord Burghley’s lists were carefully informed, when arrested, that it was Campion who had betrayed them: a cruel slander which he could refute only at the foot of the scaffold. Thanks to the reports, first of his backsliding, then of his treachery, his great reputation, for the time being, was clean gone. Having thus been given forth to the public as a knave, he was now to be set before them as a fool, and shown to be one who possessed neither sort of superiority, moral or mental.



Campion before Queen Elizabeth.

p. 138.

Many courtiers, having a purely artistic [144] interest in Edmund Campion, had begged that he might obtain the chance he had often asked for, of being heard in a disputation. This request was now suddenly granted. The conference was public, and came off in the Norman Chapel of the Tower, which was crowded. Two Deans, Nowell of St. Paul’s, and Day of Windsor, were appointed to attack Campion; he was to answer all objections as he could, but was forbidden to raise any of his own. Charke, the bitter Puritan preacher of Gray’s Inn, and Whitaker, the Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge, were the notaries. The lion to be baited did not even know that there was to be a conference, until he was brought to it under a strong guard. Time for preparation had been denied him; he was allowed the use of only such authorities as his memory could furnish; pale and weary and rack-worn as he was, he was given only a low stool to sit upon. The well-fed theological worthies were ranged before him, their chairs standing on raised platforms, and their tables spread with books of reference, pens [145] and paper.

One who was there tells us how easy and ready were his answers; how modest his mien; how that high-spirited nature so bore the scorn, the abuse, and the jests heaped upon him, as to win great admiration from the majority of those who heard him for the first time. He began by asking very pertinently whether this was a just answer to his challenge, first to rack him, then to deprive him of books, notes and pen, lastly, to call upon him to debate? and he added (wishing to be fully understood by the audience), that what he had asked for was quite another sort of hearing: a hearing under equal conditions before the Universities. During the course of this first conference he was twice most unfairly tripped up: once over a quotation, in which he was right, though he could not then and there prove it; and

again over a page of the Greek Testament, in such small type that he could not read it, and had to put it by when it was handed to him: thereby drawing down upon himself the ridiculous taunt that he knew no Greek. This he took silently, and with a smile. At the end of the six hours he had [146] more than stood his ground. The Deans complained afterwards that a number of gentlemen present, “neither unlearned nor ill-affected,” considered that Master Campion had the best of it. Some common people who thought so too, and said so in the streets, paid dearly for their boldness. One of these gentlemen favourably impressed was Philip, Earl of Arundel, then in the flush of worldly pride and pleasure. He was the real victory of the Jesuit apostle, for he received at that time and in that place the first ray of divine grace, strong enough to change gradually in him the whole motive and course of that intensity of life which never failed the Howards. As he stood leaning forward in the foreground of the daïs, in that solemn interior, tall and young, with his great ruff and embroidered doublet, and his brilliant dark eyes held by the pathetic figure of Master Campion, how little could he have foreseen his own weary term of suffering in that gloomy fortress, and his sainted death there, at the end of the years! [147]

There were three other conferences under like conditions, but in other quarters, with four fresh adversaries. Campion was again “appointed only to answer, never to oppose”; that is, to answer miscellaneous and disjointed objections against the Catholic Church, without ever being allowed “to build up any harmonious apology for his own system.” The last conference was notable for its browbeating and threatening of a too successful adversary. The Bishop of London privately came to the conclusion that the verbal tournament was doing no good whatever to the sacred cause of Protestantism. The Council agreed, and ended it.

Towards the end of October Campion was racked for the third time, and with the utmost severity, so that he thought they meant, this time, to kill him; but his fortitude was unshaken. A rough and honest first cousin to the Queen, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, growled that it were easier to pluck the heart out of Campion’s breast than to wrest from him one word against his [148] conscience. His arms and legs went quite numb after this final torture. The keeper, who was won over by his endearing prisoner, and was always as gentle with him as he dared to be, inquired next day how they felt. “Not ill,” said Father Edmund, with all of his old brave brightness, “not ill, because not at all!”

Never once until now had he been accused of any conspiracy. But he was a troublesome person: he must be silenced somehow. With a tardy inspiration, the Council bent all their strength to get out of Campion some acknowledgment that he had been mixed up with the Spanish-Roman expedition, and the Irish rising of the preceding year. Not a shadow of proof could, of course, be produced for such a charge. Then, as a final and sure means of indicting him on some other count than that of religion, and of urging his execution upon the Queen, Walsingham, with Burghley’s connivance, hatched a treasonable plot out of his own inventive head, and got false witnesses to accuse Edmund Campion of it, and swear his life away. The “Plot [149] of Rheims and Rome” was described as an attempt to raise a sedition, and dethrone and kill the Queen. It had an imaginary but recent date: 1580. Everybody or anybody, when found convenient, could be accused of so elastic a plot. It was first charged against some twenty priests and laymen in this year 1581; but it was brought up against the Earl of Arundel four years afterwards, despite the fact that the supposed interests of the Church were the last things likely to win his attention at the time assigned.

On All Saints’ Day arrived in England a suitor for the hand of Queen Elizabeth: Francis, Duke of Alençon, King of the Netherlands, the short-lived heir to the throne of King Henry the Third of France. With that King, while Duke of Anjou, and with Alençon for nine years past (as for three yet to come), Elizabeth had carried on negotiations which ended in smoke; but she now announced that she “would marry at last.” Little Froggy, as she endearingly called him, was ugly to a degree, and many years younger than her Majesty; he was brother-in-law to the Queen of [150] Scots, who was her Majesty’s prisoner at Sheffield. The dominant, ultra-bigoted party took extreme alarm at the near prospect of toleration for Catholics which such a royal match suggested to them. To reassure them, it might just now be most useful, thought the Council, to hang a Jesuit or two.

On the 14th of the month Campion and eight others were arraigned before the grand jury in Westminster Hall. For “treasonable intents” of the Queen’s deprivation and murder, these “secret and privy practices of sinister devices,” befitting one “led astray by the devil,” had “Edmund Campion, clerk,” made his re-entry into England, the Pope, meanwhile, being not only aware of his act, but its “author and onsetter”! He was commanded, as were all those lumped with him in a common accusation, to plead Guilty or Not Guilty. Up went all the right arms of these “devotaries, and dead men to this world, who travelled only for souls,” as Campion himself called them: all but his, so disabled by the rack that he could not stir it from the furred cuff in which it [151] lay. But a quick-witted comrade turned and took off the cuff, “humbly kissing the sacred hands so wrung for the confession of Christ,” and lifted it high to cry its own mute Not Guilty with the rest. The Spanish Ambassador, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, standing close by with his secretary, saw, with a pang of pity, that all the finger-nails were gone from Campion’s swollen hands. The trial proper began on the 20th, before “such a presence of people of the more honourable, wise, learned, and best sort as was never seen or heard of in that court in ours or our fathers’ memories before us . . . so wonderful an expectation there was to see the end of this marvellous tragedy . . . [of] such as they knew in conscience to be innocent.” They all heard Ralph Sherwin say, in a loud clear voice: “The plain ground of our standing here is religion, and not treason.”

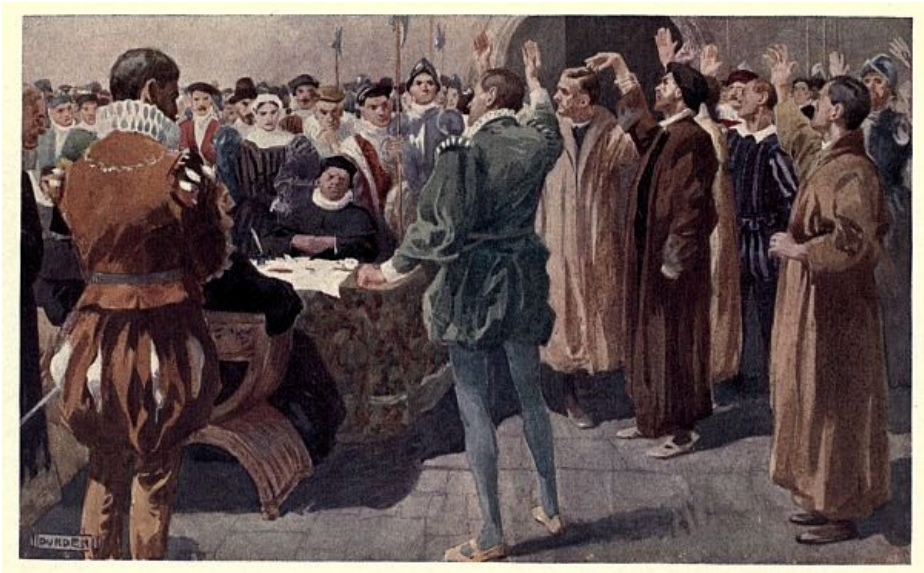
Chief Justice Wray presided, a Catholic at heart, and wretched ever after over this unwilling

day's work. The prosecuting officers for the Crown were the Queen's serjeant, Edmund Anderson; Popham, afterwards Chief Justice; and Egerton, afterwards the first Lord Ellesmere. [152] The chief witnesses were George Eliot, Anthony Munday, and two creatures named Sledd and Caddy: probably as evil a quartette as existed in contemporary England, and worthy forerunners of Oates and Bedloe. "They had nothing left to swear by," as Campion reminded the jury: "neither religion nor honesty." In no special order, but with much ardour and diligence, all the old tiresome trivial accusations were brought forward and pressed in, Campion being spokesman throughout for the defence, and his alert mind, despite his weakened body, meeting them all, and routing them. He was charged with having "seduced the Queen's subjects from their allegiance" . . . and "reconciled them to the Pope." He caught up the word. "We 'reconcile' them to the Pope! Nay, then, what reconciliation can there be to him, since reconciliation is only due to God? This word ['reconcile'] soundeth not to a lawyer's usage, and therefore is wrested against us inaptly. The reconciliation that we endeavoured was only to God: as Peter saith, *reconciliamini Domino*, [153] be ye reconciled unto the Lord." Campion was informed: "Yourself came as Procurator from the Pope and Dr. Allen, to break these matters to the English Papists." So he rejoined that in his homeward voyage from Rome, undertaken by his vow of obedience as a Jesuit, "the which accordingly I enterprised, being commanded thereto," he had "dined with Dr. Allen at Rheims, with whom also after dinner I walked in his garden . . . and not one jot of our talk glanced to the Crown or State of England. . . . As to the [Pope], he flatly with charge and commandment excused me from matters of State and regiment." . . . Followed a change of tactics. "Afterclaps make those excuses but shadows. . . . For what meaning had that changing of your name? Whereto belonged your disguising in apparel? What pleasure had you to royst it [in] a velvet hat and a feather, a buff leather jerkin, and velvet venetians? . . . Can that beseem a professed man of religion which hardly becometh a layman of gravity? No: there was a further matter intended. . . . [154] Had you come hither for love of your country, you would never have wrought a hugger-mugger; had your intent been to have done well, you would never have hated the light." To which Campion replied that St. Paul, in order "that living he might benefit the Church more than dying," betook himself "to sundry shifts . . . but that especially the changing of his name was very oft and familiar" . . . and that "he sometimes thought it expedient to be hidden, lest, being discovered, persecution should ensue thereby, and the gospel be greatly forestalled. . . . If these shifts were then approved in Paul, why are they now reproved in me?—he an Apostle, I a Jesuit . . . the same cause common to us both. . . . I wished earnestly the planting of the gospel; I knew a contrary religion professed; I saw if I were known I should be apprehended. I changed my name, I kept secretly: I imitated Paul. Was I therein a traitor? . . . The wearing of a buff jerkin, a velvet hat, and suchlike, is much forced against me. . . . I am not indicted upon the Statute of [155] Apparel! . . . Indeed, I acknowledge an offence to Godwards for so doing, and thereof it doth grievously repent me, and [I] therefore do now penance, as you see me." This charming rejoinder (again, how More-like!) was in allusion to his rough gown of Irish frieze, and a huge black nightcap covering half of his newly shaven face.

After all this mere hectoring, some pieces of "evidence" were produced. One of these was an intercepted letter which Campion himself had written from the Tower after his first and comparatively moderate racking, while it was still possible to use his hands; it was addressed to the admirable and truly holy, but fussy, Mr. Thomas Pounde, who, wild with alarm at the pretended "betrayals," had written to remonstrate with Fr. Campion. The Queen's Counsel now read this passage from Campion's humble reply: "It grieveth me much to have offended the Catholic cause so highly as to confess the names of some gentlemen and friends in whose houses I had been entertained. Yet in this I greatly cherish and comfort myself: that I never discovered [156] any secrets there declared; and that I will not, come rack, come rope!" The comment of the reader in court was an obvious one. "What can sound more suspiciously or nearer unto treason than this letter? . . . It must needs be some grievous matter and very pernicious, that neither rack nor rope can wring from him!" But Campion's even more obvious answer was that there he spoke as one "by profession and calling a priest," vowed to silence in regard to what was made known in the Confessional, and yet pressed, on the rack, to divulge secrets thus communicated to him. "These were the hidden matters . . . in concealing of which I so greatly rejoiced, to the revealing whereof I cannot nor will not be brought, come rack, come rope!" Well chosen was this answer of Campion's. It has been pointed out that if he had stated here that he had told on no one who was not already found out, he would have loosed the informers and man-hunters afresh on the whole Catholic community, until his other friends, who had not been found out, were run down. Instead [157] of that he drew off attention by reminding the court that he could not repeat what had been sacramentally confided to him. Most of his hearers were either Catholic or had been Catholic, and acquiesced. He spoke truth, but he skipped explanations: and such is, more often than not, the highest wisdom in this complex world.

There were now read out certain papers containing oaths to be administered to persons ready to renounce their obedience to her Majesty, and to be sworn of the Papal allegiance alone. These were said to have been found in houses where "Campion had lurked, and for religion been entertained;" hence they were of his composing. He objected that the administering of oaths was repugnant to him, and exceeded his authority: "neither would I commit an offence so thwart to my profession, for all the substance and treasure in the world." He went on to say (assuming for his purpose that the precious papers were not forged, though they really were so), that there was [158] no proof of their connection with himself, nor was it even pretended that they were in his handwriting. Anderson replied with singular perversity or dulness: "You, a professed Papist, coming to a house and then such reliques found after your departure—how can it otherwise be implied but that you did both bring them and leave them there? So it is flat they came there by

means of a Papist: *ergo*, by your means!" The logician in Campion dashed to the fore. Could it be shown that no other Papist ever visited that house but himself? If not, they were urging a conclusion before framing a minor! which is imperfect, he added, and proves nothing. Apparently Serjeant Anderson was sufficiently enraged by now. His highly judicial retort is on record. "If here, as you do in Schools, you bring in your minor and conclusion, you will prove yourself but a fool. But minor or conclusion, I will bring it to purpose anon!" Eliot then rose as witness, and gave his account of the Sunday sermon at Lyford: how Master Campion spoke of enormities in England, and of a day of change soon coming, welcome to the shaken and dispersed Catholics, [159] but dreadful to the heretical masters of the land. "What day should that be," broke in the Queen's Counsel, "but that wherein the Pope, the King of Spain, and the Duke of Florence have appointed to invade this realm?" Campion turned his eyes on Eliot. "Oh, Judas, Judas! . . . As in all other Christian commonwealths, so in England, many vices and iniquities do abound . . . whereupon, as in every pulpit every Protestant doth, I pronounced a great day, not wherein any temporal potentate should minister, but wherein the terrible Judge should reveal all men's consciences and try every man. . . . Any other day than this, God He knows I meant not." So much for the astonishing "evidence" of this most astonishing of all trials, one only, under Pontius Pilate, excepted.



"Not Guilty!"

p. 151.

The chief count against the defendant was the old, old one of the Bull of Deposition, and the denied authority of the Queen in spirituals: that wretched family skeleton trotted out once more! "You refused to swear to the Supremacy, a notorious token of an evil willer to the Crown." Campion, who was surely what Antony Wood quaintly calls him, "a sweete Disposition, and a well-polish'd Man," stated his position once more, lucidly, and with perfect [160] temper. He began by referring to what passed at the Earl of Leicester's London house. "Not long since it pleased her Majesty to demand of me whether I did acknowledge her to be my Queen or no. I answered that I did acknowledge her Highness not only as my Queen, but also as my most lawful governess. And being further required by her Majesty whether I thought the Pope might lawfully excommunicate her or no, I answered: 'I confess myself an insufficient umpire between her Majesty and the Pope for so high a controversy, whereof neither the certainty is yet known, nor the best divines in Christendom stand fully resolved! . . . I acknowledge her Highness as my governor and sovereign; I acknowledge her Majesty both in fact and by right to be Queen; I confess an obedience due to the Crown as to my temporal head and primate.' This I said then; so [161] I say now. If then I failed in aught, I am now ready to supply it. What would you more? I will willingly pay to her Majesty what is hers; yet I must pay to God what is His. Then as for excommunicating her Majesty, it was exacted of me (admitting that excommunication were of effect, and that the Pope had sufficient authority so to do), whether then I thought myself discharged of my allegiance or no? I said that this was a dangerous question, and that they that demanded this demanded my blood. Admitting (why admitting?) I would admit his authority, and then he should excommunicate her, I would then do as God should give me grace: but I never admitted any such matter, neither ought I to be wrested with any such suppositions." To all this no rejoinder was made. It was the identical position taken up by many another harassed martyr. The prosecution next turned to the remaining prisoners, using the same weak, wrong, skirmishing tactics,—Campion often putting in a word to hearten one, to defend another, to guide [162] a third. At a certain point he exclaimed: "So great are the treasons that I and the others have wrought, that the gaoler who has us in charge told me at night that would we but go to the Anglican services they would pardon us straightway!" Serrano, who reports this, adds: "They answered things in general." At the close of the proceedings, their issue being prearranged, Campion was allowed to make a speech to the jurors. He eloquently begged them to seek for certainties, and to remember the character of the "evidence" brought before them. Alas! he was appealing to bought men, who dared not be true.

The pleadings had taken three hours; the jury deliberated, or seemed to do so, for an hour or more. Public opinion in the Hall, as at the Tower conferences, was overwhelmingly in favour of Campion. But "the poor twelve," as Allen calls them, came back, fearful to be found "no friend of Cæsar," bringing in a verdict against the whole company as "guilty of the said treasons and conspiracies." The Lord Chief Justice spoke: "Campion, and the rest, what can you say why you [163]

should not die?” Then Campion broke out into a brief appeal to the future and the past, a lyric strain such as was not often heard beneath those ancient rafters, so sadly used to the spectacle of noble hearts in jeopardy. “It was not our death that ever we feared! But we knew that we were not lords of our own lives, and therefore for want of answer would not be guilty of our own deaths. The only thing that we have now to say is, that if our religion do make us traitors we are worthy to be condemned; but otherwise we are and have been as true subjects as ever the Queen had. In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors, all the ancient priests, Bishops and Kings: all that was once the glory of England, the Island of Saints, and the most devoted child of the See of Peter. For what have we taught (however you may qualify it with the odious name of treason), that they did not uniformly teach? To be condemned with these old lights, not of England only, but of the world, by their degenerate descendants, is both gladness and glory to [164] us! God lives. Posterity will live. Their judgment is not so liable to corruption as that of those who are now going to sentence us to death.” After which the Lord Chief Justice pronounced the formula in use for all prisoners condemned to capital punishment. “Ye must go to the place whence ye came, there to remain until ye shall be drawn through the open city of London upon hurdles to the place of execution, and there be hanged and let down alive . . . and your entrails taken out and burnt in your sight; then your heads to be cut off, and your bodies to be divided in four parts, to be disposed of at her Majesty’s pleasure. And may God have mercy on your souls!” Some of the company raised a storm of protest, but Campion’s voice rose above theirs, crying: “We praise Thee, O God!” Sherwin seconded him with the shouted anthem of Eastertide: “This is the day that the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad therein!” Like expressions of triumph were presently taken up, to the amazement of bystanders. Then the doomed men were parted, [165] and were all taken away, Edmund Campion being put in a barge on the Thames, and rowed back to the Tower, where he was heavily shackled with irons, and left alone.

XIII

VICTORY: DECEMBER 1, 1581

[166]

EVEN thus late, fresh proffers were made to buy Campion over to the State religion. Such a circumstance, as he had claimed previously, is in itself a plain disproof of any treason. Hopton, who hated him, sent Campion's own sister to him with the repeated offer of a very rich benefice. To the cell door came one day none other than George Eliot, saying that he would never have trapped Fr. Edmund, had he thought that anything worse than imprisonment could be in store. He also told the man of God whom he had wronged past reparation that he stood in danger from the wrath of the Catholics, and feared their reprisals for his late actions. Campion persuaded him that they would never push revenge so far as to seek his life, but added that if Eliot were truly repentant he should have a letter of recommendation to a Catholic Duke in [167] Germany, who would employ and protect him. Delahays, the keeper, in the discharge of his office, had to stand close to the prisoner during this interview, and what he heard sank into his mind and made him a convert. Outside the Tower, there was a ferment of excitement over this one of its inmates, and over the question whether the indignation of all Europe should be braved by carrying out his sentence. The Earl of Desmond, the accessory, and Dr. Sanders, the co-principal, of the late revolt in western Ireland, were still hiding in woods and caves, and weathering the hardships which were to be dismally ended for both during the coming spring. Burghley concisely said, in the finest Elizabethan spirit of punishing somebody—no great matter whom—when any row was made, that "Campion and Sanders were in the same boat, and as they could not catch Sanders, they must hang Campion instead." The princely visitor was still at Court, and high festival went on from day to day. The preoccupation of the Queen with him and [168] his affairs was thought to be an excellent item of the programme, as it kept her from thinking of Campion and his fate. Delay was dreaded as a means of getting together of the great English nobles, and the foreign ambassadors, with petitions for Campion's release; and it was thought that the Queen would never resist any strongly-worded request which so corroborated her own supposed secret feeling. The Council still thought his destruction desirable. Meanwhile, instant appeal was made to the Duke, by the Catholics generally, to use his influence in Campion's behalf: he promised to intercede for him, and may have done so. At the last moment further pressure was brought to bear. His confessor was sent into the tennis court, where the Duke was about to begin a game, with this message: that the royal blood of France would be disgraced for ever, if so foul a judicial murder were not checked. The little great personage, thus accosted, as we are told by Bombino, stroked his face absent-mindedly with his left hand; then raised his right hand, with the racket in it, and called to one opposite to him: "Play!" Not another word did he [169] answer to the tragic matter so thrust upon him.

Burghley fixed upon November 25, a Saturday, as the date for Campion's execution. Sherwin was appointed to die in his company, as representing the Seminary at Rheims. They were taken together one day into the Lieutenant's Hall to face some endless argument or other. The opponent, "by report of such as stood by, was never so holden up to the wall in his life." On the way back to their cells, under guard, they crossed one of the Tower courts. "Ah, Father Campion!" said his young comrade, smiling at the welcome London sun, "I shall shortly be above yon fellow." Even one hurried free breath of fresh air must have meant much to Campion. To be "clapped up a close prisoner," as he had been from the first, meant that his windows were blocked, and their minimum of air strained through a narrow slanted funnel, latticed at its skyward end, and with but one tiny pane occasionally opened at the bottom. But these things, humanly intolerable, counted for little on the threshold of light and liberty everlasting. "Delay of [170] our death doth somewhat dull me," wrote Sherwin, touchingly, to a friend. "Truth it is, I had hoped ere this, casting off this body of death, to have kissed the precious, glorified wounds of my sweet Saviour, sitting in the Throne of His Father's own glory." There was a good deal of haggling and hesitation on the subject. By statute law any caught priest was hangable; but public opinion (as Simpson reminds us in a brilliant page) did not always run with the statute law. Moreover, Camden says expressly that the Queen (who is supposed to have supervised and approved all he wrote) did not believe in the "treasons" charged to the "silly priests." It is remarkable that the first defensive pamphlet put forth by the Government after Campion's death, was one "in which the plot of Rheims and Rome was prudently forgotten—the very matter of the indictment!"

By the time the day for the execution was finally set for Friday, the first of December, a third priest had been chosen from the waiting batch of victims, as representing the English College at [171] Rome. This was the Blessed Alexander Briant, who had applied from his prison cell for admission into the Society of Jesus, a fact not known to his persecutors. If the entry of his age in the Oxford Matriculation Lists be correct (as is most likely), he was now only in his twenty-sixth year. He was grave and gentle in character, full of charm, and of the most extraordinary personal beauty. He had been carried off in the course of a descent on Fr. Parsons' London rooms, starved and parched in the Marshalsea, tortured by needles, and kept in the entire darkness of deep dungeons in the Tower. Norton, the Rackmaster, on three occasions, proceeded (in his own phrase) to "make him a foot longer than God made him," yet he adds that "he stood still with express refusal that he would tell the truth." The "truth" meant information of the whereabouts of Fr. Parsons, a former tutor and devoted friend, and of the place where Parsons' books were being printed. Briant had been condemned the day after Campion's trial, in Westminster Hall, where his angelic looks, out-lasting a hell of almost unique torment, did not pass unnoticed by the [172] public. Here (though some accounts say it was at the scaffold) he carried in the palm of his hand,

and gazed upon often, a little cross of rough wood which he had managed to whittle in his cell, and on which he had traced an outline in charcoal of the figure of the Crucified. Pedro Serrano, the secretary of the Spanish Ambassador, saw it taken away from Briant, and heard him say: "You can wrest it from my hand, but never from my heart." Not long afterwards George Gilbert died in Italy, kissing Blessed Alexander's little cross, which he must have taken pains to buy back.

These three, Fathers Campion, Sherwin, and Briant, were led forth on a bitter morning, and bound to their hurdles, in the rain, outside the Tower gates. Campion's life for the past week had been nothing but fasting, watching and prayer, and he was never in more gallant spirits. "God save you all, gentlemen!" so he saluted the crowd, on first coming out: "God bless you all, and make you all good Catholics!" The two younger men were strapped down on one hurdle side by [173] side, Campion alone on the other. The mud was thick in the unpaved streets of London, and the double span of horses, each flat hurdle being tied to two tails, went at a great pace through Cheapside, Newgate Street, and Holborn. There were intervals, however, when the jolted and bemired prisoners were able to speak with their sympathizers, who surged in upon them, and thus saved them for the moment from the incessant annoyance of Charke and other accompanying fanatics. Some asked Fr. Campion's blessing; some spoke in his ear matters of conscience; one gentleman courteously bent down and wiped the priest's bespattered face: "for which charity, or haply some sudden-moved affection, may God reward him!" says one annalist who saw the kind deed done.

The New Gate spanned the street where the prison named after it stood until yesterday; and in a niche of the New Gate was still a statue of Our Lady: this Fr. Campion reverenced, raising his head and his bound body, as best he could, as he passed under. The three martyrs were seen to [174] be smiling, nay, laughing, and the people commented with wonder on their light-heartedness. A mile or so of sheer country at the end of the road, and Tyburn was at hand, stark against a cloudy sky, with a vast crowd waiting to see the sacrifice: "more than three thousand horse," says Serrano, in the contemporary letter already quoted, "and an infinite number of souls." And he goes on, in the truest Catholic temper, speaking for himself, the Ambassador, and their little circle, to say, "there was no one of us who had not envy of their death." Just as the hurdles halted, the sudden sun shone out and lit up the gallows with its hanging halters. Fr. Campion was set upon his feet, put into the hangman's cart, driven under the triangular beams, and told to put his head into the noose. This the first martyr of the English Jesuits did with all meekness. Then, "with grave countenance and sweet voice," he began to speak, as he supposed he was to be allowed to do, according to custom. He took the text of St. Paul: "We are made a spectacle unto [175] the world, and to angels, and to men: we are fools for Christ's sake." Sir Francis Knowles and other officials promptly interrupted him, and reminded him to confess his treason. So once more he must needs say: "I desire you all to bear witness with me that I am thereof altogether innocent. . . . I am a Catholic man and a priest: in that faith have I lived, and in that faith do I intend to die. If you esteem my religion treason, then am I guilty. As for other treason, I never committed any: God is my judge." He spoke of the names which he had been hoodwinked into confessing, and protested that all the "secrets" held back were spiritual confidences, and that there were no "secrets" of another nature between his hosts and him; he also put in a plea for one Richardson, imprisoned on account of the *Decem Rationes*, whereas he knew nothing whatever of that book. He then tried to pray. But a school-master with lungs, named Hearne, hastily stepped forward and read a novel proclamation, first and last of its kind, declaring in the Queen's name that these men about to be executed were perishing not for religion but for [176] treason. Diligent reassertion, in those days, seems to have established anything as a fact!

The lords and sheriffs present reverted to "the bloody question": what did Master Campion think of the Bull of Pius Quintus and the excommunication of the Queen? and would he renounce the Pope of Rome? He answered wearily that he was a Catholic. One voice shouted: "In your Catholicism all treason is contained!" A minister came forward to bid the martyr pray with him, but with marked gentleness was denied his will. "You and I are not one in religion: wherefore, I pray you, content yourself. I bar none of prayer, but I only desire them of the Household of Faith to pray with me, and in mine agony to say one Creed." The Creed was chosen "to signify that he died for the confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith." He endeavoured again to pray, probably using aloud the words of some of the Vulgate Psalms or ritual hymns, when a spectator called out angrily to him to pursue his devotions in English. "I will pray unto God," answered [177] Campion, with all himself in the answer, "in a language which we both well understand!" He was again interrupted, and ordered to ask forgiveness of the Queen, and to pray for her. But his sweetness and patience held out till the last. "Wherein have I offended her? In this am I innocent: this is my last speech: in this give me credit. I have and do pray for her." "Pray you for Queen—Elizabeth?" was the insinuating query, made often, and answered often, as here. Campion said: "Yea, for Elizabeth, your Queen and my Queen, unto whom I wish a long, quiet reign, with all prosperity." He had barely finished this emphatic sentence when the cart was drawn away. The multitude with one accord swayed and groaned. Somebody in authority (one account names the Chamberlain of the Royal Household, Lord Howard of Effingham) mercifully forbade the hangman to cut the rope until he was quite dead. That other rope with which Campion was bound Parsons managed to buy, and he had it laid about his own neck when he came to die, in 1610. It [178] is now at Stonyhurst: a thin, frayed old cord some twelve feet long.

Close to the quartering-block stood a spectator, a young gallant of twenty-three, eldest son of a Norfolk house, who had great gifts of mind, and was given to writing verses: his name was Henry Walpole. He was a Catholic, though, it would seem, a worldly one. His generous instincts of

humanity, however, had led him to befriend hunted priests; and a love of Campion, in particular, was already kindled in him through this association. As the executioner threw the severed limbs of a blessed soul into the great smoking cauldron, to parboil them before they were stuck on spikes, according to sentence, a few drops were splashed out upon Henry Walpole's doublet. The incident roused his mind and pierced his heart, and was to him the instant cry of his vocation. Like many another spiritual son of Blessed Edmund Campion (and nearer to him than they, because he entered the Society), he was granted the glory of following him, through faults of his own, through innumerable hardships, and through martyrdom at York, in April, 1595, into the [179] peace of Paradise.

Meanwhile the hangman had seized the second victim, saying: "Come, Sherwin! take thou also thy wages." That manly man looked upon the bare bloody arm of the other, and eager to show some public veneration of his sainted leader, first bent forward and kissed it; then he leaped into the cart. Young Briant presently endured death for the Faith with an even calmer courage. The populace, much wrought up over all three, went home, through the winter mists, in tears. Most of them who had prejudices against the Church lost them for good; and very many straightway entered her communion.

The Government sent forth publication after publication in lame defence of its action. Soon France, Austria, Italy, were inundated with accounts of the event; these everywhere produced the deepest impression. At home, a great tidal wave of conversion to the old Church swept in.

Campion's death, last and best of his wonderful missionary labours, bore the most astonishing [180] fruit. The long storm of persecution raged at its full fierceness after 1581, and it burst over the heads not only of a far more numerous, but a far more heroic body. Edmund Campion's spirit had been built in good time, as it were, into the unsteady wall.

Robert Parsons had an intense feeling for his first comrade-in-arms. "I understand of the advancement and exaltation of my dear brother Mr. Campion, and his fellows. Our Lord be blessed for it! it is the joyfullest news in one respect that ever came to my heart." This same feeling breaks out with powerful irony, addressing the "Geneva-coloured" clerics, who so long harassed the martyr-group of 1581. "Their blood will, I doubt not, fight against your errors and impiety many hundred years after you are passed from the world altogether. . . . They are well bestowed upon you: you have used them to the best."

And Allen, in a private letter, says on his part: "Ten thousand sermons would not have published our apostolic faith and religion so winningly as the fragrance of these victims, most [181] sweet both to God and to men."

No remote mystic was Edmund Campion, but a man of his age, with much endearing human circumstance about him and in him. Caring for nothing but the things of the soul, he had yet caught the ear and the eye of the nation. The tidings of his end meant much to many of the great Elizabethans: not least personal was it, perhaps, to the lad Shakespeare, whose father had been settled as a stout Recusant by the Warwickshire ministrations of Parsons.

An aged priest, Gregory Gunne, came up before the Council in 1585, his thoughts and tongue too busy in Campion's praise. The day would come, he said, when a religious house would stand as a votive offering on the spot where "the only man in England" had perished. There was still no sign of such a thing when Mr. Richard Simpson's great monograph was first published, and that was twenty years before Pope Leo XIII beatified the Blessed Edmund Campion on December 9, [182] 1886. But now there is a Convent with Perpetual Adoration in its little chapel, and two bright English flags ever leaning against the altar, on that ground of the London Tyburn: and is it wonderful that the vision of a worthier memorial haunts the imagination of those who go there to pray for their country?

Blessed Edmund Campion was "a religious genius," with a creative spirituality given to few, even among the canonized children of the Fold. But in his kinship with his place and time, his peculiar gentleness, his scholarship lightly worn, his magic influence, his fearless deed and flawless word, he was a great Elizabethan too. He had sacrificed his fame and changed his career. He had spent himself for a cause the world can never love, and by so doing he has courted the ill-will of what passed for history, up to our own day. But no serious student now mistakes the reason why his own England found no use for her "diamond" other than the one strange use to which she put him. He is sure at last of justice. In the Church, that name of his will [183] have a never-dying beauty, though it is not quite where it might have been on the secular roll-call. To understand this is also to rejoice in it: for why should we look to find there at all, those who are "hidden with Christ in God"?

THE END

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD. [184]

Transcriber's Note:

Obvious punctuation errors were corrected.

Page 77, "Fowers" changed to "Flowers" (Little Flowers of Martyrdom)

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