

## EDMUND ARROWSMITH.

(From the 'Month.'

*Lancastria Fidelis* has certainly merited well of God's Church in England. The genuine downright honesty of its population, the fidelity of its landed gentry, were a barrier to the new religion, which all the material arguments that were at its disposal could not overcome. Now that the archives of England and Belgium, and the precious stores of our bishops' libraries and of our colleges are giving up their dead, we are beginning to realize at what a cost our forefathers defended the heritage of their ancient faith. Though Father Faber's beautiful hymn has been parodied by Ritualist adoption, yet its true meaning comes out all the clearer, when we read it in the new light which recent research has thrown upon it. Father Morris' publications have been noticed at length in our pages, and have had the unusual fortune of being heartily received by the first literary journals of the day. We need make no apology for devoting a few pages to the martyr whose name is at the head of this article. If we except Cardinal Fisher and Sir Thomas More, and perhaps Father Campion, none of the martyrs is better known than Father Arrowsmith. Spite of modern progress and mechanics' institutes, Catholics and Protestants from the northern and midland counties still go to seek health and cure from his "holy hand."

It was in the heart of Catholic Lancashire, the Lancashire of farms and homesteads, not the county of coal-pits and chimneys, that Robert Arrowsmith was living at the time of our story, the cruel, dangerous days of Elizabeth Tudor. His house was at Haddock, in Winwick parish, about half way between Wigan and Warrington. Robert was a yeoman who had married a lady of gentle birth; it could have been no easy thing for Catholic maidens to find Catholic husbands at such times. Margery Arrowsmith was of the good house of the Gerards. But both were ennobled by the sufferings of their families for the faith. Margery's father, when carried to church, by order of his renegade brother, Sir Thomas Gerard, and unable to resist owing to an attack of the gout, sang out his Latin Psalms so lustily, as a protest against the heretical service, that the minister was glad to have him removed. Thurston Arrowsmith, Robert's grandfather, had sacrificed earthly substance and liberty, and at last had died in prison for the truth. It was in 1585 that Margery had a child who was christened Bryan or Barnaby. The little fellow had an early taste of what his faith would cost him. One night the pursuivants broke into the house, searched it from roof to cellar, and then tying the inmates in couples, dragged them off to Lancaster goal. Poor Barnaby, then but a child, and three other little children, were left in the ransacked house, shivering in the cold, just as they had been turned out roughly from bed, in their nightshirts, till some friendly neighbours came in to look after them.

His father and his uncle Peter, wearied with repeated imprisonments, fled to Flanders, where their brother Edmund was Professor at Douay; but they were forcibly enlisted on landing into the Protestant army. They took care, however, not to shed any blood for that side, and contrived by means of Sir William Stanley, so well known for his surrender at Deventer, to get over to the Spanish and Catholic side. Peter died of his wounds at Brussels, and Robert made his way to Dr. Edmund Arrowsmith, and then returned to Lancashire to die.

His widow Margery was glad to put Bryan out to place with a good priest, who in return for his services undertook to teach him his grammar. His previous village schooling had had the effect of making him "blunt-witted and dull." But when in 1605 he was sent across the seas to the venerable College of Douay, his wits began to sharpen, and though he seemed to give small attention to his books, he always got the first place when asked his lessons. Bryan at Confirmation took the name of his uncle—Edmund—a name which had just won a fresh lustre from Campion's martyrdom, and by it he was ever afterwards called. He was a delicate boy, and had to be sent home before long; but his good master when he grew better assisted him out again. On his return he set to work so earnestly, now that he had taken the college oath, and been admitted as an alumnus, that his health began again to fail, and the time of his orders had to be anticipated. He was ordained priest on December 9, 1612, and the new President, Dr. Kellison, sent him on the following June to labor in the English vineyard.

Edmund was in person small and rather uncouth, but he was of a bright and pleasant disposition, and very attractive in conversation. He did not spare his fun when he met with travellers on the road, and his companions had to restrain him, when he saw ministers riding by on their sleek steeds, from following his strong impulse to enter into dispute with them. A gentleman who came up with him one day began to play the fool with the simple, uneducated yokel, as Edmund Arrowsmith looked to be, but he met with such clever rejoinders, and the tables so thoroughly turned upon him, that "swearing a great oath, he said 'I thought that I had met with a foolish fellow, but now I see he is either a foolish scholar or a learned fool.'" For some ten years Edmund labored hard in God's field, when he was arrested. The wonder was that this came so late, so boldly imprudent and ardently zealous he always was. When lodged in Lancaster gaol, Edmund Arrowsmith was brought before Dr. Bridgeman, the Protestant Bishop of Chester. His lordship was at supper with a number of his clergy, and though it was Lent, all were eating meat. Edmund Arrowsmith seized the opportunity for argument, and soon a hot discussion arose. "Turn all your dogs loose at once against me," he merrily said to the Bishop, "and let us have a loose bait." It seems he had the better of his adversaries, and silenced them by his learned references to history and authority. But it was probably in 1622, at the time of the proposed Spanish match, and he was shortly after released from prison.

Ever since he had made a retreat, at the close of his philosophy, Edmund had felt a call from God to enter religion, and to

become a child of St. Ignatius, through whose Exercises this call had come. To enter a novitiate was no easy matter in those days, though there was one, and no small one, within the sound of Bow Bells; and in the register of the Jesuit novice-house at Clerkenwell, Edmund's name was found inscribed as a novice when, some three years later, the place was broken into and all the documents and books were seized.

But we do not know that Father Arrowsmith was ever there. When at last his desire was fulfilled, he withdrew for two or three months to Essex, during which time, no doubt, he went through the 30 days' retreat which forms so important a part of a Jesuit's training, and learned the rules and constitutions of his order. Perhaps he went for a brief space to Clerkenwell, and there took his first vows, and then returned to the dangers of the battle field. This was in 1624. Each year he retired for 10 or 12 days to a quiet out of the way spot in Lancashire, to spend the time with others of his religious brethren in prayer and meditation, and to renew his pledge of self-consecration to God's greater glory.

A Mr. Holden in Lancashire had married his first cousin, a Protestant, before a minister. He applied to the father for a dispensation; but when it was obtained, Father Edmund insisted on a separation for a full fortnight before it should be finally granted to them. Though the woman was then a convert, both she and Holden became furious, and in their anger denounced the Jesuit to a Justice of the Peace, telling him at what time Father Arrowsmith could be found at the house of Holden's father. Recusants in Lancashire were as sturdy as they were numerous, and pursuivants often got a good beating for their trouble, and we read of one who had to eat his warrant. So the Justice was loath to go, and when pressed by the malicious traitors, he warned the old man that he was coming, and of course the priest was off when the searchers arrived. This was in the summer of 1628. As they returned they fell in with Father Arrowsmith himself, who was riding along on a good horse with a relative of his, who was dressed as his servant. The Justice's servant rushed at him with drawn sword, and Father Arrowsmith put spurs to his horse, but in vain. He got into a bog, and had to dismount and fly; but he carried so heavy a weight of books and luggage—no doubt his vestments and books of devotion—that he could get on but slowly, and his pursuer came up to him near a ditch and struck at him with his sword. Though Edmund also carried a sword, he did not draw it, but parried the blow with a strong stick which he held, and it was cut right in two close to his hand. He seems to have thought his adversary a common footpad, and made off again. But at last he was overtaken, dragged to a public-house, searched to the skin, and subjected to every infamy. There his captors began drinking at his expense, and the saintly priest had to listen to the loose talk of the half-drunken crew. His words of grave reproof were afterwards made a matter of accusation.

Before long Father Arrowsmith was lodged by the pursuivants in his old quarters in Lancaster gaol. The oath of supremacy was tendered to him, and of course was refused, and he was committed by the Magistrate to take his trial at the next assizes, which were close at hand. The judges on the circuit were Sir Henry Yelverton and Sir James Whitelock.

Sir Henry was a staunch puritan, and to his zeal against Popery was added the personal motive, that before coming down from London he had been told to his face he durst not hang a priest. The Commons, angry at the levity of King Charles, and to show their displeasure at his Catholic Queen, had insisted on a rigorous enforcement of the brutal laws which the Government would gladly have left in abeyance.

Religious hate, wounded vanity, and popular fury left little chance of impartial justice holding her own. The very day after his arrival, on August 26, Judge Yelverton summoned Father Arrowsmith to the bar, and there he stood amidst a crowd of thieves and felons, whose rough hearts he had won by his gentle manners and earnest words.

"Sirrah!" said the Judge, going directly to the chief accusation against the prisoner, "are you a priest?" The Father made the sign of the Cross and twice replied, "I would I were!" The prescribed priest held the lives of all who had sheltered him in his hands. To own his sacred character was to bring ruin on his hosts. "Yes," argued Sir Henry, "though he is not, yet he desires to be a traitor; this fact makes him guilty. But are you no priest?" Father Arrowsmith gave no answer. "You may easily see," said the Judge, turning to the jury, "he is a priest. I warrant you he would not for all England deny his order." A parson-magistrate was sitting on the Bench, who perhaps had met the prisoner at the famous supper with my Lord of Chester, and he whispered something into the Judge's ear and then began to inveigh against Father Arrowsmith as a seducer, who if order was not taken would convert half Lancashire. Did the Father recollect the face of his assailant? At all events he gladly offered, before the whole court, to defend his faith against all comers. Of this the Judge would not hear, saying Father Arrowsmith only wanted to let people of his own way of thinking hear him talk. "I will not only defend it by words, but would gladly seal it with my blood," was the martyr's reply. Sir Henry was lashed into a fury, "You shall seal it with your blood," and he swore by all that was holy that he would not leave the town before the prisoner was hung, and his bowels burnt before his face. "You shall die," he said again and again. "And you, my lord, must die," was Father Arrowsmith's calm retort.

Every means failed the Judge to extort from the prisoner his own conviction. "If any man can lawfully accuse me, I stand here ready to answer him." The married couple seem to have repented of their treacherous betrayal, for no witness was forthcoming save the son and the servant of the magistrate by whom the martyr had been arrested. The letter written by Holden and his mother, or his wife's mother, to the Justice of the Peace, in the first instance, was also produced. The two witnesses both swore