

THE LATE MONSIGNOR BENSON

Rev. Father Bernard Vaughan was the preacher at the formal opening of the little Catholic church at Buntingford, erected to the memory of the late Mgr. Benson, who lived close by. Cardinal Bourne attended the opening, and there was a notable gathering of clergy and laity.

Father Bernard Vaughan said that more than a year before Mgr. Benson left exile for home he had asked him to preach at the opening of Buntingford church. 'He was good enough to tell me,' said Father Vaughan, 'that he had set his heart upon my doing so, and at once I set my heart upon complying with his wish.' At the close of a typically forceful address, Father Vaughan added:—

'I must return to our dear friend gone home before us. "The Friendship of Christ"—was not that his theme? And was he not a high expression of it? I did not see very much of him, but we loved each other dearly, and when we did speak we could open our hearts each to each, and he always responded to what I felt is the great secret of sanctity—personal love of our Lord. Do you know, it is a great object lesson, his death? He wore himself out through the love of Jesus Christ. He realised himself as far as God permitted him as an instrument in the hands of Christ, for the conversion and the sanctification of souls. Hence his literary production, hence his wondrous array of sermons, hence his guidance of souls, hence his unwearying letter-writing. "Do less," I once said to him, "and perhaps you would do better work and be spared for a longer life." But you cannot check the rays of the sun, you cannot stop an avalanche, you cannot hold up a great cataract: you might as well go on the main line between London and Edinburgh and try to stop an express train as try to stop him. He had to go. The fire was burning, and he was racing, and on he raced till he slowed into the eternal terminus.

'No man puts anything into another which he does not take out of himself. He gave of himself always. He gave till there was none more to give, and so he sank down and died. He was finished. But there was a beautiful spirit about him: there was the wonderful hope of boyhood. He was such a boy and yet so strong a man. He was so simple. He could go almost mad in the worship of a flower picked up in the field, which others would tread heedlessly under foot: he was always in song, always chirping, warbling like a bird, promising a glorious summer. No matter who appealed to him he seemed to have time for them: he took an interest and gave his sympathy. He had a wonderful power of sympathy. He must have got it from our Lord's love, for there is nobody so sympathetic as the Master. Sometimes when we try to advance and make a little progress in spirituality some of us are perhaps inclined to be hard with others and ready to break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax. But not so Robert Hugh Benson. He could not understand how anybody could be unkind, and it hurt him intensely when people brought him news of how he was misrepresented and his works mishandled. He could scarcely understand it. He did not live in that atmosphere, but in the sunshine of the risen day. And so we have lost one who has done so much, not only for the Catholic world, but also for the non-Catholic world. He is a real loss: I was going to say almost a calamity. His life was short: but what a psalm!—not the *Miserere*, but "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He has done for thee." That was his psalm of life, and this is what you and I want—not to be pessimists, but to have the optimism of Robert Hugh Benson: to go about laden with the burden of sunshine and tell people to lift up their blinds and open their windows and let the light and warmth of God's sun into their homes and into their lives.

'There is a great light quenched and the blinds are drawn, and we feel he has left the chambers of our

soul dark. Let us learn our lesson from him, to lavish the love we have for Jesus Christ upon the service of our Lord, and to go on untiring, doing our best.

'Remember, as he said, we must not let our religion be like that of so many to whom it is an elegant outburst of graceful philosophy, a pleasant scheme of conjecture. Let it be with us, as it was with him, a passionate love of the Divine Master, love which overflows upon the brethren. If we live thus, we shall fulfil that twofold commandment of the Old and the New—"Love the Lord with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves."

WEDDING BELLS

WILSON—SHEEHAN.

A few days ago the wedding took place at St. Joseph's Church, Buckle street, Wellington, of Miss Doris Sheehan, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. W. Sheehan, and Mr. Alfred J. Wilson, son of the late Mr. James Wilson and Mrs. Wilson, of Wellington. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Father Hurley, Adm. The bride was given away by her brother-in-law, Mr. Martin Gleeson, and wore a costume of cream serge with lace vest, and panne velvet hat. She was attended by her sister, Miss Evelyn Sheehan, as bridesmaid, who wore a navy blue costume and hat of black velvet. Mr. Harold Jansen was the best man. After the ceremony a reception was held at Godber's rooms, in Courtenay place, where the guests were received by the bride's sister, Mrs. Gleeson. During the afternoon the customary toasts were proposed by Mr. Rodgers, Mr. Durnett, Mr. Jance, Mr. Burke, Mr. Gleeson, Mr. Oakes, and Mr. Wilson, and the bride and bridegroom left later for their honeymoon, the bride wearing a costume of elderberry-colored resilda cloth, with hat to match. The bridegroom's presents to the bride were a silver purse, and silver-backed brush and comb, and to the bridesmaid, a gold bangle. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson received many valuable presents, among them a handsome case of cutlery from the staff of the Vacuum Oil Company.

Hamilton

The closing devotion of the month of May was celebrated by a procession in honor of our Blessed Lady through the convent grounds. The procession was headed by the acolytes and our Lady's banner, then came the school children in regalia, fifteen of whom carried each a banner representing a decade of the Rosary. The statue of our Blessed Lady was carried by the Children of Mary, the clergy, and a very large number of the parishioners following. The concourse assembled at the grotto of our Lady of Lourdes, where an eloquent sermon was preached by the Rev. Father O'Doherty, who took for his text, 'Behold thy Mother.' The devotion concluded by the recitation of the Rosary and the May hymn by the children's choir. The grotto of Lourdes was erected in the convent grounds at the expense of the Sisters, the statue being procured from Lourdes. Last year, on Rosary Sunday, the well and grotto were solemnly blessed by the Right Rev. Mgr. Gillan, V.G., of Auckland.

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