

istry. During these 33 years the Catholics were allowed no 'chaplain'; they were ordered to take their places on Sundays amongst the Protestants, and were punished for disobedience, and their children were taken from them and set to learn in schools where all were made Protestants. It may be that this part of the history of the Catholic Church in Australia may be said to be

A Part of the History of Ireland.

It has often seemed to me that what I am told is the characteristic of the climate of Ireland (for I have never had the good fortune to be in that country) is symbolical of the pages of her history, for those pages must surely be wet with the rain of many tears. It seems to me impossible that that history can be read in any other way. I cannot understand how its pages can be read except through sympathetic shower and mist, and when I say that the first 33 years of the history of New South Wales may be said to be a part of the history of Ireland I mean that the policy of 'making all Protestants' was continued in Australia, and continued in a form too closely resembling that in which it had once been sought to Protestantise Ireland. But it is not easy to 'make all Protestants' of that nation. They were not only witnesses for the Faith before the Tudors began to commit Acts of Supremacy, but they have been witnesses ever since. Here are the people who, as it seems to me, can teach us what is meant by 'continuity.' It is in Ireland that one perceives 'continuity,' a continuity as self-evident as the joy caused by the perception. It is with the people of Ireland that the faith of those Celtic cenobites, whose caves and crosses have been for so many hundreds of years the scenes of pious pilgrimages, is still to be found, and amongst them exists so rooted a reverence for their heirlooms of holiness, and so clear and strong a spiritual insight into the truths bequeathed to them by their faithful dead, that it is impossible to doubt, were some evil revival of the Penal Laws to turn once more the island into a torture-chamber and a slaughter-house, that her true sons and daughters, no whit less Catholic than St. Patrick and St. Columba, would set, as of old, their faces steadfastly towards scourge and scaffold.

It Was in Vain

that during the early years of Australian history, in order to make all Protestants, the resources of Protestant civilisation were exhausted. It was useless to withhold from the Catholics the favor of Caesar. That favor was shown to those who hated them, and who had, in the natural order, dominion over them. It is rather a striking coincidence that in the year 1803, the year in which, for a few months, Father Dixon, one of the 'Convict Priests,' was allowed, under a sort of surly surveillance, to offer the Holy Sacrifice, that George III. presented to the Protestants of Sydney silver Communion plate of a costliness worthy of a King's gift. It is rather striking coincidence that in this very same year, 1803, Father Dixon, as we know, celebrated with a chalice which a convict had fashioned out of tin, and was vested with a chasuble made from the curtains of the poor. This was some hundred and eight years ago. I will say no more of the difference between now and then than that its realisation makes instinctive the re-calling of two passages of Scripture. One is: 'And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'; and the other is: 'But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

Such is the Divine Promise,

such the divine prophecy; the promise and prophecy of a throne of supernatural authority and appeal, of a Voice to be audible through the Ages, of a Voice which was to guide humanity from generation to generation, and to still whatever of storm the proud and foolish self-will of man may raise. They speak these words uttered by the Son of God, of where on earth absolute truth should abide, and of whence on earth absolute truth should be revealed.

I remember, as a young man, the stir that was occasioned in England by the publication of *John Inglesant*. I read it with great interest and delight, and

played my little part in that conversational criticism which ever buzzes about the book of the season. What did it mean? Was Mr. Shorthouse a 'Roman Catholic'? Did he wish his readers to think of him as of one well disposed towards the Roman Catholics? Was the charm of his literary style a subtle method of sowing that seed which could only come to light in 'Roman' atmosphere and soil? Such was the sort of questions that people, and people who set up to be intelligent, used to ask at the time. And very foolish questions they were. For whatever Mr. Shorthouse was, he was certainly no 'Roman Catholic' missionary. He was, indeed, very much more like a Protestant pamphleteer. His Jesuit was worthy of one of those studios where the lay-figure is so much more used than the living model, and his Cardinal was not quite the sort of personage who, at the time of which I speak, was still living at Archbishop's House, Westminster. The impression which the author of *John Inglesant* left upon his readers, and the impression which doubtless he desired to leave upon his readers, was to be found at the close of his story. The words, as I well remember, had a great effect upon me, and in them, perhaps, may be found the principle of too many heretical years. I will quote the passage: "'The Church of England,'" I said, seeing that Mr. Inglesant paused, "is no doubt a compromise, and is powerless to exert its discipline, as the events of the late troubles have shown. It speaks with bated assurance, while the Church of Rome never falters in its utterance, and I confess seems to me to have a logical position. If there be absolute truth revealed,

There Must Be an Inspired Exponent

of it, else from age to age it could not get itself revealed to mankind."

"This is the Papist argument," said Mr. Inglesant: "there is only one answer to it—Absolute truth is not revealed." I have come to disbelieve that statement, and to believe its opposite. I have come to believe in the 'inspired exponent.' I believe that absolute truth has been revealed. Unless that is so, I do not see how Christ could have built 'a house of refuge for man,' or how the ever-encroaching, false counsel of the Time-Spirit is to be successfully combated. I believe that absolute truth is lodged in the Catholic Church, and I believe that it is to be found nowhere else. And so believing, I had to believe as well that it was my duty to leave that communion to which certainly absolute truth had not been revealed (as the author of *John Inglesant*, himself a conspicuously devoted member of the Church of England, was so 'extreme to mark'), and to come a suppliant to that long-desired home, to cross whose threshold is at last to learn where still the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

It is Sometimes Said of Converts,

though of course only by very shallow people, that they are the victims of a weak emotionalism. It were truer to say that they are the victors over a very strong emotionalism, the emotionalism that would fain keep them where they are. To 'forget also thine own people and thy father's house,' to feel blowing upon one all the airs of association and of memory, to leave the familiar and the so long-beloved, to seem to flout all those deep hours in which one learnt to love or to loathe what was help or hindrance to the soul, to forego the easy welcome of friends whose well-known faces were to grow unfamiliar with a frown—here is matter for that emotionalism which doth so easily beset many, and which to struggle with and strangle is not done without heard cries for help. Well must many converts understand those touching words which Cardinal Manning wrote to his 'dear friend,' Dr. Pusey: 'Nay, I loved the parish church of my childhood, and the college chapel of my youth, and the little church under a green hill-side, where the morning and evening prayers, and the music of the English Bible, for seventeen years, became a part of my soul. Nothing is more beautiful in the natural order, and if there were no eternal world, I could have made it my home.'