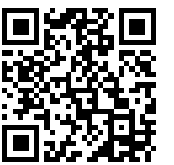
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The Irish Dames of Ypres

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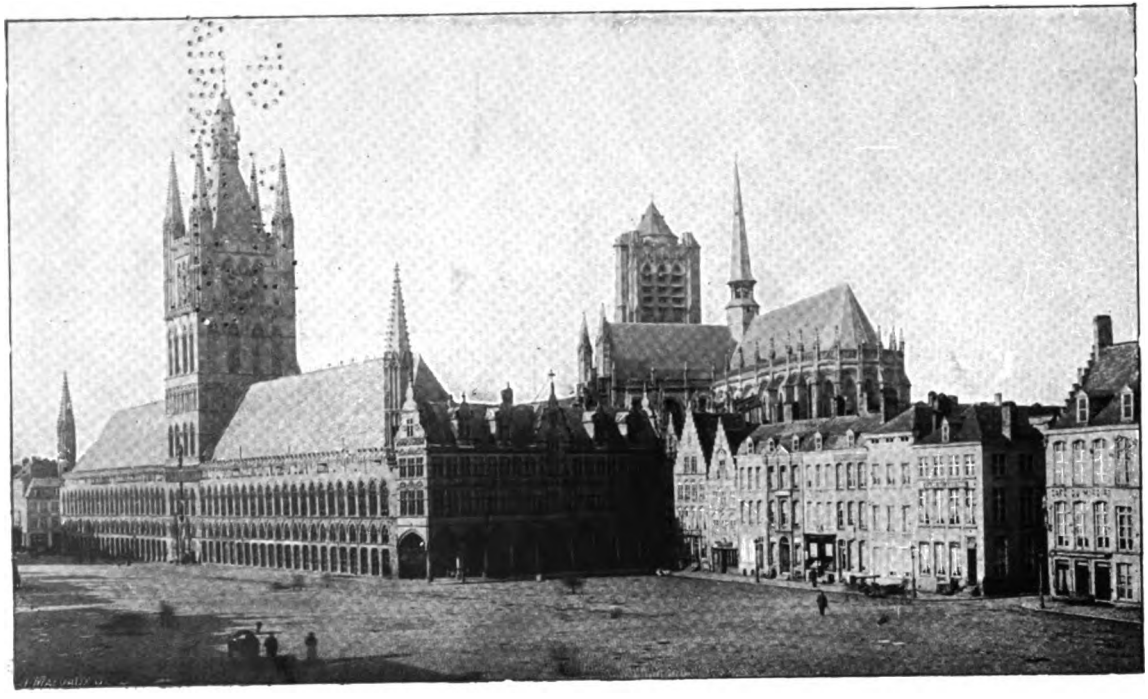
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FRANCIS J. HAN
Frank Sullivan
Dublin
Sept 8/10

THE

Irish Dames of Ypres

Being a History of the

Royal Irish Abbey of Ypres

Founded A.D. 1665 and still flourishing

And Some Account of Irish Jacobitism

With a Portrait of James II and Stuart Letters hitherto unpublished

BY THE

REV. DOM PATRICK NOLAN

Priest and Monk of the Order of St. Benedict

In the cloisters of Ypres, a banner is swaying,
And by it a pale, weeping maiden is praying:
That flag 's the sole trophy of Ramillies' fray;
This nun is poor Eily, the Flower of Finae.—*Davis.*

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AR DEORAIDEACT

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND DOM HILDEBRAND DE HEMPTINNE,

ABBOT PRIMATE OF THE WHOLE ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT,

ABBOT OF ST. ANSELM'S DE URBE, ROME, AND OF ST. BENEDICT'S, MAREDSOUS,

&c., &c., &c.

MY LORD ABBOT PRIMATE AND RT. REV. FATHER IN ST. BENEDICT,

Some fourteen years ago in retracing my steps across the Continent after a visit to Rome and the holy places of Italy I knocked at the gates of your Abbey of Maredsous, and a month later I decided, with your encouragement and approval, to abandon the world and assume the habit of St. Benedict, which I had the privilege of receiving from your hands some weeks later.

But one misgiving possessed me which I confided to your Paternity. It had always been the aim of my life to do something, however little, for the good of my country, and this ambition which grew with my growth and strengthened with my strength had already at times, even before I entered the family of St. Benedict, assumed the shape of a desire to aid in the good work of planting his ancient Order upon Irish soil—that Order which has done so much for the material and moral elevation of the rest of Europe, and which could do so much for

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the regeneration and rehabilitation of our suffering country. And I ventured, with an excess, perhaps, of worldly wisdom, to suggest to your Paternity that if, by entering your Belgian community, I was to turn my back for ever on my country and to preclude for ever the possibility of working for the realization of my hopes, I would not take the irrevocable step. Some months later, when you decided to admit me to the canonical noviciate, you encouraged me in my aspirations by giving me our National Apostle, the great St. Patrick, as the special patron of my religious life, and since then your Lordship, now promoted to the high office of Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order, has more than once approved of the principle that Catholic Ireland ought to be represented in the great family of St. Benedict by an Irish Congregation.

But a difficulty presents itself at the outset in the realization of this high ideal, and it is partly with a view to removing that difficulty that this little work has been undertaken. The most ancient Order of the Church is, with regret be it said, but little known in our most ancient Catholic land. The reason is not far to seek. It is not, as the popular delusion has it, that the Benedictine life is incompatible with the Irish character. Far from it. Irishmen have been honourably identified with the Order from early times. Need I allude to the great Abbey of St. Gall, founded by an Irishman, which, after it had adopted the Benedictine Rule, was made famous by the learning of Irish monks, among them Marcellus, or Mongal, and Tutilo (Toole), Masters of Plain Chant, under whom the music school of St. Gall became the "wonder and delight of Europe," and to the former of whom the celebrated Notker owes his musical fame. Marcellus of St. Gall died in the

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year 890, *and exactly two centuries later, in the year* 1090, *the foundation of the great Abbey of St. James at Ratisbon by the learned Irish Benedictine, Marianus Scotus* (*Muiredach Mac Robartaig or M'Groarty*), *shows that our countrymen were still animated by the spirit of St. Benedict. This great Irish Abbey became, in the next century, the parent of a flourishing Irish Benedictine Congregation counting numerous Abbeys* (*Schottenkloster, i.e., Irish or Scoto-Irish Monasteries*) *throughout the German Empire—among them Würzburg* (1136), *Vienna* (1142), *Memmingen* (1160), *Constance* (1166), *Nüremberg* (1172), *Eichstadt* (1194), *Erfurt, Oels, and Kelheim. So rapid indeed was the development of this Irish Benedictine Congregation that in the year* 1213, *little more than a century after the founding of the mother-house of Ratisbon, its Abbot, on the occasion of his visit to Rome for the Fourth Lateran Council, obtained from Pope Innocent III full exemption for fifteen Irish monasteries which owed allegiance to him. Nor were the German Emperors slow to appreciate the work of these Irish monks. A year previously* (1212), *the Emperor Frederick II, ratifying the charters of his predecessors, the Emperors Henry III, Henry IV, Clotaire, and Frederick, in favour of the Irish Monastery of Ratisbon, confirmed it in its vast possessions and valuable privileges on the condition that, according to the tenour of the charters of the aforesaid Emperors, these privileges were to be enjoyed solely by Irish monks inhabiting the said monasteries, who were to continue praying for "the Emperor and the good estate of the Empire and the whole Church."*

Such was the importance attached to the work of Irish Benedictine monks by the Popes and Emperors of Germany 700 *years ago. Nor was their work less*

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appreciated by the German Abbots, for it is related of Richard, Abbot of Fulda, that "when he had learned that Benedictine monks had come across the seas from Scotia [i.e., Ireland and Irish Scotland] to Germany, he made every effort to attract them to Fulda that his own monks might be roused from their lethargy and their zeal enkindled by the good example placed before them." These foundations, I may add, continued to exist as Irish Benedictine houses for some 400 years, until their decline on the eve of the Reformation, and it is worthy of note that among the most potent causes of the decay of Irish Benedictinism is to be reckoned, according to a German historian, the English invasion of Ireland, which had fatal effects on the monastic life of our country.

It would be impossible to mention here all the Benedictine houses on the Continent which were founded by and for Irish monks, but I cannot pass over in silence two celebrated Abbeys in the near neighbourhood of your Abbey of Maredsous—that of Fosses, which owes its origin to the Irish St. Feuillan, and the Abbey of Waulsort on the Meuse, founded by Irish monks and ruled by a succession of Irish Abbots.

But to come nearer home. It is well known that the glorious old Monastery of Glastonbury was closely associated with our country from the earliest times, so much so that in the ancient Irish Chronicles it is spoken of as "Glastonbury of the Gael [i.e. of the Irish] in the land of the Saxon," but perhaps it is not so well known that the great St. Dunstan, the glory of Glastonbury and of England, who, from his zeal for the reformation of monastic life, is rightly regarded as the second founder of the Benedictine Order in England, owed his early education to the Irish monks of Glastonbury. And as it has been in the early centuries and throughout the

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Middle Ages, so is it even in this twentieth century of ours. Irishmen are well represented in the various houses of the venerable English Benedictine Congregation, and especially in the great Abbey of Downside—the modern Glastonbury—which owes allegiance to an Irish Abbot.

But how is it, you may ask, that Ireland, which has so well deserved of the Benedictine Order abroad, does not itself possess a single Abbey of that Order? It is true that our country has had its Benedictine houses in times gone by, though they were never very numerous. We can point to one great house in the past, the famous Abbey of St. Mary's, Dublin, which, at its first foundation before the English invasion, was a Benedictine house, the memory of which is preserved to this day in the names of several important streets in the Irish Capital. Again, the famous Abbey of Downpatrick, so closely identified with our National Apostle, was also associated with the Benedictine Order. But why is it that our Order has so far never flourished in Ireland as it has in England and elsewhere? It is not, as I have already stated, and have abundantly proved, that the Benedictine rule is unsuited to the Irish character. The true reasons are not far to seek and they are two-fold.

In the first place, nearly all the Benedictine houses of Ireland were founded after, and as a consequence of, the English invasion, and were peopled with English monks. The monks came in the train of the conquerors, and were associated with the idea of conquest, were looked upon as aliens and as the supporters of alien rule, and not without reason we must confess, when we remember that statutes were enacted by the English Parliament of the Pale, forbidding under severe penalties the reception of the native Irish into these Anglo-Irish religious houses.

. . . .

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Secondly, Pax is the motto of the Benedictine Order. Peace is the essential condition, without which our Order cannot thrive or flourish. But Peace has been a rare visitor to our country. Peace is what she has been looking for in vain for a thousand years or more. From the eighth century down to our own days the history of Ireland has been a record of almost continual struggle against Danish, Norman, and Saxon invaders; while for more than 300 *years she has been engaged in a desperate struggle against the powerful forces of heresy. But our poor little country has come out victorious in the unequal contest. She has kept the Faith though she has lost her ancient churches and abbeys. And now a new spirit, a new life is animating the Church of Ireland. Now that she has emerged from the catacombs, more glorious perhaps than ever, she is renewing her youth, repairing the ruins of ages of misrule, building up new and stately temples to the living God, and restoring public worship to the place of honour and dignity denied to it in less happy times. It would seem, too, that the Pax Britannica which has ever been a stranger to our shores is now at length settling down upon the country and that the Island of Saints will soon enjoy the boon she has long struggled for of developing herself morally and materially and working out her destinies in the manner best suited to her genius. And in the brighter days dawning for our land, I foresee a great work marked out by the hands of God for the Order of St. Benedict. I see the country studded with stately abbeys, as in times gone by, where the sons of St. Benedict, true to their high vocation, sanctify work by prayer and shed around them the blessings of moral, intellectual, and material progress.*

Should this little book hasten the fulfilment of these

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hopes by making the great St. Benedict and his work better known in our country, I shall feel amply rewarded for my pains. It tells the story of the only Benedictine Abbey remaining to our race, the only one which we Irish can call our own, and it is all the more fitting that I should dedicate it to your Lordship, as this historic house was born and nurtured on the soil of the Belgian Fatherland.

Be good enough, then, my Lord Abbot Primate, to accept, in spite of its many defects, this sketch of the History of the Irish Benedictines of Ypres. It were to be wished that worthier hands than mine had been willing to perform the task, but, all unsatisfactory as it is, it has at least been undertaken with the good intention of promoting "the Glory of God and the Honour of Ireland"—

Do čum Glóire Dé
agus
Onóra na h-Eireann.

Asking your Paternity's blessing for myself and for my work,

I remain,

My Lord Abbot Primate,

Your respectful, obedient son in St. Benedict,

Fr. PATRICK NOLAN, O.S.B.

Feast of St. Benedict,
Patriarch of the Monks of the West,
21st March, 1907.

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PREFACE

THIS little work is an attempt to put together the history of a venerable Irish convent which enjoys the unique distinction of being the only Irish Abbey of the Order of St. Benedict, and the only religious house of any nationality that remained standing in the Low Countries during the stormy days of the French Revolution. Moreover, with the exception of the Convent of Irish Dominican nuns at Belem, near Lisbon, it is the only house on the Continent for religious women of the Irish nation which dates from the days of persecution. Its history is a remarkable and an eventful one, and yet, we venture to say, the very fact of its existence will come as a revelation to the greater part even of our Irish readers. For nearly two centuries and a half the nuns of this Irish community have gone on living the hidden life, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," and they would have been content to remain thus for ever, had not the present writer ventured with profane hands to draw aside a little the veil of the sanctuary for the edification of the outside world.

As the title of our book may, perhaps, appear bizarre to some, we should explain that it is the English equivalent of the name by which the community is known to the inhabitants of Ypres—in

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French, "Les Dames Irlandaises," in Flemish, "De Iersche Damen," or "Irish Ladies," although the convent is often spoken of as "Les Dames Anglaises," "De Engelsche Damen," or "English Ladies," owing partly to the proximity of the well-known convent of "English Ladies" at Bruges, and partly to the fact that foreigners do not always distinguish between the Irish and English nationalities. We have rendered the French word "Dames" by the English "Dames," which is the traditional English title of a Benedictine nun, and is still in vogue among the English daughters of St. Benedict.

Our attempt, poor and unsatisfactory though it be, to write the history of "The Irish Dames," has involved a considerable amount of research, but we need only indicate here the principal sources drawn upon:

I. A short MS. chronicle drawn up in the convent, giving its history in outline, and omitting many details. It carries down the history of the convent to the end of the eighteenth century, and from an allusion to "His late Holiness Pius VIth of happy memory," we gather that it was written in the early years of the last century. We shall refer to it as the Ypres MS.

II. A small brochure of 17 pages entitled *An Historical Account of the House of the Irish Benedictine Dames at Ipres (The only Irish Community of Religious Women now remaining on the Continent) . . . including their sufferings during the Period of the French Revolution*—printed and published by Keating, London,

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1816. It is merely a printed version of the Ypres MS. with a few slight variations, and a few additional remarks, bringing the Annals down to the year 1810. We shall refer to it as the Keating Pamphlet (K.P.)

III. The MS. Diary of Dame Anne Neville, (fourth Abbess of Pontoise, 1668-1689, and daughter of Lord Abergavenny, premier Baron of England) which is happily preserved at Teignmouth Abbey, Devonshire, and furnishes minute details, not to be found elsewhere, concerning the early years of the Ypres foundation, in which the Abbess and community of Pontoise played an important part. We have also consulted the MS. Annals of Pontoise and Dunkirk, compiled by the Benedictine Nuns of Teignmouth, which we shall name the Pontoise Annals (P.A.)

IV. The MS. history of the English Benedictine Convent at Paris, and the MS. Memoirs of the Rev. Mothers, etc., of the same house, which are preserved in the Archives of Colwich Priory, O.S.B., Staffordshire, have furnished useful details regarding the connection of Ypres with the Paris house.

V. A little brochure in Flemish, entitled *Het Klooster der Engelsche Damen, te Yper*, and published at Ypres, has supplied me with useful local information; as has also the local French guide-book to Ypres.

VI. To the Appendix to *Weldon's Chronological Notes*, etc., printed at Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester, we are indebted for the list of Professed Nuns of Ypres. It also contains a version of the Ypres MS.

VII. We must not forget to mention the interest-

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ing *Annals of the English Benedictines of Ghent* (the mother-house of Ypres), compiled by the Benedictine Nuns of Oulton Abbey and printed for private circulation in 1894, which we refer to for brevity's sake as the Ghent Annals (or A.G.)

VIII. The Calendar of Stuart Papers at Windsor (Hist. MSS. Commission, Vol. ii., 1904) has supplied me with a précis of several letters written by Queen Mary of Modena on behalf of the nuns of Ypres. I have also consulted Glover's edition of Stuart Papers at Windsor (1847), the Roxburghe Club collection of Chaillot MSS., and various Stuart Memoirs, Jesse, Townend, etc., the lives of Mary of Modena by Strickland and Haile, and of the Cardinal of York by Kelly, and Vaughan.

Amongst works of a more general nature I must mention especially O'Callaghan's well-known *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France*, a mine of useful but ill-arranged and ill-digested material; and lastly the various standard histories of England, Lingard, Macaulay, Lord Mahon (Stanhope), Burnet, etc.

The writer has aimed at accuracy of detail in the first place, and with this end in view has spared no pains to verify dates and names. It was from this motive, also, that he has endeavoured to use as far as possible the *ipsissima verba* of the original records and to weave them into his text. This endeavour to piece together a narrative from different

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MSS. has entailed much trouble and loss of time, and will explain abruptness of style here and there. In fact it would have been easier and more satisfactory from the point of view of style to have rewritten much of what is contained in the Ypres MS.

As it occurred to the writer only after the first pages had already been printed off that the remarks on page 81 regarding the Butlers are liable to mislead his readers, he may be permitted to modify them here by remarking that the heads of that great family, though they showed a tendency to become hibernicized like the other Norman settlers, never did become so to such an extent as the Geraldines, De Burgos and others, and it was chiefly from a social point of view; politically the Butlers remained almost invariably the strongest supporters of English interests in Ireland.

It may be well also to remark here that in accepting the dedication of this work the Right Rev. the Abbot Primate of the Order is by no means to be held as thereby endorsing the historical statements therein for which the writer alone is responsible.

As the work must naturally appeal in the first instance to the good nuns of Ypres the domestic annals of the convent have been gone into very fully, but these minute details will not, we trust, be without a special interest for every Irish reader. Indeed the writer ventures to hope that the history of a convent which has had so eventful a career, and has been

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brought more than once into touch with the outside world in such a dramatic manner, will appeal to a wide circle of readers of various nationalities, and this must be pleaded as his motive and excuse for introducing details which to one section of his readers will be already familiar, while to others they will be quite new.

May we also venture to express a hope that this history of the only Irish Benedictine Abbey * may arouse an interest among our countrymen in the venerable order of St. Benedict, and that it may be the means, under God, of inspiring some pious and patriotic benefactor with the resolution of restoring and establishing the Order in our country, and so enabling its members to take their part with other zealous workers, secular and regular, in the great task of national regeneration.

It would also be a source of gratification to the writer if his work were the occasion of repaying the *chers enffans d'Ypres* for many little kindnesses shown him during his brief stay in their midst, by making their delightful old city better known to Irish and English travellers who visit Bruges and Ghent in large numbers and yet seem to forget the existence of this, one of the most original and most interesting of the old Flemish cities.

* We are pleased to say that since this work was undertaken some patriotic Irish monks of Downside Abbey have opened a Benedictine School near Gorey, Co. Wexford, and that their efforts have been blessed with gratifying success.

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In conclusion it only remains for the writer to return thanks, in the first place, to the Lady Abbess, the Prioress and Community of Ypres for their hospitality during a pleasant visit of nearly three weeks to their convent in October, 1904; and for having put at his disposal various valuable letters and documents contained in their archives; to the Lady Abbess of Teignmouth, Devonshire, for having kindly lent him the MS. Annals of her community, and the Rev. Dame Justina, O.S.B., of the same convent for her great kindness in transcribing the passages in Abbess Neville's Diary relating to Ypres; to the Lady Abbess of Oulton for placing several letters at his disposal; the Rev. Dame Prioresses of Colwich (Staffs.) and Atherstone (Warwickshire) for their hospitality and permission to transcribe MSS. at their convents; the Dominican Sisters of Cabra, Dublin, and Mr. J. Mansfield of the same city for several items of information; to M. Desagher, Public Archivist at Ypres, for facilitating access to the city archives and for kindly transcribing the documents concerning Abbess Beaumont; and finally to his brother, Pierce L. Nolan, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, for substantial sympathy and encouragement.

ERDINGTON ABBEY,
BIRMINGHAM,
Feast of St. Patrick,
Apostle of Ireland, 1908.

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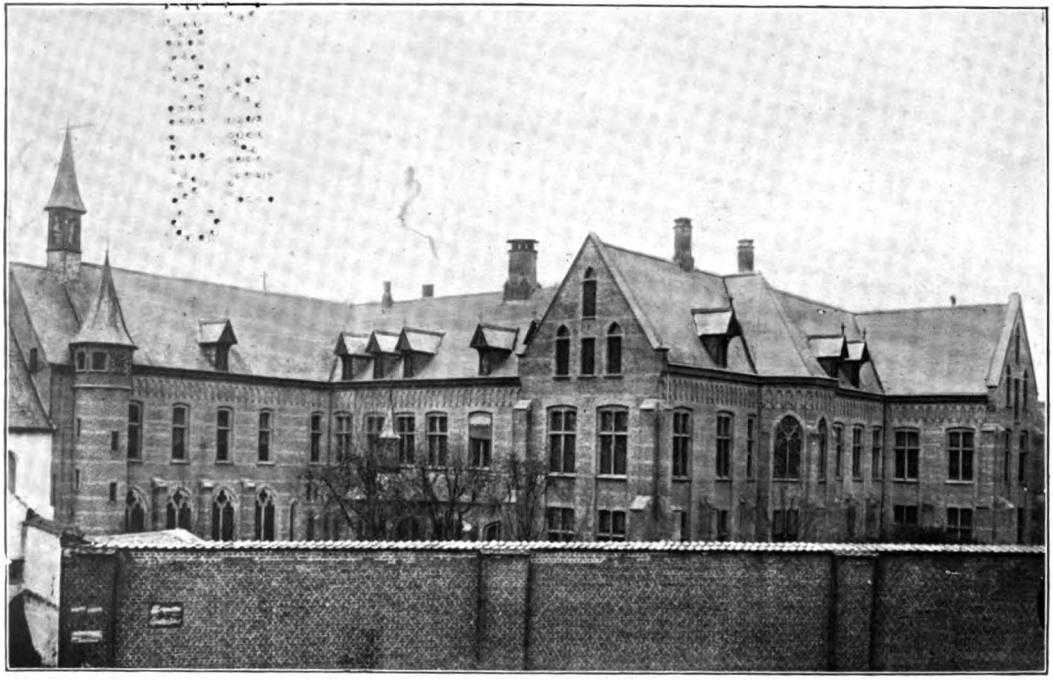
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ABBEY OF THE IRISH DAMES, SEEN FROM THE RAMPARTS.

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The Irish Dames of Ypres

CHAPTER I

OF YPRES PAST AND PRESENT

In the quaint old Flemish city,
As the evening shades descended,
Low and loud and sweetly blended,
Low at times and loud at times,
And changing like a poet's rhymes,
Rang the beautiful wild chimes
From the Belfry in the market.

—LONGFELLOW.

THE quaint old city of Ypres, in West Flanders, can boast of a brilliant past, though fallen to-day from its former high estate. Time was when it rivalled, nay, surpassed, its flourishing sister-cities, Ghent and Bruges, in wealth and population, and to this day it bears many traces of its former glory, and may be truly styled one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful and interesting of all old Flemish cities. To most people it is, perhaps, best known as the episcopal city of the well-known Bishop Jansenius, whose name has been linked with a notorious heresy; but for Irish people it possesses a higher and truer interest owing to its associations with the historic convent which has found shelter within its walls for well nigh two centuries and a-half—a convent which was founded as far back as the year 1665, and whose

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community, ever since the year 1682, have borne the title of "Les Dames Irlandaises," or "Irish Ladies." Alone of all the English-speaking communities which were founded in the Low Countries after the so-called Reformation, and alone, in fact, of all the religious houses of Belgium, it enjoys the distinction of having bravely weathered the terrible storms of the French Revolution, and of having remained in Belgium all through that troublous time, while it still continues in the twentieth century the good work of prayer and the education of youth which it began in the seventeenth.

But before we begin the history of this ancient Irish house it will be well to give a brief description of the hospitable and interesting old Flemish city which has sheltered our countrywomen for so long a period.

The city of Ypres owes its origin to a castle, which is said to have been built as early as the eighth century, on an islet in the Yperlée, the river, or rather streamlet, on which the present town stands. This castle, which was situated opposite the existing entrance gate of the ancient Abbey of St. Martin, hard by the present Cathedral, was destroyed by the Normans at the end of the ninth century, and rebuilt by Baldwin II, or the Bald, Count of Flanders, who married a daughter of King Alfred of England and died in the year 918. This Baldwin is said to have fortified both Ypres and Bruges, while his grandson, Baldwin III, greatly promoted the commerce of both these cities by establishing yearly fairs, and thus, thanks to the favour

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and protection of the earlier Counts of Flanders, the city made rapid and remarkable progress. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Ypres was far and away the first city in Flanders, having left behind her rivals, Bruges and Ghent, in the race for wealth. Already in the thirteenth century it counted 200,000 inhabitants, had 4,000 looms at work, and constructed, by the munificence of its wealthy guild of Cloth Merchants, the magnificent Cloth Hall and Town Hall, the largest in Belgium and one of the glories of the Low Countries.

But the following century saw her fortunes decline. In common with Bruges and Ghent, the city felt itself compelled to wage deadly war with the Counts of Flanders, who, in their jealousy of the increasing wealth of the towns, endeavoured to curtail the privileges and recall the charters granted by their ancestors. The city, moreover, was engaged in frequent conflict with its ever-dangerous neighbours, the French, while civil discord at home, added to the mutual commercial rivalries of the three great Flemish cities, completed the work which external foes had left undone. On June 9, 1383, the town was besieged by an English army, aided and reinforced by the citizens of Ghent, but the inhabitants of Ypres made a gallant resistance and compelled the enemy to retire after an unsuccessful siege of two months. Glorious however as was the defence from a military point of view, the siege had disastrous effects upon the trade and industries of the city. The suburbs were destroyed and many of their industrious inhabitants dispersed,

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never to return again; while the foreign merchants and traffickers bade adieu to a city which was the scene of almost perpetual conflict. A blow was dealt at the cloth trade, the staple industry of the city, from which it never recovered, and Ypres lost its proud position as commercial capital of Flanders, though it could still, at the end of the century, boast of a population of 100,000 souls, and could still lay claim to be considered, with Bruges and Ghent, as one of the three *bonnes villes* of Flanders.

In 1385, two years after this disastrous siege, the male line of the Counts of Flanders became extinct, and the city, along with the rest of Flanders, passed to the House of the Dukes of Burgundy, in whose possession it remained for nearly a century.

In 1477 Flanders became an appanage of the House of Austria by the marriage of Mary of Burgundy to the Archduke, afterwards Emperor Maximilian, and subsequently passed to Spain.

In 1560, under Philip II of Spain, Ypres was made a bishopric, but was not destined to enjoy in peace its newly-acquired dignity, as a few years later, like the rest of Flanders, it became a prey to the savage excesses of the religious innovators of the so-called Reformation. On August 15, 1566, the city was sacked by a band of these inconoclasts, and again, in 1578, it was occupied by an army of "reformers," who succeeded in completing their work of destruction. As a result of the excesses of these fanatics the rich and industrious inhabitants were compelled to emigrate in such numbers that, on its recapture by the Spanish troops

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in the year 1584, after a rigorous blockade of eight months, the once populous city was found to contain no more than a sorry remnant of 5,000 souls.

From this period we may date the final decay of the city, which thenceforward ceased to play any active part in the history of Belgium. On the other hand, its proximity to the French frontier exposed it to the attacks of these dangerous neighbours, and during the next two centuries Ypres, as a possession now of Spain and now of Austria, was over and over again attacked and occupied by the French in their frequent conflicts with those powers. At the end of the eighteenth century it fell into the hands of the troops of the French Republic, the greatest tyrants, as a native historian* truly remarks, that ever set foot on the soil of Belgium. Scenes of carnage were once more witnessed within the city, while the civic rights and franchises it had tenaciously clung to and preserved throughout the vicissitudes of so many centuries, were now suppressed by these apostles of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

In 1815 Ypres, with the rest of Belgium, fell under the rule of the Dutch, who restored and extended its fortifications; but the period of Dutch possession, or rather oppression, came to a speedy end, as everyone knows, by the glorious revolution of 1830. Such, in brief, is the history of this most interesting old Flemish city down to the period of Belgian independence. The Ypres of to-day is a quiet little town of some 17,000 inhabitants, but its handsome churches, hospitals, and

* Godefroi Kurth.]

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public buildings, its picturesque streets, and quaint gabled houses are silent witnesses to its glorious and historic past.

Of the civil monuments of Ypres the most remarkable is the magnificent pile of buildings known as the "Halles," and occupying an imposing position at the corner of the great public square. It comprises the Cloth Hall, the oldest and most important part of the building, the Belfry, the "Salle des Echevins," or Sheriffs' Hall, the Hall of the Twenty-seven, and the Town Hall. The Belfry and the eastern wing of the Cloth Hall were begun in the year 1200, in the reign of Baldwin of Constantinople, Count of Flanders, and were completed in 1230. Building was begun anew in 1285, the western and northern parts of the Cloth Hall being finished in 1304, more than a century after the commencement of the work. This beautiful building, which is of the purest early Gothic, was erected by the Guild of Cloth Merchants to serve as an exchange, and warehouse, and for other purposes of their flourishing business, and remains a striking monument of the city's palmiest days. It is richly and tastefully decorated externally and internally. The lancet recesses between the graceful Gothic windows serve as niches for statues of distinguished personages who have been identified with the history of Ypres, including the long series of Counts and Countesses of Flanders, from Liederic le Forestier, who flourished towards the end of the eighth century, down to the Emperor Charles V. The statues which stood here formerly were coloured and were placed in position

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on the accession of each sovereign, but, as the local French hand-book tells us, "they were broken on the 13th December, 1793, by the soldiers of the French General Omoran, who had occupied the town after its evacuation by the Austrians the day before. These images of 'ancient tyrants,' no doubt, hurt their republican susceptibilities!"

This "French General Omoran" was, of course, the Irishman O'Moran, who had attained high rank in the French army under the Monarchy and played a prominent part under the Republic. We do not know that he ever visited Ypres in person, or that he was responsible for the acts of vandalism committed by his troops; at all events we shall find him later on playing a more creditable rôle and doing a kindly turn to his countrywomen, the Irish Dames of Ypres.

There are several fine old churches in Ypres, but we shall only briefly allude to the Cathedral of St. Martin, which calls for some notice as having been the scene of the abbatial benediction of the first Abbess of our convent. This handsome structure was begun twenty-one years after the Cloth Hall, and, like the latter, is a striking memorial of the days of the city's greatest prosperity. The choir, which was begun in 1221, marks the transition stage from the Romanesque to the Gothic style of architecture. The nave, aisles and transept, of pure Early Gothic, date from 1254, and took twelve years in building. The handsome porch of the south transept dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century, being in the style termed by French writers, "ogival tertiaire," which would correspond

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to what is known in England as the "Decorated Style." Above this porch is a fine rose-window, which is remarkable as being the only example of a polygonal rose-window of that period.

The interior effect of the Cathedral is very grand, owing to the loftiness of the nave and the admirable proportions of the building. In the pavement before the high altar there is a simple flagstone which the casual visitor would pass by unnoticed. But if he looks carefully he will see four numerals, one at each corner, making the date 1638, being the date of the death of the well-known Jansenius, whose remains lie beneath the stone. In 1635, only three years before his death, he published a political treatise in Latin entitled, *Alexandri Patricii Armacani, Theologi, Mars Gallicus*, etc. It would seem from his assumed name, "Alexander Patrick of Armagh," that he was in touch with Irish matters ecclesiastical, while in the Latinized adjective Armacanus there is evidently a punning allusion to the *Arma virumque cano* of Virgil. This work, in which Jansenius remonstrated with the King of France for having allied himself with the Protestant Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, was so pleasing to the Spanish authorities that they rewarded its author, in 1636, with the bishopric of Ypres, which he lived, however, to enjoy but for two years. Before his death, he was busily occupied in preparing for the press the *Augustinus*, his famous work on Grace, and by his last will he stipulated that it should be published *quam fidelissime* as "faithfully as possible," while, at the same

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time, he declared his obedience and submission to any decisions the Holy Roman See might make concerning it. Little did he think that his name would become associated with a lamentable heresy and schism, which was to be a source of much strife and of untold misery to many a soul.

The city of Ypres has honoured the memory of this learned bishop, who, by the way, was a Dutchman and a good Catholic to boot, by naming a square and a street after him, but it must not be supposed that the good citizens have any sympathy with Jansenism, or heresy or schism in any shape or form. Far from it; taken as a whole the town of Ypres may be considered a stronghold of sturdy Flemish Catholicism, although the poisonous blast of liberalism and free-thought has swept over the town and produced its baneful effects here as elsewhere in Belgium. It would be strange were it otherwise, considering the close proximity of its noxious neighbour, France. The large French manufacturing towns of Tourcoing and Roubaix, with their strong socialistic and revolutionary elements, and Lille, with its socialistic mayor and municipality, are just over the border, not many miles distant, and yet Catholicism has more than held its own in Ypres, where, for the past thirteen years or more, the citizens have enjoyed the blessings of peace, order and prosperity under the enlightened sway of a Catholic mayor and Catholic municipality. Religion flourishes there, under the auspices of Our Lady of Thuyne, patron of the city, whose statue occupies an honoured place over the handsome Flemish chimney in the

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Sheriffs' Hall. The spacious churches are crowded on Sundays with devout worshippers, while the people in general respect and reverence the priest and salute him in the streets. The writer remembers, in particular, one bright little Flemish child who would invariably run up to shake hands with "mynheer pastoor," as she would call him, not recognizing the Benedictine dress.

To what are we to attribute this wonderful preservation of religion, and, along with it, of Flemish nationality? It may be attributed, we think, in a great measure, under God, to the fact that the Flemish people have preserved their language, and with it their national characteristics. In Ypres Flemish is heard on all sides, while the younger members of the family often reach a considerable age before learning a word of French. It is heard in the pulpit, where sermons in French are an exception and rarely heard; it is heard in the market, in the shops, in the streets; were it otherwise, and had the French language and rubbish of the French papers and feuilletons permeated all classes, Flanders might have long since become little better than a department of France and have been destined to share in the downfall of that decaying country.

Before concluding this brief sketch of Ypres I must say a word about its ancient ramparts, which add so much to the picturesqueness and attraction of the city. Under the Dutch dominion the fortifications of Ypres were restored and extended, but they were dismantled by the Belgian Government in 1855.

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At Ypres [says a clever lady-writer,* who knows and loves the old Flemish city], the ancient city walls still remain, and the space at the top has been laid out in beautiful gardens with verdant grass plots, and shady walks winding amongst thickets of flowering shrubs, red and white hawthorn, lilac, laburnum, seringa, and guelder roses. Seats are placed in secluded nooks beneath the rustling plane trees that overshadow the low, mossy walls and grey bastions; and below, a hundred feet or so, lies the ancient moat, where myriads of white water lilies float, and stately swans sail lazily about amongst the reeds and rushes, their snowy forms reflected in the water. The ramparts at Ypres are a place to dream in. There you forget all the toil and moil of modern life, its sordid cares and feverish unrest, and fancy yourself back in the Middle Ages—the ages of faith and romance.

From the ramparts, too, the best view can be obtained of our convent, which nestles close to them on the inner side. There the Irish pilgrim may spend hour after hour, musing over the Irish Convent's strange vicissitudes and eventful history, which is part and parcel of the history of his race. There did the writer spend many a pleasant moment "listening with a wild delight" to the mellow old-time chimes that

> Rang their changes from the belfry
> Of that quaint old Flemish city,

as he thought of the days that were gone, and strove to weave together the story of the Irish Dames of Ypres.

> Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the olden times,
> With their strange, unearthly changes rang the melancholy chimes,

*Mrs. C. E. Jeffery.

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Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the nuns
sing in the choir ;
And the great bell tolled among them like the chanting
of a friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms filled
my brain :
They, who live in history only, seemed to walk the earth
again.

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CHAPTER II

HOW THE LADY MARY, AND OTHER DAMES OF HIGH DEGREE, ABANDONED HOME AND COUNTRY TO FOLLOW CHRIST; AND OF THE BENEDICTINE CONVENTS FOUNDED IN THE LOW COUNTRIES AND IN FRANCE, AFTER THE FALL OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND

> And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.
>
> —MATT. XIX. 29.

ALTHOUGH the Benedictine community of Ypres has been known since the year 1682 by the style and title of the "Irish Dames," it was not in the beginning a purely Irish foundation. It was originally a filiation from the house of Ghent, which, in its turn, owed its origin to the Benedictine community of Brussels. The latter house was founded in the year 1598, chiefly through the exertions of the Lady Mary Percy,* whose father, Thomas, Earl of Northumberland, had shed his blood on the scaffold for the old faith in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1572).

Lady Mary retired to Brussels towards the close of the sixteenth century, where she lived a life of great piety, so much so that we are told that she was in the

* Descendants of the exiled Percies still exist in Belgium, and still retain the title of Percy de Northumberland.

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habit of going barefoot through the streets to visit the various sanctuaries of the city. After some time, being desirous of embracing the religious life, she was advised by her confessor (Father Holt, S.J.) to found a house for her countrywomen who were prevented by persecution from following a religious life in England.

Accordingly, with the permission of the Archduke Albert, ruler of the Low Countries, and the sanction of the Pope, Clement VIII, this, the first English Benedictine house since the Dissolution, was founded in Brussels in the year 1598, and towards the close of the following year the first Abbess was solemnly blessed by the Archbishop of Mechlin, in the person of Dame Joanna Berkley (daughter of Sir John Berkley), she being the first English Abbess since the fall of religion. We are told that in honour of the occasion the "Archdukes"* Albert and Isabella gave a banquet at Brussels, to which they invited the newly-made Abbess and her nuns, an invitation which, of course, was politely refused. The chairs upon which Albert and Isabella sat that day were sent as a gift to the community, and are still preserved in the Convent of the Irish Dames of Ypres, as also a cope made out of the silk dress worn on the occasion by the Archduchess.

In course of time the Convent of Brussels became

* In 1598, the very year of the foundation of the Brussels Convent, Philip II of Spain ceded his kingdom of Belgium to his daughter Isabella and her consort the Archduke Albert. Belgium thus became an independent kingdom and made marvellous progress under the enlightened rule of the beloved "Archdukes," as the royal couple were styled; but unfortunately Albert died in 1621, and Belgium reverted to Spain.

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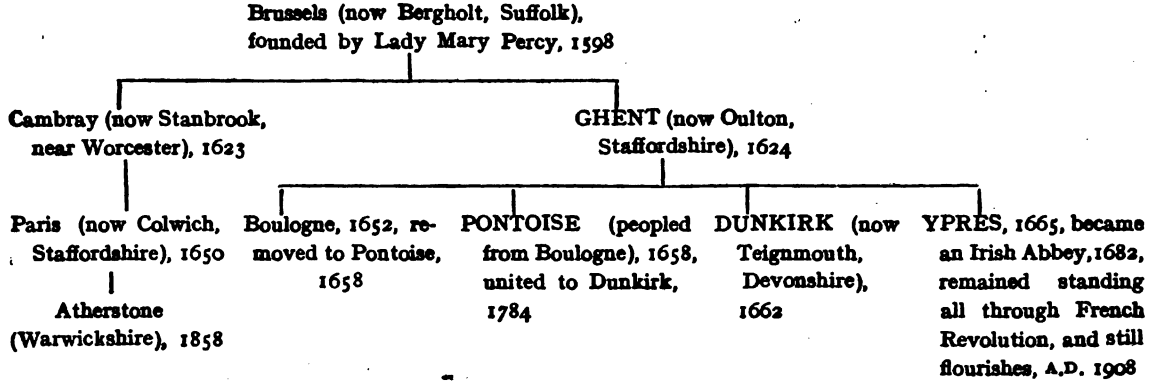
the parent of several other Benedictine houses in the Low Countries and in France, wherein the daughters of ancient and noble Catholic families of England and Ireland gave themselves up to that life of prayer and contemplation which was forbidden them in their own country. The order and dates of these foundations will be seen by a glance at the Genealogical Tree or Filiation Table on the following page.

The Convent of Ghent, which was the second house founded from Brussels, became in its turn the parent of Pontoise and Dunkirk, and lastly of Ypres, although the sister-houses of Dunkirk and Pontoise aided materially in the foundation of the latter house by sending several of their subjects. It is not our intention to enter at length into the interesting history of the mother-house of Ghent and its daughters, Pontoise and Dunkirk, but as these three houses, along with Ypres, formed a congregation apart, or a separate family of religious houses, and were consequently intimately related and in close communication with each other and with Ypres, we shall give a few details of their history which will not be without interest, especially for Irish readers.

It must be understood that the Convent of Ghent was not a "foundation" in the strict meaning of the term, but rather a "secession" from Brussels, using the latter word in no invidious sense. It would seem that Lady Mary Percy, the foundress of the Brussels house, who became Abbess in 1616, was anxious to withdraw her community from the jurisdiction of the Diocesan and subject it to that of the President of the

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FILIATION TABLE OF THE BENEDICTINE CONVENTS FOUNDED IN THE LOW COUNTRIES AND FRANCE, AFTER THE SUPPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS HOUSES IN THE BRITISH ISLES



NOTE.—The above Communities returned to England, on the outbreak of the French Revolution, with the exception of Ypres, which struggled through the storm.

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Anglo-Benedictines, thus putting an end at the same time to the spiritual direction of the Jesuits, a project that did not find favour with her nuns, at least not with all of them. At the same time the community was growing too large for the accommodation or, as Sir Toby Matthew quaintly expresses it, "the Howse begann to Fill and so the Body grew too bigg for the Cloaths." For these, and, doubtless, other reasons, Dame Lucy Knatchbull and several other nuns, who, like her, were not altogether satisfied with existing conditions, obtained permission to leave Brussels and start a new house in Ghent (1624). Dame Lucy, who became its first Abbess, was accompanied and assisted by Dames Eugenia Poulton, Magdalene Digby (sister of Sir Everard Digby, who was executed in connexion with the Gunpowder Plot), and Mary Roper, daughter of the second Lord Roper of Teynham. Dame Lucy's brother, Father John Norton, *alias* Knatchbull, S.J., seems also to have assisted in the matter and accompanied the nuns to Ghent.

The new foundation at Ghent proved a success. Postulants continued to present themselves, and about the year 1641 the community had increased so much that larger buildings became a pressing necessity, but it seemed no easy matter to find the necessary funds. However,

the Abbess was fortunate enough [writes the editor of the Ghent Annals] to find a friend in need, who volunteered to advance the sum of 35,000 florins (about £3,354)* . . . . This friend was Mr. Louis van

* According to another estimate (Ghent Annals, Appx.) the sum mentioned equals about £2,917.

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Hoobrouck, originally of the Irish family of O'Brook, naturalized in Flanders. He appears to have behaved in a generous and upright manner and his family were long looked upon as benefactors to our community *. . . .

As regards the Irish origin of the van Hoobrouck family, we must confess that we feel somewhat sceptical, and have made inquiries in Belgium, but have not been able to verify the fact. However it has been a constant tradition in the community since its earliest days, and an annual Mass was offered up at Ghent for the " O'Brook family " for more than a hundred years. It continued, in fact, to be said after the community returned to England, until the late Archbishop Ullathorne decided that the obligation no longer existed. The Irish origin of the family is alluded to in a letter of February 27, 1815, from Mrs. Moore, Prioress of the English nuns at Bruges, to Lady Abbess Shuttleworth, at Caverswall Castle, Staffordshire, where the Ghent community had settled down :—

I have endeavoured to stimulate his zeal for you [she writes], by relating what his elder brother said, viz., that his ancestors had greatly contributed to the establishment of the Benedictines of Ghent, speaking of the English Dames there, and what a particular Providence it would be should he prove to be the means of their re-establishment. This gentleman draws his origin from Ireland, and his family name O'Brook was in progress of time changed by the inhabitants of Flanders into Hoobrouck.

The gentleman referred to in the above letter was M. van Hoobrouck de Moreghem, whose daughter was being educated by the English nuns at Bruges and

* Ghent Annals, p. 20.

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whose influence and assistance the Prioress wished to obtain in her endeavour to recover for the English Benedictine nuns their property at Ghent, which had been confiscated at the French Revolution.

On the other hand, the present representatives of the family in Belgium would seem to be unaware of the Irish origin attributed to them, though quite willing to "admit the soft impeachment." We must confess that the combination of the Irish patronymic "O" with a Saxon name such as Brook, if Saxon it be, is almost unheard of. It is quite possible, however, that the name was originally Holbrook, a name not unknown in Ireland, and that the good nuns unconsciously altered it into O'Brook and the Flemings into Hoobrouck.*

In the Annals of the Ghent Convent we read now and then of the profession of Irish subjects. We are told, for example, that Lady Honora Burke, a "little titled lady in the school, daughter to the Marquis of Clanrickarde, was professed on her death-bed at her own earnest request, and died a few days after, August 7, 1652." She was the daughter, we presume, of Ulick Burke, or de Burgh, fifth Earl and Marquis of Clanrickarde, who was commander of the Royal forces in Connaught during the civil war, but eventually capitulated to the Parliament in 1652, as expected reinforcements from the Duke of Lorraine did not turn up. Lady Clanrickarde, the mother of the little nun, had left Ireland during the Cromwellian persecution,

* In a statement of accounts in Latin, furnished to the Bishop by Abbess Roper in 1646, an entry is made of the sum lent "a Dño Hobroucke."

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and brought her two daughters, Lady Honora and Lady Margaret, with her to Ghent. While there they visited the Benedictine Convent, with which Lady Honora, then only a child of about fourteen, was so pleased that she expressed a desire to enter the school, where she soon developed a religious vocation and longed to become a nun, but her mother would not hear of it. However, the child's wishes were fulfilled in an unlooked-for manner. She fell ill of a spotted fever, which was prevalent in Ghent at the time, and, as the doctors gave no hope of her recovery, she implored permission to make her holy vows on her death-bed. Her pious request was granted, and we are told that she was "almost revived to a new life at the joy of being a Benedictine nun," but God called her to Himself.

We read again of the profession at Ghent, in the year 1716, of another member of a noble Irish family, one which has, happily, continued Catholic down to our own days. We allude to Dame Ruperta Browne, daughter of Nicholas, the second Viscount Kenmare. She received her early education at Hammersmith, where the "English Ladies," founded by the pious Mary Ward, kept a school for Catholics in spite of the great difficulties arising from the penal laws. At the age of thirteen she was sent to the school at Ghent, where she was a model of obedience and humility, and never seemed to expect any exceptional treatment on account of the large pension paid for her. Having made a retreat in the school, she resolved to forsake the world, and entered the novitiate at the age of sixteen. It was through her generosity that the

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convent guest-house known as the "Good Angels' House," was built, nor did she ever seem to think she had done enough for the community.

We must now say a few words about the two sister-houses, Pontoise and Dunkirk, which materially assisted the mother-house of Ghent in the foundation of their youngest sister Ypres.

In the year 1652, some thirty years after its foundation, the community of Ghent had increased so much in numbers that a new foundation became an absolute necessity, all the more so as the increase in numbers was not accompanied by a proportionate increase of means for their support. The dowries of the first nuns had been laid out in the purchase of ground and in building, while it became more and more difficult, owing to the troubles in England, to obtain the portions of the postulants who still applied for admission, especially as the Catholic gentry suffered much in their property from heavy fines. The result was that the community of Ghent got much into debt, to the great anxiety of the Abbess and community. Lady Abbess Neville, in her diary, reveals to us the straits to which the good nuns reduced themselves in order to get out of debt. About the year 1630, she tells us, Lady Abbess Eugenia Poulton was so anxious to clear off the debt that "the zeal of the community, concurring with her frugality and parsimony in all things, as far as possible, where health would permit, nay, even beyond it," they gave up the third or "offering" dish at dinner, and none but the sick had anything in the morning; and during a whole year the nuns took nothing but

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bread and butter for supper on Tuesday nights. At the same time they worked so hard

that zealous persons, who made a scruple of losing their time, sat some four hours before dinner, with the interval of Mass only; and after dinner, without removing, they sat about four hours also, which could not but much prejudice their health. But it was for God, and the good of a community which stood in need of their assistance and service, and they very cheerfully embraced the opportunity, having then by several merchants very good vent [sale] for their silk flowers, sometimes £30 at a time.

It is consoling to know that the hard work and self-denial of the good nuns had the desired effect. All the debts were paid off, and a solemn *Te Deum* was sung in thanksgiving.

But their troubles were not over. "The house was now full," Abbess Neville tells us, "yet many still desiring to enter, it was thought fit that we should enlarge and build. . . . Many of our ablest religious fell into coughs and died, wanting air and conveniences of lodging."

It was at this conjuncture that Mr. O'Brook came to the nuns' assistance, and building operations began anew in 1640, but had to be stopped after some time as the community was once more involved in difficulties and distress through the breaking out of the civil war in England in 1642. Owing to the distracted state of the country, and to the fact that the relatives of many of the nuns were engaged fighting for the Royalist cause, it became more and more difficult to get money from England. "From the year 1642," says Lady Abbess Neville, "we never received one

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penny of rent for what we had in England and but little of the principal for many years after; and those that were both in the convict [school] and noviceship were forced away by want of ability in their friends to pay either their pensions or their portions."

In 1650 Dame Mary Knatchbull was elected Abbess, and she at once began to make serious efforts to relieve the growing distress of the community. Self-denying ordinances were once more put into force; strict economy was to be practised, and no leave was to be granted to anyone to eat between meals for a whole year, except in case of ill-health. "I was then their unworthy Prioress," says Abbess Neville, "and I can affirm that it was so inviolably observed that not an apple nor a nut was eaten out of order, but was acknowledged with as much humility as a great fault."

Thus did these delicately-nurtured ladies of ancient Catholic lineage and high degree quit their country and possessions to suffer hardships and privations in a foreign land for love of Christ and of the counsels of perfections contained in His Holy Gospel: "Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor and come follow Me;" while the new "gospellers" of the "godly Reformation" understood and practised so little of the Scriptures that they observed not even the strict commandment not to steal and not to covet one's neighbour's goods. Which of the two were followers of Christ and of His Holy Word?

And it required no small courage in these ladies to leave England in those evil days for foreign parts, for,

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if caught on the journey, they were liable to arrest, and insult perhaps, if nothing worse. We read in the manuscript collection of Letters of Sir Edward Dering* (1598-1644), who was Lieutenant of Dover Castle in the reign of King Charles I, how three sisters, bound for Brussels Convent, were stopped *en route* and sent back.

"But that which hath been the occasion," writes Sir Edward chivalrously enough, to his credit be it said, "to intercept their journey is that these gentlewomen are three sisters all bound for Brussels, whose modesties can hardly deny but that their purposes were for the nunnery there. . . . They do plainly confess that the end of their journey was to be probationers in the nunnery." And he winds up with the pithy remark, "Pass refused." †

And again, in a paper still preserved in the Record

* Quoted in Bergholt Annals (printed for private circulation).

† It is interesting to note that the late Edward Heneage Dering, Esq., of Surrenden Dering, Co. Kent, the descendant of the worthy baronet, who felt compelled to prevent our would-be nuns from leaving the country, was received into the Church, together with his wife, Lady Chatterton, the beautiful and accomplished widow of the late Sir William Chatterton, Bart., of Castle Mahon, Co. Cork, in the year 1865, and lived and died (1892) a most devoted son of the Catholic Church.

The Sir Edward Dering alluded to in our text was appointed Warden of the Cinque Ports and Lieutenant of Dover Castle in 1626, and was made a baronet in the same year. He was M.P. for Kent in the Long Parliament, 1640, and at first espoused the Parliamentary cause, and moved the first reading of the Root and Branch Bill, but voted against the Grand Remonstrance and returned to his allegiance to King Charles I, for which his house was four times plundered by the rebels and his estate devastated. Having retired with his family to one of his farm-houses, he died there in 1644 in a state of great poverty. The Dering family is one of the few still existing in England which are of undoubted "Saxon origin." Their connexion with the Cinque Ports began as early as the 14th century, when Sir Richard Dering was lieutenant of Dover Castle. (Cf. *Baddesley Clinton: Its Manor, etc.*, by Rev. H. Norris, F.S.A.)

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Office, we read the following from Sir George Paul to Secretary Conway, January 16, 1626 :—

I ordained divers young gentlewomen, attempting to leave the kingdom for foreign seminaries, to be apprehended four months ago, and bonds taken for their appearance.

But more drastic measures were necessary in order to relieve the strain upon the house of Ghent, and Lady Abbess Knatchbull began to think seriously of making a new foundation.

From the time I was first charged with the government of this monastery [she tells us], (considering the distressed condition thereof, being eighty persons without any foundation [i.e., endowment], 4,000 lb. in debt . . . and not 100 lb. income of certain rent), I was moved to cast about by all imaginable ways how this burthen might be raised, not that I doubted a whit God's continuing favour towards our subsistence (though no human means appeared for the compassing thereof).

She tells us that she appealed for aid to many princes and persons of quality but without result. Finally, however, in great measure through the exertions of George, Lord Digby (son of the Earl of Bristol, British minister at Paris), she obtained the necessary authorization from the Queen Regent of France, Anne of Austria, and from the King, permitting her to send a colony of nuns to Boulogne.

Accordingly, on January 9, 1652, the nuns destined for the new foundation set out on their journey, in charge of Mr. Dalton, a priest, to Boulogne. It would be difficult to describe all that they had to endure from the intense cold, the difficulty of transport,

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and insufficient accommodation; nor did their difficulties cease when they had arrived at their destination. But as it is not our intention to write a history of the Boulogne house, we shall not enter into details.

Suffice it to say that after many trials and contradictions the new community finally settled down in their new home, and elected as their first Abbess Dame Catherine Wigmore, who was blessed and installed in October, 1653, being presented with a crozier and ring by the Duchess of Lorraine.

But their residence in Boulogne was not to be of long duration. In 1658 the community removed to Pontoise, near Paris, the climate of Boulogne having been found unsuitable and, moreover, there was imminent danger of the town's suffering the fate of Dunkirk, which had recently fallen into the hands of the English rebels.

In 1662 the Convent of Ghent sent out another colony, this time to Dunkirk, which, now that the restoration of Charles II had been accomplished, promised to afford them a safe retreat. But as the town at that time belonged still to England, permission to make the foundation had to be procured from King Charles, who granted his consent, but in the following year thought it politic to make a show at least of putting difficulties in the way of making a religious foundation on English territory, upon which two of the nuns, Dame Mary Caryll and Dame Anne Neville, proceeded to England to interview the King and matters were satisfactorily arranged.

The Convent of Pontoise was not destined to

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continue to the end as an independent community, as its financial condition, which was never a very flourishing one, seemed to grow daily more and more hopeless. In 1683 Lady Abbess Neville makes the following significant entry in her diary: "This year, 1683, with the last, was of no small weight in regard of our temporalls, which, ever since my good Lord Montague* his death, hath still grown worse and worse." For a few years more her diary still records various gifts to the abbey, of which the following are of interest:—

April 16, 1685, from a nameless friend, an alms given us to desire our prayers—2,000 livers—it proved to be our glorious king J. R. [Jacobus Rex].

Given by my Lord Castlemayne when he went Ambassador to Rome, for prayers, 55 livers.

The Duchess of Cleveland was also a benefactor to the convent, as also the Duke of Grafton.

In 1687 Abbess Neville's diary ends abruptly with an entry recording the visit of Cardinal de Bouillon, a benefactor to the abbey. In 1699 we read of two new pupils named Nugent, and evidently Irish, having entered the school, "being found in clothes by her Majesty of Great Brittany."† For nearly a hundred

*Walter Montagu (son of Henry Montagu, first Earl of Manchester) was a prominent Royalist and a convert, having become a Catholic in the reign of Charles I. On the outbreak of the Civil War he retired to France, where, having become a Benedictine monk and priest, he was, through the influence of the Queen Regent, made Commendatory Abbot of St. Martin's Abbey, near Pontoise, and was for many years ecclesiastical superior of the Convent of English Benedictine Nuns, near the same town.

†In an account of the Abbey of Pontoise, sent in 1718, by Lady Abbess Widdrington to the Church historian, Dodd, we read:—

"Mr. Edmund Kelly succeeded [as chaplain to the nuns (?) in 1696], but for some months, being called away to be Divine to the late Elector of Treves, and is now Bishop of Clonfert in Ireland."

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years more the community of Pontoise struggled on in spite of financial difficulties until at last, in 1784, it felt compelled to dissolve, and, with the approval of the Archbishop of Rouen, the Abbess and the greater part of the nuns joined the community of Dunkirk.

But the latter house was likewise on the eve of its dissolution. Five years later the French Revolution broke out, and in 1793 the Convent of Dunkirk was sacked by the revolutionaries, its records and documents seized, its religious turned out and imprisoned at Gravelines for eighteen months. Eleven of the nuns had died of the hardships of their imprisonment before permission was obtained for the removal of the community to England. All that remained of them reached London in May, 1795, where they took up their residence in the old convent at Hammersmith until, in 1863, they removed to their present house, Teignmouth Abbey, Devonshire.

The community of the mother-house at Ghent was also forced to fly during the troubles of the French Revolution, and, after a sojourn of some years at Preston, and a long residence at Caverswall Castle, in Staffordshire, it finally settled down at Oulton, near Stone, in the same county, where it still carries on the good work of prayer and education of youth, inaugurated at Ghent nearly 300 years ago.

And now we must recount the fortunes of the youngest and sole remaining house, the Convent of the Irish Dames of Ypres, which alone survived and remained standing amidst all the vicissitudes and terrors of the French Revolution.

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THE OLD CONVENT, RUE ST. JACQUES.

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CHAPTER III

OF THE FOUNDATION OF YPRES, 1665

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth.

—*Marmion*, Canto II.

We have seen in the last chapter how the Lady Mary Percy founded a convent in Brussels for those of her countrywomen who wished to devote themselves to a life of prayer and contemplation in the Order of St. Benedict, as the ancient nunneries of England had been dissolved or destroyed, and the religious life had become extinct and well-nigh impossible owing to the persecutions inflicted by the "godly reformers." We have also seen how a colony went out from the Brussels house and set up a new convent in Ghent, which became the mother of three other houses—Pontoise, Dunkirk, and Ypres. Of these latter, the two first were founded in order to relieve the pressure on the mother-house at Ghent, whose limited funds and house-room could not accommodate the ever-increasing number of noble girls who knocked for admission to the convent, having abandoned home and parents and country to follow Christ.

But the house of Ypres, whose varying fortunes we shall trace in the following pages, was founded at

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the special desire of the Bishop of that city. This historic foundation had to undergo many bitter trials in the beginning, and was on several occasions on the point of becoming extinct. No one who had witnessed the difficulties it underwent in its early days could have foreseen or believed that it was destined to battle successfully against even greater trials for well-nigh two hundred years, and that it would live on into the twentieth century. But God often deals with religious communities much in the same manner as He does with individuals. He permits them to be sorely tried in order that they may be humbled and purified and so become worthier instruments for promoting His honour and glory. Certainly it would seem as if He had a special predilection for this house of Ypres, and that great things are yet in store for it in the designs of His Providence.

The history of the earliest days of Ypres Abbey, like that of so many other ancient foundations, is a little obscure in some points, but something can be learned from the Ypres MS., and much more from the diary of Lady Abbess Neville, of the Abbey of Pontoise. This Abbess seems to have written her entries concerning the Ypres house about the year 1685, that is to say, only just twenty years after the foundation was made, so that she had opportunities of obtaining her information at first hand. She gives many details which are passed over in the Ypres MS. But before making extracts from her diary let us say a few words about the venerable Abbess herself.

Dame Anne Neville was born in 1605, being the

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third daughter of Sir Henry Neville (son and heir of Edward, fifth Baron Abergavenny, and premier Baron of England), by his first wife, Lady Mary Sackville, daughter to Thomas, first Earl of Dorset. Her mother was a fervent Catholic. Her great-grandfather, Sir Richard Sackville, was Privy Councillor to Queen Mary. Camden tells us that "Queen Elizabeth took him into her Privy Council, though he had been of Queen Mary's Council, and was of the same religion with her (i.e. Catholic), the reason probably being that he was first cousin to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn. Dame Neville was blessed as fourth Abbess of Pontoise in January, 1668, and died December 15, 1689.*

But to begin the history of the Dames of Ypres:—

In the year 1665 [says the Ypres MS.] M. Martin de Praet, a Canon of Ghent, being elected Bishop of Ipres, his Lordship made his solemn entrance into his diocese on 7th March, and on 18th May following he solicited permission from the magistrates of Ypres for the erecting a convent of English Benedictine Dames in their town; for the effecting of which, all necessary grants and orders were expedited from Philip the 4th, King of Spain, and registered in the great Council of the Commune of Ipres.

Now let us hear what Abbess Neville has to say. Her account is much more full and circumstantial and fills several pages of her diary. We shall give it at length, on account of its intrinsic interest and importance, in her original quaint language and spelling, merely making a few comments and altering, now and

* Pontoise Annals.

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then, her punctuation, which is occasionally decidedly erratic :—

The Establishment of a Monastery of ye Congregation at Ipres *—1665.

∽ The Rt Rnd and most Illustrious Lord Martin de prats ; Beeing made Bishope of Ipres ; and having had for some years much affection and kyndness for ye monastery of Gaunt,† and in perticular for Dame Marina Beaumount, by wm by reason of her language, speaking both latin and french he had most acquayntance,‡ his lorsp§ demaunded her by name of my lady Mary Knatchbull and ye Cõunity of Gaunt : to begin a new Monastery in his Dyocesse and in Ipres toune ; towards wch || foundation he promissed to contribute liberally : ∽ soe all things beeing agreede vppon my Lady mary Knatchbull ¶ went wth her by Dunkirk to see her and her Religious happily setled in theyr new plantation ∽

Here we would like to interrupt the venerable Abbess by remarking that the little band seems to have made a great round in travelling by Dunkirk, but it was no doubt with the view of seeking subjects for the new foundation from the members of the community there.

The Abbess then goes on to give the names of this first little colony which thus set out for Ypres :—

The Religious desighned for ye foundation were, that

* i.e. Ypres.
† Ghent.
‡ i.e. "With whom, on account of her linguistic attainments, he was best acquainted."
§ Lordship.
|| which.
¶ Abbess of Ghent. We may here remark, once for all, that in these old chronicles Abbesses are spoken of as "My Lady" or "Lady so-and-so," which does not necessarily mean that they had titles of nobility in the world. "Lady Abbess Knatchbull" would have been the more correct expression.

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went from Gant~ D. Aloisia German, Dm Aldigund finch~ D. mary Lucy~ Sr. Martha~ a convers Sister (sisr Jenison yn * a novice at Dun[kirk] went also wth ym †).

Thus the little party numbered six, all told. Besides the Superioress, Dame Marina Beaumont (born 1617, professed at Ghent 1637), there were three other professed choir nuns from Ghent, i.e., Dame Aloysia German, who was born in 1606, was professed at Ghent, August 6, 1637, and was still living in 1672. She was about sixty years of age when she went to Ypres, and it may help our readers to realize the antiquity of that foundation if we remind them that she was a little girl of ten the year of Shakespeare's death. Dame Aldegonde Finch was born in 1614, professed February 5, 1647, and died February 1, 1692; while Dame Mary Lucy, the third choir-nun from Ghent, was born in 1633, professed July 6, 1664, and died somewhere between 1696 and 1700.‡ Lucy was apparently her family name, not her name in religion, and, as she was a native of Warwickshire, she was probably a relative of the Puritan, Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote Park, who is said to have prosecuted Shakespeare for deer-stealing. Sister Martha, the converse or lay-sister, was also presumably from Ghent, while Sister Jenison, the novice, was from Dunkirk.

At the outset all things seemed to promise fair for the future welfare of the new foundation :—

In ys § beginning ther was so favourable a concurrance

* then. † with them. ‡ Ghent Annals. § this.

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in all those circumstances wch useth to render new plantations hard, and stormy as may well be admired—and taken for a happy augure: of the future progress :∽ For whereas ye princes Grant, ye Townes admittance, And ye Bishop's satisfaction: in temporalls; useth to be even masterless, by or * best contryuances in all other beginnings; ∽ heere though nothing but ye Bishops favour supported ye caus; ther was not in any thing ye least single opposition.

But all these great expectations seemed likely to come to naught. Abbess Neville then goes on to discuss how such a favourable beginning should have nearly failed, and, in an interesting moral soliloquy, tries to assign the reasons. She hints mysteriously at some unfitness in those who undertook the task, of their want of proper disposition, etc. Her remarks are very interesting and show deep spiritual insight, and ought to be studied by those who are in authority, and especially those who are concerned in making new foundations.

It is strange yt† so promising expectations shold so soone dissipate and come to nothing yet soe it fell out, nor can any say or think there was such want of vertu in ye persons as to be ye cause of it; for they were all sincear good religious persons, and for my lady herselfe, certaynly she had as many naturall abillityes as could be found in any of or ‡ sex; nor did she want pyety, wt yn § could be; ye ouer waying ballance yt || over powrde soe much good in her; or ym ¶; ∽

She then proceeds to diagnose the case, and, from her own experience as Superior, to find out what was "the overweighing balance that overpowered so much good" in Lady Beaumont and her companions. She

* our. † that. ‡ our. § what then. || that. ¶ them.

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speaks very plainly, and from her remarks we would gather that they had neglected some salutary admonitions contained in the rule of St. Benedict: wherein it is written in the Prologue, in the very head of the book: "First of all, whatever good work thou dost begin, beg of Him by most earnest prayer that it may be perfected by Him" [i.e., by Jesus Christ].

This and other similar passages must have been familiar to the good Benedictine Abbess, and may have been in her mind when she penned the following remarks:—

All yt I can alleadge * to have receaude † light by, is in ys and ye like circumstances, to consider and examine how providence hath suaid ‡ ys affair I must say wthout bitterness or animosity thos naturall deffects, and propensions to wch all are subiect more or less; ∽ may sometimes hinder what is desired and obserue how they ether gurde § ymselves by prudence ∽ mortification ∽ and resource to God; in ye ouercoming thos deffects wch may be apt to sway ym; and whither || they discern ym in ymselves or noe and take it well to be admonisht of wt may be deffective in ym and will give ye preferance to counsell and good aduise ¶ and not rather leaue theyr frend: yn ** lay downe theyr own designs or following theyr passion or humore; and soe hauing one †† brought ymselves uppon ye stage, will rather mayntayn theyr own errors by vyolence yn yeald to draw of[f] wthout crying victory, wch few allows ym but ymselves, thus bringing ymselves into a laborinth, they meet wth thorns on all sides; and if patience and humillity be wanting all comes to be lost; ∽

"Neither doth any man take this honour to himself but he that is called by God," says St. Paul, and

* allege. † received. ‡ swayed. § gird. || whether. ¶ advice. ** than. †† once.

Abbess Neville is of the same opinion, but she does not mean any reflection on Lady Marina :—

I do not apply ys to my lady Marina or hers : or to any more yn to my selfe, and all yt are or may be superiours or ioynt actors with ym in ye setling or governing a comunity for unless all such persons are chosen by Allmighty God for such imployments ; resolus with them selves, to observe ye different motions of natur and grace and so tak up ye weapons of mortification, and fight couragiously agaynst ymselves ; and both to implore God's assistance, to becom victorious, and to make use of councell and advis how to manage such a warefare little advauntage will be made certaynly ther ar some things wch wn we obtayn of God All mighty by impertunity, He grants us but maks vs pay deere for it—and it is a mercy, in Him to do it : many times deuout soules perswade ymselves that if they were in such or such an imployment or dignity they wold imploy it much to Gods honnor, and seruice, and really intend it, and many times God takes ym at theyr word and giues ym theyr asking ∽ and when they come to find how smale a stock they haue of vertu, and ye great expens they must be dayly at in all encounters to render wt is du to every on : they soon discouer theyr own indigence, and find yt a sincear intention though it carryeth farr in ye way of vertu yet it is not yt aloan yt can dispatch ye busines ∽ nor will thos other naturall parts do much.

" But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise : and the weak things of the world . . . that He may confound the strong," says St. Paul.* And again the Psalmist tells us that, " Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it," and so thinks Abbess Neville :—

Humillity patience and a tru indifferency [she continues]

* 1 Cor. i. 27.

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or rather a contempt of all ye world esteems great; will avayle more to aduans our interest both uppon earth and for heauen, yn all ye naturall and acquired parts wt soe euer; and generally Allmighty God doth so dispose that thos that are great in theyr owne or others eyes to often fals short of giuing ymselves or others satisfaction; for as ye way to heauen is strait and narrow, we must draw orselves into as litle and low a compass as we can, and wn we can not stoope to ys no wonder if we fall short of giuing or receauing satisfaction ∽ for we must first studdy to pleas God, and for his sake endeauoure; not to disoblige or nabours, for when ons difficultyes arise within doors and with out it is impossible, it shold not destroy ye strongest building ∽ and vnless or Lord builds the hows he labours in vayn yt builds it; ∽ and even wn it is built; yet vnless or Lord keepes ye hows he labours in vayn yt keeps it: so often times Allmighty God carryeth on our endeauours for his service; wth a probable prosperity and yet wn we think ye work well aduaunst, he is pleased to let it fall to ye ground yt we may learn to loue and serue him as well in aduersity, as prosperity, and so know all things depends more uppon his will and prouidence yn any humayn industry, or abillity and least any shold too much court thos naturall parts, or to much prize ym in ymselus or others, Allmighty God often permits ym to be less successfull in great affayres, yn other less gifted persons are; ∽ chusing thos yt are weake and humble; as fitter instruments to aduance his honnor and glory: ∽

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CHAPTER IV

ABBESS BEAUMONT'S ILL-SUCCESS AND DEATH—THE ABBEY OF YPRES IS ACQUIRED FOR THE IRISH NATION

(1665-1682)

> For in this is the saying true : That it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth. . . . Others have laboured and you have entered into their labours.
>
> —JOHN IV. 37.

HAVING finished her instructive soliloquy, the worthy Abbess proceeds to recount in minute detail the various changes and events that succeeded each other rapidly in the new house until it was finally decided to turn it into an Irish foundation. The death of the Bishop, who had invited the nuns to Ypres, and had promised to contribute to their support, was a serious blow to the infant community. He seems to have died in the very first year of their arrival.

The Bishops death, and some other things occurring in y^s * setlement brought it into hazard of utter ruin, but not w^th^out some signall marks of Gods fauouring providence ; ∽

∽ 1665 ∽

w^th^in a yeare thos 3 forementoned Dames, y^t† went w^th^ D^m^ Beaumount to y^t^ new beginning came bake, finding smale hopes of a wished setlement, they returned to they^r^ mother monastery at Gaunt ; ∽ And 3 novices admitted

* this. † that.

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for ye Quire, also left, yt place, and went to other monasteryes whereby in an instant, so hopefull a plantation seemde to be quite dissipated ; ∽

Recruits, however, were forthcoming from another quarter :—

But at ye same time, ye plague raging much at Dunkirk, 3 of thos Dames yt had gon from Gaunt to yt foundation, to auoyd ye daunger wer content to remoue to Ipers : and assist ye Lady Marina in her enterprize ; they continued wth her some years buckling through many great difficultyes, but finding no probable ground to expect any increas, or hopes of other advauntage by theyr suffering yn wt * heaven had in store for ym they resolved to lay down ye acting any longer in yt establishment and to provide for theyr owne peace and content : and soe In ye yeare . . . Dame Ignatia fortiscu † and Dm Vivina Eyre ‡ ∽ wth Sister Martha § ∽ a convers sister, returnd to Gaunt ;∽ D. Hellen Wayte || ; to Dunkerke.

Thus did poor Lady Abbess Beaumont ¶ find herself left once more with a sadly-diminished community.

And ther remayned with my lady Beaumount only D. flavia Cary, a most excellent Regular good Religious woman, yt was sent to ye new establishment at Dunkerk,

* than what.

† Dame Ignatia Fortescue was a native of Salden, Bucks, was born in 1616, and professed at Ghent 1632. She was descended from the martyr, Sir Adrian Fortescue, beheaded 1539.

‡ Dame Viviana Eyre, born 1643, and professed at Ghent 1659. In the Ypres MS. her name is given as Vincent Aire.

§ She had come to Ypres with the first batch.

|| Born 1614, and professed at Ghent 1648.

¶ She had been blessed as Abbess four years after her arrival at Ypres. " His Lordship [the Bishop of Ypres] performed the solemn Benediction of the Right Honourable Lady Marina Beaumont in his cathedral church as first Abbess of the monastery, anno 1669." —Ypres MS.

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and from thence sumoned by my lord Bishp prats to assist my lady Marina at Ipers. He being Superior both to Dunkerk and Ipers; she was obliged to obey, and was a great support to my lady Marina; ther was also tow young Dames yt had been profest ther wth a convers * sister yt came novice from Dunkerk.

So that at this conjuncture the community seems to have been reduced to five, and of these the Abbess was to lose three, for Dame Benedict Beazer, one of "ye tow young Dames," left her and went off to join the Poor Clares of Gravelines, where she was professed in 1678,† the other Dame died, and the lay-sister went to another community, as Abbess Neville tells us,

but D. Beazare went to Graulin; ye other Dm dyed a yeare or tow after; and ye convers Sister was put to ye black Sisters: ‡

"Ye other Dame" alluded to here was, in all probability, Dame Susanna Joseph Carew, who was professed on the 3rd of May, 1669. Her death must have been keenly felt by the sorely-tried Abbess, as she was her first-born spiritual child, and "was the first nun professed in and for this house of Ypres; she departed this life on January 14, 1681," § after some eleven years of religious life.

We have now arrived at the year 1681. The house at Ypres had been founded some sixteen years, but success seemed as far off as ever, and now, after so many years, we find poor Lady Abbess Beaumont left

* i.e., a lay-sister. Apparently the Sister Jenison, mentioned as having come with the first batch.
† Pontoise Annals.
‡ These seem to have been a nursing sisterhood.
§ Ypres MS.

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practically alone, with none to comfort or console her but the faithful Dame Flavia Cary. So, finding the Ypres foundation lying on her hands like some sickly child which she could not train up to a vigorous life, and finding it impossible to erect it into a self-supporting, self-constituted community, she took it into her head to make it over to some other house, hoping that thereby it would be resuscitated.

And as non[e] being left to make up a Community [continues Abbess Neville], in ye yeare 1680 and 81 my lady Marina writ to ye Abbess at Pontoise,* offering to her and yt [that] community hers at Ipers to be supplyed by subjects from ym [them] and so by consequence to be by consent of all for futur[e] times to be dependant on yt of pontoys; severall letters passed but nothing was effected, and in ye yeare 1681 my lady Marina came privately to Paris and it fell out that at ye same time ye Abbess of Pontoise had an affair that called her to Paris† where they both mett and conferde uppon that proposall, but not agreeing about it; my lady Marina made conditions with the Benedictine Dames at Paris‡ and tooke tow [two] of theyrs away with her, ye tow Dame Conniers,§ with severall others yt designed to be Religious—secular persons, but of noe considerable rancke or fortune not wth standing by ye favour of frends my lady Marina procured some good charityes and a yearly pension from ye

* Here the Abbess has inserted in the margin: "Anne Nevill unworthy," that is herself.

† The "affair" alluded to by the Abbess was a new foundation, in Paris, which was offered to her community by the Duchesse de Richelieu. The Pontoise Abbey was near Paris.

‡ i.e., the Priory of Our Blessed Lady of Good Hope, founded at Paris, by the English Benedictine Nuns of Cambrai, in 1652; now settled at Colwich, Staffordshire.

§ Two religious of this name are given in the list of the professed nuns of the Paris house, i.e., Mother Catharine Conyers, professed August 15, 1665, and Mother Lucy Conyers of Jesus Maria, who died 1714; the date of her profession is not known.

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King of france, so she and her company returned home wth much joy.

We may here interrupt Abbess Neville's present narrative to remark that she elsewhere alludes in the following terms to her unsuccessful interview with Abbess Beaumont at Paris :—

My Lady Marina Beaumont (Abbess of the Ypres monastery) wrote to desire me and this Community to let her have some of our Religious to settle her house, proposing a dependency, and total surrender of all powers to this monastery, and to make that dependent on this. Several letters passed, for it could not so suddenly be ended . . . And on 18th of Decr. I went to Paris as well on this score [i.e. to see about the foundation at Paris offered by the Duchesse de Richelieu] which was a secret, as to meet my Lady Marina, there to conclude with her, which was soon dispatched; for she finding some favour and bounty at Court fell off from her former proposals, and so we parted; but she took 3 Dames out of *Chaud lu loit* * with others, and so returned to her monastery, and was soon called to the other world; and that house fell into dispute, and if it could be compassed, fell into a design of being made an Irish house. Now all these passages being at large set down elsewhere, I shall only touch here what cannot be avoided.†

Having related Lady Abbess Beaumont's unsuccessful attempt to submit the Ypres house to that of Pontoise, and her subsequent arrangement with the Paris house, she changes the scene to Dunkirk and

* So spelt in the Abbess's Diary. She means the English Benedictine Convent of Champ l'alouette, i.e., "Lark-field," Paris (now Colwich, Staffs.); or, as it is written in the original MS. history of the convent, "Rue de chant d'alouette," i.e., the "street of the lark's song."

† In foregoing extract the spelling has been modernized.

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introduces new actors on the stage. What follows is of the utmost interest and importance, as the Dunkirk house was in a large measure the occasion of Ypres being handed over to the Irish.

About ye same time my lady Mary Carrill,* Abbesse at Dunquerk, finding most of ye Comunity sickly by reason of ye sea and other inconveniences, were determined to make tryall of removing from thence to some other part of france, but ye tow [the two] Irish Religious, D. Legge, † D. [Mary Joseph] Ryan ‡ was sensible of parting wth § so advantagious a place wth a fine convenient monastery new built; and at a less rate yn [than] they thought it worth, and so proposed to ye vicariat, and my lady Carrill yt [that] if they wold permit ym [them] to goe into Irland and try theyre frends and relations to see whither they wold not make up such a summe as might purchas[e] yt [that] hows [house] at Dunquerke for ye Irish nation, and send theyr children thither both for Religion and education [i.e. both as pupils and postulants]; to ys [this] proposall ye vicariate gave a very satisfactory care, and so my lady finding ym [them] disposed for it, gave ym [them] also her consent; and though winter yet they imediately began theyr journy and wore [were] to pass by Ipers || [Ypres] soe to goe to Ostende and ther[e] to take shipe for Irland. My lady Marina was very kynd to thes[e] tow [two] Dames and made ym [them] great offers if they wold come at theyr return from Irlande wth [with] wt [what] company or fortunes they might bring and setle wth [with] her; ye vicariat was very kynd to ym

* D. Mary Caryll, professed at Ghent 1650, sent to Dunkirk 1662, Abbess 1664, died in office 1712, was daughter of John Caryll, Esq., of Harting, and grand-daughter of William, second Lord Petre.

† Dame Alexia Mary Legge, professed at Dunkirk, 1666.

‡ Dame Mary Joseph Ryan, or O'Ryan, professed at Dunkirk, 1670. The Ypres MS. confounds her with Dame Josepha O'Bryan, who is first on the list of the professed nuns of Dunkirk.

§ i.e., regretted parting with.

|| Which was apparently a great round.

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and made them all proper offers for they^r advantage; w^ch [which] was very much to they^r comfort; But as for they^r passing to Irland by Niport * all disswaded y^m [them] from it; in y^s [this] ill season so they past privatly to Mardyck,† where taking ship they went to England and so from thence to Irland w^ch [which] my lady Carrill did not take well ‡ of y^m [them] but they excused it as beeing necessitated to it; They had so good succes[s] ther[e] as in 7 or 8 months they returnd w^th very good assurance and bills for considerable sum̃es put into Mr. Berline his hands. Supposing y^t [that] howse § [house] and establishment shold be made good unto y^m [them] and y^t [that] they might send they^r daughters and frends to it:

But these two good Irish Dames were disappointed on their return from their successful quest in Ireland, as the Abbess of Ypres had in the meantime made an arrangement with the two Paris Dames, while their own Abbess had changed her mind about selling Dunkirk to them.

Now they finding [continues Abbess Neville] my lady Marina, as it were, enterd into a settlement w^th thos tow Dames from pariss,‖ and my Lady Carrill at Dunquerk not fully resolved uppon selling y^t [that] hows they went to paris to negociat they^r affayres in y^t court, but w^thout [without] effect though y^e Queene by means of her confessor was very gracious to them and many other frends, espetially Irish, y^t [that] did endeavour to promote y^e worke [of making an Irish foundation], and my lady M.

* Nieuport, a Belgian seaport, west of Ostend.

† Mardyke, a port between Dunkirk and Gravelines.

‡ Because she had given them permission to go to Ireland direct, not *via* England.

§ i.e., the Dunkirk house, although it might refer to the house at Ypres, which Abbess Beaumont wished them to join.

‖ Paris.

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Knatchbull, Abbess at Gaunt, wth [with] theyr own superiour my lady Carrill, but nothing was done in it.

However, the design of making a foundation for Irish Benedictine nuns was to be speedily realized, and its realization was hastened by the death of poor dear Lady Abbess Beaumont, who, after her many years of care and anxiety, was called away to a better world, where reward is meted out according to merit, not according to success. She died on August 27, 1682, in the sixty-fifth year of her age, the forty-fifth of her religious life, the seventeenth after her arrival at Ypres, and the thirteenth of her reign as Abbess.

We shall let Abbess Neville tell us the rest :—

In ye interim my lady Marina dyeing and D. Conniers ye elder went into England before her death, and ther was only ye younger wth S. flavia Cary and a convers[e] sister ; Dunkerk and Ipers beeing on[e] Bishoprick, ye vicariat wth D flavia desired some of my lady Carrils Religious to come to Ipers, and some time before ys [this] D. Leg[ge] beeing dead in paris, by aduis [advice] from my lady Knatchbull and my Lady Carrill, our Bishope approving of it, wth ye advis of our indifferent * man, by consent of ye Comunity and request of ye bisp [bishop] of ye Irish Nation† heere in france tow [two] of our Religion [i.e., of our community], D[ame] Butler,‡ a cossene [cousin] to my lord Duke of Ormone [Ormond], and Count d'Albee his Daughter [i.e., Count d'Albie's daughter], D. Christina

* Impartial, disinterested, confidential.

† We cannot say whether she alludes to some Irish Bishop temporarily in exile, or to some other Bishop appointed to look after the interests of the numerous Irish exiles then in France.

‡ Dame Mary Joseph Butler, professed at Boulogne, 1657, removed with community to Pontoise, 1658. We shall hear much of her later on.

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whight * were sent first on[e] and y^n [then] y^e other to paris to D. Ryan, and at last D. Ryan and D. Christina went away to Ipers, but did not enter y^e monastery in regard y^t [that] D Conniers w^th [with] company from england beeing arrived, stole first into y^e monastery, disputing and making great clamors, but at last by y^e authority of Very R^nd far Sherborn y^n [then] president of the English munks, conditions were agreed uppon, and y^e tow [two] D. Conniers were returned to paris, and D. Ryan and D. Christina entred y^t [that] monastery, my lady Carrill bringing with her thither 3 or 4 of her young Religious y^e Ellection past for y^e chusing an Abbesse and D. Flavia Cary was ellected.

And so the Irish finally got a foothold in the house at Ypres.

At the time of the arrival of the two Irish nuns

*Dame Mary Christina Whyte, professed at Pontoise, 1673. She was the only daughter of Sir Andrew Whyte, third son of Sir Dominick Whyte of Limerick, 6th Baron (1513) and 1st Count (1658) of Alby, of the Holy Roman Empire. Her father is said in Maunsell's History of Maunsell to have been created Count d'Albie by Lous XIV, but this is probably a mistake; as a son of a Count of the Empire, he was by birth Count Andrew d'Albie. He seems to have been made a Privy Councillor by James II, before September 27, 1686, and died in London the following year, being buried in St. Margaret's Westminster, September 15, 1687. He is said to have married Anastasia, daughter of Sir James Walsh, Bart. His elder brother was the well known Ignatius, Marquis of Albeville, of the Empire, so created August 20, 1677, some time Ambassador of The Hague, and afterwards P.C. and Secretary of State for Ireland, who followed James II to France, and acted as his Secretary until his death at St. Germain's, August 24, 1694.

For the above details concerning the Whyte family, I am mainly indebted to the courtesy of the distinguished convert and Jacobite, the Marquis de Ruvigny (author of *The Jacobite Peerage*, etc.), whose ancestor, the 2nd Marquis de Ruvigny, Deputy General of the Huguenots under Louis XIV, played a prominent part in the Irish Jacobite wars, though not on the Catholic and popular side, and was rewarded by the Usurper with a grant of confiscated Irish estates, and the title of Earl of Galway.

The title d'Alby and d'Albeville contain of course an allusion to the family name Whyte.

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from Dunkirk and the departure of the two Paris nuns, the community proper of Ypres consisted only of Dame Flavia Cary and a lay-sister, but the two nuns from Dunkirk, with the three who followed them from the same house, brought the number up to seven. "It is true," says the Flemish writer, "that all [the five nuns from Dunkirk] were not Irish, but people were full of confidence that God, who is able to raise up children of Abraham from the stones, would also be powerful enough to raise up novices in abundance out of a nation so Catholic as the Irish."*

* "'t Is waar, alle vijf en waren wel geene *Iersche*, maar men was met volle betrouwen dat God, die machtig is uit de steenen kinderen van Abraham te verwekken, ook wel machtig genoeg zou zijn om uit de Iersche natie, zoo katholijk, novicien in overvloed te verwekken."—*De Engelsche Damen te Yper.*

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CHAPTER V

A RETROSPECT (1665-1682)—DAME FLAVIA CARY, FIRST ABBESS OF THE IRISH COMMUNITY (1682-1686)

WE have now traced the history of the Convent of Ypres from its first foundation in 1665, until the year 1682, when, after many trials and vicissitudes, it entered upon a new career as an Irish Abbey. We have taken Lady Abbess Neville's diary as our principal guide, but as her quaint narrative may seem obscure to some, we shall briefly sum up the facts in clear and simple language.

We have seen how, in 1665, the newly-appointed Bishop of Ypres invited Dame Marina Beaumont, a member of the English Benedictine community of Ghent, whom he had known and esteemed when a canon of the latter city, to make a foundation in his diocese, and how she, with the permission of her superiors, acceded to his request, and proceeded to Ypres with four nuns from Ghent and a novice from Dunkirk. But trials and difficulties beset her path from the outset, and within a year the three choir-nuns from Ghent returned to their monastery, while three novices that had been admitted at Ypres for the choir also left and went to other monasteries. About the same time three other nuns, to avoid the plague which was raging at Dunkirk, were content to go to

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Ypres to assist Abbess Beaumont, but, having remained for some years "buckling through many great difficulties," they too left, as also a lay-sister. Abbess Beaumont was now left with only Dame Flavia Cary, who remained with her in obedience to the Bishop and "tow young Dames" that had been professed at Ypres along with a lay-sister. But the "two young Dames" left for other convents, and the lay-sister went to "ye black sisters." So Lady Abbess Beaumont, being left alone with Dame Flavia Cary, entered (in the years 1680 and 1681) into correspondence with the Abbess of Pontoise, proposing to make the Ypres house a dependency on that of Pontoise. In the year 1681 the two Abbesses had an interview on the subject at Paris, but could not come to terms; so the Abbess of Ypres made proposals to the English Benedictine nuns of Paris and obtained two nuns, "ye tow Dame Conniers," from that house, and having also procured several postulants, "some good charityes and a yearly pension from ye king of france," she returned home with "much joy" to her convent.

Now "about ye same time" the community of Dunkirk, being "sickly by reason of ye sea and other inconveniences," their Abbess was thinking of selling the convent and removing elsewhere, but two Irish members of the community thought it a pity to sell their fine new convent at a sacrifice, as it seemed to them, so they asked and obtained permission to go to Ireland and procure such a sum from their friends and relations as would purchase "ye hows at Dunquerke" as a convent and school "for ye Irish nation." So

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they set out in mid-winter, calling round by Ypres, where my Lady Abbess was very " kynd to these tow Dames, and made them great offers if they would come at their return from Ireland with what company or fortunes they might bring and settle with her," instead of going back and buying out Dunkirk as they intended. As to their sailing direct from Belgium to Ireland " in this ill-season," all dissuaded them from it, so they took ship at Mardyke, in France, for England, and thence to Ireland, which my Lady Abbess of Dunkirk did not quite approve of, as it was not strictly in accordance with their *itinerarium*, or marching orders, " but they excused it as being necessitated to it." They were well received in Ireland, and " had so good success there as in seven or eight months they returned with very good assurance and bills for considerable sums," and no doubt returned in high spirits " supposing that hows and establishment shold be made good unto them and that they might send theyr daughters and frends to it." But they counted without their host, for the Abbess of Ypres had in the meantime made arrangements with " thos tow Dames [Connyers] " from Paris, and my Lady Abbess of Dunkirk was not " fully resolved uppon selling that hows " of Dunkirk, so our two Irish Dames " went to paris to negociate theyr affayres " at the French Court, perhaps with the view of starting an Irish foundation in France. But they did not succeed, although " ye Queene of France was very gracious to them and many other friends, especially Irish, did endeavour to promote ye worke," and my Lady M. Knatchbull, Abbess of Ghent, as well

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as " my Lady Carril " of Dunkirk, their own superior, were much in favour of it.

In the meantime, however, my Lady Abbess of Ypres died, and, as the elder Dame Conniers was away in England, there were only three souls left in the monastery, to wit, Dame Flavia Cary, the younger Dame Connyers, and a lay-sister, whereupon Dame Flavia and the Vicariate of Ypres asked my Lady Abbess of Dunkirk to send some of her nuns to Ypres. Now some time before this Dame Legge, the Irish nun who had accompanied Dame Ryan to Ireland and to Paris, had died in the latter city, so, " by advice from my Lady Knatchbull [the Abbess of Ghent] and my Lady Caryl [Abbess of Dunkirk]," with the approval of the Bishop who had jurisdiction over Pontoise, and " with ye advice of our indifferent man, by consent of ye community and request of ye Bishop of ye Irish nation here in France," my Lady Abbess Neville of Pontoise (who has related these events in her diary) sent two of her nuns, Dame Butler, " a cousin to my Lord Duke of Ormond," and Dame Christina White, Count d'Albie's daughter, to Dame Ryan at Paris, whereupon Dame Ryan, being reinforced by these two Irish Dames, set out with Dame Christina for Ypres, " but did not enter ye monastery " as " Dame Connyers with company from England having arrived, stole first into ye monastery, disputing and making great clamors," but by the authority of the Very Rev. Fr. Sherborne, President of the English Benedictines, conditions were agreed upon, by which " ye tow D. Connyers were returned to Paris," and Dame Ryan

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and Dame Christina Whyte entered the monastery and thus secured it for the Irish nation, Dame Ryan bringing, no doubt, the considerable funds she had procured in Ireland.

As we have already remarked, on the departure of the two Dames Connyers for Paris, the community of Ypres consisted only of Dame Flavia Cary and a lay-sister, but the two Irish Dames, with three or four nuns that followed them from Dunkirk, brought the number up to seven or eight, and, thus reinforced, the community proceeded to elect an Abbess, the choice falling upon Dame Flavia Cary.

So far we have followed closely Abbess Neville's diary. Before recording the few events of Abbess Cary's period of office which have been handed down to us, we shall present the reader with the brief account of these transactions, preserved in the Ypres Annals, which agree in the main with Abbess Neville*:—

Lady Beaumont seeing very little success, notwithstanding the pains she had taken for the establishment, engaged the Superior of the English Benedictine Nuns of Paris, to send some of her religious, to whom she gave over† the house. The Nuns of Ipres, discontented with the translation of their house, informed the Community of Ghent of Lady Beaumont's transaction. Lady Knatchbull, then Abbess of Ghent, engaged Lady Caryl, Abbess of Dunkirk, to go to Ipres in order to keep the house for the Congregation, to take with her sufficient subjects to elect an Abbess for *a Community of Irish; as she*

* The Ypres MS. is much later and less detailed than the Neville Diary. The writer evidently had no access to the latter.

† 'Wished to give over,' 'conditionally,' 'Lady Knatchbull of Ghent would not consent.'—Ypres MS. *note*. Of course, as the Ypres House was a foundation from and dependent on Ghent, the Abbess of the former house could not dispose of it.

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*always intended that the house of Ipres should serve for that nation,** which had no establishment for religious women in Flanders. As soon as Lady Caryl received the account of Lady Beaumont's death (which happened on 27th August, 1682), she came to Ipres, with four of her religious, two of whom being Irish, she desired they should join the Nuns of Ipres house and elect an Abbess; *that the person elected was to be chosen in quality of the first Abbess of an Irish Community*, though the second of the establishment. On 19th November, 1682, Rev. Dame Flavia Cary was chosen, by plurality of votes, for Abbess, which election was confirmed by the letters patent of the Rt. Rev. Vicars General.†

Few events are recorded of the term of office of Lady Abbess Cary, which was a short one, but the work of converting Ypres into an Irish monastery went on apace under her auspices.

Lady Flavia Cary [says a note in the Ypres MS.] was the first who, jointly with the communities of Ghent, Pontoise and Dunkerque gave this house to the Irish for a refuge to keep as such for ever. She was always greatly affectionated to the Irish, being told (when a child) that she should be Abbess of an Irish monastery, and was effectually the first Abbess chosen here for the Irish.

Anno [in the year] 1683 [says the same authority], the Rt. Honorable Lady Knatchbull, Abbess of the Ghent house, desired the respective houses of the Congregations (of which Ipres made the fifth house‡) to send some of the Irish religious professed in the different monasteries in order to compose the Community of Ipres. Lady Knatchbull sent from Ghent, Rev. Dame Ursula Butler; Lady Caryl sent from Dunkirk Rev. Dame Mary Joseph O'Bryan;§

* The italics are ours.

† *An Historical Account, etc., of the Irish Benedictine Dames at Ypres.* London: Keating, 1816. Ypres MS.

‡ See Genealogical Tree, p. 16.

§ She was professed in 1665, and is first on the list of professed nuns of Dunkirk. It is strange that Abbess Neville does not

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Lady Nevil sent from Pontoise, Rev. Dame Mary Joseph Butler and some others; upon which *a legal donation and concession of the house of Ipres was made in favour of the Irish nation*, and Lady Flavia Cary took possession of it as Abbess of the Irish Community dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, under the title of GRATIA DEI. After many pains and labours for propagating this establishment, it pleased God to call the Rt. Rev. Lady Flavia Cary out of this life on 20th February, 1686,* having been Abbess of Ypres a little over three years.

From the Neville Diary we glean a few additional and interesting details concerning the same period of Abbess Cary's régime :—

After some little time [writes Abbess Neville,] my lady of Gant as well as my lady Carrill wth my lady Flavia [Cary] agreed uppon having D. Ursula Butler from Gaunt and o^r [our] D. Butler from pontoys [Pontoise] and accordingly they went back to Ipers, poor D. Christina Whight [Whyte] soone tooke leave of y^s [this] world and dying of a vyolent fever left y^m [them] to deplore y^e loss they had in her w^ch [which] certaynly was great, for she was a person of very good parts tru pyety and vertu; D. Ursula Butler wth D. Ryan went for Irland to procure thos monys formerly promised, and some fit subiects for y^t [that] new beginning monastry, and had very good success; D. Ryan returning to Ipers, 1684, ther came wth her 5 or 6 for y^t convict [i.e., five or six children for the school], but on or tow [one or two] of y^m were for y^e Novishipe [novitiate],—a litle before theyr arrivall my lady Knatchbull and my lady Cary were very importune [i.e., were very importunate] to have D. Laurance Lawson to be sent to y^m [i.e.,

mention her among those sent to Ypres, while, on the other hand, the Ypres annalist nowhere makes mention of Dame Mary Joseph Ryan, or O'Ryan, who also belonged to Dunkirk, and played a prominent part in the early history of Ypres. Could Dame O'Bryan have been mentioned here by mistake owing to the similarity of the two names?

* Ypres MS.

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to Ypres] to assist D. Butler in ye teaching and other affayres of the hows [house] wch [which] wee graunted, though wth much unwillingness on or [our] side, to part wth her; but theyr much importunity preveyld [prevailed] D. Ursula stayd behinde in England for ye dispatch of some affayres, and is ther still, and will not I presume retyre from thence till the coronation of or [our] Soueraign King James as [has] past; assighned to be on St. Georg his day [St. George's day, 23rd Apr.], ys [this] 1685.

So far Abbess Neville had written in 1685, and the next year, evidently, she made the following entry in her diary,

but death surpriside D. Ursula Butler by a vyolent favour [fever] in England and not long since ys [this] year, 1686. D. Flavia, theyr last ellected Abbess, dyed sudaynly [suddenly] of an appoplex, D. Ryan beeing in Ireland, ther is only D. M. Joseph Butler and D. Mary Laurance Lawson, both of or [our] hows [house], now remayning ther, and till some news or ye return of D. Ryan from Irlad [Ireland] no positive determination can be taken, wee pray dayly for a happy conclusion for ye glory of God, and good of Religion.

And the prayers of the good Abbess and community of Pontoise were, no doubt, heard on behalf of the poor little tempest-tossed community of Ypres, which was once more in a precarious state.

Thus we have seen how, on the election of Lady Flavia Cary in 1682, as first Abbess of the new Irish community, some of the Irish nuns from the other houses were sent to Ypres. Dame Ursula Butler was sent from Ghent and Dame M. Joseph Butler from Pontoise, which would bring the number of the community up to nine. But poor Dame Christina Whyte, Count d'Albie's daughter, who had come to Ypres with Dame

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Ryan, soon died of a violent fever, and was a great loss as Abbess Neville has told us. In a letter to Ypres, dated July, 1686, the same Abbess, speaking of Dame Christina, says: "I confess that I parted with one of my eyes when I permitted Dame Whyte to leave me, for she was a most serviceable good religious, soon fit for heaven."

Somewhere about this time Dame Ryan and Dame Ursula Butler went to Ireland to procure the moneys promised the former on her previous visit to that country, and some fit subjects for 'that new-beginning monastery' of Ypres. They were very successful, and Dame Ryan returned in 1684, with five or six young ladies, one or two of whom wished to become novices. In the same year, just before the arrival of Dame Ryan, Abbess Neville, being entreated thereto by the Abbesses of Ghent and Dunkirk, reluctantly consented to allow Dame Lawrence Lawson, of Pontoise, to go to assist in teaching at Ypres.

Dame Ursula stayed behind in England to dispatch some business affairs, and was not expected to return till after the coronation of King James, which she did not live to see, as, a short time before, she was carried off by fever in England (1685). As we here take leave of this good nun, whose career at Ypres was a short one, we may cite the following notice of her from a note in the Ypres MS.:—

She had been three different times Prioress at Gand [Ghent], was mistress of Novices when her own mother came to religion, she was not only her superior then, but after her Profession being chosen Prioress. She was sent

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from Gand (as being Irish) for the service of this Monastery, for which purpose she went to Ireland and got for this house at her return from England three hundred and fifty pounds sterling money from her own friends. She fell sick and died in London by the great fatigues she went thro' for the service of this house, the 10th April, 1685.

Finally, Abbess Cary died suddenly of apoplexy the next year, 1686, and, as Dame Ryan was away again in Ireland, and as the Dames that had come from Dunkirk for the election of Abbess Cary seem to have returned to their convent, Ypres was once more desolate, there being only two nuns left.

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CHAPTER VI

ABBESS BEAUMONT'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SPANISH GOVERNOR AND THE BURGESSES OF YPRES

AND now that we have introduced our little colony of Irish Benedictine nuns into Abbess Beaumont's convent in the good city of Ypres, we must give our readers some account of the new home in which they settled down. Lady Abbess Neville does not give us any information on this point, so we must seek for details elsewhere.

In the Archives of the Abbey there is preserved an extract in old Flemish, from the "Register of the Resolutions" of the "groot ghemeene Raedt der Stede van Ipre," or great Common Council of Ypres, of the xviii May, 1665, to the following effect:—

At the request of "mynheer" the Bishop to admit four English religious of "great house" (i.e. of noble family) and recommended by the King of England,* into a part of the town to be designated by the "magistraet," and which was to serve them as refuge, on their undertaking not to be a burden to the town; it is resolved to meet the Rt. Rev. Bishop's wishes therein, provided they are conformable to the intentions of His Excellency the Marquis de Castel Rodrigo, Governor of the Netherlands.

* "Vier Inghelsche religieusen van grooten huuse by den Coninck van Inghelant gherecommandeert."

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These preliminaries having been arranged, they entered into a house provided by the Bishop * and situated in the part of the town known then as the *Nieuwestad* or *Neerstad*, i.e., the new town. This *Neerstad* consisted of an assemblage of houses and streets, stretching to the north of the city, between the Boesinghe and Dixmude gates as far as the gate of Thourout.

The house allotted to the nuns is said to have been a very fine one, but they were not destined to remain in it long, as the site was required, it seems, for new fortifications. In 1640 the Spaniards had strengthened this quarter by earth-works. But in 1678 the city of Ypres surrendered to the armies of Louis XIV, and the Spanish earth-works were replaced by stone fortifications under the directions of the celebrated French engineer, Vauban. These works of construction and reconstruction necessitated the total, or at least partial, demolition of the *Nieuwestad*, and, already seven years before the French occupation, the site of the new convent was required and the house succumbed to the pick-axe on the 20th of July, 1671, after six years' existence as a convent. Abbess Beaumont was obliged to look out for a new shelter for her little community, and, with this end in view, had recourse to the Spanish Governor at Brussels, not having, it would seem, implicit confidence in the local authorities.

Her petition was favourably received by the

* Cf. *De Englesche Damen*, ch. iii., iv.

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Governor, who addressed on her behalf the following letter, which is still preserved in the public archives, and is interesting as showing the deeply religious spirit with which the Spaniard of those good old times was animated in the transaction of the ordinary business of daily life.

The letter, which is in French, is endorsed: "To our dear and well-beloved, the Attorney and Sheriffs of the town and city of Ipre" and runs as follows:—

Don Juan Domingo de Zuniga et Fonseca, Count of Monterey and of Fuentes, Marquis of Taracona, Gentleman of the Chamber of our Lord the King, Lieutenant-Governor and Captain-General of the Low Countries and of Burgundy, etc.

VERY DEAR AND WELL-BELOVED,

Dame Marina de Beaumont, Abbess of the English Benedictines, established in the lower town of Ypres, having petitioned us to be pleased to allow her to transfer herself with her convent to a part of the said town which will bring her neither inconvenience nor molestation we issue these presents, commanding you in the name of His Majesty to put no obstacle or difficulty in the way, but rather to this end to accord to the said Lady Abbess, every aid, favour and assistance necessary, whereby you will be doing a thing most agreeable to us. Adieu, very dear and well-beloved, may our Lord have you in His holy keeping.

Given at Brussels the 22nd April, 1671.

(Signed) J. D. CONDE DE MONTE REY.

(Countersigned) VERREYKEN.

But the worthy dignitaries of the good town of Ypres did not seem inclined to meet the wishes of

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Abbess Beaumont, backed up, though they were, by his Spanish Majesty's Governor-General. In a long French document, which is still extant in the Public Archives of Ypres, they acknowledge the receipt of the communication which his Excellency has done them the honour to address them, and express their readiness to assist the Abbess and nuns "as far as justice, the service of his Majesty, and the welfare of the town will allow." But the said Abbess has not informed them as to the place in which she intended to establish herself. Accordingly they have carefully considered the matter as their duty and their oath require them, and they find that, "according to custom and immemorial prescription no monastery or convent can be admitted into this town, unless by the consent of the grand Baillie* and the assembly of the Grand Council, composed of eighty-four persons, among whom they (the Attorney and Sheriffs) have only fourteen votes." They then recall how, on the 18th May, 1665, at the request of the Rt. Rev. Bishop, and of the Governor, the Marquis of Castelrodrigo, the religious were admitted into the town by the said great Assembly, which was to assign them their place of residence, and that they (i.e., the Attorney and Sheriffs) made a visitation of the place where the nuns wished to settle, and found that they might, while fully complying with the conditions of the said Grand Council, have assigned the nuns another place which would have been less disadvantageous to the town.

But as they come to the conclusion (as above re-

* Grand Bailly.

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marked) that his Excellency wishes to favour the said nuns in a very special manner, they have resolved to accord them

suitable and considerable accommodation in the place which they had chosen—to wit, that they should occupy there one of the best houses of the town, well-built and clean, with large garden, besides an hereditament, adjoining the same house, very spacious, in which there were heretofore three or four fine houses. Which resolution we have proposed to the said Lady Abbess, in all civility, by one of our own body, deputed for that purpose. To which she replied in terms haughty enough that she could not and would not be satisfied with the said accommodation, but that she wanted more and was sure of having it. From the which we conclude that she intends, in the course of time, to incorporate a whole quarter of the town to the prejudice of his Majesty and particular detriment of this town, as by these and like means the traders and other honest citizens, who bear the burthens of aids, subsidies, garrison-tax,* watch and ward, imposts, impositions, etc., would be driven away, to fill the town with persons who are only a charge, especially seeing that they have no foundation or endowment, and this in a town of which nearly the third is mortgaged to the great inconvenience of the few citizens that are left, and the large number of military men, whose officers complain daily that they cannot find their conveniences there.†

Finally, they conclude in a firm but respectful tone :—

We have deemed it, my Lord, our duty to communicate the above to your Excellency and to supplicate you in all humility (as we do by these presents) to command the said Lady Abbess and nuns to conform to the terms of

* Garnisons.
† "Qu'ilz ne peuvent trouver leur commodité."

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the act of admission, and to be satisfied with the site, more than sufficient, which we have assigned them . . . and furthermore to pardon us for venturing to style ourselves

My Lord,

Your Excellency's

Very humble and very obedient Servants,

ATTORNEY AND SHERIFFS OF THE TOWN OF YPRE.

From our Assembly the 28th May, 1671.

But the irrepressible Lady Abbess Beaumont seems to have gained her point in the matter, as we gather from a reply of November 23, 1671, from the town authorities to a further note from the Government dated Brussels, October 22.

In this reply the Attorney and Sheriffs, etc., acknowledge the receipt of the petition of the English Benedictines, who propose to fix themselves in the town, and with this end in view

to obtain possession of a certain house belonging to the Sieur de Gruyttere, situated in the street known as the Clierstraete . . . It is true that we have consented to the petitioners occupying the house . . . on the express condition that they would content themselves with the same along with an hereditament adjoining, as being more than sufficient for their number . . . And as they have not wished to conform to these conditions, but on the contrary have occupied and purchased yet another house and property while seeking for still more, our consent has come to an end. Wherefore we are of opinion (under correction) that His Majesty will do well to excuse the conveyance required, unless they abandon

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the said other house and hereditament . . . and promise to conform exactly to the terms of their admission . . .

My Lords,

Your Most Illustrious Lordships'

Very humble and very obedient Servants,

THE ATTORNEY, SHERIFFS AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF IPRE.

From our Assembly XXIII of 9ber, 1671.

We cannot help thinking that on the whole the worthy burgesses of Ypres were justified in refusing the extravagant demands of Abbess Beaumont. She and her community had been admitted into the town "by way of refuge," and on the understanding that they would not be a burthen. Her community was small, and was destined to remain so during her period of authority. They were, moreover, without fixed endowments, and, all things considered, ought to have been satisfied with very humble beginnings.

Whether or not she abandoned the additional house and property to which the Grand Council took objection we do not know. But certain it is that she transferred her little community in the year 1671 from the *Nieuwestad* to a house in the street known then as the Klierstrate, where the Irish Dames have continued to reside ever since; and it will not, we think, be out of place to give a brief description of the spot where they have been settled for well-nigh two centuries and a-half:—

In the Klierstrate [writes the Flemish author of the

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*Engelsche Damen,**] so named because in the same street in former times a great many people died in the space of one week of a malady of the glands, there stood on the east side, several little untenanted houses. The English Dames bought them. Behind the convent of the English Dames there runs a street in a semi-circle on to the Klierstrate to the south corner of the convent. At this south corner dwelt formerly Isaac Baelde; and in the aforesaid street dwelt Boudewijn [Baldwin] Loot. Both of them were accustomed to distribute to the poor every Friday a white loaf, half a pound of butter, and some silver pence; and it is from these distributors of alms that this street got the name of *Aalmoessenierstraat.* Now this house and property, which formerly belonged to Baelde and Loot, were also bought by the English Dames, and incorporated in the convent which they built there.

So far our Flemish author.

We cannot help surmising that these houses were the ones whose acquisition by Abbess Beaumont was objected to by the town authorities. The streets exist still, but under different names. The *Klierstrate,* in which the front entrance to the convent was and still is, is known now as the Jacobusstrate, Rue St.

* "In de Klierstrate aldus genaamd omdat er in dezelve eertijds, op ééne weke, machtig veel menschen stierven van't zeer aan de klieren, stonden, aan den oostkant, verscheide kleine onbewoonde huizekes. De Engelsche Damen kochten ze. Bachten het klooster der Engelschen Damen komt een straatjen geloopen, met eene halve boog, tot aan de Klierstrate, aan den zuidhoek van 't gesticht. Aan dien zuidhoek woonde oudtijds Isaac Baelde; en in voorzeid straatje woonde Boudewijn Loot. Beiden hadden de gewoonte van, alle vrijdagen, een wit brood, een half pond beuter, en eenen zilveren denier aan de armen uit te deelen. 't Is van die uitdeelders van aalmoessen dat dit straatjen den naam kreeg van *Aalmoessenier-straat.* Welnu, het huis en de erve die eertijds aan Baelde en Loot toebehoord hadden, werden ook door de Engelsche Damen gekocht, en in 't klooster, dat zij daar bouwden, ingelijfd."—*Het Klooster der Engelschen Damen te Yper,* pp. 21, 22.

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Jacques, or St. James's Street, from the ancient Church of St. James hard by. The street or lane at the back of the convent, where Baldwin Loot dwelt, is still known as the Rue de l'Aumônier, while the south end of it, which runs into the Rue St. Jacques, and contained the house of Isaac Baelde, is the present narrow lane known as Rue de Moscou.

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ABBEY OF THE IRISH DAMES, RUE ST. JACQUES, YPRES.

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CHAPTER VII

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM

BEFORE we proceed to sketch the career of the convent in its new capacity as an Irish house, we would like to supplement Abbess Neville's circumstantial account of the manner in which it became assigned to the Irish, as their national convent, by details gleaned from other unquestionable sources. Dame Neville being Abbess of the Convent of Pontoise, which was intimately connected with the Irish house of Ypres, might possibly be accused of being prejudiced in favour of the latter, and of being unduly opposed to the claims of the Paris house, which was only a distant cousin. On the other hand, the Paris nuns considered they had a good claim to the Ypres house, as they had sent two or three of their nuns there on the invitation of Abbess Beaumont, and on the understanding that the house would be theirs.

We have already seen how, on her failure to gather a community of her own, Abbess Beaumont had offered the Ypres house to Paris, as if it were her own private property, and as if she had no longer any obligations towards the mother-house of Ghent. This high-handed proceeding was prompted by her anxiety to instal an English community at Ypres, and thus to keep out the Irish, whom the superiors of Ghent, Pontoise and Dunkirk had decided to send to Ypres already before

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Dame Beaumont had applied to Paris. The project of turning *her* convent, as she called it, into an Irish house was so distasteful to her that she actually wrote, as we shall see, to the French Minister Louvois, to say that she " would crawl on all fours to Paris " rather than tolerate such an enormity.

However, we have been fortunate enough to discover two important statements of the case from the standpoint of the Paris nuns, which we give in full, as they have an interest all their own, and bear out Abbess Neville's statements, while incidentally furnishing additional and interesting details about Ypres. They are, moreover, important as proving beyond all cavil that the house of Ypres was formally made over to the Irish.

Our first extract is from an ancient MS. history of the Paris house, preserved at St. Benedict's Priory, Colwich, Staffordshire. The writer relates how the Paris nuns went to Ypres, and, after summing up, with a clearness and conciseness worthy of an Equity judge, the arguments in favour of the Irish claim on the one hand and that of her community of Paris on the other, she concludes with the important information that these arguments, *pro* and *con*, were submitted to arbitrators, no less personages than the Marquis de Louvois, Mgr. the Archbishop of Paris, and the Grand Vicars of Ypres, and that they decided in favour of the claims of Ireland. We may remark that Ypres and other Flemish towns had been ceded to France by the Peace of Nimeguen in 1679 (some three years before the death of Abbess Beaumont), which explains why the

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Minister Louvois and the Archbishop of Paris were among the arbitrators.

Of Some Difficulties that have occurred in this our little Comunity.

7th Chapter.

The 6th Difficulty that occurr'd was concerning the Convent of ye Nuñs of Ypres. The case was this:—

Madam Marina Beaumont, ye Abbesse of the said Convent of Ypres, wanting Religious to sustain her Establishment, which she had begun there, by her own Industry, and ye assistance of her Parents and Friends: coming to Paris to find some Religious of the English Nation, and of the Order of St. Bennett to help her, address'd herself in ye: first place to the English Benedictine Nuñs of Pontoise, who, refusing to hearken to her Proposition, unless she would give up the entire disposing and conduct of her Monastery unto them, retaining only the Quality of Abbesse, to which she would not condescend: Whereupon she had recourse to this our Convent and to our then Worthy Superior Monsr de Perrieres, desiring us to afford her, our assistance, and some Religious to conserve her Convent, and Establishment for the good of our Nation; whereupon, our said Superior coming to us, and conferring with us, desired to know, whether Any of Us were willing to goe, or no, along with ye said Lady Abbesse. Our Dear Sisters, Dame Catherine, and Dame Lucy Coñyers, as also Dame Ursula Trevilian, (who is since dead) and Sister Amanda Butcher, offered themselves to goe; and accordingly set forth to goe to Ypres with the said Lady Abbesse, we furnishing them with Viaticum's,* Cloths,† etc. This hapned

Here the narrative breaks off abruptly, and, after a short space, continues:—

Sometime after their arrivall at Ypres, the Lady Abbesse

* Money, etc., for journey. † Clothes.

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thought fit to send Dame Catherine Coñyers, and Sister Amanda into England, to try what help and charitable Assistance they could procure for the support of their Monastery, wch Negotiation the said Dame Catherine succeeded very well in: But during her absence, the good Lady Abbesse hapned to dye, to wit, on the 27th of August, 1682: Upon which, Dame Catherine was oblig'd to return back to Ypres immediately; and presently after, great difficulties arised, which would be too tedious to relate in particular; but in a word the Contestation was, To whom the Convent of Ypres should belong? viz.: whether to Dame Catherine, and the Nuñs that went from hence, together with Dame Flavia, and a Lay-Sister, who were conventualls of Ypres, during ye life of the said Lady Abbesse, Or to the Nuns of Gant or Dunkerk, who laid claime to the said Convent, in behalf of the Dames Legg and Ryan, 2 Irish Religious profess'd, respectively of ye said Convents.

Reasons for the aforesaid Irish Dames.

1st. That, Madame Beaumont herself was profess'd of the Convent of Gant.

2ly. That, they of Gant, had given up all their right to the said Irish Religious Dames.

3ly. That, the Grand Vicars of Ypres, would never Incorporate our Religious, for want of Portions.

4ly. That, the Irish had no establishmt in France for any Convent of Nuñs.

5ly. That the Convents of Ypres, Gant, and Dunkirk, as also Pontoise, made but one Congregation; of which Gant was the First.

Reasons for Us.

1st. That we and our Sisters never expected to have bin thus disquieted, especially by the said Irish Nuñs, who had refus'd to Joyn with ye said Lady Abbesse of Ypres.

2ly. That our Religious at Ypres, had taken great pains

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for the conservation and encreasing of the Convent, with great Satisfaction to the Lady Abbesse.

3ly. That we had bin at considerable expences for their Journey, and necessary accomodations there, as appear'd by a Faithfull Memorial, which we gave in.

4ly. That by our help, and Dame Catherine's Industry, the Convent of Ypres had built a house wh. cost about 3,000 livers.*

5ly. That during 2 years time past, the said Nuñs of Gant, Dunkirk, and Pontoise, had kept a profound silence, touching this Right of their pretended Congregation.

6ly. That in reality, they could not make out, that they had any true Congregation, they being entirely under the jurisdiction of several Bishops, and their own Constitutions terming all the Union they have a COMBINATION, not a Congregation. †

7ly and Lastly. It is certain, that the Intention of the said Lady Abbesse de Beaumont, was, That the possession of her Monastery‡ should belong to English Nuñs, which she declared before A Notarie, a little before her Death, she writing likewise to Mr. Le Marquis de L'ouvoye,§ in these Express Terms, " que plutôt que de souffrir qu'on etablisse en sa maison des Religieuses Irlandoises, elle viendroit a Paris, sur ses 4 pattes." ||

To wch reasons another was added, To wit, The Promise, the Grand Vicars of Ypres had made to our Religious, provided they could procure means to maintain themselves with some young gentlewomen with Portions; which Dame Catherine had in a manner effected: Having

* Livres.

† If the Abbeys of Ghent, Dunkirk, Pontoise, and Ypres formed a congregation strictly so-called, they would be naturally interdependent, and Abbess Beaumont could not dispose of Ypres without the consent of the mother and sister-houses.

‡ It mattered little what her intention was, as the monastery was not hers.

§ Louvois, the celebrated minister of Louis XIV.

|| " That, rather than suffer Irish nuns to be established in her house, she would come on all fours to Paris "—no doubt to protest against such an enormity and to get King Louis to interfere. The word " Irish " in the original is written in larger or " scare " letters.

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brought over with her, One Madame Harper, a rich Widow and 2 young gentlewomen.

These Reasons pro and con: were presented to Mr. Le Marquis du L'ouvoye, Monseigneur the Arch-Bishop of Paris, and the Grand Vicars of Ypres, to have ye case decided. And after much Sollicitation of both sides, the case was determined against Us, by means of the Powerfull friends of the said Nuñs of Dunkirk, Gant, and Pontoise. Whereupon, the Arch-Bishop at their Importunity, sent us an obedience to return; wherewith our Religious readily complyed, coming back again ye 24th of April, 1683, and the Nuns of Ypres, being oblig'd to pay us back all our Expenses, wch they did accordingly.

Here, we may well observe, that tho' this dispute caus'd much discourse amongst our English Communities every where; yet all yt [that] understood the bottom of the contest, were no little edify'd at our conduct, and particularly, Mr. de L'ouvoye, and our Arch-Bishop (To whose order we readily submitted:) as also the 2 Grand Vicars of Ypres, had reason so to bee; . . .

The following account of Dame Catherine Conyers, one of "ye tow Dame Conniers," who went from Paris to Ypres at Abbess Beaumont's invitation, throws some further and interesting light on the subject. We have taken it* from a MS. work entitled:—

"Some particular remarks of† our venerable Mother Beginners that came from the English Benedictine Monastery of the truly virtuous and religious Dames of our Blessed Lady of Consolation in the Town of Cambray. And a Register with the remarks of all the rest of our Rd. Mothers, and Religious Sisters, of this our Monastery of Our Blessed Lady of Good Hope in Paris. Deceased since the year of Our Lord 1652."

* From the copy made at Atherstone Priory, Warwickshire, of the original MS., which is preserved at Colwich Priory, Staffordshire, the present representative of the Paris convent.

† i.e., on.

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The portion treating of Dame Conyers runs as follows :—

Some remarks of * Revd. Mo.† Catherine Conyers of the H.[oly] Cross who departed this life the 2nd of Jany., 1703.

In 1680 she went to Ipres with the Lady Beaumont, 1st Abbess thereof; for her Ladyship happening to have been many years in her Monastery without having porfessed any excepting one Lay sister, and the house being also ready to fall on their heads, and they in so great poverty of friends and money, that they were in an impossibility of repairing it. The grand Vicars of the place, by the long experience they had of her conduct, despairing of her ever bringing it to anything, threatened to give it to the French if she did not very soon get a supply from some Monastery of her own Nation; the wh [which] occasioned her Ladyship's addressing herself unto us, to the great astonishment and surprise of the whole Community, we being as then totaly ignorant not only of the state and concerns of her Monastery, but even of her own person and designs upon us, not having had the least intelligence or information from herself or any other, when all of a sudden she came and cast herself at the feet of our V. Rd. Mo Prioress (who was then Rd. Mo. Justina Gascoigne) laying open unto her the great distress and affliction she was in for want of Religious, making most humble supplications to her Reverence to grant her some of us, for that otherwise she shd [should] for certain (she said) have her house taken from her and given to the French, and withal making great protestations how it shd be ours after her death, if that we wd but then assist her in the pressing straits and necessity wherein she was, as she truly believed, she said, we were obliged in conscience being as we were, of the same order and nation, and shd have it to answer to God if we refused her, and much more to this effect she was daily and almost continually battering our ears with either by

* i.e., on. † Mother.

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letters, friends or coming herself in person, leaving nothing unattempted wh she thought might possibly procure our consent; the which had such influence upon Mo Cath. [Mother Catherine] that she offered herself (with leave of superiors) to go along with her Ladyship. The same did also Mo Lucy (her sister) and Mo Ursula Trevillian taking with them Sr Amanda a Lay sister, at wh the Abbess exceedingly rejoiced, willing them before their departure to make a form of Obedience to her in presence of us all in the Choir, and then she constituted Mo Catherine her Prioress. But they were strangely when being arrived at her Monastery to find things in the condition they were in, and at first were in some suspense what to do or resolve on, but after having recommended the matter to God (being conscious of their own good meaning and intention in what they had done) they concluded to wade thro' (by God's assisting grace) the best they could the difficulties wh generally do attend such enterprises and thereupon Mo Cath. set herself heartily to the work wh she then looked upon as the known will of God for her, immediately casting about how to get and procure charities toward the repairing and building of the Monastery and within the compass of 2 years space that they remained there, she got (together with what the Abbess gave her) sufficient for the building of a Workhouse,* Chapter house and double Dormitory, the wh she entirely finished and also got several pensioners as well English as Dutch, 2 or 3 of the said English having come over with design of Professing amongst them, and had moreover laid her design for the building of a Church and Choir, having likewise all materials for the building of another dormitory over that she had already built when it pleased Almighty God to put a stop to her further proceeding by the death of the Abbess. For they not having as yet professed any of the house, the religious of Ghent, Dunkirk and Pontoise who had endeavoured (tho' unknown to us) before our religious went to Ipres, to have got it for the Irish Dames professed at their

* i.e., a work-room.

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Monastery, and had been (as we understood after-wards) treating the Abbess about it when she came and made her addresses to us, now set upon the effecting that after her death, wh they found they could not do during her life, and tho' we at the first, did use all the means we could to help and assist Mo Catherine by supplicating and pleading the justice of her cause, and the right our Monastery had to lay a claim to it, as well in regard of the donation the Abbess had made thereof to us, as for our having been at the charges of their journey thither, and several other expenses, and had likewise been at no small trouble in soliciting their affairs and procuring them charities; yet when we perceived that things were like to grow to so great height on both sides, we chose rather peacably and quietly to render it up then by further arranging and disputing to hasard the causing dissentions, animosities and difficulties betwixt their Monasteries and ours to the disedification and scandal of seculars, and accordingly we wrote to Mo Cath. together with some other friends to advise her to do the same, to wh she presently requiesced; and as tho' she had done nothing at all shewed herself most ready and willing to have left the place at the same instant, but that 'twas our sentiment to have her remain till she had made some reasonable agreement with the religious that were come to take possession of the house to re-emburse her so much of what she had laid out in the building, as might bear their charges back, the wh after her having amiably concluded, she with the rest of her company returned home, bringing with them four of their English pensioners whom we (contrary to our custom) got leave to take into our Monastery, till such time as they might be otherwise provided for or disposed of; but soon after Mrs. Hawes and Mrs. Kitcheson (who had come over with intention of being religious at Ipres) took the scholar's habit amongst us, tho' Mrs. Kitcheson after some little time having declared that her desire and vocation was rather to be amongst strangers than those of her own nation, our V. Rd Mo Prioress, Mo Cath and

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some others did use such endeavours with those who had the charity to promise to give them portions in case they professed amongst us, that with some difficulty they obtained their consent to give them that wh they designed (had she settled with us) to place her in a French Monastery of Benedictines. Mo Catherine looking upon the overthrow of her designs as permitted by Almighty God for her greater good, was so far from complaining of the Injury she might think to have been done her, or bearing the least difficulty or grudge with those who went to take possession of that wh had cost her so great pains and labor, that when about 9 or 10 years after her having left Ipres, that Revd Dame Mary Butler went thither to be Abbess, and she being pleased in her way thither to honour us with a visit, and at the same time telling us of the great loss they had had there of their Churchstuff, for that some of the Dames who were then gone to begin a Monastery in Ireland, had, she said, carried away with them the very best suits that our Religious had left; and her Ladyship seemed withal to be in that concern and trouble, as not knowing what to do for want of change, that it did so extremely move Mo Cath. and this our present Revd Mo Prioress to compassion (it happening to be a little after her Reverences first election) as also some others that had the honour to entertain her that they all unanimously agreed of making her Ladyship a present of 3 suits of Church stuff,* of different colours, the wh she was pleased to accept with grateful acknowledgements, owning they had not received so much from any of their convents.

* i.e., three sets of vestments.

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ABBESS BUTLER,

1686-1723.

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CHAPTER VIII

OF THE ELECTION OF ABBESS BUTLER, FIRST IRISH ABBESS OF YPRES (1686)—OF THE BUTLERS OF IRELAND, AND OF ABBESS BUTLER'S COUSIN, JAMES BUTLER, SECOND DUKE OF ORMONDE

> The Abbess was of noble blood,
> But early took the veil and hood
> Ere upon life she cast a look,
> Or knew the world that she forsook.

On the death of Lady Abbess Cary (February 20, 1686), the Abbey of Ypres found itself once more in a forlorn state. There were but three choir-nuns left to form a community, and one of these, Dame M. Joseph Ryan, was absent again in Ireland in the interest of her order and of her sorely-tried sisters. So there were but two choir-nuns actually at Ypres, according to Abbess Neville, and these two, Dame M. Joseph Butler and Dame M. Lawrence Lawson, were both of the Pontoise house. It is true that in the list of the professed religious at Ypres a Sister M. Benedict Blisset is entered as having made her profession under Abbess Cary's auspices in the preceding year (May 19, 1685), but she was only an "extern-sister," and so, perhaps, strictly speaking, not a member of the community.

The Convent of Ypres had thus practically ceased to be a filiation of Ghent, and, indeed, it seemed as if its very existence were in the balance, for

> D. Ryan, being in Ireland [writes the Abbess of Pontoise],

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there is only D. M. Joseph Butler and D. Mary Laurance Lawson, both of or hows [our house, i.e. Pontoise], now remayning ther, and till some news or ye return of D. Ryan from Irlad no positive determination can be taken, [but] wee pray dayly for a happy conclusion for ye glory of God, and good of Religion;

And the prayers of the good Abbess and the community of Pontoise were not in vain.

More than six months elapsed before the election of a new Abbess took place, which we can easily understand as there were only two religious actually at Ypres; and, as we are told that the new Abbess was elected "by plurality of votes," and, as we know from letters of Abbess Butler, preserved at Ypres, that Dame Ryan never returned thither, we may presume that some religious had been sent to Ypres from the other convents in order to form a community sufficiently large to proceed to the election.

On the 29th August, 1686 [says the Ypres MS.], the Community elected for Abbess by plurality of votes, Rev. Dame Mary Joseph Butler, which election was confirmed by letters patent of the Rt. Rev. Vicars General. Two or three months later, in November of the same year, Her Ladyship was blest Abbess at Comines, by the Rt. Honorable and Rt. Rev. Lord de Choiseul de Plessis Praslin, Bishop of Tournay, the See of Ipres being then vacant.

This remarkable woman, the first Irish Abbess of Ypres, was of the ancient and noble family of the Butlers of Kilkenny, being the daughter of Toby Butler, Esqr., of Callan, in that county, and a cousin to "my Lord Duke of Ormond." She had made her profession at Boulogne on November 4, 1657, five

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years after the foundation of that house, of which she seems to have been one of the first professed, and in the following year she proceeded to Pontoise, whither the Boulogne community had resolved to migrate. At the time of her election as Abbess she is said to have been forty-four years of age, and had nearly completed twenty-six years of religious life.

Lady Butler [says an Ypres MS.] was niece to Lady Knatchbull. Her father dying, her pious mother sent her at 8 years of age* to be educated under the care of her aunt, Lady Knatchbull then Abbess of the English-Benedictine Dames at Gand [Ghent], where she scarce attained the age of 12, when considering the vanity and folly of all the pleasures the world can afford, and being inflamed with divine love [she] importuned to enter our holy Order which was not granted till she was fourteen. The Lady Knatchbull having sent Religious to establish a convent in Boullen [Boulogne]† her Ladyship sent her thither for that house. She was admitted to her Profession at 16 at Boullen, the 4th Dec., 1657.

Having had the happiness to be professed, she redoubled her fervour, joining to an inviolable fidelity to our holy Rule and Constitutions the continual self-denial recommended in the Gospel. So great was her desire of resembling her crucified Spouse, as to beg by an ardent petition all manner of sufferings, and particularly that she might meet with contradictions and neglect from those to whom she had been most serviceable. Her petition was granted as well by continual infirmities as many other crosses. She manifested her spirit of perfect obedience and love of the Cross in yielding to the counsel of her Spiritual Director (Sir John Warner of the Society of Jesus) a zealous promoter of this establishment, who represented to her the merit of sacrificing the comfort

* Quoted differently in Teignmouth Annals—"Sent at age of 8, on death of her pious mother.

† Founded 1652.

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and quiet she experienced in her community of Pontoise, where she was much beloved and esteemed to come to Ipres, where there was entire deficiency of all temporal comforts, want of subjects, etc., these considerations of a poor and mortified life engaged this generous soul immediately to fly to the Cross. She arrived at Ipres in 1683 . . .

Abbess Butler's term of office was a most eventful one, but before speaking of it we must say something of the distinguished family to which she belonged, and especially her noble kinsman, the Duke of Ormonde, with whom the Abbess and her community came more than once into touch.

The Butlers of Ireland trace their descent from Theobald Walter or Fitzwalter, elder brother of Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, and justiciar of England. Fitzwalter accompanied Prince John to Ireland in 1185 and received extensive grants of land from him in that country. The Prince, having assumed the title of "Lord of Ireland," appointed Fitzwalter his Chief-Butler, dignifying him with the title of "Pincerna Hiberniæ," or "Cup-bearer" of Ireland, though but a very small part of the country acknowledged the authority of John or of his father, King Henry II. Hence the title and name Le Botiller, or Butler, assumed by the Fitzwalters, and first used in the year 1192. The first Butler seems to have ended his days in Ireland, where he founded several monasteries.

In the course of time the Butlers became one of the most powerful and important of the Anglo-Norman families in Ireland, where they acquired many grants of

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lands and titles. They became at the same time, like so many other Norman families in Ireland, thoroughly Irish in manners and sentiment—*ipsis Hibernicis Hiberniores*—more Irish than the Irish themselves, as the well-known saying ran; contracting marriage alliances with the native Celtic Irish, adopting their dress and manners, even their language, and going into battle with the Irish war-cry of "Butler Abu!"

It has been asserted by a learned authority that "25 patents, ennobling various branches of the house, have issued from the Crown," including "not only peerages of England and Ireland, but also of Wales and Scotland; and of no other family do so many ancient baronial and castellated mansions still remain as of the house of Butler in Ireland."* This distinguished name was borne by no less than five of the Peers who sat among the Lords in King James's Parliament—the celebrated Patriot Parliament, held in Dublin in 1689—by Richard Butler, Viscount Mountgarret, and the four Pierce Butlers, Lords of Ikerrin, Galmoy, Dunboyne, and Cahir respectively. One of the latter, Pierce Butler, Viscount of Galmoy, being Lord Lieutenant of the County Kilkenny, was probably a near relative of our Abbess Butler. In the Commons of the same Parliament sat seven Knights of the Shire of the name of Butler, of whom two represented our Abbess's native county of Kilkenny. And be it remarked to the credit of the name of Butler that all these and other distinguished families of the name, like that of our Lady Abbess, were true to Faith and Fatherland, and

* The author of *Feudal Dignities in Ireland*, cited by O'Callaghan.

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chose rather to abandon their homes and properties and go into exile with their king than to deny their Faith or bow their knee to the usurper. But in leaving Ireland they did not forget their ancient chivalrous traditions. Far from it; the name of Butler is writ large in the military annals of France and other European nations to whom they offered their services, and such was the distinction they acquirecd that the illustrious Lafayette is said to have remarked, in the course of the American War of Independence, that "whenever he wanted anything well done he got a Butler to do it."

But Abbess Butler's cousin, the great Duke of Ormonde, was conspicuous by his absence from James's Parliament, having renounced his allegiance to the Stuarts and thrown in his lot with the usurper. He was the head of that branch of the Butler family which had been ennobled with the title of Earls of Ormonde —a title which carries us back to the year 1328, the second of the reign of King Edward III. His ancestors, unfortunately, had apostatized in the reign of Henry VIII, at whose court Thomas Butler, the tenth Earl, known as "the Black Earl," was, for political reasons, weaned from the ancient faith of Ireland and of Christendom, and brought up in the new-fangled doctrines but lately introduced from Germany. In the next century, however, in the year 1619, we find the "Black Earl's" great grand-nephew, James Butler, twelfth Earl, and, afterwards, first Duke of Ormonde, being entrusted as a boy of nine, by his mother, to a Catholic tutor at Finchley, near London; but in his

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case, likewise, English and Protestant influence proved too strong, and he too was made a royal ward, and was brought up in the State religion.* He played a very prominent part during the Civil War, as Royalist commander in Ireland, of which country he was several times Lord Lieutenant. On the final success of Cromwell and the Parliamentarians he quitted Ireland, and remained in close personal attendance on Charles II, during his exile, acted as his ambassador, and negotiated with Monk for the King's restoration. As ex-Lord Lieutenant, he proclaimed James II as king before leaving Dublin in 1685, and was Lord High Steward at James's coronation.

He was succeeded in 1688 by his grandson, James Butler, thirteenth Earl, and second and last Duke of Ormonde, who was cousin, as we have said, of our Lady Abbess Butler. This distinguished Peer was in command of the Irish guards in King James's reign, but, in an evil moment, deserted the cause of his lawful King and went over to the usurper, an act, of which, it must be said to his credit, he sincerely repented, as we shall see hereafter. He was conspicuous as Lord High Constable at the coronation of William and Mary in 1689, and in the same year was attainted and his estates forfeited by James II, now in exile. He fought at the Battle of the Boyne, 1690, secured Dublin for the usurping Prince of Orange, and recaptured his ancestral

* "Ormond," says the Abbé Airoldi, Internuncio of Flanders, who visited England and had an interview with King Charles II in 1670, "is an open and inward foe to Catholics. His brothers and sisters and his family were always Catholic, but he was in boyhood educated among heretics, and imbibed their noxious maxims. In Ireland as Viceroy he proved a bitter foe to Catholics. . . ."

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Castle of Kilkenny in the course of the same year and same campaign, and also, to his honour be it said, he came to the rescue of his cousin, Abbess Butler, and her nuns from Ypres, whose convent in Dublin had been sacked by the triumphant Williamite troops.

Having been appointed by King William as his Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Captain of the Horse Guards, and Lieutenant-General, he continued to follow the fortunes of the usurper during all the latter's campaigns on the Continent; he received two sabre wounds and had his horse shot under him while heading a charge of British cavalry at the Battle of Landen (1693), and was on the point of being killed when he was rescued by a French guardsman, who concluded from the rich diamond ring on his finger that he must be a person of distinction, with the result that his life was spared and he was taken prisoner to Namur.

Shortly after Queen Anne's accession in 1702 he was appointed to the command of 12,000 troops on board the combined English and Dutch Fleet, which after an unsuccessful attempt on Cadiz, proceeded to Vigo and destroyed the Spanish treasure-ships, which had just arrived there under convoy of a French fleet, to which victory Ormonde's troops materially contributed by landing and capturing the castle. On his return he accompanied Queen Anne to St. Paul's, where a solemn thanksgiving was held, on which occasion, we are told, it "appeared how much he was the darling of the people, who neglected their Sovereign, and applauded him more, perhaps, than any subject was on any occasion."

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In the year 1712 the Tory and Jacobite Cabinet of England decided to cashier the Duke of Marlborough* and put an end to the costly and unnecessary war on the Continent—a war of which the celebrated Dr. Johnson wrote that it " was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough, and it would have been continued without end if he could have continued his annual plunder."† Some idea of the profit acquired by the mercenary Duke during his office of Commander-in-Chief may be acquired from the statement of Dr. King, of Oxford, to the effect that he " left at his death more than £1,500,000 sterling," an enormous sum for those days. And yet, remarks the same writer, " when he was in the last stage of life and very infirm " he " would walk from the public rooms in Bath to his lodgings in a cold dark night *to save sixpence in chair-hire.*" His office as Commander-in-Chief was handed over to the Duke of Ormonde, who at this time had reverted to his old Tory and Jacobite leanings, and who, unlike his predecessor, was generous and disinterested to a fault. " Nobody could doubt the Duke of Ormonde's bravery," remarked Earl Powlet publicly in the House of Lords, " but he was not like a certain Lord [alluding to Marlborough] who led troops to the

* Evelyn records in his Diary in the year 1692 : " Lord Marlborough, Lieutenant-General of the King's Army, etc., etc., dismissed from all his charges for his excessive taking of bribes, covetousness and extortion on all occasions from his inferior officers. NOTE.—This was the lord who was entirely advanced by King James, and was the first who betray'd and forsook him."

† On the other hand, Marlborough himself wrote as follows to Godolphin : " I must every summer venture my life in a battle and be found fault with in the winter for not bringing home peace though I wish for it with all my heart and soul."

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slaughter, that a great number of officers might be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his pockets by disposing of their commissions."

It was remarked of the Duke of Ormonde, during his Continental campaign under William III, that " his expenses were so great abroad that it may be said he gained more reputation by his generosity than many generals have by their armies," and he certainly maintained his reputation in this respect during his campaign in Flanders in 1712, after his appointment as Commander-in Chief of the British Forces. We are told that when the Flemings went " to see the Duke at dinner they were wonderfully pleased at the sight," while one of them " declared he never saw anything to come up to it ; he had often seen Marshals of France at dinner, but never in half that pomp." On one occasion it happened that the Duke's Deputy-Quartermaster-General fixed upon a priest's house, in the latter's absence, as the most suitable for his Grace of Ormonde's quarters.

At our return [relates the Quarter-Master himself], the Priest was amazed to see the Duke's kitchen-tent already pitched in his orchard ; thirty or forty cooks, scullions, turnspits, and other servants busy at their several employments ; some spitting all sorts of flesh and fowl in season ; others making pies and tarts ; and others making fires and fixing boilers and ovens. In short, in less than three hours, there was as grand a dinner served up, as it if had come from the markets of London or Paris. The Priest declared that, if he had not seen it, he could never have believed that such a dinner could be had in a camp, even for the great Louis Quatorze. . . . Then

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we went to see the dining-tents, in the largest of which was a table of twenty-four covers, in another a table of eighteen, and in a third one of twelve, all looking into each other, with a fourth for the musick to play, while his Grace was at dinner. The priest was as much charmed as surprized at what he saw. I ask'd him if he did not think I had got a good lodger for him? He thank'd me. . . . We staid here about ten days, his Grace shewing a great deal of respect to the Priest; for he dined and supped with him every day, and often sat with him when at leisure. The night before the army marched, the Duke made him a handsome present.

We cannot help wondering if this great Duke, who was able to keep up such profuse style during his campaign in Flanders,* ever thought, amidst all this "pomp and circumstance of war," of his poor cousin, Abbess Butler, and her struggling community, who at Ypres, not far away, were engaged in a nobler warfare, and found it hard enough to make both ends meet withal.

In 1713 he was, for the third time, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,† where he kept "Court . . . in greater splendour than ever was known in that kingdom."

* It seems that they carried on warfare leisurely and luxuriously in those days, but it should be remarked that Ormonde had orders from the home authorities to remain inactive during this campaign of 1712.

† He had been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from September, 1703, to June, 1705, and again in 1710 and 1711, when he displayed his sympathy with the Jacobite sentiments of the Irish people by wearing the white rose on the birthday of Prince James III, 'The Old Pretender,' and by attaching white satin rosettes to the collars of his dogs, whence the verse in the popular song:—

Our noble Ormonde he is drest,
A rose is glancing on his breast,
His famous hounds have doff'd his crest,
White roses deck them over.

He was accompanied to Ireland by Sir Constantine Phipps as Lord

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But dark and evil days were at hand. The Duke, owing to the antiquity of his family, his high official positions, his vast wealth and magnificence, not to speak of his distinguished personal qualities, his courage, benevolence, and affability, had for some time been the head and idol of the Tory and Jacobite party in England, and the cry of "High Church and Ormonde," or even "an Ormonde in opposition to King George," resounded throughout the country, from which it would seem that some of the Tory party even went so far as to contemplate setting him upon the throne, after Queen Anne's death, in opposition to George, and even to James's exiled son and heir, whose manly determination not to abandon the Catholic faith, not even for the crown of England, was displeasing to many of his partisans. But it was not to be so. Queen Anne died somewhat unexpectedly on August 1, 1714, and by dint of Whig intrigues the crown passed to an obscure foreigner in the person of George, Elector of Hanover. The result was that the Duke of Ormonde became more popular than ever, as was manifested in a striking manner in the following year, 1715, being the first after George's accession. In that year the Whigs duly celebrated the birthday of the Elector, now styled King of England, which, by an awkward coincidence, happened to be May 28, the following day being the birthday of King Charles II, and the anniversary of the Restoration of the Stuarts.

Chancellor. The latter had acted as counsel for the defence of the Tory, Dr. Sacheverell, and while in office in Ireland endeavoured to suppress the insulting Orange displays which annually took place round the Dutchman's statue in Dublin.

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Needless to say all true Jacobites postponed their rejoicings to the latter day. "Their mobbs in the city," says an anti-Jacobite writer, "broke the windows of such houses as were not illuminated, and, among 'em, those of the Lord Mayor. Their cry was 'High Church and the Duke of Ormond.' In Smithfield there was one of the greatest mobbs that has been known since Sacheverell's Trial, where they burnt a print of King William," etc. The result was that Ormonde became a marked man, and on June 21 of this same year, 1715, he was impeached for high treason, along with Bolingbroke and the Earl of Oxford, prominent Ministers of the late Tory and Jacobite Government. Bolingbroke had already fled to the Court of the exiled King in France; Ormonde was at first inclined to brave the storm, and was still conspicuous by his magnificent style of living which vied with that of the Court itself, but, seeing the turn things were taking, he too decided that discretion was the better part of valour and followed Bolingbroke to France. Before flying from England, however with characteristic courtesy, he went to visit the Earl of Oxford, who, having decided to weather the storm and remain in England, was now a prisoner in the Tower of London. Ormonde once more urged him to attempt an escape which Oxford refused to do whereupon the Duke took leave of him with the words "Farewell, Oxford, without a head," to which the Earl replied "Farewell Duke, without a duchy." On August 8 the Duke withdrew to France, and less than two weeks later, August 20, 1715, he was attainted and his estates forfeited.

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The sacrifice which this noble Duke thus made for his principles and for his exiled King was no light one. His income from his estates alone, in Ireland and England, was, as officially returned at the time of his forfeiture by the new Government, over £21,000 a year, a princely rental for those days, unequalled by few, if any, of the wealthiest estates of the then British aristocracy; while the vastness of the revenue he derived from other sources may be inferred from the many important posts he held, as set forth in the Act of his Attainder, which describes him as :—

The Most High, Puissant and noble PRINCE, James Butler, Duke of Ormonde, Earl of Brecknock, and Baron of Lanthony and Moore-Park in England—Duke, Marquis and Earl of Ormonde, Earl of Ossory and Carrick, Viscount Thurles, Baron of Dingle and Arklow, in Ireland—Baron of Dingwall in Scotland—Hereditary Lord of Regalities, and Governor of the County Palatine of Tipperary, and of the City, Town, and County of Kilkenny, Hereditary Lord Chief Butler of Ireland—Lord High Constable of England, Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports, and Constable of Dover Castle—Lord Lieutenant of the County Somerset—Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the County of Norfolk, High-Steward of the Cities of Exeter, Bristol, and Westminster, Chancellor of the Universities of Oxford and Dublin—Colonel of the 1st Regiment of Foot-Guards and the 1st Regiment of Horse-Guards, Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of all her Majesty's Forces by Sea and Land throughout the British Dominions, or acting in conjunction with the Allied Powers—One of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council in England and Ireland, Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and Lord-Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland.

His London residence in St. James's Square was

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sold to an Irish gentleman for £7,500, while his English country seat at Richmond, where, as a French writer tells us, "he lived in great magnificence, kept open table and seemed to have raised his standard there against King George,"* was purchased for the latter's son, the Hanoverian Prince of Wales, for a sum of £6,000. Needless to say he also forfeited his famous Irish country-seat, the Castle of Kilkenny, of which an English tourist wrote in 1698—"This Castle may properly be called the Elysium of Ireland, and, were not the Duke and Duchess better principled than to forget Heaven for a perishing glory, they'd little think of mansions hereafter, who have such a Paradise at present to live in." And a later writer says of it—"The many offices here shew, what the older inhabitants of the city assured us, that, while this was the residence of that illustrious family, there was no officer wanting here that is to be met within the Palaces of Sovereign Princes."†

The arrival of this distinguished exile at the court of the true King of England "over the water," and the encouraging reports he brought with him of the manifestations of popular sympathy at home, raised great expectations in the breast of James and his followers. "Care and hope," writes Lord Bolingbroke, "sat on every busy Irish face." Nor was the Duke of Ormonde slow in giving practical proof of his loyal sentiments. Already, in the autumn of the same year, accompanied

* Quoted by O'Callaghan—"Il vivoit avec grande magnificence, tenoit table ouverte, et sembloit y avoir levé l'étendard contre le Roi George . . ."

† Quoted ibid.

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by ninety officers and twenty-five chosen troops from the Irish Regiment of Nugent, he sailed from France to Plymouth, arrangements having already been made for a rising in the South of England. But when the Duke landed he found no one to meet him, his plans having been basely betrayed by his confidant, a certain Colonel MacLean, of the Highland clan of that name, which was otherwise so conspicuous for loyalty to the Stuarts. No course was left open but to return to France, where, after an interview with the exiled King at St. Malo, the Duke, nothing daunted, put to sea again, with the desperate resolve of landing single-handed on the English coast. But he was driven back by a violent tempest, and eventually retired to Avignon, at that time the seat of the exiled Court. There he resided under the name of Colonel Comerford until another opportunity presented itself for striking a blow for his Sovereign. Some three years later, in 1718, Spain, under the energetic rule of Cardinal Alberoni, who, though the son of a working gardener, had become the Prime Minister of his country, found herself at war with England, and in order the more effectually to embarrass her enemy, she warmly espoused the cause of the exiled King. In February, 1719, Philip V issued a manifesto in favour of the "male and Catholic line of the House of Stuart," whose representative made a royal entry into Madrid the following month. One of the Royal Palaces was assigned him for his residence, and a considerable military force, " most of them Irish," was to be at his disposition, to assist him in asserting his rights to the throne of

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England. A picked detachment of Spanish infantry, with several Scotch nobles and Irish officers, sailed in advance the same month, and landed in Ross-shire, in Scotland, where they were to await the arrival of the main armament under Ormonde. About the same time, Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan, son of the great Earl, proceeded to Connaught to prepare a rising in Ireland. Meanwhile, in the same month, the main Spanish fleet of five picked men-of-war, with about twenty transports, and 5,000 soldiers, "partly Irish," put out from Cadiz, under Admiral Don Balthazar de Guevara and the Duke of Ormonde. But, about fifty leagues off Finisterre, the fleet encountered a violent tempest, which shattered and dispersed the ships and obliged them to make for the nearest ports.

This disaster completely upset the Jacobite plans in Scotland and Ireland. The Spanish force of some 300 men, which had already landed in Scotland, submitted to the Hanoverian troops, after a short skirmish, at the Vale of Glenshiel. In Ireland the Lords Justices had offered a reward of £10,000 for the capture of the Duke of Ormonde, dead or alive, while the Castle issued a proclamation offering £1,000 reward for the apprehension of Sarsfield, and at the same time requiring all officials to "apprehend all Popish Archbishops, Bishops, Jesuits, Monks," etc., but the Earl of Lucan succeeded in escaping to St. Omers, in Flanders, where he died shortly after, the last earl of his line.

Thus did the elements, not for the first or last time, fight against Ormonde and the Stuart destinies. Had this expedition succeeded in landing, it is pretty certain

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the Hanoverians would have been driven from the throne, and it is evident, from the large reward they offered for his apprehension, how seriously they felt the danger. The well-known Irish Protestant Jacobite, Dr. Charles Leslie, writing in the following year, 1720, to the Regent of France on behalf of the cause of James III, remarks that "nine parts in ten of the people" were for the Stuarts, and he adds: "And no man in England of either party doubts but that if the Duke of Ormonde could have landed from Spain last year, with the forces and arms designed for the expedition, it would have restored King James, probably without a war, but certainly with a war of two or three months at most." He furthermore remarks that "at least twenty of the most considerable men in England, of opulent fortune, are willing to come over into France and return with the troops" the Regent may lend them, but that "no circumstance can contribute so much to make the English nation press to take up those arms, in the quarrel of their own country and of France, as the Duke of Ormonde being at the head of those troops." . . . "And whereas possibly an army of 12,000 men, under any other General might continue only the same number . . . *under the Duke of Ormonde, the most beloved and esteemed man ever England had*, whatever arms they had would be as many men in ten days; and on their approach to London would swell to 40 or 50,000 men. But this is most certain that, in this cause, *the Duke of Ormonde is, in his own person, very many thousand men, and is alone more than all the other heads of the party put together in the affections and expectations of the English nation.*"

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The gallant and impetuous Duke was destined to spend a long, weary quarter of a century before another opportunity presented itself of proving his zeal for the Stuart cause; and when the call did come at last it found him a venerable old man of well-nigh eighty. On January 9, 1744, Prince Charles hurriedly quitted Rome and set out for Paris, which he reached on the 20th, having interviewed the faithful old Duke at Avignon, on his way across France. Another imposing expedition was fitted out by France, and the Prince and Count de Saxe had already embarked at Dunkirk with 7,000 men, and were making fair headway for the English coast when again the elements conspired against the Stuart cause. The fleet was dispersed by a violent tempest and the expedition abandoned. The faithful old Duke of Ormonde had been summoned from Avignon to join the expedition, and, aged as he was, he obeyed the summons with alacrity, but hearing, on his way to Dunkirk, of the failure of the expedition, he reluctantly returned to Avignon. The zeal of the old Duke on this occasion was worthy of a Butler, and forcibly reminds us of the sentiments contained in a letter, written twenty-five years before by his cousin Lady Abbess Butler, in which she assures King James III that "she would have to doubt of the attributes of the Almighty if she hesitated to hope that, although *she is nearly eighty years of age*, she would have once more the honour of assuring his Majesty at Whitehall of her profound submission."

But the life of this venerable old cavalier was drawing to a close, and that at a time when the cause

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he had so long worked for and hoped for seemed on the verge of success. It was the glorious year of 1745. His youthful master, Prince Charlie, had already successfully accomplished his romantic descent upon Scotland, had entered Edinburgh and proclaimed his father as King, and had fought and won the brilliant victory of Preston Pans—all which good tidings may have reached Avignon in time to cheer the last hours of the loyal old Duke. And now he might well sing his *Nunc Dimittis*, for he had lived to see at least the temporary triumph of the cause he had so much at heart, and was spared the anguish which the news of the disastrous defeat of Culloden and the ruin of his hopes must have caused him. On November 16, 1745, just as Prince Charlie was crossing the English border and on the very eve of the capture of Carlisle, his faithful old servant passed away at Avignon, "in the 81st year of his age, after having suffered an exile of upwards of thirty years." He "left this world," says his life, published three years later in London, "'tis hoped for a better," a prayer to which we heartily respond Amen! For, though he was born and bred outside the true Fold and died outside it, he did so, we doubt not, in the most utter good faith, and may be truly said to have belonged to the spirit of the Catholic Church, if not to the body. He was in truth an eminently religious and conscientious man, one who had the courage of his convictions, and who, as we have seen, sacrificed much for his principles, and we doubt not that the Prince of Righteousness has rewarded this faithful servant for his loyalty to his earthly prince.

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Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
. . . . . .
Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe, and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Even his bitterest enemies admitted the sincerity of his motives, and at the time of his impeachment "his fate was peculiarly regretted," as Sir Walter Scott truly remarks, "for the general voice exculpated him from taking any step with a view to selfish aggrandizement. Several of the Whigs themselves, who were disposed to prosecute to the uttermost the mysterious Oxford and the intriguing Bolingbroke, were inclined to sympathise with the gallant and generous cavalier, who had always professed openly the principles on which he acted."* And a writer whose political sympathies were opposed to those of the Duke, having lamented his fall, goes on to remark: "He is an Irishman, if there is any such thing in the world . . . and the greatest of his enemies will allow that, as to personal bravery, Cæsar or Alexander never had more."†

* Quoted by O'Callaghan.

† We do not doubt that as regards personal bravery the Duke was a typical Irishman, though for other reasons we would hesitate to set him down as such. We have seen how his ancestors were weaned over to Protestantism, as the best means of inspiring them with anti-Irish sentiments, and the experiment proved, as usual, only too successful. Certainly Ormonde's Irishism would not part

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He has been described as " of a low stature, but well-shaped, a good mien and address, a fair complexion, and very beautiful face," and has also been proclaimed as " the best bred man of his age."

Such was the second Duke of Ormonde, " Prince Palatine of Tipperary," and cousin of the humble Abbess of Ypres. Well might Abbess Butler feel proud of her noble kinsman had she felt so inclined, but she regarded as nothing all that the world esteems as great. With the Apostle she counted " all things to be but loss . . . that she might gain Christ." But, little importance as she may have attached to the Duke's empty worldly titles and honours, she must have appreciated to the full the staunch spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice which prompted him to abandon all for a worldly king, even as she herself had sacrificed all for the King of kings. It must, indeed, have been an intense pleasure to her to see him return to his old allegiance, and, though difference in religion seems to have been a bar to intimate intercourse, the Duke would seem to have corresponded with her during his exile; at least we find the Abbess, in the year 1718, employing the Duke as her intermediary in conveying her condolence to King James III on the death of his mother, Queen Mary of Modena.

current in these days of the Gaelic League and Irish-Ireland propaganda. To give but one proof: " So late as the reign of Queen Anne," writes Hardiman in the Introduction to his *Irish Minstrelsy*, " we are told that the intention of that princess to promote the cultivation of the Irish language was frustrated by the Duke of Ormond, who repeated in her presence an unmeaning sentence of broad sounding words as a proof of its barbarity." What Queen Anne's object may have been in promoting the study of Irish we do not know, but probably it was with a view to proselytism.

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JAMES BUTLER, SECOND AND LAST DUKE OF ORMONDE.

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JAMES BUTLER, SECOND AND LAST DUKE OF ORMONDE

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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CHAPTER IX

THE STUARTS AND THE ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT

DAME MARY BUTLER had not been very long Abbess of Ypres when she was invited by King James to play a prominent part in carrying out his design of establishing a house of Benedictine nuns in Dublin. For James had known the nuns of St. Benedict when he was an exile in the Low Countries, and held them in high esteem. In fact the Stuarts, and King Charles II especially, had been for long years much indebted to the Order of St. Benedict, and it was in great measure to a member of that Order that the Merry Monarch owed his escape after the disastrous Battle of Worcester (1651).* The story is an interesting one, and it will not be out of place to repeat it briefly here.

* The credit of saving the King's life at Worcester is due in the first instance to the gallant conduct of an Irish officer, Captain Edward Wogan. This officer first distinguished himself by his successful defence of the Fort of Duncannon in Ireland against Ireton and the Cromwellians (1649). He was subsequently captured and imprisoned in Cork, but escaped in 1650, in which year he distinguished himself by successfully accomplishing "the desperate task of marching through England with a party of royalist cavalry" in order to effect a junction with King Charles II's adherents in the Highlands of Scotland, "though all England had then submitted to the Parliament." It was he who "*saved the King's life, at the battle*, or rather flight, of Worcester, by the desperate stand he made, at the head of 300 horse, against Cromwell's whole army" (of some 30,000 men) "in the suburbs of that town, till the King and Colonel Careless were out of sight." And yet Wogan's name and the great services he rendered to the King are passed over in silence by most, if not all, English historians, including Lingard. Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, and O'Callaghan's *Irish Brigades*, etc.

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The King's hopes of regaining his father's throne seemed to be irretrievably ruined by the terrible defeat of Worcester. Charles himself was a fugitive, and it even seemed improbable that he would be able to make good his escape from the clutches of the Puritans, who were thirsting for his blood. But a few faithful Catholics, ever loyal in the midst of persecution, came to the rescue of their Sovereign. For two nights he remained hidden in the priest's hiding-place at Boscobel, the residence of the Penderels—poor, but loyal Catholic yeomen.

Here, as tradition has it, he lay concealed during the day in the leafy branches of a spreading oak, until, for greater safety, he repaired to Moseley Hall, the residence of the Whitgreaves, another Catholic family, who still retain their ancient residence along with their ancient Faith. This journey he is said to have made in the disguise of a peasant, mounted on a mill-horse, accompanied by the faithful Penderels, and going by the name of "Will Jones."

On the King's arrival at Moseley Hall, Mr. Whitgreave and a Father John Huddleston,* subsequently of the Order of St. Benedict,† who was staying with the family in the capacity of chaplain and tutor, were presented to him by the faithful Lord Wilmot, who had sought refuge in Moseley some time before. "Gentlemen," said the noble lord, on introducing the King,

* Or Hudleston; the name is variously spelt.

† "Mr. Whitgrave had served as lieutenant, Hudlestone as gentleman volunteer in the armies of Charles I. The latter . . . leaving the service took Orders and was at this time a secular priest, living with Mr. Whitgrave. He afterwards became a Benedictine monk."—Lingard.

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" the person whom you see here under this disguise is both your master and mine, and the master to whom we all owe duty and allegiance," whereupon Mr. Whitgreave and Father Huddleston knelt down and kissed his Majesty's hand. The King, in his turn, promised he would " never be unmindful either of them or theirs."

For three days the King remained in hiding at Moseley Hall, taking his meals in Father Huddleston's room, old Mrs. Whitgreave sitting at the table with him and carving for him, while her husband and Father Huddleston waited upon them both. Now it happened that on one of these days, a Tuesday, the King had a long chat with the Reverend Father, from whom he learned how the Catholics were persecuted by the Puritans on account of their Faith and loyalty. On being taken up into the garret, which was used as a chapel, the King looked " respectfully upon the altar," saying he had " an altar, crucifix, and silver candlesticks of his own " till he sold them to " my Lord of Holland."

On coming down again, he looked over Father Huddleston's books, showing especial interest in one of them entitled " A Short and Plain Way to the Faith and Church," by " Mr. Richard Huddleston, a Benedictine monk," uncle of Father John Huddleston, and having read it through attentively, the King remarked that it was the best work he had seen on the subject and that its arguments were unanswerable. He also picked up a catechism, saying, " It is a pretty book, and he would take it along with him."

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But suddenly soldiers were seen approaching the house, upon which the King was hurried away, for safety, into the priest's hiding-place, where he remained till the danger was over. On his coming out from his uncomfortable quarters, the priest took occasion to point out to him that the unpleasant conditions to which his Majesty had just been submitted were the daily experience of Catholic priests in those days of persecution, upon which the King remarked: "If it please God I come to my crown, both you and all of your persuasion shall have as much liberty as any of my subjects," a promise which he faithfully kept as regards Father Huddleston, but shamefully belied as regards his other Catholic subjects.

It is to the arguments contained in the little book at Moseley Hall that Father Huddleston attributes King Charles's conversion, although he had not the courage to proclaim himself openly a Catholic at that time, and was not actually received into the Church until the last moment of his life.* It is said, however, that during his lifetime he never omitted any opportunity of showing his contempt for the State Church and its ministers, as the Abbé Agretti remarks in his

* Burnet, however, says that he became a Catholic already during his exile on the Continent. "Before the King left Paris he changed his religion, but by whose persuasion it is not yet known, only Cardinal de Retz was in the secret, and Lord Aubigny had a great hand in it. The Duke of York was not at that time converted, for it was later than this when the nun's advice in a monastery in Flanders, desiring him to pray every day that if he was not in the right way God would bring him into it, made such an impression upon him that, as he said, it never left him till he changed."—Burnet, *Hist. of His Own Times*, Book i. Could this "nun" have been Abbess Roper, and did Charles also owe his conversion to her "persuasion"?

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report sent to Rome (December, 1669) on the state of the Catholic religion in England, as revealed to him during his visit in the previous September :—

The King, Charles II., is as benign and affable a prince as can be, being very well disposed towards Catholics, for he knows how in his adversity they served him with unshaken fidelity. Many heretics imagine his Majesty to be a Catholic in his heart, because he often in public and private, ridicules and disparages the preachers, not only those who are Presbyterians or fanatics, as they term them, but also those who are Protestants of the Establishment. The Catholics seeing the king continually living in bad practices hold that he is of no religion.*

But to return to our narrative. At midnight of that same day (Tuesday, September 9, 1651) King Charles, disguised in Father Huddleston's cloak, bade adieu to Moseley Hall and, after a further series of adventures, succeeded in reaching the South of England and making good his escape to Fécamp, in Normandy.†

But the visit to Moseley Hall was not the first occasion on which Charles had come into touch with the Benedictine Order. Already, in March of the year 1650, during his first exile from England, having occasion to pass through Ghent, he called upon Lady Abbess Roper and the community of the English Benedictines in that city, as we learn from the

* Cf. Brady, *Episcopal Succession*, etc.

† Cf. the interesting article on "The Conversion of Charles II," *Downside Review*, July, 1900, by Rev. A. S. Barnes, who quotes Father Huddleston's narrative.

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following interesting account contained in the mortuary notice of the said Abbess :—

Upon the Annuntiation eve precedent to her last sickness, our young King Charles the Second a little after the beheading of his father, in his first passing through Ghent was received into our monastery by this our Reverend Dear Lady Abbess and religiously intertained, her Ladyship having a serious and private conference with his Majesty, she noting down what pass'd between them ; this was but a month before her happy dissolution. And after her buriall the paper was found amongst the private writings in her oratory, where she did not spear [spare] to speak plainly and most piously, in order to his eternall and temporall good ; who [i.e., the King] was so well pleased at her humble, prudent and cordiall sincerity that then and ever since his majesty shewed himself upon all possible occasions peculiarly and graciously affected to this our community. After his departure he put us all in mind of our Dear Saviour, how he was deserted by his own people, having this thought when we saw the king in his purple coat mourning for his father, which moved my Lady [Abbess] and us all (At her ladyship's precise ordain) to pray hartily for his conversion and the good success of his bleeding affairs.*

Within less than a month after this visit the Abbess was seized with a mortal illness, upon hearing of which, King Charles, who was in Holland at the time, "sent in all speed his own Phisitian to her assistance." May we not suppose that Abbess Roper's salutary admonitions, coupled with the pious prayers of the Benedictine nuns of Ghent, prepared the way for the King's conversion, and contributed at least as much thereto as the incident at Moseley Hall ? In the year following his first visit to Ghent, Charles sent the nuns a donation

* Ghent Annals, pp. 24, 25.

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of 1,000 pistoles, and settled on the convent an annuity of £500.* Furthermore, we learn from the Neville Diary that both Charles II and his brother, the Duke of York, called to take leave of Abbess Knatchbull, of Ghent, before they left Flanders at the Restoration. The Abbess had for some time been a medium of communication between the exiled Stuarts and their Royalist adherents in England, and some years previously had exerted herself to the utmost to assist them in their difficulties. It is said, in fact, that the Abbess contributed materially to the restoration of Charles II† "by her correspondence and by conveying his letters in her covers."

Abbess Neville tells us moreover that "upon the eve, as it were, of that happy day assigned for his return to England, his Majesty sent away Mr. William Roper,‡ of Teynham, with 500 gold pistoles in a purse, with a letter in his own hand, to my Lady and her community" [of Ghent]. The original of Charles's letter was unfortunately lost during the troubles of the French Revolution, but happily it had been transcribed several times, and, as it seems, had been altered in the process. We give the copy made of it in 1718 by Abbess Knatchbull II for Dodd, the Church historian, which differs in some unimportant particulars from the version in the Pontoise (Teignmouth) Annals. It was evidently written by the King in answer to

* Ghent Annals, p. 30.

† "The nuns of [Oulton] still show a relic of the visit of his brother, in the shape of a chalice-veil that was made out of one of his banners with I. R. (Iacobus Rex) and a crown embroidered on it." Note on Oulton Mission in *Birmingham Catholic Directory*.

‡ Cousin to Lady Abbess.

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one from the Abbess congratulating him on his restoration, and runs as follows * :—

THE HAGUE,
May 31*st*,† 1660.

MY LADY ABBESS ‡

I have received y^rs of y^e 25th, and I do assure y^u y^t [that], as I have ever since my being in these parts, received many evidences of y^r good affection to me, so I shall never forget it, but shall always have a particular kindness for y^u and § y^r Community, and shall take all occasions to oblidge y^u of w^ch y^u may assure y^r community. I have directed the Chancellor to send y^u a little present of four hundred English pieces, || for the supply of y^r present necessities ¶ and y^u shall find y^t I will do all I can to make y^r condition more easy,** and that I am ††

Your affectionate friend

CHARLES REX.

A few days after Charles had penned the above letter he entered London amidst the acclamations of the people and was restored to the throne of his

* Ghent Annals, p. 38.

† It will be noticed that Charles's letter is apparently dated several days after he had left the Hague, and two days after his triumphant entry into London, which took place on his birthday, 29th May of the same year. This seeming anachronism is explained by the fact that he evidently uses the New Style, which was introduced into Holland in the very year of the reformation of the Calendar by Pope Gregory, and which was ten days ahead of the Old Style, which England still maintained owing to anti-Papal prejudice, although it had been abandoned by Catholic Europe and even many Protestant States.

‡ The following variants occur in the Pontoise transcript of Charles's letter, which may easily be accounted for by supposing that the original (which was lost in 1794) was in French and was slightly altered in the translation :—

§ "And care of your community."

|| "In gold."

¶ "Distress."

** "Hereafter."

†† "And to approve myself," etc.

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ancestors. But he soon forgot the fine promises he made regarding the Catholics, and, although an admirer of their religion and a Catholic at heart himself, he had not the courage to resist the enemies of the ancient Faith. He did not, however, altogether forget his promises to the Benedictine nuns of Ghent. Towards the end of the following year Abbess Knatchbull, of that community, wishing to relieve the pressure on her house by making a new foundation, and not having means sufficient therefor, formed the bold resolution of crossing over to England and appealing in person to King Charles, who received her most graciously and gave her some £3,000 towards the new foundation.*

It is interesting, moreover, to note that the Royal Chapel at St. James's, assigned to Charles's Catholic consort, Queen Catherine of Braganza, was attended, amongst other clergy, by six Benedictine monks,† who were living in common in a house near the Chapel.‡ In 1671, the Queen, having removed her court to Somerset House, and having re-opened the Chapel there which had been closed since the death of Queen Henrietta Maria, was followed thither by the Benedictines, and the Catholic chapel at St. James's was thus left deserted.

But the dark days of a new and bitter persecution were at hand, in which the Benedictines were to suffer with the rest of the Catholic body. In 1671 Anne Hyde, wife of the Duke of York, heir to the throne,

* Ghent Annals, p. 39.

† *Travels of Cosmo III. of Tuscany.* London, 1821. Quoted by Father Barnes, *loc. cit.*

‡ *Reports from Envoys of the Holy See*, quoted *ib.*

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died, and it was soon noised about that she had rejected the proferred ministrations of the Protestant Bishop of Worcester, and had died a Catholic. She seems to have been a benefactor to the English Benedictine nuns at Ghent, as an annual Mass was offered up by the community for the repose of her soul until quite recently.* Among the Chaillot MSS.† there is an interesting declaration in French set forth in writing "at St. James's the 8 August, 1670," by the late Duchess of York, on the motives which led her to become a Catholic :—

She protests in the sight of Almighty God that no man or woman whatsoever persuaded her to the step. It is a blessing she owes to God alone, who had heard her prayers. For, when in France and Flanders, she had often wondered at the devotion of the Catholics, and seeing she had so little herself she begged of God to enlighten her if she were not in the true religion. But she had no doubt of the truth of Protestantism until she began to read the Protestant Dr. Heylin's *History of the Reformation*, which had been recommended to her as calculated to confirm her in the Protestant religion. But it had the contrary effect, as she saw clearly that it was the history of a series of abominable sacrileges. Scruples having arisen in her mind, she began to compare Catholic and Protestant doctrine as contained in Holy Scripture, by careful reading of her Bible, and to her astonishment found that the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the Infallibility of the Church, Confessions and Prayers for the Dead were clearly set forth in Holy Scripture; whereupon she consulted, each separately, two of the best Protestant bishops in England (Shelden, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Blandford, Bishop of

* It ceased at the same time as the annual Mass for the "O'Brook family."

† Stuart Papers (Roxburghe Club, Vol. ii.)

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Worcester), both of whom told her that there were many things in the Roman Church, which it would be well it they had preserved, e.g., Confession, which was certainly founded on a precept of God, and prayers for the dead which was one of the most ancient practices of Christianity, and which the two bishops, for their part, practised in secret. The Bishop of Worcester went so far as to acknowledge that if he had been brought up a Catholic he would remain one. Her doubts and difficulties were only increased by her interviews with the bishops, but she continued to pray more and more earnestly for light. She had no peace until she opened her mind to a Catholic, who introduced her to a priest, "The first, on my word of honour, with whom I had ever spoken." The more she spoke to the priest, the more she was convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church, which she felt compelled to join if she wished to save her soul, although all her worldly interests and her friends were opposed to the step. She thanks God for the great grace of her conversion, and only hopes that the poor Catholics of England will not be further persecuted on account of it. She only asks for patience to bear all the sufferings in store for her in this life, in the hope of enjoying a happy eternity.*

The conversion of the Duchess of York was all the more remarkable as she had been a strong Protestant, nay, fiercely anti-Catholic. Airoldi, Internuncio at Brussels, who visited England in October, 1670, and was granted a private audience by King Charles, writes of the Duchess as follows, in his "Relation of the State of Religion in England," forwarded to the Holy See in November of the same year :—

The Duchess of York in times past was a fierce persecutor of Catholics, whose very name she hated to hear.

* The above, as given in the Chaillot MSS., is in French, but may have been written originally in English.

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Last year she seemed to change her nature. Formerly she would not admit a Catholic into her service, but now she has relinquished that prejudice. Hence arose a rumour which was even carried round all the gazettes, to the effect that she had become a Roman Catholic The religion of the Duchess, however, is that of the King.*

In the following year, 1672, the Duke of York himself, the future King of England, refused, in spite of Charles's remonstrances, to receive the communion in the Anglican church on Christmas Day, from which the people concluded, to their great dismay, that he too was a Catholic, or about to become one. The result was that next year, 1673, the Test Act was passed, ordering all holding office under the Crown to receive communion in the Anglican church within a month or resign office. The Bill, which was specially directed against the Duke of York, passed the Commons on Easter eve, and anxious curiosity prevailed as to whether the Duke would receive communion with the King on the great feast of the morrow, but he had the manliness and sincerity to absent himself, and resigned his post of Lord High Admiral on the Act becoming law, rather than do violence to his conscience. The Lord High Treasurer, Lord Clifford, soon followed suit, thus avowing himself likewise a Catholic; and finally, the blind fury of the people knew no bounds when it became known that their future king had taken for his second wife the daughter of the Catholic Duke of Modena, thus seemingly precluding all hope of a Protestant succession.

The signal for a new outburst of persecution was

* Maziere Brady's *Episcopal Succession*, etc.

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given in 1678, when the infamous Titus Oates pretended to have discovered a new "Popish Plot" for the massacre of the King and of all Protestants, the result being that the lives and properties of innocent Catholics were sworn away by the perjury of this wretched impostor and of his accomplices, and the Benedictine Order suffered with the rest.

Although it had been stipulated by the marriage articles that James and his bride should have a Catholic Chapel allotted to them in St. James's Palace, and they naturally expected that the former public chapel of Catherine of Braganza, which was now disused, would be handed over to them, still Charles did not venture to allow of the opening of another Catholic chapel at such a crisis, and the Duke and Duchess of York had to content themselves with an ordinary large room in the Palace, which was converted into a chapel, and served by two Benedictine Fathers from among the six Benedictine Chaplains who ministered to Queen Catherine at Somerset House.

But the Benedictines were not suffered long to pursue their peaceful labours at Somerset House and St. James's, for soon an Order in Council was issued (1675) commanding, among other things, that all Catholic priests born within any of his Majesty's dominions, "except Mr. John Huddleston, who was eminently serviceable to his Majesty in his escape from Worcester, should leave the kingdom before the 25th day of March next. . . ."

The Benedictines at Somerset House were thus compelled to leave the country, with the exception of

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Father Huddleston and two lay-brothers, who were not affected by the Act. But four years later even the innocent, unoffending lay-brother, Pickering, was put to death on an absurd charge of attempting to shoot the King in St. James's Park. The two Benedictine Fathers, however, who were in attendance on the Duke and Duchess at St. James's Palace, seem to have been allowed to remain, and it would seem that one of them was still living there at the time of the King's death.

King Charles was called to his account on February 6, 1685, and, as everyone knows, he died a Catholic, having been received* into the Church a few hours before his death by the same Benedictine, Father Huddleston, who had helped to save his life after the Battle of Worcester. The history of this death-bed conversion will be familiar to many of our readers. They will have read, in Lord Macaulay's graphic pages, how, when the King's life was fast ebbing away, he received with cold indifference the advances of the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Wells, who invited him to prepare for his end, and how he absolutely declined to receive the Communion from their hands. And all the King's courtiers, and even his Catholic brother, the Duke of York, were apparently indifferent to the spiritual interests of the expiring monarch, and it seemed as if he were going to die without the consolations of religion. But his French mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth, in whom a life of vice had not utterly extinguished

* Or perhaps we should say "reconciled to." See note from Burnet above.

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all sentiments of Catholic piety, realized the terrible situation of the unhappy King, and, with admirable devotion and courage, confided all to the French Ambassador, who had called to inquire for the King, and, providentially, looked in to see her also before leaving. He found her in an agony of sorrow. She took him into a secret room, and poured out her whole heart to him.

"I have [she said] a thing of great moment to tell you. If it were known, my head would be in danger. The King is really and truly a Catholic; but he will die without being reconciled to the Church. His bedchamber is full of Protestant clergymen. I cannot enter it without giving scandal. The Duke is thinking only of himself. Speak to him. Remind him there is a soul at stake. He is master now. He can clear the room. Go this instant, or it will be too late.

Thereupon the Ambassador hastened to the dying King's bedchamber, called the Duke aside, and delivered his momentous message. Then, and not till then, did James seem to realize the terrible situation. His conscience smote him, and he resolved to do his duty at all costs. Having ordered the crowd of courtiers and ministers to stand aside, he approached the bedside and whispered his secret into Charles's ear. "Ah," replied the dying monarch in an audible tone, "I would give everything in the world to have a priest." *

"Shall I bring a priest?" said the Duke. "Do, brother," replied the sick man. "For God's sake do, and lose no time. But no; you will get into trouble."

* "Ah, dit ce prince mourrant, je donnerois toutes les choses du monde pour avoir un prestre."—Chaillot MSS.

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"If it costs me my life," said the Duke, "I will fetch a priest."

Now all the English-speaking priests had been banished the country ten years before, and Charles had basely consented to their banishment, but, by a merciful disposition of Providence, Father Huddleston, the Benedictine monk—the one priest of English nationality whom Charles had saved from the fury of the Protestants—happened at that very moment to be in the neighbourhood of Whitehall Palace.

"Upon Thursday, the 5th of February, 1685," writes Father Huddleston, "between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, I was sent for in haste to the Queen's backstairs at Whitehall, and desired to bring with me all things necessary for a dying person," a summons which the good Father instantly obeyed.

"The back door," writes Macaulay, "was then opened; and Father Huddleston entered. A cloak had been thrown over his sacred vestments; and his shaven crown was concealed by a flowing wig." *

* We do not know from what authority Macaulay drew these details, but are inclined to think that here, as elsewhere, he sacrifices accuracy to his love of the picturesque. They are not in Father Huddleston's narrative (which Macaulay consulted) and we doubt if, under such circumstances, the good monk wore sacred vestments, with the possible exception of a surplice and stole at most: and we fancy that an English monk, who in those days wore a shaven crown, ran the risk of forfeiting his head altogether. Several years later, when King James related this death-bed scene for the edification of the nuns of Chaillot, he remarked that the priest, having finished his work, deemed it prudent to retire, and did not return again. "What!" exclaimed one of the nuns, "the priest was afraid, and the Duke of York, who might have lost three kingdoms, feared nothing."

Rizzini, writing to the Duke of Modena (20th February, 1685), says:—

"I may now add, what I did not dare to write in my last letter, that the King died a Catholic . . . It was the good Benedictine,

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"Sir," said the Duke, "this good man once saved your life. He now comes to save your soul." Charles faintly answered, "He is welcome."

Father Huddleston then approached the King's bedside, and what followed we will let him tell us in his own words:—

The King then declared himself that he desired to die in the faith and communion of the Holy Roman Catholic Church; that he was most heartily sorry for all the sins of his life past, and particularly for that he had deferred his reconciliation so long; that through the merits of Christ's Passion he hoped for salvation; that he was in charity with all the world; that with all his heart he pardoned his enemies, and desired pardon of all those whom he had anywise offended; and that if it pleased God to spare him longer life he would amend it, detesting all sin.

I then advised His Majesty of the benefit and necessity of the sacrament of penance, which advertisement the King most willingly embracing, made an exact confession of his whole life with exceeding compunction and tenderness of heart, which ended, I desired him, in farther sign of repentance and true sorrow for his sins, to say with me this little short act of contrition:

"O my Lord God, with my whole heart and soul I detest all the sins of my life past for the love of Thee, whom I love above all things, and I firmly purpose by Thy holy grace never to offend Thee more. Amen, sweet Jesus, Amen. Into Thy hands, sweet Jesus, I commend my soul; mercy, sweet Jesus, mercy." This he pronounced with a clear and audible voice, which done, and his sacramental penance admitted, I gave him absolution.

Huddleston, who saved the King's life after the battle of Worcester, who now co-operated in saving his soul. From his own lips I have it that the evening before the King's death he was summoned to hear his confession, but as he is well-known at Court he was advised to cover his *baldness* with a periwig, and to change the very simple coat the good old man of seventy-seven is in the habit of wearing. The King did not recognise him until he had removed his wig."

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After some time thus spent, I asked his Majesty if he did not also desire to have the other sacraments of the Holy Church administered to him. He replied, "By all means; I desire to partake of all the helps and succours necessary and expedient for a Catholic Christian in my condition." I added, "And doth not your Majesty also desire to receive the precious body and blood of our dear Saviour, Jesus Christ, in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist?" His answer was this, "If I am worthy, pray fail not to let me have it." I then told him it would be brought to him very speedily, and desired his Majesty, that, in the interval, he would give me leave to proceed to the sacrament of Extreme Unction. He replied, "With all my heart." I then anoyled [i.e. anointed] him, which was soon performed. I was called to the door, whither the blessed sacrament was now brought and delivered to me.*

Then returning to the King I entreated his Majesty that he would prepare and dispose himself to receive, at which the King, raising himself, said, "Let me meet my heavenly Lord in a better posture than in my bed"; but I humbly begged his Majesty to repose himself: God Almighty, who saw his heart, would accept of his good intention. The King then, having again recited the fore-mentioned act of contrition with me, he received the Most Holy Sacrament with all the symptoms of devotion imaginable.

Thus did the "Merry Monarch," by a sincere death-bed conversion, make some atonement for the scandal and follies of his life; and it is an interesting fact, and perhaps not generally known, that one of Charles's

* In his hurry Father Hudleston had not had time to bring the Blessed Sacrament with him, but "the Divine Providence so disposing, Father Bento de Lemos, a Portuguese, came thither, and understanding the circumstances I was in, readily proffered to go to St. James's and bring the Most Holy Sacrament along with him." As Father Barnes remarks, it was most probably fetched from the Duke of York's private chapel.

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natural children, as likewise one of his brother James's children, abandoned the world and took the religious habit in the Order of St. Benedict. The first of these to quit the world was Lady Arabella Fitzjames, daughter of James II, who, having received her education at the Convent of Pontoise, determined to consecrate herself to God in holy religion, and was clothed on April 16, 1689, receiving the name of Sister Ignatia. A contemporary French paper* alludes to this interesting event as follows:—

1689, April 16. The Queen of Great Britain [Mary of Modena] went to Maubuisson to visit the Princess Palatine, Abbess of that monastery, where she dined. She afterwards went to Pontoise, where she was received with honours by the Sieur de Mouthiers, Lieut. General of the town at the head of the municipal body. She was present at the clothing of a sister of the Duke of Berwick in the monastery of the English Benedictine nuns. Père Bourdaloue, S.J., preached, and the Abbé de Vertamont, Vicar General of Pontoise, performed the ceremony. The Queen left the next day.

Her good example was soon followed by Lady Barbara Fitzroy, daughter of Charles II. "Before the close of the year" (1689) says the Teignmouth editor, "another former pupil [of Pontoise], and one who was under a similar cloud, through no fault of her own, was chosen by Almighty God to leave all the evil of this world to give herself to Him; this was Lady Barbara Fitzroy. She was two years older than her cousin Lady Arabella Fitzjames."

It is consoling to know that both these daughters of the Stuarts proved excellent nuns and we may hope

* Quoted (from Weldon) in Pontoise Annals.

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by their mortified life expiated to some extent the sins of their parents. Lady Barbara Fitzroy, who was known in religion as Dame Benedicta, took her vows in 1691.

This sketch of the various associations which linked the Stuart Kings with the Order and rule of St. Benedict would not be complete without some mention of a very distinguished member of the Stuart family who embraced the severe Cistercian observance of St. Benedict's Rule. We allude to the Royal Abbess, Princess Louisa Hollandina, daughter of Elizabeth, Princess Royal of England (who married Frederick, Elector Palatine of Bavaria) and grand-daughter of James I. She was a niece of Charles I, a sister of Prince Rupert, the dashing cavalier officer, and an aunt of George I, her younger sister, Sophia, having married the Elector of Hanover, father of the latter Sovereign.

This Royal Abbess was thus connected both with the Stuart family and with the Hanoverians, who, a little later on, were to become their rivals and deadly enemies. Although both her parents were Protestants she, nevertheless, in her 37th year, became convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, and having succeeded in obtaining interviews with some Catholic priests, and becoming thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of our holy Faith, she made her way to Antwerp, where she was received into the Church in 1658, it being impossible for her to take this step in her Protestant home. She afterwards proceeded to Rouen, where she met her brother Edward, Prince Palatine,

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who had previously become a Catholic. He took her to Chaillot, near Paris, where her aunt by marriage, Queen Henrietta Maria, consort of Charles I, was living in the Convent of the Visitation, which she had founded. Queen Henrietta received her as if she were her own daughter, and presented her to the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, while the King of France settled on her an annual pension of 12,000 livres. The Princess spent a year in the Convent of Chaillot with the view of accustoming herself to the exercises of a religious life, "in all which, even in manual labour, as making hay, needlework, etc., she surpassed the nuns themselves in fervour, exactitude, regularity and recollection."

It may well be believed that the anger of the Princess's mother, on hearing of her daughter's conversion, knew no bounds, but Queen Henrietta Maria brought about a reconciliation. In 1659 Princess Louisa entered the Royal Cistercian Abbey of Maubuisson,* near Pontoise, where she was professed in 1660, after a noviciate of eighteen months. "She was from the very noviciate," says Alban Butler, "a zealous enemy to the least mitigation in discipline, and cheerfully embraced the humblest and hardest duties, for long sweeping the church every day." In 1664, only four years after her profession, having held the office of Sacristan, Portress, and Sub-Prioress, she was chosen Abbess by the unanimous vote of her Sisters, the choice being ratified by the King. But her new dignity produced no change in her mode of life.

*Outside Pontoise, on the other side of the river Oise. It was founded by Queen Blanche in 1242.

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She continued to eat in the common refectory, and would use only an earthen cup, and all the rest like the other nuns. She would not sleep in the Abbess's rooms, but in a little cell without a chimney, at the farthest distance from the church, to which she had to pass through the granaries, and often in winter through deep snow. Yet she never failed to assist at every hour of the Divine Office, by day and at midnight, unless dangerously ill. All the pensions bestowed on her, and whatever could be spared of the revenues of the monastery were consecrated to the relief of the poor or to distressed monasteries. It was her delight to have for her own use the coarsest and oldest habit, and the meanest book; when a glass of her spectacles was broken, she would not have a new pair, but ever after used the broken glass, pieced together with sealing-wax. Most edifying was her love of poverty and humiliations, the austerity of her penance, her invincible meekness, the tenderness of her charity and most sincere humility. In her long last sickness she had the *Miserere* Psalm writ in great letters hung before her, which she often recited with many tears. She had also an image of our Divine Redeemer, crowned with thorns, so placed that she could always turn her eyes upon it. After receiving the last Sacraments, she calmly expired, February 11, 1709, being 87 years old within two months, and in the 49th year of her profession.*

This distinguished Princess and Abbess, who was as accomplished as she was holy, is alluded to by Miss Strickland † as "the elder sister of the Electress Sophia, who had given up all hopes of the English succession to become a Catholic Abbess. She was a great artist 'and her portraits bear a high price,' says Grainger, 'not as a princess, but as a paintress.'" She was a pupil "of

* From *Life of Mary of the Holy Cross, Abbess of the English Poor Clares at Rouen*, by Alban Butler. London, 1767. Quoted in Pontoise Annals.

† *Lives of the Queens of England.*

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the famous Gerard Honthorst," and " carried so far her proficiency in the art he taught her that to this day the paintings of Louise Hollandine have a value in collectors' eyes near equal to those of her master."*

The conversion of the Prince Palatine and of his sister, which created a sensation at the time, was thus gracefully alluded to by Bossuet in his funeral oration on Anne de Gonzague :—

Whilst her many perfections fixed upon Anne de Gonzague the eyes of all Europe, Prince Edward, son of the Elector Frederick V., King of Bohemia, deserved and won her. She preferred to the greatest wealth, the virtues of this prince, and an alliance where on all sides were only to be found kings. She led him to seek spiritual instruction, and he soon recognized the error into which the last of his line, forgetful of his faith, had plunged him.

And then he goes on to allude to the Princess Palatine's conversion :—

Oh, happy omen for the Electoral House! The prince's conversion was followed by that of the Princess Louisa, his sister, whose virtues make the saintliness of the monastery of Maubuisson shine forth in soft glories over the entire Church—and these first fruits of grace have drawn down such blessings on the Palatine race, that we now at length behold it returned to Catholicism in the person of its chief. . . .

But if the return of the Prince and his sister to the one Fold awakened joy in the hearts of all Catholics, it is not surprising that it was a source of dismay and consternation to the other members of the ultra-

* Baroness Blaze de Bury—*Memoirs of the Princess Palatine*, etc.

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Protestant Palatine family. Their mother, the Princess Elizabeth Stuart, sister of Charles I of England, on hearing of her son's conversion, declared she wished for nothing but death; while the Prince's sister, Elizabeth, Princess Palatine, fell seriously ill, and, to console herself in her trouble, wrote to the celebrated philosopher, Descartes, for whom she had unbounded admiration, to acquaint him with the trial that had befallen her family. The philosopher, being a Catholic, must have been somewhat surprised, if not amused, at receiving such a communication from a "princess, whose intelligence," as he once expressed it, "is so superior to the generality of mankind," but nothing disconcerted, he sent the poor princess a letter in which occur the following admirable and sensible remarks, which must surprise those who doubt of Descartes' orthodoxy:—

I will not deny my surprise at learning that your highness should have been grieved—nay, grieved even to physical illness—at an event which by far the greater part of the world will call fortunate; and which even the rest ought to regard as at least excusable, for many excellent reasons. Those of my religion (and they form the great mass of persons in Europe) cannot avoid approving of the fact itself, although some of the determining causes of the fact may appear blameable in their eyes: for we believe that God uses various means to draw souls towards Him, and one, for instance, may have entered the cloister with unholy intent, who shall afterwards have led therein the life of a real saint. As for those who are of another belief—if they disapprove, one may have some right to impugn their judgment, for they cannot be impartial—and if they will consider that if they or their fathers, or their ancestors, had not begun by quit-

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ting the Roman Church, they themselves could not belong to the Reformed creed, they may see some good cause for ceasing to abuse the persons who return to the Church of Rome.*

It would seem from the philosopher's letter that there were some who imputed Prince Edward's conversion to interested motives, even as, later on, malicious tongues tried to blacken the character of his sister, and scrupled not to put evil constructions upon her change of religion also. But of the purity and sincerity of the Princess's motives, at least, there cannot be the slightest doubt. She had nothing to gain from a worldly point of view by becoming a Catholic, but much to lose. She was remarkable for her beauty, and in her younger years had been eagerly sought for in marriage by Frederick William, the "Great Elector" of Brandenburg, one of the founders of modern Prussia. She was, moreover, her mother's favourite child and only solace when all her other children had deserted her, and it must have cost the young Princess many a heart-felt struggle before she could summon up courage to obey the voice of conscience and quit the maternal roof. That the step was taken only after anxious deliberation is clear from the following letter, which she left behind for her mother, and in which the sincerity of her motives stands forth clearly revealed :—

MADAM,—The respect which I have for your Majesty is too great to permit me to do anything purposely to dis-

* Quoted by Baroness Blaze de Bury in *Memoirs of the Princess Palatine*, etc.

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please you, and God knows that no impulse, except that of His Spirit, could ever have induced me to undertake any action, however reasonable, without having first communicated it to you; but in this contingency, the affair being one of heaven, and not of this world, and one in which I should doubtless have found your Majesty opposed to the guidings of Divine Providence in my behalf, I could not act otherwise, and all my duty consisted in advertizing you of my resolution by the means which I now employ.

I must tell you, then, Madam, that the Christmas festivals being so near, I have been obliged to withdraw from your Majesty, from fear of being wished to receive the sacrament against my conscience, since at length it has pleased God to discover to me the surest way of salvation, and to give me to know that the Catholic religion is the only way, out of which there can be no other. As to the reasons and instructions which have thus persuaded me, I shall take the liberty to inform your Majesty further when I am arrived at the place, whither I am going solemnly to embrace this belief; but yet, Madam, I trust you will pardon me for a course which is inspired by a power which the powers of earth vainly resist, and which I have only resolved to adopt from the pure motive of assuring the repose of my soul, protesting to your Majesty that you shall discover, by the results of this enterprise, that I have no other aim than that of securing a tranquil retreat, where I may have full leisure for the service of God, and to testify to you in all things that I am, and wish to remain all my life, Madam, your Majesty's most humble and most obedient servant,

LOUISE.

The 19th December, 1657.*

It is instructive to note that the Princess's cousins, King Charles II and the Duke of York, then exiles in the Low Countries, called on her at the Carmelite Convent in Antwerp, where she had taken temporary

* Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England*, etc.

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refuge, and the King reproached her for having become a Catholic, little thinking, perhaps, that he and his brother would later on follow her good example :—

The King and my niece and my other nephew [writes the Princess's mother to Prince Rupert] were at Antwerp, and went to see Louisa in the monastery. They wrote to me before they saw her to know if I would be content for them to see her, which I told them would be too much honour for her, though as the Princess of Hohenzollern had told such base lies, they would do a good action to see her, and justify her innocence. . . . I forgot to say that the King and my niece chided Louisa for her change of religion, and leaving me so unhandsomely: she answered that she was very well satisfied with her change, but very sorry that she had displeased me.

If Charles II had shown himself more or less well disposed towards the Order of St. Benedict, his brother and successor, James II, proved himself its great friend and benefactor.

James II., rightly surnamed the Just, of most holy memory [writes Dom Bennet Weldon, the quaint Benedictine chronicler], no sooner had the English Imperial diadem on his professed Catholic hands, but he bethought himself of its old props the Benedictine crozier . . . and therefore resolved his royal consort's chapel should be attended by a convent of Benedictine monks. Thus the royal chapel of St. James's . . . came into the Benedictines, to whom His Majesty had shown much affection before, having two of them attending his Duchess, when he was Duke of York . . . besides those whom King Charles II, his royal brother, maintained under pretence of their being part of the clergy composing the chapel of his queen.*

* Weldon's "*Course and Rough First Draught*" *of the History of James II.* (Brit. Mus. Add. MSS.). Quoted by Dom Gilbert Dolan, *Downside Review*, Vol. xviii.

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As soon as he became king (1685) James began at once courageously to practise his religion publicly and had the doors of his little chapel thrown open during the celebration of Mass, to the dismay of the Protestant courtiers in the adjoining ante-chamber. Furthermore, as soon as it was possible, he re-opened the large chapel, which had remained closed since Catherine of Braganza had removed to Somerset House. To serve this chapel James called over some thirteen Benedictine monks and two lay-brothers from the various English monasteries on the Continent, assigning to them the buildings which had been occupied by Queen Catherine's Portuguese friars, the site of which is now occupied by the western end of the gardens of Marlborough House.* A "copious income" (£1,500 a year) was allotted by the King for the support of the monks, who must have been fairly comfortable in their new home, which was situated, as Weldon tells us, "in ye very best air of all London." But these conventual buildings in which, as the headquarters of English Benedictinism, a general chapter of the English monks of St. Benedict was actually held in 1685, have long since disappeared. The chapel, however, still remains, though, needless to say, it is no longer used as a Catholic Chapel. During its brief existence as such in the reign of James II, this historic building was the scene of several important events. It was here that Father Ellis, O.S.B., in a sermon preached on the Feast of all Benedictine Saints, November 13, 1686, in the presence of the King, who ordered the sermon to be

* Cf. *Downside Review*, Vols. xviii. and xxi.

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printed, made formal and public renunciation, on behalf of his Benedictine brethren, of their claim and title to the ancient abbey lands of the Order, an event alluded to by Dryden, in *The Hind and the Panther*.

In the same poem, in reply to the panther (the Church of England) the milk-white hind (i.e., the Catholic Church) "opposes the tale of the *poultry*, or the Catholic priests, whom, for his own immediate service, the King kept in a private farm, but whom the *pampered pigeons*, or the clergy of the Established Church, beheld with malignant eyes." *

> Besides these jolly birds, whose crops impure
> Repaid their commons with their salt manure,
> Another farm he had behind his house,
> Not over-stocked but barely for his use;
> Wherein his poor domestic poultry fed,
> And from his pious hands received their bread.
> Our pampered Pigeons with malignant eyes
> Beheld these inmates and their nurseries;
> Though hard their fare, at evening and at morn,
> A cruise of water and an ear of corn,
> Yet still they grudged that modicum, and thought
> A sheaf in every single grain was brought.
> Fain would they filch that little food away,
> While unrestrained those happy gluttons prey.

In the following lines Dryden probably alludes to the Benedictine monks whom James kept at St. James's and the consequent jealousies of the parsons:—

> And much they grieved to see, so nigh their hall,
> The bird † that warned St. Peter of his fall;
> That he should raise his *mitred* crest on high,
> And clap his wings and call his family

* Butler, *Hist. Memoirs of Irish, English and Scotch Catholics.*

† The cock—emblem of regular clergy of Rome, on account of their nocturnal attendance at matins. Cf. Butler, *Hist. Memoirs*, etc.

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To sacred rites; and vex the etherial powers
With midnight matins at uncivil hours;
Nay more, his quiet neighbours should molest
Just in the sweetness of their morning rest.
. . . . . .
The world was fallen into an easier way:
This age knew better than to fast and pray.

It was in this chapel likewise that Count d'Adda, the Papal Nuncio to the Court of St. James, was consecrated Archbishop "by ye Archbishop of Armagh, assisted by Bishop Layborn and another Bishop of Ireland," "on ye 11th of May 1687."

Here, too, was Dom Ellis, O.S.B., consecrated titular Bishop in 1688, the King presenting him with a gift of £500, besides a yearly pension of £1,000.

But as yet there was no Catholic chapel at the Royal Palace of Whitehall,* so James had a room fitted up for the purpose until the completion of the building of a new Catholic chapel there in 1687—"a stately piece of piety," writes Weldon, "worthy of King James's devotion, who spared nothing in the true worship of God." And here again the King showed his particular affection for the Benedictines. For "such was the affection of his Majesty to the habit," says the same writer, "that when he assisted at his Royal Chapel of Whitehall . . . he would have one of our Fathers by the credence, in his habit, that, seeing St. Bennet in his children, he might be ever mindful of him,"

* The King, careful, as he says, "to keep rigorously to his engagement not to seize upon anything which the Church of England could lay claim to," had left the Chapel Royal of Whitehall for Princess Anne and the Protestants, and built a new one "from the ground" for himself and the Catholics. Cf. Haile, *Life of Mary of Modena*, p. 155.

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which is all the more remarkable as the chapel was "served by the regular clergy and some regular clerks."

But James at times let his admiration for the Benedictine habit pass the bounds of discretion. For example, when the Benedictine Abbot Corker * was sent to London as the representative of the Elector of Cologne, the King insisted that he should be "introduced at Court in the habit of his Order, accompanied by six other monks, his attendants, in similar dress,"† a needless display which caused great offence to non-Catholics. It is interesting also to note that in the latter part of 1688, when Lady Abbess Butler of Ypres was passing through London on her way to Dublin, "she waited on the Queen at Whitehall in the great habit of her Order, which had not been seen there since the fall of religion."‡

James's reign, however, soon came to a close. On his flight from England, and on the arrival of the Prince of Orange, the Catholic Chapel of St. James's, which escaped the fury of the mob, was devoted to far different purposes, for we are told by the *London Gazette*, December 31, 1688, that "the Popish chapel to which the monks belonged at St. James's is being lent to the French Protestants; they had prayers and

* Dom Maurus Corker was the intimate friend and confessor of our martyr, the Ven. Oliver Plunkett, while in Newgate Prison, where they were both confined. He is said to have received the martyr into the Order of St. Benedict.

† Lingard.—James's dispute with Cambridge University arose through his insisting on the Vice-Chancellor's admitting Dom Alban Francis, a Benedictine monk, to the degree of M.A. without exacting the usual oaths.—*Ibid.*

‡ Ypres MS

preaching in it on Sunday." On the arrival of the Hanoverians it was handed over to the Lutheran members of their Court, and is still used for Lutheran services in German and Danish, being known as the German Chapel Royal.

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PORTRAIT OF KING JAMES II.
PRESENTED BY HIM TO THE NUNS OF HIS ROYAL IRISH ABBEY.

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CHAPTER X

[illegible] JAMES [illegible] FOUNDS [illegible]
CONVENT IN ENGLAND [illegible]
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PORTRAIT OF KING JAMES II.

CHAPTER X

KING JAMES INTENDS FOUNDING A BENEDICTINE CONVENT IN ENGLAND—HE IS DRIVEN FROM HIS THRONE

O what's the rhyme to porringer?
Ken ye the rhyme to porringer?
King James the Seventh had ae dochter
And he ga'e her to an Oranger.

Ken ye how he requited him?
Ken ye how he requited him?
The lad has into England come,
And ta'en the crown in spite of him.

—*Jacobite Song.*

But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters joined
Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this.

—*King Lear.*

KING JAMES'S affection for the Benedictines was not confined to the monks of that Order. While in exile on the Continent he had known and appreciated the loyalty, devotion and zeal of the daughters of St. Benedict, and had more than once given them practical proof of his esteem and good-will. For Lady Abbess Knatchbull, of Ghent, both he and his brother Charles II had an especial regard, and Abbess Neville of Pontoise tells us that at the Restoration, before their departure from Flanders, they both came to take leave of her, and "gave to her and hers several testimonies of their esteem and good wishes, heartily desiring prayers." Nor did James, on becoming king, forget

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his brother's promises to the good Benedictine Dames, as we see by the following interesting and characteristic letter which he wrote to the Abbess of Ghent within less than a year after his accession :—

WHITEHALL,
Jan. 20th, 1686.

MADAM,

I would not have yu imagine yt [that] I have been ye less sensible of yr letters and good prayers because of my silence; for I am highly mindfull both of them and your former signal services; but as ye Almighty, by his prophet, speaking to comfort his people, useth this expression—"he is silent in his love"—so I, his vicegerent, use ye same expression to yu; for, till I have settled ye affairs of my kingdom, I will keep in silence and reserve wt [what] I intend; wch [which] is to have yr Cloyster, our Darling monastery, ye first in my kingdom. Then yu shall find I will not only make good my brother's promises, but add new favours, to show you how much I am,

Madame, your affectionate friend,

JAMES REX.*

From this we learn that it was King James's intention to transfer the community of Ghent to England as soon as the affairs of his kingdom should be settled, but it was not in the designs of Providence that his pious intention should be realized. He had not been long upon the throne when his own impetuous, head-

* The originals of the above letter and of other autograph letters of King James, and of that of Charles II, previously quoted, were lost, with other valuable MSS. of the Ghent Convent, during the troubles of the French Revolution, in 1794. But fortunately Abbess Mary Knatchbull II had them copied in 1718 for Dodd, the historian.

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strong character and the disloyalty and intolerance of his English subjects made his position a very difficult one for him. The head and front of the King's offending was that he wished to extend toleration to all creeds, a measure that did not commend itself to the bigotry of the majority of his Protestant subjects, however much they ranted about liberty of conscience. At the same time it must be admitted that the King did not show as much discretion as he did courage and zeal, and, be it added, obstinacy in the carrying out of his beneficent designs. Nor did he make sufficient allowance for the sectarian prejudices of his narrow-minded subjects. It should be added, moreover, that in becoming a Catholic he brought over with him and still retained some of the gravest defects of the system in which he had been brought up, notably lax principles of morality and an obstinate adherence to his own private judgment and private opinion. And this was his ruin. In fact it might be said without exaggeration that James's persistence in the illegal measures which brought about his downfall is to be attributed, not to the Catholic religion which he had embraced, but rather to the leaven of Protestantism which he had not yet at this period got rid of. It is well known that the Pope himself and some of the best and wisest of the English Catholics urged him to greater prudence and respect for existing laws, and had James been a better Catholic and listened to the counsels of the Holy Father, he would have conciliated his Protestant subjects, have retained his crown, and have done at least as much good to the Church as he inflicted harm

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upon her. Both the Vicar Apostolic, Dr. Leybourne, and the Papal Nuncio* were charged by Rome to oppose the headstrong policy of King James, but their remonstrances were of no avail. Of Dr. Leybourne Macaulay writes "he seems to have behaved on all occasions like a wise and honest man." This Catholic bishop, James's own nominee, went so far as to tell the King boldly that he had grievously wronged the Fellows and students of Magdalen College, and that he ought to make restitution to them on religious as well as on political grounds. But the King turned a deaf ear to his advice.

He has been described as narrow-minded and bigoted, but the truth is that it was his love for toleration and liberty of conscience that alienated the affections of his intolerant subjects. No sooner had he ascended the throne than he ordered the release of the Dissenters, among them some 1,500 Quakers, who had been persecuted by the bigoted authorities of the Protestant Established Church; while he contributed a sum of not less than £15,000 to the relief of the French Protestants, who had come to England on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.† In 1687, as everyone knows, he issued a second Declaration of Indulgence, which he ordered to be read

* "The Nuncio had come to England as a layman, and with a threefold object:—To congratulate the King on his accession, *to exhort him to temper his zeal with prudence and moderation, and to solicit his intervention with Louis XIV. in favour of the . . . French Protestants.*"—Haile, *Life of Mary of Modena*, p. 145. It will be a revelation to Protestants to learn that the Pope of Rome sent an envoy to the Catholic King of England in order to secure liberty and tolerance for the Protestants of France.

† He showed the same spirit of tolerance when he was an exile in Scotland, where he exerted himself on behalf of the Presbyterians.

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in all churches and chapels; but the episcopal and clerical bigots of the Protestant Church of England resisted this measure of toleration, and the seven refractory bishops became national heroes in the eyes of the so-called liberty-loving people of England; for by religious liberty King James's Protestant subjects meant liberty to persecute and ostracise all who would not consent to their own heretical opinions. His abolition of the Test Acts was the most liberal and tolerant measure enacted by any King of England since the Reformation had destroyed liberty of conscience. It was, moreover, declared legal by a majority of the judges, who admitted the King's dispensing power, and yet King James was denounced as a tyrant and a bigot because he had the courage to follow the dictates of his conscience, and wished that all his subjects, Protestant as well as Catholic, should enjoy a similar liberty. And as regards his Declaration of Indulgence, which the Bishops refused to promulgate, was he or was he not the successor of Henry VIII; who claimed to be supreme head of the Church of England as by law established; and as such had he not at least as much right to exert this authority for the furtherance of his tolerant and beneficent designs as his predecessors had to exert the same authority for the furtherance of their irreligious and tyrannic measures, in which they were so faithfully and slavishly obeyed by the very same Church?

But the Protestants of the Established Church were outdone in bigotry by the Protestant dissenting bodies. The latter believed in toleration and religious

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liberty for themselves, but for nobody else. They had received James's Declaration of Indulgence with enthusiasm at first, and loyal addresses were showered upon the King. Evelyn tells us in his Diary how, on one occasion, when he was in the Council Chamber at Hampton Court, a deputation of Dissenters from Coventry was introduced, "with expressions of great loyalty and submission. To which the King, pulling off his hat, sayd that what he had don in giving liberty of conscience was what was ever his judgement ought to be don; and that as he would preserve them in their enjoyment of it during his reign, so he would endeavour to settle it by law that it should never be alter'd by his successors."

Brave and liberal sentiments worthy of a Catholic sovereign, who would give all his subjects religious freedom, and, as far as possible, bind his successors to do the same. But James did not fully gauge the depths of the meanness and narrow-mindedness and intolerance of his Protestant subjects. Within a year their fine sentiments of loyalty had dwindled away, or rather had given place to feelings of suspicion, distrust and open disloyalty, and why? All because they found out to their disgust that the poor Catholics were to enjoy with them their newly-found liberty. No! better, thought they, hound the King from his throne than share religious liberty with the hated Catholics. And they joined with their persecutors in driving from his throne this Catholic King, their best benefactor, who had made them freemen at last, and set up in his stead a succession of foreign Protestant usurpers,

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under whom they were made to feel once more the lash of persecution, which they brought upon themselves by their own intolerance. True that in the reign of Protestant William a Toleration Act was passed by Parliament, but it was a mockery compared with the broad measure of liberty which James had granted, and which he would have secured to English Nonconformists for ever by Act of Parliament. "Not a single one of the cruel laws enacted against Nonconformists by the Tudors or [Protestant] Stuarts is repealed. Persecution continues to be the general rule. Toleration is the exception. Nor is this all. The freedom which is given to the conscience is given in the most capricious manner." So writes the Protestant Macaulay, the panegyrist of William, of this first Protestant attempt at a Toleration Act. Such were the prevailing ideas of tolerance in the hey-day of Protestantism.

"All kinds of religions [except the Catholic] are tolerated in England," said Queen Mary once to the nuns of Chaillot, "and the late King [James II] used to say that they had one bond of negative union which consisted in not submitting to the Pope; with that exception, everything was welcome in England. The King, my lord, was firmly persuaded that no man should be forced in matters of religion." And again she remarked: "If my son were restored there would be no change of religion; all that would be done would be to stop the persecution of the Catholics"—which is all that King James wished to do.

But we have no intention of writing James's pane-

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gyric. If he lost his crown it was in a great measure through his own fault. The great Civil War, with its attendant miseries—the direct and logical outcome of the subversive principles in Church and State introduced by the so-called "Reformation"—was fresh in the memories of his subjects; and they were willing to submit more or less patiently even to a King of the hated Catholic religion, rather than witness a repetition of the scenes of civil discord which so many of them had been through. And if James had been well advised he would, as far as conscience might allow him, have taken his subjects as they were, and, as far as possible, have avoided goading them to irritation by running counter to their stupid prejudices. But he chose the other and less wise course, and, considering the bigoted mood his subjects were in, it is not surprising that they drove him from his throne.

Matters speedily passed from bad to worse. Disloyalty soon spread to the army, and, even as in 1643 King Charles I had to rely on a Royalist Irish garrison to keep his own city of Chester in allegiance, so too, in 1688, was his son King James constrained to call over his Irish guards and other Irish Catholic troops to hold in check the disloyal Protestant citizens of London. The first detachment of Irish troops, counting seven companies of eighty men each, in all 560, arrived in London on the 24th October, and was quartered in St. Giles', Holborn, and Red Lion Fields. Another detachment arrived on the 4th December, and was ordered to replace the troops at Gravesend and Tilbury, whose loyalty was more than doubtful.

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But all was in vain. On the 5th November, 1688, James's unnatural son-in-law, the usurper William, landed in England, being followed soon after by his still more unnatural daughter, the wretched Mary,* who was all eagerness to snatch the crown from her parent's brow. King James was deserted by his own subjects, who flocked to the usurper, and, cruellest blow of all, he was deserted by his favourite daughter, Anne.

Next we gat owre an Orange king,
That play'd with parties baith, man,
A hogan-mogan foreign thing,
Who wrought a world o' skaith, man.
When he came owre our rights to see,
His father, friend and a', man,
By his Dutch guards he drove to sea,
Then swore he ran awa, man.

In the idst of these disgusting manifestations of treachery and disloyalty on the part of his own subjects, and of the very members of his own household and family, one hope was left to the unfortunate King. He knew that he could at least count upon the loyalty of his Irish troops, and his trust in them was not misplaced.

* The miserable thing did not live to enjoy her unnatural triumph very many years, having been carried off by small-pox five years later (1694).

"The news will have reached you," writes Rizzini to the Duke of Modena, "of the death of the Princess of Orange of *putrid small pox* after three days' illness. . . . That Princess, young, beautiful, and reputed the delight of a rebellious people, is suddenly become a frightful spectacle, and a subject for their bitter tears. She was a daughter who sinned against the commonest and most indispensable law of nature ordained by God—that of honouring her parents."

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So much confidence, in fact, did he place in them that when the rumours of the Dutch invasion began to grow more persistent, he endeavoured to leaven his wobbling English battalions with an infusion of loyal Irish troops.

His soldiers [wrote the Austrian minister to the Emperor] are his most dangerous enemies . . . A few weeks ago orders were given to the Duke of Berwick's regiment to admit three or four Irish recruits into each company, which the Lieutenant-Colonel and five Captains absolutely refused . . . upon this they were imprisoned at Windsor and cashiered by Court Martial (after pardon had been offered if they would retract and they had refused it); almost immediately afterwards three lieutenants and four ensigns of the same regiment resigned their commission, and a large number of soldiers deserted. . . . If the King cannot depend upon these, still less can he depend upon his seamen . . . who unblushingly declare they will not serve against Holland.*

It is a matter of which Irishmen may feel justly proud, that their countrymen were given the place of honour in the vanguard of the King's troops which proceeded to resist the Dutch invader, while it was a body of the King's Irish troops, under the gallant Patrick Sarsfield, which was engaged in the first battle, or rather skirmish, with the rebel forces, which was fought at Wincanton, in Somersetshire. But Irish valour and Irish loyalty were unavailing. Treason and treachery of the basest and meanest kind were rampant among the King's followers. The traitor Churchill, afterwards the "great" Duke of Marl-

*Imp. Archives, Vienna.

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borough, was the first to sneak over to the usurper's camp.* He was soon followed by Prince George, the King's son-in-law, and by the Duke of Ormonde, the Protestant Colonel of the King's Irish Guards. But the Irish Catholic troops remained staunch to the very last.

True, they were compelled by superior numbers to fall back, but another stand was made against the rebel forces at Reading, and here again it was the Irish that were to the fore. A sharp encounter took place between the rebels and some six hundred Irish posted at that town, but the latter were forced back through the streets to the market-place, where they tried to rally, but being fired upon from the houses by the inhabitants, and attacked in front by the troops, they were obliged to fall back. To our mind the situation of these gallant Irish troops at Reading was a most pathetic one, and one which we would commend to the careful consideration of those numerous Irish Protestants, and English Protestants, and Catholics, too, who undertake to lecture the people of Ireland upon loyalty. These poor fellows had left their country to do battle for the rightful king whom his own subjects had basely deserted, and here in the very heart of England, instead of meeting with sympathy they encounter hostility on every side—

* "The treachery of that Churchill, . . . " writes Hoffmann in a dispatch to the German Emperor, "has been the object of universal reprobation, for Churchill owed everything to the King, who, raising him from the dirt, made him not only one of the four captains of his guard, but lieutenant-general to the scandal of everybody, as he was considered as the least worthy of such a post. But this country is fertile in such anomalies. . . . If the King hopes the troops will be more faithful than their officers, he will be counting on a people constant but in inconstancy."—Imp. Archives, Vienna.

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being attacked on the one side by the foreign invaders of the country, and on the other by those very English who ought to have been the first to rally to the support of the King's Irish troops.

But the vastly superior forces of treason and rebellion won the day. The loyal Irish were forced back step by step, and finally overpowered. A detachment of the invading army was sent to drive out the Irish garrison of Tilbury, who were at last overcome by superior numbers. Some two hundred of them made a gallant effort to return to their native country by seizing on a richly-laden East India vessel which had just arrived in the Thames; but owing to their want of skill in navigation they ran ashore, and, after a desperate resistance, were obliged to surrender. The other Irish troops in England were disarmed and taken prisoners as a punishment for their loyalty, but in the end of April of the following year, 1689, some 2,000 were shipped for Germany where they were to be put at the disposal of the German Emperor, to form an Irish regiment for service against the Turks.*

In the meantime King James had fled from England,† and thus was accomplished what is known to English people as "The Glorious Revolution," in reality one of the most sordid episodes recorded in history.

* Cf. interesting article on "The Irish Guards," in *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1900, by Captain Fitzalan Manners.

† Queen Mary had succeeded in escaping by night with her infant child from Whitehall. "At Gravesend," writes Riva, who effected the Queen's escape, "we found three Irish captains, sent by the King, who were to serve on the yacht. . . . They had a boat in readiness. Her Majesty entered it with her suite."

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CHAPTER XI

KING JAMES FOUNDS A ROYAL BENEDICTINE ABBEY IN DUBLIN—BATTLE OF THE BOYNE—FLIGHT OF JAMES —THE CONVENT SACKED AND NUNS DISPERSED

Ireland—What stranger turns for refuge to my hall,
Whose gate still opens wide to misery's call?
James—Thy James alas! in want and woe I come
To seek the shelter of thy friendly home.
Ireland—Woe! that the sanction of thy sacred name
Should come to deepen destitution's claim.
. . . . . .
James—Spouse of my soul! I was constrained to flee—
The minions I dared trust abandoned me;
Out on the false ones! thousand foes pressed on!
Betrayed—deserted—could I stand alone?
—*Irish Jacobite Poetical Dialogue.* (Translated by H. G. Curran.)

I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.
—ISAIAS I.

ONE alone of James's three kingdoms remained faithful to him in the hour of need. The Catholic people of Ireland, that very people whom his Stuart predecessors—grandfather, father and brother—had so shamefully neglected and persecuted, forgot all their wrongs at the sight of his misfortunes, and rallied to the King in his distress, for they recognized that the cause of James was the cause of justice and righteousness. It was, moreover, the best cause that Ireland could espouse at the time, though for her a sorry cause at best

James on his part was not slow in recognizing

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that Catholic Ireland was the only nation whose loyalty he could rely upon, and already, in the year 1686, the year after his accession, he had wisely and justly resolved to restore the principal authority, civil and military, in Ireland, to the Catholic majority to whom it belonged by right, and had chosen the Lord Deputy Tyrconnel as his chief agent in carrying out his designs.

As Tyrconnel played a prominent part in the establishment of the Dames of Ypres in Dublin, it will not be out of place to introduce him in a few words. Richard Talbot, afterwards known as Earl and Duke of Tyrconnel, was the youngest son of Sir William Talbot, first baronet and "legal orator of the Catholic party in the Irish House of Commons," and was brother to Peter Talbot, Archbishop of Dublin, who died in Newgate Prison in that city on a false charge of complicity in the imaginary "Popish Plot." He was born in 1630, and when a lad of nineteen was wounded at the siege of Drogheda, where he was an eye-witness of the terrible massacre of the inhabitants perpetrated by Cromwell and his troops. He succeeded in escaping from the carnage, but the fearful scenes he witnessed left a lasting impression on his memory and inspired him with a life-long horror of Puritanism. On the accession of King James II he was created Earl of Tyrconnel, and became the King's right-hand man in Ireland, being his principal instrument in restoring the civil and military power to the Catholics. With this end in view, he disbanded the disloyal Protestant forces and remodelled the army on a Catholic basis.

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On June 8, 1686, he reviewed in St. Stephen's Green the Irish Guards, who, two years later, were sent to the assistance of King James. In 1687 Tyrconnel was made Viceroy of Ireland, and the process of transferring the chief authority to the loyal Catholic majority made rapid progress.

Such being the state of Ireland, it is not surprising that the idea should occur to King James of founding his projected Royal monastery in the Irish capital. It was natural, moreover, that he should select the Lady Abbess Butler of Ypres as the person most suitable for the purpose of carrying out his designs. For she was Abbess of an Irish community, and furthermore her brother was King James's cup-bearer.* Accordingly, in the year 1687, he ordered Tyrconnel, the Viceroy of Ireland, to communicate with the Abbesses of Ypres and Pontoise on the subject, while the Viceroy's wife seems likewise to have interested herself in the matter. In the archives of the convent at Ypres there is still preserved a letter in French from Tyrconnel to the Grand Vicars, praying them to preserve the convent for the Irish nuns in case they should be obliged to return. It is undated and runs as follows :—

TO THE GRAND VICARS OF IPRES.

GENTLEMEN,

These few lines are to beg of you very earnestly to take charge of this little refuge of the Benedictine dames of Ipre, during the absence of Lady Abbess, whom we consider it very opportune to summon over here for a

*The Butlers, as we have seen, were the hereditary "cup-bearers of Ireland."

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time. It is for the good of this country and the establishment of order.* Affairs here, thank God, are in such a state that we hope for much consolation from God and the King.† I wish, however, that there should be one or two of these religious residing under your protection, to take care of the house and hold possession of it, until we arrange otherwise, which will be as soon as possible.

The world knows that I only desire the glory of God and the welfare of this nation. I have shown it both by word and by deed, [and] shall continue to do so, as long as they do not render themselves unworthy of it,‡ and as it is an affair of God, you will contribute towards it also by your care.

I am,

Gentlemen, your obedient servant, etc.,

(Signed) TIRECONNELL.

On September 27, 1687, the following letter was also addressed to the Vicars General at Ypres by the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Patrick Russell. He had been at first exclusively in favour of a foundation being made in Dublin by Dame O'Ryan, who had come over from Ypres several years before, and had made up his mind to protect no other establishment. However, at the desire, no doubt, of King James, who was the special patron of Abbess Butler, the Archbishop changed his mind, and wrote the following urgent appeal to the Vicars to send her over. The original is in French, and is in the convent archives at Ypres.

* "Et l'establissment de l'ordre," which might also be interpreted "for the establishment of the Order (Benedictine) in Ireland."

† He had at first written "from God and from religion"—"de Dieu et de la religion."

‡ "Tandis qu'ils ne rendront indigns"—the Viceroy's French is defective.

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To the Vicars General of Ipres.

Gentlemen,

Our Vice-Roy, the Earl of Tyrconnel and the most enlightened men of this Kingdom are of opinion that it is absolutely necessary in order to preserve the monastery of English [*sic*] ladies at Ipres, that Madam Butler, Abbess of that monastery should come here, as soon as possible. I also believe, gentlemen, that she will promote better than any one else the interests of their establishments, as well at Ipres as in this country; provided that you will be good enough, as we trust you will, to give her the support of your authority, and to further her good intentions by your charitable care for the preservation of the house of Ipres for this nation, so that its daughters may have a place of refuge, should a change [of government] take place, from which God preserve us. Three days ago I received four religious under my protection of whom three came from Pontoise, and the other from Ipres. All of them, as likewise those whom we are still expecting from Ipres, are to be under the charge of Madam Butler. I beg you, gentlemen, to have regard for the demand of His Excellency with whom I associate myself, along with a great many persons of quality, who ask you for the same favour, and whom you will oblige by sending on Madam Butler, preferably to any one else.

I remain, gentlemen,
With much sincerity and esteem,
Your very humble servant,
(Signed) Patr: Dublinis.

Dublin, this 27 Sept.,
1687.

But besides the Viceroy of Ireland, and the Archbishop of Dublin, and the Vicars General of Ypres, there was someone else also who considered he had something to say in the matter. In the year 1678, by

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the peace of Nimeguen, Ypres, among other Flemish towns, had been ceded to France by Spain, so that the Irish Dames had been living now for nearly ten years under the sway of the Grand Monarque, whose Government, like every French government, whether monarchical or republican, was deeply imbued with that aggravating spirit of supervising and controlling everyone and everything in its dominions. And so when there was question of Abbess Butler's leaving the great King's territory, his Intendant, who held sway at Ypres, had to be informed of it. He in his turn communicated the matter to the King's great war minister and minister for public buildings, Louvois, then at the height of his power. He laid the matter before King Louis XIV at Versailles, who graciously replied that he had no objection to Abbess Butler's going to Ireland, but that it was his intention to put someone else in her place as soon as she was gone. Louvois' letter to Demadrie (otherwise written de Madryt), the Intendant at Ypres, is still preserved in the convent archives. It is in a curt official style, but then the King's Intendant, however important in his own sphere, was a mere nobody compared to the great minister. Here is a translation :—

VERSAILLES,

13 *August* [1688].

I have received with your letter of the 5th inst. those which accompanied it. On my informing the King of their contents, His Majesty ordered me to inform you that he will have no objection to the Abbess of the English [*sic*] Religious establishment at Ypres going to Ireland, but that as soon as she shall have quitted the

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Kingdom, it is his intention that her place should be filled up. Let me know if it is for the King to nominate her [i.e. a new Abbess], or for the Religious to elect her.

LOUVOIS.

DEMADRIE.

Let us now give the account of the Dublin foundation as contained in the Ypres MS. :—

Anno [i.e., in the year] 1687, King James the Second, desirous of establishing a convent of religious women in Ireland, ordered the Duke of Tyrconnel, his Lord Lieutenant in said kingdom, to write to the Lady Abbess of the Irish Dames of Ipres, and desire she would repair to Dublin, and establish her monastery in that city. Innumerable were the difficulties, oppositions and resistances she met with from all sides, to put the King's design in execution ; but this strong, courageous woman surmounted them all with heroic patience and magnanimity. When she was just ready for her voyage a partition of an old wall fell upon her, under which she was so buried that it seems a miracle she was not killed ;* a picture of the crucifix fell on her head and kept off the bricks, yet thrust a nail very deep between her brows ; this happening at a time in which none of the religious were within hearing increased the danger. God who destined her for the promotion of His glory in the accomplishment of this establishment caused a voice to be heard by a lay-sister who was gardening repeating three times : *Go help my Lady*, whom she found imbrued in her blood and almost suffocated under the ruins of the wall. After she had recovered from the illness the fall caused her, other difficulties arose against her journey, [but] at last the Duke of Tyrconnel wrote to the Court of France, to get all those obstacles removed that impeded Lady Butler's going over to Ireland ; and in the meantime, the Archbishop of Dublin, by order of his Grace,† wrote to the Grand Vicars of Ipres, informing them that King James desired the

* " brained " in the Teignmouth version.
† i.e., the Viceroy.

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Abbess should come over with her Nuns; that he would protect no other establishment but that of Lady Butler; that besides the better part of the kingdom judged it necessary the Lady Abbess should come with all possible speed to found a Monastery in Dublin, she being the person most proper for that effect; begging that the Vicars General would reserve the house of Ipres for a place of refuge, in case of an adverse change of the times.

The Lord Lieutenant, [continues the same narrative,] had, by the King's orders, taken a house for Lady Butler and her Community towards the upper end of Big Sheep Street, in Dublin.* His Grace† went in person in order to see it properly fitted up for her use. Anno 1688, the Rt. Honourable Lady Butler departed from Ipres, accompanied by some choir Dames, and Sister Placida Holmes, a Converse‡ Novice. When her Ladyship arrived at London, she waited on the Queen at Whitehall, in the great habit of her order, which had not been seen there since the fall of religion. Her Ladyship left London on 8th October, and arriving in Dublin on 31st, was presented to his Majesty§ by the Duke and Duchess, who received her most graciously, and promising her his royal protection, ordered a royal patent to be expedited with most ample privileges in favour of her ladyship and the Community, under the denomination of his Majesty's own first, chief, and royal Abbey of his three kingdoms, with free permission to settle in any part of the kingdom of Ireland. This royal patent was dated the 5th June, 1689.‖

* i.e., Great Ship Street, at the back of Dublin Castle. The convent is said to have stood near the site of the Church of St. Michael-le-Pole.

† i.e., the Lord Lieutenant; but he was not yet "his grace," not till the following year. The Entry Book 3 (p. 1), among the Stuart papers at Windsor, contains, under the date March 25, 1689, Warrant for a grant to Richard, Earl of Tyrconnel, Viscount Baltinglass and Baron of Talbotstown, of the dignity of Marquis and *Duke* of Tyrconnel, Co. Tyrone.

‡ i.e., a lay-sister.

§ The annalist seems to be in error here. James was still in England in October, 1688. He fled from England finally on the 23rd December, 1688, and remained in France till his arrival in Ireland in 1689.

‖ The patent is dated the "5th June and 6th year of our reign."

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Lady Butler entered her enclosure immediately in Big Sheep Street, where the Divine Office, Holy Mass, and all the regular observances were daily performed, to the consolation and edification of the nobility and gentry of Ireland, who hastened to place their children for education, under the care of the venerable Abbess, who excelled in piety, virtue, and every branch of good education. Among thirty young ladies who were entrusted to her, eighteen postulated for the Veil; but her Ladyship thought it more prudent to defer their admission, until more peaceable times, the war being already far advanced, and in effect, King James' army being totally defeated the 1st July, 1690. King William's army came victorious into Dublin, and ransacked the monastery. Lady Butler's first care was to send the young ladies back to their respective parents. She then saved herself, with her religious and some of her church plate and ornaments, in a neighbouring house; and resolved upon quitting Ireland, notwithstanding the many instances made her by the Duke of Ormond, her near relation, who promised her a strong protection from King William; but she insisting on returning to Ipres, the Duke obtained an ample pass for her and the Community to leave the kingdom, without any molestation being made to them from his troops.

So far the Ypres account, which will be understood more clearly if we take a glance at the course of events in Ireland after the deposition of King James. Upon the expulsion of the King and his flight into France, the usurper opened negotiations with Tyrconnel, but the people of Ireland gave the latter to understand that if he invited over the intruder they would burn the Castle and the Viceroy along with it, and would place Ireland under the protection of France. Tyrconnel accordingly despatched the Catholic Chief Baron Rice with a message to the exiled King, inviting

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him to come over and put himself at the head of the Irish people, who were eager to fight for him. In the event of James's refusal, Rice had instructions to seek an audience with the French King, and to invite him to accept the kingdom of Ireland as an appanage of the French crown.

Meanwhile, on the departure of the envoys for France, "Tyrconnel set himself to prepare for the conflict which had become inevitable. . . . The Irish nation was called to arms, and the call was obeyed with strange promptitude and enthusiasm. The flag on the Castle of Dublin was embroidered with the words: 'Now or never! Now and for ever!' These words resounded through the whole island. Never in modern Europe has there been such a rising up of a whole people."* The result was that the Protestant garrison was soon driven out of its strongholds with the exception of Derry and Enniskillen.

On March 12, 1689 (O.S.), King James landed at Kinsale, accompanied by his sons, the Duke of Berwick and the Grand Prior, several distinguished French generals, and some 1,200 veterans, and, after a brief delay, set out on what was literally a royal progress to Dublin.

From Kinsale to Cork, from Cork to Dublin, his progress was accompanied by Gaelic songs and dances, by Latin orations, loyal addresses, and all the decorations with which a popular favourite can be welcomed. Nothing was remembered by that easily pacified people but his

* Macaulay, *History of England*, ch. xii.

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great misfortunes and his steady fidelity to his and their religion. Fifteen chaplains, nearly all Irish, accompanied him, and added to the delight of the populace; while many a long-absent soldier now came back in the following of the king to bless the sight of some aged parent or faithful lover. The royal entry into Dublin was the crowning pageant of this delusive restoration. With the tact and taste for such demonstrations hereditary in the citizens, the trades and arts were marshalled before him. Two venerable harpers played on their national instruments near the gate by which he entered; a number of religious in their robes, with a huge cross at their head, chanted as they went; forty young girls, dressed in white, danced the ancient *Rinka*,* scattering flowers as they danced. The Earl of Tyrconnell, lately raised to the dukedom, the judges, the mayor and corporation completed the procession, which marched over newly-sanded streets, beneath arches and evergreens and windows hung with "tapestry and cloth of Arras." Arrived at the Castle the sword of state was presented to him by the deputy, and the keys of the city by the recorder. At the inner entrance the Primate, Dr. Dominick Macguire, waited in his robes to conduct him to the chapel, lately erected by Tyrconnell, where *Te Deum* was solemnly sung. But of all the incidents of that striking ceremonial nothing more powerfully impressed the popular imagination than the green flag floating from the main tower of the Castle bearing the significant inscription: "Now or Never—Now and Forever."†

Not for many a long weary year had our poor country witnessed such a triumph and such rejoicings, the echoes of which must have reached the little Benedictine Convent in Ship Street, hard by Dublin Castle, where Abbess Butler and the good

* The Rince Fada, now being happily revived by the Gaelic League.

† D'Arcy McGee, *History of Ireland*. But if we mistake not blue, not green, was the national colour of Ireland at this period.

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nuns of King James's " first and chief Royal Monastery of Gratia Dei " had already begun their peaceful life of praise and supplication. But this joy and peace were not to last long.

In the month of May following, the King convened a Parliament at Dublin—the last national Parliament of Ireland—at which an Act for extending liberty of conscience and other excellent Acts were passed. And here we cannot forbear quoting the King's admirable speech from the throne on this occasion, for the fortunes of the Irish Dames of Ypres were closely bound up with those of their royal patron, whose actions and motives have been so vilely misrepresented and misunderstood :—

My Lords and Gentlemen [so ran the King's speech], the Exemplary Loyalty which this Nation hath expressed to me, at a time when *others* of my *subjects undutifully misbehaved themselves to me, or so basely deserted me*: and your seconding my Deputy, as you did, in His First and Resolute asserting my Right, in preserving this Kingdom for me, and putting it in a Posture of Defence ; made me resolve to come to you, in defence of your Liberties and My Own Right. And to my great Satisfaction I have not only found you ready to serve me, but that your Courage has equalled your zeal.

I have always been for Liberty of Conscience, and against invading any Man's Property ; having still in my Mind that saying in Holy Writ, *Do as you will be done to*, for that *is the Law and the Prophets.*

It was this Liberty of Conscience I gave, which my Enemies both Abroad and at Home dreaded ; especially when they saw that I was resolved to have it Established by Law in my Dominions, and made them set themselves up against me. . . .

This Argument was made use of, to persuade their own

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People to joyn with them, and to many of my Subjects to use me as they have done. But nothing shall ever persuade me to change my Mind as to that; *and wheresoever I am the Master, I design (God willing) to Establish it by Law; and have no other Test or Distinction but that of Loyalty.*

But alas! the triumph of justice and toleration was to be short-lived. In the summer of the following year, 1690, the usurper William crossed over to Ireland, and, a few weeks later, on July 1, was fought the memorable Battle of the Boyne. The rightful King was defeated and fled the country, and with him liberty likewise fled the land. Then the dark night of sorrow and desolation once more settled on the unfortunate country; then the best and bravest of the sons and daughters of Ireland began to bid adieu to their native land; then, too, the Irish Dames of Ypres were ruthlessly driven from their peaceful cloister in Dublin, and forced once more to take the road of exile, after a brief sojourn of less than three years in the Irish capital.

Soon after sunset, on the very evening of that disastrous day, King James rode into Dublin Castle,* and, on the following day, after an ungracious and ungrateful speech to the Lord Mayor and some of the principal Catholic citizens, he set off post-haste for the South of Ireland, thence to take ship for France.

He turned him right an' round about,
Upon the Irish shore,
And ga'e his bridle-reins a shake,
With "Adieu for evermore, my dear,"
With "Adieu for evermore."

* Where he was met by the Viceroy's wife, Lady Tyrconnel, who is said to have bantered him on the superior horsemanship he displayed in escaping the first from the field of battle.

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Thus did King James abandon the gallant and loyal people who had risked all in his cause.* We do not know if before his hurried departure he found time to bid a last farewell to Lady Abbess Butler and the nuns of his own "first, chief Royal Monastery of Gratia Dei," only a stone's throw from the Castle gates. Probably not, he was so full of the thought of his own safety. But we do know that they were abandoned to the tender mercies of the savage soldiery of the usurper. On Sunday morning, July 6, the sixth day after the battle, the Dutch King rode into Dublin in state, and not many days elapsed before his gallant troops were engaged in the congenial task of attacking the peaceful home and looting the little property of the defenceless Benedictine ladies in Ship Street Convent. But we do not wish to hold William directly responsible for this act of vandalism, which, moreover, may have been perpetrated by the dragoons and other troops of the advanced guard, who entered Dublin before him; a supposition which seems to be borne out by the

* "It is greatly feared," writes the Abbé Melani, from Paris, 26th June, 1690, to Abbé Gondi, at Florence, "that King James will meet with the same misfortune which overtook him in England, and that in Ireland he may find himself abandoned by the greater part of his army, having there also made himself an object of compassion and scorn. He is always hoping to be recalled by the English, and treats them better than he does the Irish, who have always been faithful; this has a bad effect upon the Earl of Tyrconnell and the other Irish magnates. . . ."

An Irish Jacobite poet has wittily described him as having "his one shoe English and one shoe Irish"—le n-a leaċ-bhróig Gallda 'r a leaċ-bhróig Gaedhalaċ.

It would have been well for James if he had taken Louis the Fourteenth's advice. "The best thing King James could do," remarked the French monarch, "would be to forget he had ever reigned in Great Britain, and think only of establishing himself solidly in Ireland."

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statement of McGregor to the effect that "after the Battle of the Boyne some of the soldiers of King William's army entered Dublin and seized upon the Church-plate of the convent."*

Be that as it may, in the same month of July the magnanimous usurper was pleased to grant a pass-port to the nuns, according them his "gracious permission" to leave their native land in peace. The pass-port, which was obtained through the influence of Abbess Butler's cousin, the Duke of Ormonde, is still preserved in the convent at Ypres. It is written on a small sheet of ordinary foolscap paper, and is dated from the camp near Carrick—Carrick-on-Suir, we presume, where William would be about this time on his march south from Dublin to reduce Waterford. It runs as follows :—

WILLIAM R.

L.S.

Whereas we have received an humble Peticen in the name of the Lady Mary Butler, as Lady Abbess of a late Nunnery in Dublin, in behalf of herself and Convent, setting forth that they all belong to a Nunnery in Flanders, from whence they came to this Kingdome, about 3 years past, and humbly praying our Gracious Permission to return into Flanders again. We—do therefore hereby strictly charge and Require all Officers Civil and Military as well by Land and Sea, and all other our Loving Subjects whatsoever that they permit the said Lady Abbess and—Nuñs to depart in Peace and not to give them any the least trouble or molestation, while they attend for a

* *Pictures of Dublin*, by J. J. McGregor, 1821.

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Convenient Passage. Or from ye time of their embarkation untill they should arrive at their Intended Port.

Given at Our Camp neer Carick—this 23rd day of July, 1690, and in the Second year of Our Reigne.

By his Majesties Command,

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Thus did James's Benedictine "plantation" in Ship Street, Dublin, come to an untimely end. The first nuns, including the three from Pontoise and Dame Barbara Philpott from Ypres, had arrived in Dublin in September, 1687. Abbess Butler followed a year later, arriving in Dublin, October 31, 1688, and in July, 1690, less than two years after her arrival, the community was dispersed.

We have not been able to discover many further details, beyond those already given, concerning this foundation in Dublin. Its history seems to be almost a complete blank. PAX is the motto of the children of St. Benedict, and in truth these good Benedictine Dames would have been only too happy had they been allowed to pass the even tenour of their lives in peace, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." The house seems, however, to have been a great success from the start. Scholars and postulants flocked to the convent, and had it not come to a violent end, and had the times been more propitious, it would in all probability have been the parent of many flourishing Benedictine convents in Ireland, where the daughters of Erin, who found themselves called to the contemplative life, could serve God according to their vocation,

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and the absurd delusion that the Benedictine life is incompatible with the Irish character would have long since been proved to be false.

We may here present the reader with such additional details as we have been able to glean from other sources concerning the house in Ship Street. From a work entitled, *A Summary of the Various Ecclesiastical Institutions, Orders, Edifices, etc., in Ireland since the Introduction of the Christian Religion*, printed in Dublin, 1810, we learn that Abbess Butler, on her passage through London, not only waited on Queen Mary at Whitehall, but was also "most courteously received by the Queen Dowager,* who, in testimony of her affection, made her a present of some altar-plate and church ornaments." The same authority says that William's soldiers "seized on the church-plate, which had been removed to a Protestant lady's house in the neighbourhood. The Abbess, therefore, resolved to hinder a further prophanation by throwing into the fire whatever remained. . . ."

In the convent archives at Ypres there is still extant a copy (undated) of a Petition of Abbess Butler's to the French King's minister, Louvois, setting forth that having "obtained permission about a year ago to go to Dublin, in Ireland, to regulate the affairs† of a convent, commenced there with the protection and assistance of the Duke and Duchess of Tyrconnel, the great revolutions which have occurred in that country have prevented her from arranging her affairs within the

* Catherine of Braganza, widow of Charles II.
† Regler l'Estat.

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limit of time fixed by the permission," and so she prays for an extension of time and that the Intendant of Ypres should be ordered not to allow any innovations to be made at Ypres during her absence. From this we learn that Abbess Butler, while at Dublin, still retained her position as Abbess of Ypres.

In reply to this request Louvois forwarded a letter, dated 11th October, 1689, to M. de Madryt, Intendant at Ypres, enclosing the King's *placet* that Abbess Butler's place should not be filled up for another six months.

We have also discovered among the archives at Ypres some further debris from the wreck in Ship Street in the shape of two slips of paper recording transactions by Dame Barbara Philpott, which are not without interest.

The first acknowledges the receipt from Mrs. Barbara Philpott of " the sume of Eight pounds ster[ling] together w^th^ 50 . . . formerly. R^cd^ is on acctt for worke and materialls done in the house belonging to S^r^ William Barker I pay R^cd^ in ye behalf of the workmen this 18th day of febr, 1687-8." If this Sir William Barker was, as it would seem, the landlord of the Benedictine convent or school in Ship Street, it might be possible to identify the house, or at least its site.

The second is an agreement " with Richard Nee— to Prune the Trees dig and Sow the Garden, &c., belonging to the Nunnery in Great Ship Street, w^ch^ he accordingly did and for w^ch^ he by agreement is to have or receive the sume of Twenty shillings ster[ling]."

" Dated this 14th day of May, 1688."

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Poor Sister Barbara! Little did you think that the vineyard of the Lord in Great Ship Street, which you so diligently cared for, was soon to be ravaged by ravening wolves; that an enemy was to come and plant cockle instead of the good seed which you sowed, and that your little paradise, like the rest of the country, was soon to witness the very abomination of desolation. But your labours have produced fruit a hundredfold in the next life, where the Master of the vineyard for whom you toiled has rewarded you for your pains.

This Dame Barbara seems to have been the business woman of the community. She was a nun of Pontoise, where she had been professed in 1662, but was sent to Ypres, and thence to England and Ireland. On the break-up of the Ship Street Convent she returned to Pontoise, where she died about six years later, May 4, 1696.

Her "Death-Bill" tells us that "her other abilities rendered her fit to be sent to assist at Ipres, where after three months she received her obedience for England from the Lady Butler, her Abbess; and soon after went for Ireland to act there for a foundation which God blessed with good success. Then she [was] ordered to return for France to negociate some affairs for the house at Dublin; after which she went to Ipres, and was Superior there three years, in the Lady Butler's absence, and returned to our community after five years spent in the Irish mission, being indefatigable in all her obediences, by which she advanced God's honour. . . ."

Amongst those who had come over from Ypres was a good lay-sister, Sister Mary Placida Holmes, of whom we are told that "she made her vows in Dublin

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where King James II was at that time, and who gave her the black veil, declaring to all the ladies that he esteemed her much more happy than any of them. After the defeat of his army the rebels came to plunder our convent, but Sister Mary Placida had the courage and presence of mind to disguise herself in secular clothes and put herself among the plunderers to save what was most sacred and precious. She followed Lady Butler in all her painful journeys, and died on the 26th June, Anno 1735 in the 70th of her age and 45th of religious profession."*

We shall conclude this chapter by presenting our readers with the Charter of James's Irish foundation.

KING JAMES'S PATENT FOUNDING A CONVENT OF BENEDICTINES IN IRELAND, AND CONFERRING AN ANNUITY OF £100 STERLING UPON THE NUNS THEREOF.

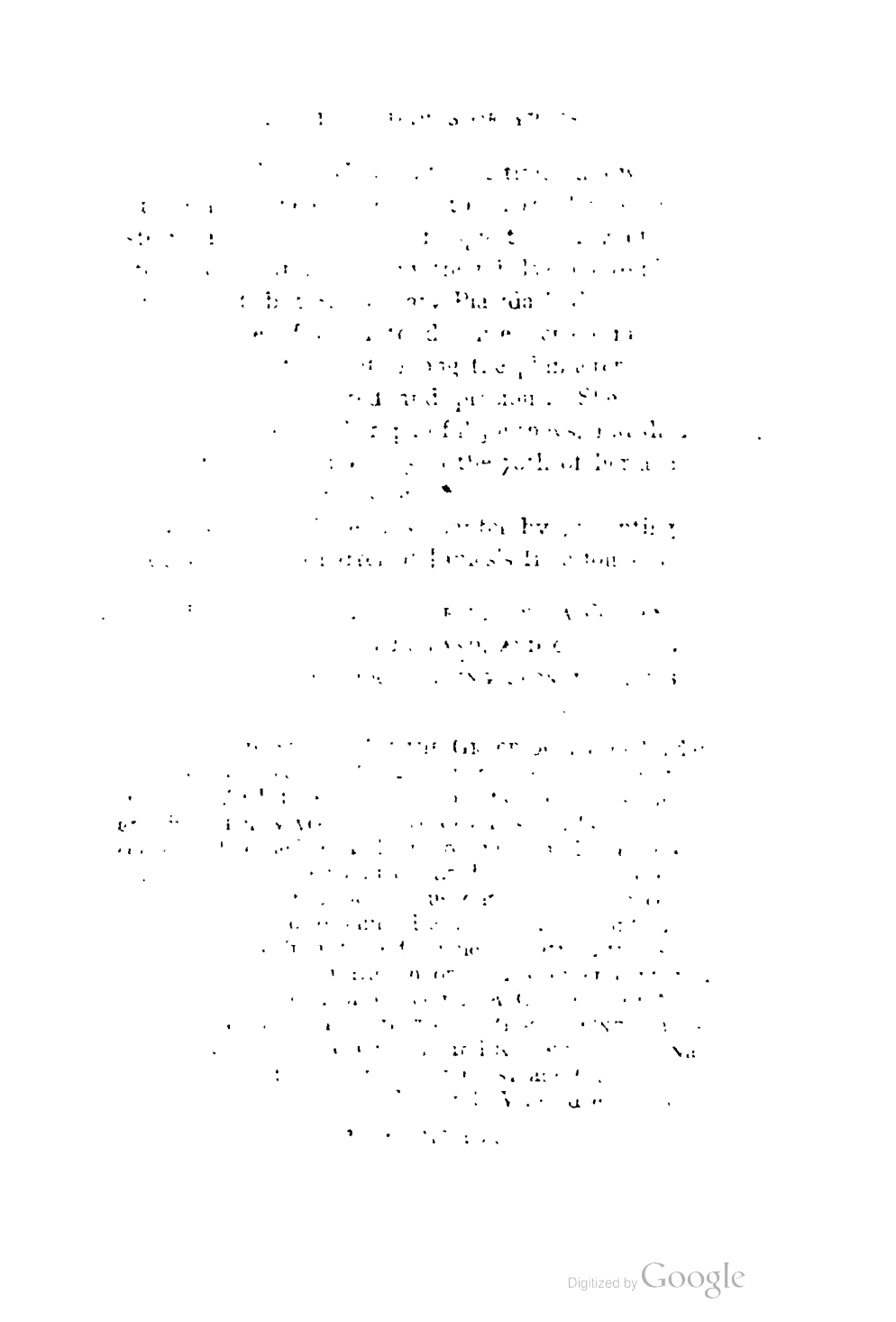
JAMES THE SECOND BY THE GRACE of God of England Scotland ffrance and Ireland king defender of the ffaith, etc. TO ALL to whome these psents [presents] shall come greeting: Know yee that wee of our spiall [special] grace certaine knowledge and meere motion Have granted constituted ordained and declared and appointed and by these psents WEE do for us our heires and successors Grant constitute ordaine Declare and appoint THAT there shall bee from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter in our Citty of Dublin or in any other convenient place in our Kingdom of Ireland A CONVENT OF NUNNS of the order of ST. BENEDICT consisting of ONE ABBESSE AND NUNS and to be CALLED and KNOWNE by the Name of Abbesse and convent of our FIRST and CHIEFE ROYAL MONASTERY of GRATIA DEI and WEE doe for us our

*Ypres MS. note.

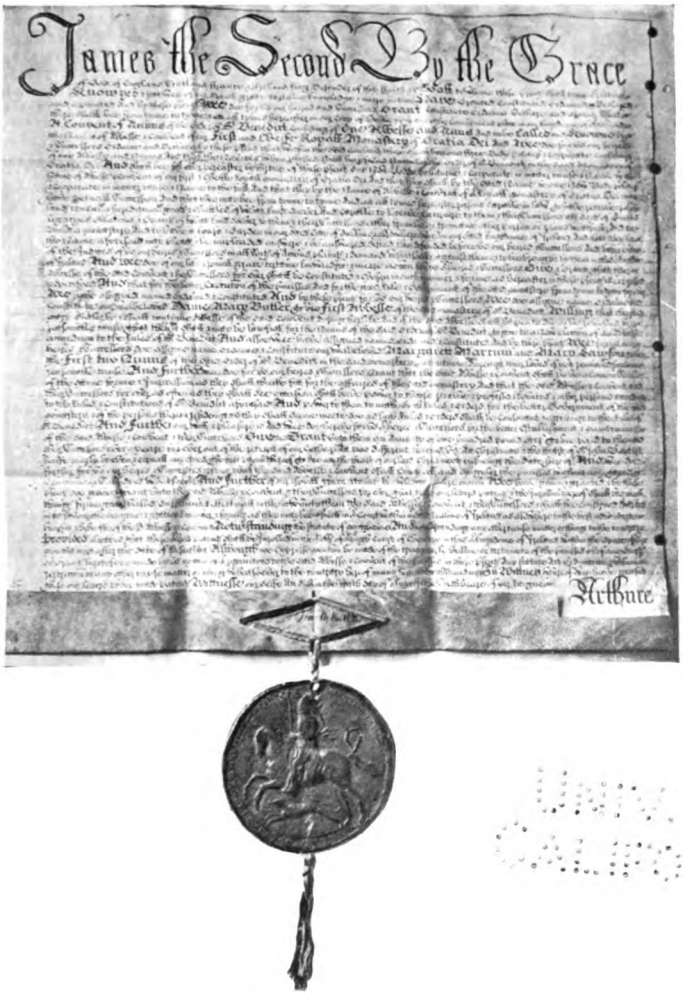
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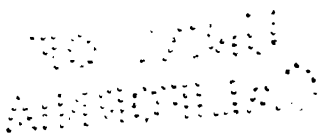


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KING JAMES'S CHARTER TO HIS ROYAL IRISH NUNS OF ST. BENEDICT.

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heirs and successors ordaine and Declare by these psents that within the said convent there shall bee one ffree Body politique and corporate consisting of one Abbesse and Nunns and that all the Novices when pfessed [professed] shall be pfessed Nunns of the order of St. Benedict in the said Monastery of Gratia Dei AND shall bee for ever hereafter by virtue of the psents one True[?] Boddy pollitique and corporate in matter cause and Name by the Name of Abbesse and convent of our first and cheiffe royal monastery of Gratia Dei and that they shall by the said Name be one true free[?] Body politique and corporate in matter cause and Name to the full And that they by the name of Abbesse and convent of Or Royall monastery of Gratia Dei may have ppetuall [perpetual] succession and that they may bee from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter persons capable in law to have receive and possesse lands tenemts [tenements] and hereditamts goods and chattles of what kind soever and capable to receive and acquire to them and their Successors all sorts of guifts[?] Legacyes oblations and grants of what kind soever to them and their successors and either from Us or from any other person or psons whatsoever and to Build a monastery And to have a house and garden in our said Citty of Dublin or elsewhere within our said kingdome of Ireland and that they by the Name aforesaid may plead and bee impleaded answere and bee answered defend and be defended before us our heires and successors and before any of the Judges of us our heirs and successors in all Sorts of actions plaints and demands whatsoever against them or to bee brought by them in this our kingdom of Ireland AND WEE do of our like espiall [especial] grace certaine knowledge and meere motion for us or heires and successors Give and grant that the abbesse of the said convent and her successors for ever shall be constituted and chosen in such manner and forme as hereafter in these psents is expressed and specifyed AND that for the better execution of the pmisses [premises, i.e., of the aforesaid] and for the good rule and government of the said monastery from tyme to tyme for ever WEE have assigned named ordained and con-

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stituted AND by these psents for us our heires and successors WEE do assigne name ordaine and constitute our well-beloved DAME MARY BUTLER to be FIRST ABBESSE of the said monastery of St. Benedict WILLING that the said Mary Butler bee and shall continue Abbesse of the said convent during her life and if the said Abbesse shall happen to die or be removed for reasonable cause that then and so often it shall and may be lawful for the Nunns of the said order of St. Benedict to goe to a new election of an Abbesse accordng to the rules of St. Benedict AND alsoe wee have assigned named ordained and constituted and by these psents WEE for us our heires and successors doe assign name ordaine and constiute our welbeloved MARGARETT MARTUM* and MARY LAWSON to be the first two NUNNS of the said order of St. Benedict in the said monastery to continue therein during their lives if not removed for some reasonable cause AND FURTHER wee doe for us our heirs and successors grant that the said Abbesse and convent shall have a comon Seale of the same forme and impression as they shall thinke fitt for the affaires of the said monastery and that the said Abbess and convent and their successors for ever as often as they shall see occasion shall have power to choose receive and profess Novices and other persons according to the rules and constitutions of St. Benedict aforesaid AND power to them to make such rules and orders for the better government of the said monastery and of the persons therein resideing as they shall deeme meete soe as such rules and orders shall be consonant and agreeing to the rules of St. Benedict AND FURTHER our will and pleasure is and wee doe hereby for us or heirs and successors for the better Establishment and maintenance of the said Abbesse and convent and their Successors GIVE and GRANT unto them an annuity of one hundred pound ster[ling] to bee paid to them and their Successors every yeare for ever out of the receipt of our exchequr att two different terms (viz.) att christmas and the ffeast of St. John Baptist half yearly by even and equal moyetyes the first paymt

* Evidently a mistake of the engrosser. Read "Markham."

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thereof to bee att the ffeast of our Lord Christ next ensueing the date hereof AND we doe further for us our heirs and successors grant that the said Abbesse and convent shall enjoy all and singuler the pmisses [premises] without any taxes exactions or subsidyes whatsoever AND further of our espiall [especial] ctaine [certain] knowledge and meere moton [motion] WEE have given and granted and by these psents doe give and grant unto the said Abbesse and convent and successors for ever that these our Letters patent by the inrollmt [enrollment] thereof shall be in all things firme good vallid sufficient and effectual in the law unto them the said Abbesse and convent and their successors and shall be construed and intpted [interpreted] in as favourable benigne and gracious mannner and forme as they may bee as well in or court within or said realme of Ireland as elsewhere to the best advantage benefit and behaffe of the sd Abbesse and convent NOTWITHSTANDING the statute of mortmaine AND nothwithstanding any other cause matter or thing to the contrary PROVIDED alwaye that these [?] patents shall be inrolled in the rolls of or high court of chancery in this or kingdome of Ireland within the space of six months next after the date of these psents ALTHOUGH noe expresse mention be made of the true yearly vallue or certainety of the pmisses or of any guifts or grants heretofore made by us or any of or pgenitors [progenitors] to the said Abbesse and convent of the pmisses in these psents any statute act ordinance pvision [provision] or prescription [?] or any other cause matter or thing whatsoever to the contrary hereof in any wise notwithstanding IN WITNESS whereof we have caused these our Letters to bee made patents WITNESS our selfe att Dublin the ffifth day of June In the Sixth yeare of our raigne

ARTHURE.*

* We have transcribed the above from the original Patent at Ypres. An inaccurate version may be found in the Appendix to Harris's History of William III (Dublin, 1747-9).

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CHAPTER XII

OF THE PONTOISE NUNS WHO TOOK PART IN KING JAMES'S "PLANTATION" IN SHIP STREET, DUBLIN

THE Ypres account of King James's foundation in Dublin, which we have cited in the preceding chapter, would lead us to suppose that the little colony in Ship Street came entirely from that convent, whereas, as a matter of fact, the Convent of Pontoise contributed several members.

On July 29, 1687, Abbess Neville, of Pontoise, sent off Dame Margaret Markham, with three other choir-nuns, Dames Mary Lawson, Anne Neville, and Susan Fletcher, to the assistance of the new foundation. Two of these, Dames Markham and Lawson, are expressly appointed in James's patent to be the "first two nuns" of Abbess Butler's convent in Dublin. After a stormy and painful sea-voyage of two months duration, they arrived at their destination at the end of September, 1687, so that they came to Dublin fully a year before the time assigned in the Ypres account for the arrival of Abbess Butler. Writing from Dublin on the 27th September, 1687, to the Vicars-General of Ypres, the Archbishop of Dublin says: "I have received, three days ago, under my protection four religious, three of whom came from Pontoise, and the other from Ypres; they must all, including those

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we still expect from Ypres, be under the guidance of Madame Butler." The three from Pontoise to whom the Archbishop alludes evidently belonged to the party which set out with Dame Markham, one of them, Dame Neville, having died on the journey. Another member of the party, Dame Susan Fletcher, died in Dublin within less than two years after her arrival.

The fourth nun alluded to by the Archbishop as having come from Ypres was most probably Dame Barbara Philpott, who was professed at Pontoise, but transferred to Ypres, and sent on in advance by Abbess Butler, first to England and then to Ireland to make arrangements for the new foundation.

We are indebted to Abbess Neville for the following interesting details as to the part played by the Pontoise nuns in the foundation at Dublin:—

In the year 1687, Dame Markham was one of those four that went for Ireland to meet my Lady Butler and Dame Philpott from Ipres. Some of our Community being desired by Lord Tyrconnel's lady (then Viceroy of Ireland), and that in so obliging a manner as could not be refused, the design being so much for God's glory and good of religion as obliged us to send some that might be of advantage for such a work, in the establishing regularity with a true fund of virtue in that beginning-house. Dame Markham being our first Ancient [i.e., Dean], and who had been several times chosen Prioress, and many other chief offices, and discharged them with zeal and satisfaction to all, was judged most proper for an Assistant in this great enterprize. Her real piety and solid virtue giving very promising hopes of her well discharging her duty both to God and Religion, she was by

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all thought the fittest person to be depended upon in this mission that was to go from us; and accordingly was dismissed with three more, as Superior in their journey, and then to surrender herself and them as humble subjects at the feet of my Lady Butler, when she should meet them in Ireland: which obedience Dame Markham undertook with much humility and alacrity;* and on the 29th July, 1687, with abundance of tears on both sides took their leave of the Community and began their journey in a disguise, for Rouen there to take ship for Ireland. And all things succeeding there prosperously encouraged us to confide that Almighty God and our Blessed [Lady] with glorious St. Patrick, with all the holy angels, will assist them happily to complete this great undertaking for which we daily pray. ["It is evident," says the *Teignmouth* editor, "that Lady Neville wrote thus far soon after the little colony set out; and on the other side of the paper she adds:"] but since having had a letter from Dame Markham of their kind reception by both their Excellencies and all others, with very promising hopes of a most happy settlement. In the journey which was a very hard one and of two months voyage, most of it by sea in great danger and terrible storms, which cast them into several havens; and in that of Milford poor Dame Anne Neville† by a fall got her death, and was buried there, dying most happily; which the rest most edified at, went on their journey with much sense of leaving her dead there, but joy that she died with so much peace and exemplar virtue.

To the above details, gleaned from a MSS. of Abbess Neville, we may here add the following extract from the Mortuary Notice of Dame Margaret Mark-

* At this time Dame Markham was either 70 or 75, according to different papers; and had seen Lady Butler arrive as a postulant at Boulogne. This little party never saw Lady Neville again on earth (Pontoise Annals).

† Of Holt. She was of a different family from Lady Abbess Neville (Ghent Annals).

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ham, drawn up at the time of her death by Lady Abbess Widdrington :—

Anno Domini 1717, the 25th of July, in this our monastery, etc., . . . is happily deceased, strengthened with the Sacraments of Holy Church, our most dear and saintly Mother, Rev. Dame Margaret Markham, in the 105th year of her age, and of her Religious profession 77 [and 7 months]. She made her Religious vows at Ghent* and after 12 years profession she was sent first [to] Boulogne in Picardy,† and thence to Pontoise in the year 1658, where her exactness in all her religious duties, and motherly heart rendered her a chief support of Religion till the year 1687, when she was sent for to Ireland to begin a Royal foundation in Dublin, where after settling all things in a fair prospect, she solemnized with great splendour her 50 years jubilee [at which King James is said to have been present]. But Divine Providence, whose designs are inscrutable, having permitted that [the] Catholic Religion and the new Establishment should sink under the prevailing power of the usurper, she was forced back to her monastery.

Lady Abbess Neville, writing apparently at the time when Dame Margaret was in Ireland (1687 to 1689) gives the following details as to her family :—

Dame Margaret Markham was daughter to George Markham, Esq., of Ollerton, Notts, in the Forest of Sherwood. There was another house, entitled Kirby Bollers, belonging to their family, which was subtracted from them for being Roman Catholics, for which they underwent, upon false and unjust accusations many heavy penalties and banishment. Her mother was Mistress Judith Witherwick Fitzwilliams, inheritrix of Claxby and Normanby, and many other fair tenements. . . .

On leaving Dublin, Dame Margaret went to Ypres,

*27th December, 1636. †In 1652.

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where she remained from 1700 to 1702, and where she was again Prioress. She then returned to Pontoise, where she died, at the age of 105, according to her Mortuary Notice, but the editor of the Ghent Annals puts her age at 95. At the time of her death she had survived ten Abbesses, and was living under her eleventh.

Dame M. Lawrence Lawson's religious career closely resembles that of Dame Markham, inasmuch as she came from Pontoise to Dublin, and was mentioned by name in James's patent, and having survived the bitter trials and disappointments of the Dublin foundation she too returned to Pontoise, and, later on, was sent for a time to Ypres to assist in the revival of that struggling house. But as she did not play any further prominent part in the history of the Ypres house, we shall here take leave of her too, at least for the present, with the following extract from her Mortuary Notice, merely premising that she was professed at Pontoise January, 1677, and died November 25, 1729.

She was from her youth inclined to virtue, which to preserve she took a solemn leave of the world in an age when it 's most pleasing, and dedicated herself to God, where from the first instant to the last moment she truly showed her interior application to God and her duty, by her composed exterior and exactitude to silence, which none ever heard her break. She was sent by obedience to Ireland and Ipres, there to establish the perfection of monastical observance, in both places having given marks of her fervour and zeal she returned back to us, and continued giving the same good example in the Offices of Dean, Chantress and Tourier.* . . .

* i.e., Door-keeper.

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Finally, we must take a last farewell of the other two nuns who set out from Pontoise for Dublin, Dame Neville and Dame Fletcher; the former had died on the voyage, as we have seen, while the latter died in harness in Dublin.

Dame Anne Neville's Death-Bill tells us that her death took place on September 25, 1687, when she was only 31 years of age, having been professed 14 years :—

Her peaceable and submissive spirit, and exact compliance with religious duties as far as health would permit, made her judged fit to be sent from hence to the new establishment at Dublin; which obedience, though hard and contrary to her, she received as from God Himself, and offered herself as a sacrifice to His Divine will and that of obedience, which holocaust rendered her so agreeable to her Divine Spouse that by an accident before she arrived at her journey's end, she by a happy death attained an immortal life, and the innocency and candour which ever appeared in all her actions makes no doubt but that she now enjoys the privilege of following the Lamb. R.I.P.

Dame Susan Fletcher died in Dublin on May 18, 1689, in the 40th year of her age and 13th of her profession. We are told that during the eleven years she lived with the Pontoise community—

She was most exemplar in regularity. . . . She was so strictly united with Almighty God, that His Divine Presence was never from before her eyes, and she beheld God in her superiors, obeying them and their ordinations as God's immediate will. . . .

Solid humility joined to all the other virtues caused her to be sent to that new plantation in Dublin, there to complete her crown, where she daily met with occasions of suffering, whereby soon she consummated that sacrifice

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which she had made of herself at her going from hence. . . . R.I.P.

Thus of the four nuns that were sent from Pontoise to Dublin only two—viz., the veteran Dame Margaret Markham and Dame Lawrence Lawson—survived the ordeal, and returned to their convent.

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CHAPTER XIII

MISUNDERSTANDINGS

> And Barnabas would have taken with them John also that was surnamed Mark. But Paul desired that he (as having departed from them out of Pamphylia, and not gone with them to the work) might not be received. And there arose a dissension, so that they departed one from another.
>
> —ACTS OF THE APOSTLES XV. 37-39.

IT is remarkable that the Ypres version does not mention a word about Dame Mary Joseph O'Ryan and her efforts at this time to make a Benedictine settlement in Dublin; and if we were to rely solely on the evidence contained in the brief Ypres account we should be led to conclude that Abbess Butler's house in Great Ship Street was the only Benedictine foundation made in Dublin at this eventful period. In fact we were, for a considerable time, under this impression, and did not even suspect the existence of another Benedictine house, or even the possibility that a second should be founded in the few years comprised within the brief space of James's reign. But there is abundant proof that two attempts—two rival attempts, if we may use the word—were made, at this period, to plant the ancient Order of St. Benedict on Irish soil. That this is the case is evident from a series of letters which we have found in the archives of the convent at

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Ypres, from which it appears that there were grave misunderstandings between Abbess Butler and Dame M. Joseph O'Ryan. The latter, as we have seen, had played a prominent part in securing the house of Ypres for the Irish nation, and had, with the sanction of her superiors, on or about September 12, 1685, gone to Ireland for the second time with the view, it would seem, of procuring pupils and subjects and money for Ypres. But it would appear that, instead of returning to Ypres with what assistance she may have procured, she remained on in Dublin with the tacit permission, or toleration, at least, of the authorities of her convent. It was the autumn of 1685. The Catholic King James had been on the throne for some eight months, and, no doubt, the prospects of the Irish people and their beloved Church must have looked much brighter than they had done for many a long weary day. The Catholics began to come out from their hiding-places and breathe the fresh air of liberty and feel that they were, or ought to be, freemen of their own capital city. And with that thirst for knowledge which is one of the distinguishing traits of the Irish Catholics, one of their first impulses would be to seek for those educational advantages which Protestant intolerance had so long denied them. We may naturally conclude then that good Dame O'Ryan's Irish heart was cheered with the bright outlook for Faith and Fatherland, and that the thought would occur to her: Why not, now that we have at last a tolerant King, settle down in Dublin and do good Benedictine work here in the Irish capital for our country and religion? The house of Ypres is a

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house of exile, a place of refuge which we Irish had to be content with, because a bloody persecution had made the religious life impossible in Ireland. But all that is changed now. A King who, with all his faults, is deeply religious, and a saintly Queen now reign over a kingdom, which will be at last truly united, if the intolerant minority will only permit it.

Be that as it may, Dame O'Ryan, instead of returning to Ypres, seems to have settled down in Dublin and, with the sanction of the Archbishop, to have opened a Benedictine school, to which the Countess of Clanrickarde and the first of the Catholic nobility of the land sent their children. For at that time still a considerable proportion of the oldest and noblest of the families of Ireland had been able to keep the ancient faith without losing their ancient possessions.

But difficulties arose in the year 1687, two years after Dame O'Ryan had arrived in Dublin, for in this year King James proceeded to found his first chief and royal monastery of Gratia Dei, in the city of Dublin, of which his friend Dame Butler of Ypres, and no other, was to be Abbess. Hence the complications and contradictions revealed in the following letters. At first the King would only protect Dame Butler, while the Archbishop would recognize none other than Dame O'Ryan, and it seemed as if there would be a King's Abbess and convent and an Archbishop's Abbess and convent; but all things turned out more or less happily in the end, the Archbishop welcoming Abbess Butler, and the King, as we shall see, patronizing Dame O'Ryan's establishment. There were

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other sources of difficulty which were likewise cleared away. For example, Dame O'Ryan had made her profession at Dunkirk Convent, of which Dame Caryll was Abbess, but she had been living for several years under Abbess Butler at Ypres, so there seems to have been a doubt as to which Abbess she was really responsible. Then the Vicars-General of the vacant see of Ypres had also to be reckoned with, for both the convents of Dunkirk and Ypres were under their jurisdiction; and, in addition to this, King Louis XIV's Intendant at Ypres must have a finger in the pie.

This little introduction will serve to unravel the tangled skein of the following correspondence; will explain the cross-currents and cross-purposes therein revealed, and will serve to show how such a state of things could have arisen. It is not pleasant to chronicle disputes between persons dedicated to Religion, especially between Religious whose motto is PAX, but, having undertaken to write the history of Ypres, we feel we would not be doing our work conscientiously or doing justice to our readers if we were to suppress the present unpleasant chapter, especially as the letters contain incidentally some interesting details. Our late Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII of happy memory, set us an example in this respect by throwing open the archives of the Vatican to all comers, Protestant as well as Catholic, for, as he well remarked, our holy religion has nothing to fear but much to gain by the truth being brought to light. And lest tender consciences should be shocked at the mere appearance of misunderstandings between the servants of God, we

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would remind them that some even of the greatest saints had to struggle with natural weakness and imperfections, until the grace of God was made perfect in them; and to cite a case at point, do we not read in the Acts of the Apostles* how the great Apostle St. Paul and his companion Barnabas fell out over the apparently trivial question as to whether they should take John Mark with them or not? "And there arose a dissension so that they departed one from another."

With this apology, and merely premising that we have tried to put as charitable a construction as possible on Dame O'Ryan's actions though we cannot wholly excuse her, and that on the other hand Abbess Butler seems to have allowed the "*naturally* ardent and lively temper" which we are told she possessed to get the better of her, we shall now put the correspondence before our readers. We have translated the letters, which are in French, as far as possible in the style of the originals. The first that we shall give, though not the first in order of date, is one from Abbess Butler expressing disapproval of Dame O'Ryan's actions. Her indignation at the prospect of seeing herself debarred, through no fault of her own, from accepting King James's invitation to found a house in her native country is natural and excusable, but we are sure she would herself have been the first to regret having made use of expressions here and there which might be construed as derogatory to the respect due to the Archbishop.

* Acts xv.

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Abbess Butler to the Grand Vicars of Ypres.

Ipre this 11th August, 1687.

Gentlemen,

I am obliged to you in the last degree for the frankness with which you are good enough to treat me, in communicating to me those matters which concern the affairs of this poor house, which has no cause for rejoicing in this world, unless it be in the promise of Our Lord, when He says: Blessed are those, who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. The letter which My Lord of Dublin has written me is more or less of the same tenor as that which you have received from him. I have read it over and pondered over it with astonishment. However, it does not in any way disconcert me. I know well that it is not of to-day or yesterday that contradictions accompany the most holy undertakings. They are, as it were, the ordinary mark of such. The project* in question has never been formed by me. It was proposed to me when I least thought of it, being then only occupied in finding means to build a chapel here. I came to a decision, in fine, with regard to it, with the advice and approval of many good people, and I trust that (with the grace of God) my intention has been good, in doing so, and without any other object but His greater glory and the welfare of my order. Such being the case, the more I meet with difficulties, the more ought I to have courage and confidence to overcome them. I have assuredly much veneration for my Lord of Dublin,† and for all the Prelates, in general, of our Holy Religion. I doubt not that he is a great man of good. But he has not had opportunities of knowing what Regular Discipline is, having spent all

*i.e., of making a foundation in Ireland.

†Most Rev. Patrick Russell, Archbishop of Dublin, 1683 to 1692, succeeded Archbishop Talbot after a vacancy of three years.—*Kirchenlexikon*, art. Dublin.

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his life in a country, where profession is not made.* Moreover, as he has not been long Bishop of Dublin,† and before that was only a Curé or Pastor of a Parish, he has never had much acquaintance with our affairs here, and at present he does not wish to have any impressions concerning them, except those which Dame O'Ryan gives him. On her arrival in Ireland, she found him but lately appointed ‡ a Bishop, and being an old acquaintance of his, it was not difficult for her to bring him over to her interests. It is easy to see that it is she who has suggested everything that he says in his letters. Let us examine, if you please, gentlemen, what this is and we shall see that it is much easier to write it, than to prove it.

He says, firstly, that the said Dame has done her best for this house and that she has sent money here.

Gentlemen, on the 12th of next month, two years will have passed since she left here for Ireland, full of fine promises and taking with her an altar frontal, a chasuble and all the other ornaments which Madame de Dunquerque (i.e., Lady Abbess of D.) had given this house. We gave her 8 pounds sterling for her journey to London, and she received £2 there. And from that time to this, I call God to witness that we have not received the value of a farthing (obole) from her, not even the pension which she had promised for one of her novices, whom she left here nearly a year and a half after her departure. If any one doubts the truth of my statements, he need only write to her [D. O'Ryan] and ask her to give the name of the merchant here or elsewhere on whom she has drawn her bill of exchange—or to say in what manner she has ever given us anything in the world. But enough of this subject. As regards her having done all she could for this house I admit it, but it was for its destruction, by preventing each and everyone from coming here. And not content with that, she

* Ou l'on fait point de profession, i.e., of monastic life.

† About four years at date of this letter.

‡ He had been Archbishop about two years at the time of Dame O'Ryan's arrival.

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and her novice have spread reports so unfavourable to this house that the mother of two of our little pupils was on the point of sending for them, and would have done so had not the Viceroy's wife [la Vice-Reyne] dissuaded her by assuring her of the falsity of the reports.

Secondly, Monseigneur says she had the permission of the Vice-Roy to hire a house at Dublin, even before he had received her under his protection. Now I must tell you that the Earl of Tyrconnell, the only Catholic Vice-Roy that we have had in Ireland for more than a century, was not invested with this dignity till December last, and did not arrive in Ireland till towards the end of January, and if you wish to consult your Registers you will see that the Bishop wrote you in the month of April previous to get your consent to his taking Dame O'Ryan under his protection. Consequently she could not then have had the permission of the Vice-Roy, as, not being such at that time, he could not grant any favour in that capacity.

Thirdly, he says it will not be permitted to anyone of the same family to make a foundation at Dublin, except to Dame O'Ryan.

Without staying to examine whether this is according to the maxims of the God of goodness and mercy who receives all without distinction of persons, I ask you, gentlemen, what you would think of an ecclesiastic of your Seminary or Diocese, whom, we'll suppose, you sent somewhere to serve your interests there, and who, instead of working for this end, were to busy himself in making you so odious, that you would be forbidden ever to put your foot in the place. Imagine, gentlemen, how such conduct would be felt by you, especially if the place where your presence was proscribed were your native country. This is just what Dame O'Ryan does in our regard.

Fourthly, he says he will not forget to send girls over here. It is high time to think of doing so, seeing that already two years have flown by since D. O'Ryan has been with him for this purpose, and we do not yet see the slightest sign that either one or the other takes any

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trouble to send us some. For my part, I am tired of such fine promises. The Lady Abbess of Dunquerque is always assuring me in her letters of her desires and continual prayers for the progress of this community, but I know from a good source that she secretly does me ill turns everywhere.

Fifthly, he says that Dame Philpot* tries, through the influence of the Countess of Tyrconnell, to drive away Dame O'Ryan, and that this is done without the cognizance of her husband, the Vice-Roy.

I am quite ignorant as to whether this is the fact or not. But it seems to me that as the Bishop is on the spot, he might have, long since, warned His Excellency of such proceedings. Besides I can hardly believe that a lady so virtuous as the Vice-Reyne † would undertake an affair of such consequence without consulting her husband.

In fine, he says that Revd. Fr. Thaly now shares his feelings with regard to Dame O'Ryan.

Here is the letter of the said father, which has just been brought me; it seems to me it speaks of nothing less than of that.

Having dealt with the Archbishop's statements she goes on to give her own view of Dame O'Ryan's present position:—

Now, gentlemen, please allow me to ask you if Dame O'Ryan has been incorporated a member of this monastery or not. If she has been, can she get rid of it at her own sweet will and become a member of another [house] without your consent? If she can, then every other Religious can do the same, when it seems good to her. And so Dame Philpot, whom we sent to Ireland lately on the business of this house, need only take the idea into her

*She had come over from Ypres in the interest of Abbess Butler.

†Lady Tyrconnel, "once the gay and beautiful Fanny Jennings, the loveliest coquette in the brilliant Whitehall of the Restoration" (Macaulay)—and as pious and virtuous as she was beautiful.

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head, and, following the example of Dame O'Ryan, declare that the Lady Abbess of Pontoise is her superior, not I, and thus she will be free from the obligation of rendering an account of her journey to anyone. Such a thing being once admitted, good-bye to all order and all regular dependence. I am persuaded, gentlemen, that when you reflect thereon, you will find the matter of too evil consequence to be tolerated.

The Lady Abbess of Dunquerque has in her monastery some religious, who were formerly sent from Ghent for the needs of the said monastery. Would she be pleased if the Lady Abbess of Ghent were to-day to encourage the said religious to refuse her [i.e., the Abbess of Dunquerque] obedience and to form independent projects under her [i.e., the Abbess of Ghent's] protection? Undoubtedly not. And yet it is just what she does herself though she can be hardly ignorant of the fact that we should not do to others what we would not like them to do to us. Nor can she be ignorant either of the fact that D. O'Ryan has always had a repugnance towards obeying anyone, and this reason alone, were there no other, renders her less fit to govern well. In fine it was the opinion of Madame Carryll* last year, which she wrote to you in express terms, that she did not consider D. O'Ryan capable of filling the place left vacant here, adding that if she had twenty votes to give in the election of a superior, she would not give one in favour of her. Why then does she now wish to send some of her religious to Ireland to make her Abbess in that country? Our private interests soon make us change our opinions. However, there is no interest that can excuse us before God for having contributed to promote some one to an office for which we consider her incapable. For myself, personally, I wish to have no hand in it. I pray Our Lord to turn all to His greater glory, and you, gentlemen, if you see that they are doing me an injustice, I most humbly beg of you to remedy it by your authority as superiors and your paternal protection, assuring you that it is with regret

*Abbess of Dunkirk.

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that I find myself in the unavoidable necessity of troubling you in such a way, for which I beg a thousand pardons, being, with affection and entire submission,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble and very obedient

Daughter and servant

MARIE DE BUTLER,

Abb[ess] unworthy.

The Father Thaly alluded to in the above letter of Abbess Butler was, no doubt, Hugo Thaly (? Daly), who was born in Ulster, 1638, entered the Society of Jesus in 1657, or '59; was professed of the four vows; and died at Poitiers, 1711. He is described as an "insignis juventutis instructor," "a distinguished educator of youth" up to his old age; was Rector of Poitiers and of Drogheda; served two years in hospitals; was in Dublin in 1683, at Drogheda in 1686 (and in Dublin again in 1687, as we learn from this and the following letter), and at Poitiers in 1708. He was for about 24 years on the Irish mission, and some years in Scotland. For the last eight years of his life he was totally blind. He died at the Irish College, Poitiers, 1711, at the age of 73; and was esteemed a holy man.* As is apparent, he was greatly in favour of Abbess Butler and opposed to Dame O'Ryan.

The following is, perhaps, the letter of Fr. Thaly alluded to in the above letter of Abbess Butler:—

*Oliver, from Stonyhurst MSS. Cf. Foley, *Records of English Prov. S.J.*, vol. vii., Part 2nd.

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REV. HUGH THALY, S.J., TO VICARS-GENERAL OF YPRES.

MESSIEURS LES
VICAIRES GENERAUX
DE L'EVESCHÉ VACANT
D'IPRES
A IPRES.

DUBLIN, *2nd of July*, 1687.

GENTLEMEN,

We have received your letters and orders to recall Madame ô Rian, but the resolution which Her Excellency has taken, of inviting the abbess to come here herself, compels us to say nothing yet, until she is on the spot to intimate your and her commands. They say that the Bishop maintains that Madame ô Rian is now entirely under his guidance, that it is no longer in your power to dispose of her, so that it will be necessary for you to declare your views upon this matter to the Bishop, in the letters you may forward him with Madame Butler, when she comes here. There are ecclesiastics as well as seculars, who will do all they can in her favour. She declares that she abandons all the interests she may claim in Ipres, saying that she could not save her soul under Madame of Ipres. If she is recalled it must be to Dunkirk, where she spreads the report through her friends that she has made her vows of stability. She recognizes no other regular superior except that of Dunkirk, and without the assistance of that Abbess, I don't see that it is possible to make her return. Everything can be managed with less noise and scandal, when Madame Butler is here, and to remove her before will be difficult besides which her school would be dispersed and her friends would talk loudly of the wrong done to her country and of the violence used towards her.

But as soon as Madame Butler comes everything will be tranquillized and she will retire of her own accord, in compliance with your commands, to her own monastery. Madame Philpot is a very good soul, and wishes to have

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her obedience renewed; she wishes for nothing which is not in strict order,* and would have written to you on this point, if she were able to write in French. I recommend myself to your SS. SS. [? Seigneuries—your Lordships], and am with respect,

Gentlemen,

Your very humble and

Very obedient servant in O^r^ Lord,

HUGUES THALY,

Of the Comp.^y^ of Jesus.

The good Jesuit Father seems to insinuate in the above letter that Dame O'Ryan was wrong in asserting that she had made her vows of stability for Dunkirk, but in matters of Benedictine discipline he could hardly be expected to be infallible. Every Benedictine monk and nun makes a vow of "stability" for one particular monastery. Unless a specific exception to the contrary is expressed, his or her stability is presumed to be fixed for the monastery in which profession is made. Dame O'Ryan had made her profession in and for Dunkirk Convent. She was afterwards sent to Ypres, but unless she formally changed her "stability" for that convent, with the approval of the Abbesses of both houses, she would still be considered a nun of Dunkirk. In a letter written by Abbess Butler to the Grand Vicars of Ypres, November 12, 1687, she expressly asserts—"It is unquestionable that D. O'Ryan belongs to the Dunkirk house, that she

* "Elle ne veut rien que dans l'ordre," which might possibly also mean "she wishes for nothing outside the (Benedictine) Order."

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had never been incorporated here. . . ." Of course if Dame O'Ryan had been sent to Ypres for a definite number of years, she could not act independently of the Abbess of Ypres, even with the approval of the Abbess of Dunkirk, until the period for which she had been sent to Ypres had elapsed, or unless the Abbess of Ypres released her.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DUBLIN, *15th of August*, 1687.

GENTLEMEN,

Although I have not allowed myself the honour of writing to you since last month, I have nevertheless acted according to the confidence which you have been pleased to place in me. In the belief that gentleness would win over Madame Rian to reason, I have not availed myself of the power you gave me of intimating to her the command to return. I have not, however, failed to give your order to our Archbishop, so as to act towards him with regularity. Yesterday there was a conference before our Viceroy, who declared to the Archbishop that Madam Rian is not fit to govern the first establishment of Religious which is to be made here. His Excellency considers it to be for the good of the country that the house of Ypres and that in this city should form one and the same [house], for fear of change, and that for that reason the Lady Abbess of Ipres should come with some Religious of Pontoise under her charge in order to commence with more zeal, union and charity than can be expected of Madame Rian. His excellency wrote to Mr. de Louvys [Louvois] to oblige the Intendant to let you act according to your discretion. We do not think, over here, that the two Religious of dunkerke [Dunkirk] whom madam Rian asks for are suitable; they would only cause more division; and so you are requested to keep them back, and to recall dame Rian, whose ambition is too apparent. The Viceroy will make a foundation

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for madam butler of whom he has a good character, as well as of the others whom she brings with her.

I am with respect,
Gentlemen, y^r very humble and obed^t
Serv^t, H. THALY, S.J.

It is a striking comment on the situation of the Church in those times that an Abbess could not be selected for the new foundation in Dublin without the interference of the Viceroy of Ireland on the one hand and that of the French King's Minister and Intendant on the other.

LETTER FROM ABBESS CARYLL OF DUNQUERQUE.

TO MONSIEUR,
MONSIEUR DE VIRY,
Grand Penitentiary; President
of the Episcopal Seminary and
Vicar General of the Diocese
at Ipres

SIR,

It is some time ago that I took the liberty of recommending to you the interests of Dame Marie Joseph Ryan for the honour of our Community to which she belongs, without, however, wishing to do anything against the interests of the Monastery of Ipre, which I have always tried to serve with much sincerity, and have none the less at heart at this moment, although I am continually hearing and reading that I am accused of the contrary. I intend to justify myself to the Viceroy of Ireland, as I am known to him, and to show him that my actions are a convincing proof that I have not deserved the reports spread about me on this subject. I make no pretensions as regards yourself, Sir, as you know that I have never written to you or made any request to the disadvantage of that house;

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but I am obliged to forward to you this letter of the Archbishop of Dublin; if it contains the same things that he writes to me, you will be convinced that Dame Ryan is not such as she is represented to you to be, and that she has the protection of the Vice-Roy, as well as that of my Lord Archbishop; the testimony of the latter is alone sufficient to justify her, and will, I believe, be of sufficient weight to obtain what he asks of you; I shall add nothing from myself except to assure you that I am very much disposed to acquiesce in whatever decision you may be pleased to come to, being with much respect and submission,

Sir,

Your very humble and very
Obedient daughter and servant,
MARIE D'CARYLL, Abb:

DUNQUERQUE *this 4th August.**

The following letter is not endorsed, but was apparently written to Abbess Carryl of Dunkirk. If so, the Archbishop, in alluding to the Abbess's "repugnance to side with" Dame Ryan, could not have been aware of her real sentiments as expressed in the above letter to the Grand Penitentiary of Ypres, written about three weeks before this of the Archbishop:—

MADAME,

I have received two letters of yours, the first containing one for Madam Ryan, which I have given her, showing her mine at the same time. Both the one and the other pained her greatly, seeing that you show such a repugnance to side with her. Since the last letter I wrote you I have not spoken to the Earl of Tyrconell about the affairs of Madam Ryan, but I am quite sure he will not go back on the promise he made me to establish her here, since he has sworn to it. I have received to-day

*No year—but it must have been written in 1687.

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a letter from his majesty, giving me power to admit Religious houses into this city, and especially those of the nation [i.e., Irish], which sufficiently authorizes me to protect Madm Ryan; and what I now come to ask of your charitable assistance is to send me two of your Religious, such as may be able to do honour to the house from which they come, and to the purpose for which I want them. I would cherish them much and so, without doubt, would the greater part of the Kingdom, for, as regards what has been written against Madam Ryan, it is only a pure effect of calumny, as it is clear that Madam Clanricked [*sic* Clanrickarde] would not entrust the education of her daughters to her, if she did not esteem her. I beg of you to send your religious as soon as possible and obtain for Madam Ryan the blessing of the Grand Vicars for her settlement here. It seems to me they ought to be well satisfied and very grateful to me for making here an establishment of your order, which may in time increase the house of Ipres if they think fit. The Abbess of Ipre and the Religious who intended coming here will do very well not to leave their house, much less give themselves the trouble of coming, for I assure them I am determined not to admit them. I shall be very much obliged, Madam, by your granting my request and am

Your very humble servant,

PATRICK DE DUBLIN.

DUBLIN, *this 23rd of August.*

[No year, but must be 1687.]

We can very well believe the Archbishop's statement that Tyrconnel *swore* to establish Dame Ryan in Dublin; as, if we are to credit the statements of his enemies at least, he was a past-master in the art of swearing, and, if his same enemies are to be believed, of forswearing himself. Hence the nick-name they gave him of "lying Dick Talbot."

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The following letter of the same date from Dame Ryan, defending her position, was enclosed in that of the Archbishop, and like the latter was apparently addressed to the Abbess of Dunkirk :—

MADAME,

I have suffered a Purgatory in my impatience to hear from you in reply concerning the matter in which I allowed myself the honour of writing to you, and on receiving your reply my anxiety was only increased, seeing the little encouragement I received therein from you, who are the only person from whom I could expect any, or on whom I depend. My Lord Archbishop was charitable enough to keep your letter in his hands two or three days before giving it to me in order to prepare me better for it, and on handing it to me he asked me what I wished to do; as regards the indiscretions of which I am accused, and the little utility of which I am to the public, I have left it to him to say whatever he thinks fit in my defence, although it seems to me that my conduct is sufficiently justified by the fact that I have the first nobility of the country to educate, [and] certainly their Parents would not permit them to lose their time and spend their money, if the education which I give them did not reply to their expectations, and I would not be protected as I am, if I did not do the nation service. The only person who opposes me is the Countess of Tyrconell; the rest of the nobility and people of quality have regard for my labours and the pains which I take, and I shall fear nothing provided I can have some of our dear Community with me. My Lord Archbishop has received to-day a letter from his majesty, giving him full power to establish Religious, men and women, in his Diocese, and it depends entirely on him, and not on Madame Tyrconell or any other, to make such a choice as seems best to him. Do me the favour, Madame, to let me know when you will be good enough to send us some of our Religious, and I beg of you also [to permit them] in passing through to see my Confessor, who is,

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as you know, the first almoner [or chaplain] of the Queen-Dowager;* he has promised me he would pay the expenses of their journey. I have written to my Cousin Moore to accompany them; he can act as our Confessor, and this is what the Archbishop wishes; the first thing he wishes them to do on their arrival is to elect the two novices to their Profession; as regards any other election† I am far from thinking of it, it being my wish to be always dependent on you, and I assure you, Madame, that I will submit with joy to the youngest Religious you may be pleased to send, but not to [one of] a Community other than yours. My Lord having commanded me to forward his letter and mine by this ordinary [courier], I am obliged to conclude before recounting all that I had to say to you, who am with the most profound respect,

Madame,

Your very obedient and affectionate daughter,

MARIE JOSEPH RYAN.

We do not know to whom Dame Ryan alludes in above letter as "her confessor . . . and first almoner of the Queen-Dowager," but we know from the report of the Abbé Agretti, sent to Rome about seventeen years before the above was written, that some Irish priests were in high favour at the Court of Charles II. Agretti, who was a Canon of Bruges, and Minister Apostolic in Belgium, was sent from Brussels in September, 1669, on a mission of inquiry into the state of the Church and Religion in England. In his report, which was sent to Rome, December, 1669, he

*Catherine of Braganza, widow of Charles II.

†She hints at reports spread about as to her desire to become an Abbess.

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mentions many Irish priests, amongst others the following :—

Thadeo Ceough [? Keogh] *alias* Poerio, a Dominican who stays in the house of the Marquess of Clanrickarde *He is titular chaplain to the Queen.* . . .

Patrick Hews [Hughes] a Jesuit, Chaplain, *effective*, of the Queen. . . .

And Patrick Ghineo, a Secular, one of the queen's principal almoners, is in great favour with the King, [Chas. II.] He is exemplary and of "gran bonta." . . . He is chiefly useful for procuring access to his majesty, and conveying a message to him. The king willingly listens to Ghineo, in whom he places entire trust.

All's well that ends well. The following interesting letter from Abbess Butler to the French King's Intendant at Ypres announces that all difficulties and opposition had been removed as regards her going to Ireland :—

To Monsieur,

Monsieur Des Madrits, Coun^lr [Councillor] of the King in all his Coun^ls [Councils], Intendant of Justice, Police and finance at Ipres.

Ipres *this* 12*th* 7^ber [September], 1687.

Monsieur,

Please allow me to put before you, along with the letter which the Confessor of His Brittanic Majesty has sent me from Monsieur Barillon,* a copy of another which I received the other day from her Excellency the Vice-Queen of Ireland. You will learn from them that all opposition was at that time on the point of coming to an end, and I have received others this morning showing that everything has passed off in our favour in the best possible manner, since the Viceroy, having been thoroughly informed as to the merits of the case, boldly declared

* French Ambassador at the Court of St. James.

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himself the Protector of our establishment. He has already written on this subject to the Court of France. He has ordered a house to be rented and furnished for us in Dublin, which he has gone to the trouble of inspecting in person, and when he is at Chester where he is coming to find the King,* he will take there, in concert with His Majesty, the necessary steps to ensure the success of such a good beginning.

You know well, Sir, that the best undertakings are not always examples of obstacles and difficulties. As regards those which my Lord of Dublin wished to make, they caused me little surprise. I know well from what source they sprang; and one need not have any great discernment in affairs to see that they have been communicated to you with such diligence, merely to prejudice you and to dissuade you from favouring our designs with your usual goodness and charity. People are already convinced that all these obstacles and difficulties had a very sorry foundation, and if, Sir, you doubt thereof, please be good enough to consult the Vicars on the matter. They know all that has taken place. See what they think of it. They are disinterested people, and consequently they will inform you concerning it with greater sincerity than others. If they tell you that I am in the wrong, I am quite willing that you should deprive me of every favour; but if they assure you of the contrary, I shall expect of your honesty and equity the protection and charitable good-will with which you have hitherto been pleased to honour us. I am assured that persons of the first quality will be thankful to you for it, and will not fail to testify their gratitude, as likewise she who wishes you and all your family with all her heart the greatest honours of this world and a happy eternity, being with all possible respect,

Sir,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

MARIE JOSEPH BUTLER,

Abb.[ess] unworthy.

*Ou il vient trouver le Roy.

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The historic meeting at Chester between the Viceroy of Ireland and King James, to which Abbess Butler alludes in the above letter, had already taken place a few weeks before the letter was written.

In the summer of 1687 King James set out on a Royal progress round England, arriving at Chester about the end of August. Here he was welcomed by two distinguished supporters of very opposite religious and political views. Penn, the Quaker, whom the King had won over to his cause by his measures of toleration in favour of dissenters, was endeavouring to rally his brethren to the support of the King. On the Sunday, with James's full approval, he preached to a dissenting congregation in the tennis-court, a measure of liberty which Nonconformists had not enjoyed under the King's Protestant predecessors. The Protestant Bishop Cartwright, whom James had appointed to the See of Chester the year before, preached in the once Catholic Cathedral to his Protestant audience, while the King heard Mass at an altar which had been decked out for the purpose in the Shire Hall. Among those who assisted at the Holy Sacrifice that day was, in all probability, the Irish Viceroy, Tyrconnel, who had hastened over from Dublin to meet the King at Chester, that being the nearest point to Ireland which was taken in by the King in his progress. He had come to tell his Majesty how the process of transferring the Government of Ireland from the hands of the disloyal Protestants to the ever-loyal Catholics was going on apace, and how he had taken a house hard by Dublin Castle, where

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James could place the nuns of his own first chief and Royal Monastery of Gratia Dei.

The King congratulated Tyrconnel on the good work done, and sent him back to Ireland with his benediction and encouragement. James himself turned southward, and having visited Boscobel, where the Catholic Penderels had sheltered his brother Charles II, and the battle-field of Edgehill, where his father, Charles I, had first felt the vengeance of ultra-Protestantism, he turned his steps towards Oxford, where his high-handed proceedings against the Fellows of Magdalen were to be the beginning of a similar lesson for himself.

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CHAPTER XIV

DAME O'RYAN'S BENEDICTINE CONVENT AND SCHOOL IN CHANNEL ROW, DUBLIN

THE way was thus opened for Abbess Butler's foundation, the fortunes of which we have already followed in a previous chapter. But Dame O'Ryan's affairs had not yet been settled. As we have already seen from the letter of her Abbess (Lady Caryll of Dunkirk), the latter was much disposed to encourage the said Dame, on seeing that she had the patronage of the Archbishop, and was promised the protection of the Viceroy. Later on, as we learn from the following letter, she decided to assist Dame O'Ryan in making a foundation in Dublin, by sending over to her two professed nuns of Dunkirk, to enable her to admit to profession the two novices whom she seems to have picked up in Ireland.

Abbess Caryll's letter is not endorsed, but was probably addressed to the Grand Penitentiary of Ypres, M. De Viry, as was her former one. It apparently enclosed a letter from the Archbishop of Dublin, most probably that of the 23rd August, which we have already given.

DUNKERCK, [*sic*]
This 10th *of* 7ber [September] 1687.

SIR,

I do not penetrate into the causes and reasons which

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you have for concealing from me what you intend doing as regards the establishment in Ireland, but I send you the enclosed for two reasons; one, to justify myself as having done nothing contrary to the interests of the Lady Abbess of Ipre, as she complains everywhere, since you see that I have not acted in favour of the other [i.e., D. O'Ryan] although she is my Religious and has worked under your jurisdiction for more than ten years to this effect, and it would be very shameful of us to send her back with a reprimand after such a time. The second reason is, Sir, to show you the resolution of the Archbishop to establish her in his Diocese in preference to any other, as likewise his demand that I should send two Religious for the profession of the two novices, and for the establishment of this monastery which he wishes to erect [i.e., canonically]. I await your orders as to this last point, with such entire submission, that I do not wish to put forward several things which I might say on this subject. All I ask for is your reply as soon as possible, and I beg of you to communicate it to Monsieur L'Intendant, he has such affection for our house that I take the liberty of informing him of our concerns, and I am convinced that neither you nor he will decide on anything but what you consider to be for the glory of God and our advantage, and you will see that I shall submit without difficulty. It is only right that I should act fairly towards my Lord Archbishop—on the other hand he knows that I am dependent upon you, and that, of my own accord, I cannot render him the service he desires. I am with much respect,

Sir,

Your very humble, etc.,

MARIE D'CARYLL, *Abb.*

It was probably after writing the above that Abbess Caryll learned that it had been finally agreed on all sides that Abbess Butler was to go to Dublin, and it would seem that she did not wish to embarrass her by

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encouraging Dame O'Ryan to remain on in the same city. At the same time she does not seem to have been anxious to recall her to Dunkirk, so she proposed to aid in keeping Ypres for the Irish, in the absence of Abbess Butler, on condition that Dame O'Ryan should be allowed to return and to remain there. But Abbess Butler would on no account assent to this condition, as we learn from a letter evidently written to the Grand Vicars of Ypres, from which, on account of its length, we can only give an extract :—

(ABBESS BUTLER TO THE GRAND VICARS OF YPRES.)

IPRE *the* 12*th* 9ber [November], 1687.

GENTLEMEN,

After having wished you the happy feasts of this Holy octave* and assured you of my humble respect please permit me to inform you that My Lady Carryll wrote me on the 28th of last month that after having spoken to the Intendant, she would make me proposals of agreement with Dame O'Ryan. I am informed that the Intendant has not been at Dunquerque since then. However I received on the 5th inst. a letter from the Lady Abbess of our English Dames at Ghent to the effect that My Lady Carryll had agreed with the Intendant to preserve this house, with its revenues, for the Irish nation on certain conditions, to wit, that D. O'Ryan may come to Ipre and keep the house for the nation in my absence, and that if afterwards I am obliged to return here, she will give it back to me, remaining with me here.

You are, Gentlemen, my superiors; I have made a vow of obedience to you, and I hope (with the help of God) never to fail in my obligations in this respect. This is why I wish to do nothing in this matter without your

* The octave of St. Martin of Tours, who is the patron of the Cathedral of Ypres, and who was also the patron saint of several of its bishops.

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knowledge and consent, beseeching you at the same time to continue ever to protect me in as far as the justice of my cause requires. The revenue of this house consists of 80 pistoles, French money, which his Most Christian Majesty gives us every year We are 7 persons in the family [community] (without counting D. O'Ryan), all of us professed or members incorporated here, and we have not a sou that we can rely upon for our living except these 80 pistoles. It is unquestionable that Dame O'Ryan belongs to the Dunkirk house, that she has never been incorporated here, and what's more, that she has voluntarily cut herself off from us, having declared in writing (as you may have seen by the copy of her letter written lately to My Lady Caryll and which the Lady Abbess of Ghent has communicated to me) that she does not wish to recognize anyone as her Abbess except my Lady Caryll, or submit to any but to her and her Religious, refusing in express terms to join with the Religious of any other Monastery. This much taken for granted, here, gentlemen, is the reply I am going to make to the proposals of my Lady Caryll, if you think right. I am willing that D. O'Ryan should come here and remain here always in my absence, and I am even willing to give her an adequate sum, by way of revenue, for her maintenance, such as you, gentlemen, or any other fair-minded person thinks suitable, on condition however that My Lady Caryll undertakes to have the remainder paid to me every year to supply both the needs of those whom I shall leave in the house with D. O'Ryan, as those who shall come [with me] to Ireland; and that, in case I am obliged by some change [i.e., of the government] (from which God preserve us) to return to this country, My Lady Caryll will then recall the said D. O'Ryan to her convent, to acquit herself in the monastery of her profession of the vow of obedience which she has made in the sight of the Church and which she refuses to accomplish elsewhere. This, gentlemen, will appear to you all the more reasonable, as our Constitutions expressly ordain that if any Religious, who is transferred from one monastery to another, is an impediment or a trouble to the peace of the [latter] place,

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she is to be sent back to the monastery whence she came. I have the text inserted here, word for word, in the original Latin which our Confessor will show you whenever you please :—

Quae in monasterium aliud transfertur pacis aut majoris perfectionis causa, si pacem illius loci pertubaverit et inquietam se præbuerit, remittatur, ut de ea superiores statuant, quod magis e re illius, et Conventus, futurum in Domino arbitrentur. (*De translatione Monialium, cap.* 4, *ver.* 9.) In the same chapter, ver. 3, it is said : Quando monasterium novum instituendum erit, penes Abbatissam et Conventum sit eligere ad institutionem peragendam.

And so Dame O'Ryan being only a simple religious* had no right to commence a Monastery by herself alone, without the consent of the Abbess and of the Community. It's in vain, gentlemen, that Constitutions have been made for us, and that the trouble has been gone to of having them approved by the Ordinary and confirmed by Pope Alexander VII., if it is permitted to us not to observe them and to follow only our own caprice and our own will in matters of the utmost consequence. It is unquestionable that neither I nor my predecessor have ever chosen or authorized D. O'Ryan to commence an establishment in Dublin. Nor do I think that my Lady Caryll will maintain that she has done so either, at least in a canonical manner, that is to say by the choice and deliberation of the Community. And indeed it is incredible that one could do with deliberation such a ridiculous thing as to wish to begin a new establishment with one single Religious. The truth is, that D. O'Ryan has not been formally chosen or authorized by anyone for the design she has in her head. Her obedience allowed her nothing else (as you have already declared) but to go to Ireland to obtain some assistance for this poor house.

It is clear from the above letter that Abbess Butler relinquished any claim she had to Dame O'Ryan's obedience, so that the latter was, now at least, perfectly

* N'estant qu'une particulière.

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free to pursue her project in Dublin, with the approval of her own Abbess (i.e., of Dunkirk) and of the Archbishop. She did not return to Ypres, nor was she recalled to Dunkirk, but remained on in Dublin. Needless to say she was not associated with King James's and Abbess Butler's Convent in Great Ship Street, and her name is not mentioned in the King's charter granted to the latter. But she appears to have established a Benedictine convent and school in Channel Row, which was situated in the part of Dublin lying north of the Liffey and since the advent of the Hanoverians has been known as North Brunswick Street. The existence of this convent seems to have been more or less ignored by most people on the one hand, while, on the other, it has been more than once confounded with that of Abbess Butler. Harris,* in his edition of Ware's *Antiquities of Ireland*, speaks of the Channel Row Convent as having been " founded by King James II, 6th June, 1688, and *con*-founded by King William, 16th July, 1690." Perhaps he too confounds two distinct foundations, and his remarks may possibly apply rather to Abbess Butler's house in Ship Street, the patent of which is dated 5th June, in the 6th year of James's reign; but not having been able to consult Harris's work directly, we cannot pass judgment upon it.

There is no doubt, however, that they were two quite distinct foundations, as is evident from the

* Quoted in the interesting "Story of a Dublin Parish" (*Irish Rosary*, June, 1904), by the Rev. Myles Ronan, C.C., who also supposes the Benedictine Nunnery in Channel Row to have been founded by Mary Butler.

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work entitled *A Summary of the Various Ecclesiastical Institutions, Orders, Edifices, etc., in Ireland since the Introduction of the Christian Religion*, which was printed in Dublin in 1810, and which we have already quoted in connection with Abbess Butler's foundation. Having given an account of this Ship Street foundation, which agrees with the Ypres MSS., the author goes on to speak of Dame O'Ryan's convent as follows :—

There was another Benedictine nunnery erected under the invocation of St. Brigid, in Channel Row, opposite to Red Cow Lane, much about the same time, *or rather a little before that of Ship Street*, by Dame O'Ryan, a religious lady of Ireland, who took the Benedictine habit, professed in the English nunnery of Dunkirk, with two novices, and were encouraged and favoured by Archbishop Russell, it subsisted but for a short time, like that of Ship Street. Dame O'Ryan returned to her convent at Dunkirk where she died.

Again J. J. McGregor, in his *Pictures of Dublin*, published in 1821, clearly distinguishes the two foundations as follows :—

During the residence of James II in Ireland he founded the following houses :—

I. A nunnery for Benedictines in Ship Street, [which, as McGregor correctly says, was begun by Abbess Butler,] accompanied by some other religious whom she had borrowed from the English Benedictine Monastery of Pontoise, etc., etc.

He then goes on to say :—

The same Prince also erected a Convent in Channel Row, under the invocation of St. Brigid. This, as well as the house in Ship Street, was for Benedictine Nuns, and Dame O'Ryan and two Novices from the English

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Nunnery at Dunkirk entered into it, but was obliged to quit it about the same time that the Sisterhood of Ship Street left this country. Mrs. O'Ryan and her companions returned to Dunkirk, where she lived for many years after. The Channel Row Convent has since been occupied by nuns of the Order of St. Dominick, who remained in possession of it until a few years since. The house is now converted into a charitable dispensary.

The Channel Row Convent was thus the Archbishop's and Dame O'Ryan's own special foundation but King James II, although he did not regard it as his own first chief and Royal monastery, nevertheless condescended to patronise it as we learn from De Burgo's *Hibernia Dominicana*. Speaking of the Dominican nuns, who came from Galway to Dublin in the second decade of the eighteenth century, he says :—

That they resided together in Fisher's Lane until the month of September of the said year [1717] when they moved to a street, on the same side [i.e. the north] of the river, commonly called Channel Row, and occupied a house near the Church which had formerly belonged to the Nuns of the Order of St. Benedict, and which was consecrated under the title of St. Brigid, Widow, in the year 1689, by the then Most Illustrious Archbishop of Dublin, Patrick Russell, *His Most Gracious Majesty, James II being present, as I have learned from eye-witnesses.*

As regards the dedication of this church, we are disposed to believe it was to St. Brigid, Virgin, of Ireland, rather than to St. Bridget of Sweden, as the learned Dominican asserts.

An interesting account of the Channel Row Convent and Chapel as they appeared in the year 1749, that is to say, about sixty years after the Benedictines had left

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them and about thirty-two after the Dominicans had taken possession, is contained in a MS. entitled: "State and Condition of R.C. Chapels in Dublin, Both Secular and Regular, A.D. 1749"*:—

> Channel Row Nunnery [writes the author, who was probably a Protestant] has a chapel belonging to it, both of which were built for *Benedictine* Nuns in the reign of James II, but is now under the *Dominican Rule*. The house is large, the chapel decent, the altar grand, well wainscotted and adorned with pillars. . . .

From this it would appear that the buildings, which were spacious and commodious, were erected specially for the purposes of Dame O'Ryan's Convent.

It speaks much for the zeal of the persecuted Catholics of Ireland for the glory of God's House that they should lavish so much care and money on the adornment of their chapels at a time when the terrible Penal Laws were still hanging over them. It is true that in 1745, four years before the above account had been penned, there was a lull in the persecution, as the glorious victory of the Irish Brigade at Fontenoy and the large part played by Irishmen in Prince Charlie's descent upon Scotland in that year, had given the British Government food for reflection and for serious alarm, and induced them to send over the genial Earl of Chesterfield as Lord Lieutenant, with at least a temporary "message of peace to Ireland."

But to return to Dame O'Ryan. It seems that after the usurper William's troops had "confounded"

* Egerton MSS. 1772, ff. 68 *et seq.* *British Museum*, edited by Most Rev. Dr. Donnelly, Bishop of Canea, for Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.

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King James's religious foundations the few nuns of Channel Row Convent returned to Dunkirk, with the exception of Dame O'Ryan, who remained on in Dublin hoping against hope that better times would come and that she might yet restore the fortunes of the venerable Benedictine Order in that city. But at last old age and infirmity compelled her also to return to Dunkirk, as we learn from her Death-Bill or Mortuary Notice, which is still preserved among the MS. memoirs of the Benedictine monastery at Ghent, and which shows us in what esteem this venerable old nun was held by her own community. It runs as follows :—

Anno Domini 1719. Sept. the 7th. Departed this life R^d D^m Mary Joseph O'Ryan, this good Religious accompanied Dame Alexia Legg being of the same nation when she went for Ireland to procure means for the establishing an Irish monastery, the death of the one did not discourage the other who pursued the undertaking and remained many years in Ireland under the protection of the Arch Bishop of Dublin. His Lordship in the reign of King James the Second, there being some hopes of success, made an address to my Lady Caryll to send some more religious to her, no sooner were they arriv'd but the Revolution broke out in England w^ch obliged King James ye 2^d to fly into France, His Majesty making his way thence into Ireland in hopes to reconquere his Crown, remaining there some two years,* He encourag'd their establishment and many persons of quality to contribute to it placed their children w^th them as pentioners, but the King being overcome in Ireland more by treachery than by force of Armes was forced to return into France; hopes of ye small Community's increase, was not only lost, but necessitated to disperce, and came back to their

* King James arrived in Ireland in March, 1689, and fled after the battle of the Boyne in July of the following year, so that he only remained in Ireland for some sixteen months.

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Monastery, only this good D^m M. Josepha who weathered it out by ye advice of some of the Bishops and zealous Catholics in expectation of better times and circumstances, but she growing antient and infirm came back to prepare herself to death, for though all other matters were uncertain, she was sure that could not faille. All^m God gave her some years in order to it. it was a particular providence of his y^t she should live a great part of her life in the country in continual fatigues and turmoils and yet to dye in this Monastery* of her Proffession, it was doubtless a recompense for her good intention. She had a long and tedious sickness before her death, received all the Rights of our Holy Mother the Church and departed this life at ye [age] of 92, of Proffession 49.

Requiescat in pace.

It would seem that one of Dame O'Ryan's community died during their brief residence in Dublin. Beneath the now Protestant, but once Catholic, Church of St. Michan's, in North Dublin, there are vaults, which, owing to the antiseptic nature of the soil, have the property of preserving bodies from decay. "In the second vault on the right are several coffins without lids, revealing the skeletons in all their gruesome, mummified ugliness. Some of the bodies are perfect . . . The first of these . . . on the left is supposed to be that of a Benedictine nun, belonging to the convent in Channel Row, and the body on the extreme right is thought to be that of a Cistercian monk belonging to Mary's Abbey."† It is an interesting and happy coincidence that this good Benedictine nun should have been laid to rest in the same vault as her

* i.e., Dunkirk. † "The Story of a Dublin Parish."

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brother religious of the once Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary's, Dublin. In the same vaults are buried the bodies of the Brothers Sheares, who died in the attempt to assert their country's freedom, while in the grave-yard outside is the reputed grave of the patriot, Robert Emmet.

We may conclude this chapter by remarking that the Dominican nuns remained in the former Benedictine convent in Channel Row until the year 1808, when they removed to Clontarf, and thence, in 1819, to Cabra, where they still flourish. The old Benedictine oratory in Channel Row was rented by the Governors of the House of Industry in 1810 and converted into a surgical hospital, which was opened in 1811, and named after the Duke of Richmond, then Viceroy of Ireland. It still exists as part of the Richmond Surgical Hospital, being known as the Chapel Ward.*

Thus came to an untimely end the latest, though we trust not the last, attempt to plant the daughters of St. Benedict on Irish soil.

* Allusion is made to Dame O'Ryan's convent in the following notice of her patron and protector, Archbishop Russell:—

"After a vacancy of three years the Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Russell was consecrated Archbishop of Dublin on the 2nd August, 1683 . . . During King James's residence in the Irish Metropolis, Dr. Russell was virtually chaplain to that monarch, and celebrated Divine Service in the Royal presence. The last rite he celebrated before the King was the consecration of the Benedictine Nunnery in Channel-row. On the downfall of the Stuart dynasty he fled to Paris. When, however, he returned to close his life in the land of his ministry, in 1692, he paid the debt of nature, and was buried in the ancient church of Lusk. Archbishop Russell's principal residence was in the old chapel house at Francis-street, where an ancient censer is still preserved, exhibiting the inscription: 'Orate pro Patricio Russell, Archiepiscopo Dublinise, Primate Hiberniæ, et pro ejus fratre Jacobo Russell, Decano Dublinise, et Protonotario Apostolico qui me fieri fecit.'"—(Dalton, *Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin*, quoted by J. Collins.)

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CHAPTER XV

THE RETURN TO YPRES—DEATH OF ABBESS BUTLER (1690-1723)

I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.—PSALM LXXXIII.

Fear not, little flock.—LUKE XII.

I will not leave you orphans.—JOHN XIV.

ON the violent break-up of the little community in Ship Street, the few surviving nuns of Pontoise, who had shared Lady Abbess Butler's fortunes in Dublin, seem to have directed their steps homewards to their own convent, near Paris, while Abbess Butler herself, as we have seen, decided to return with her own subjects to her convent at Ypres.

After a long and dangerous voyage both by sea and land [says the MS.] they at length arrived at Ypres, and entered their old house, where Lady Butler led a most solitary life, the professed nuns of Pontoise having returned to their own monastery. For five years she lived alone with four lay sisters, and in such an extreme poverty as to have no other drink* than a decoction of bran. Destitute of all human comfort, but ever united to God in prayer, never wearied of suffering nor yielding not, she expected with an humble resignation our Lord's good pleasure, resisting the solicitations of her family,

* "Drench" (P.A.)

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and even of the Bishop, to sell the house and live at her ease wherever she chose;* but her heroic soul, confiding in Providence, would not abandon the work of God nor fly from His cross, and the Almighty verified in this His faithful spouse the truth of His sacred word *that none should ever trust in Him in vain.*

At last her admirable patience was rewarded, and "four ladies from the Court of France" presented themselves as postulants and asked to be permitted to share with her the trials and consolations of the religious life, but only two remained, and these did not make their profession until after a long probation of five years.

Fortified by her unshaken confidence in the Divine Providence [says the MS.], after having remained alone above five years, she received in the year 1695 four choir novices, but for further trial of her heroic patience and fidelity, had not the comfort of professing any till 29th Oct.,† 1700, when she admitted two to the making their sacred vows. Notwithstanding her want of subjects she had the resolution to dismiss the other two, not finding them endowed with the spirit of their state, although the Queen of England had promised to provide for their maintenance.‡

But Lady Abbess Butler was not altogether without

* "The professed nuns of Pontoise having returned to their own monastery, Lady Butler remained alone with four lay-sisters supporting with a most chearful [*sic*] and admirable constancy an extreme poverty and want of every human comfort, insomuch that the Bishop tried to engage her to break up the establishment, sell her house, and retire to some other convent, where she might live in quiet and ease."—. K.P.

† According to the Ypres list, Dame Arthur was professed December 9th, and Dame Josepha O'Connor December 29th, 1700.

‡ An Ypres MS. (apparently Abbess Butler's "Death-Bill"), quoted in P.A.

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benefactors in this time of bitter trial. Among them we must mention Pope Innocent XII, who, in 1699, forwarded a sum of one thousand scudi, part of a larger sum set aside by him for the relief of distressed Irish exiles.*

It appears also that an annual sum of five hundred florins was allowed the nuns by the King of France, while Queen Mary of Modena made contributions out of her slender resources, as we shall see.

It is probable that the "four ladies from the Court of France," above alluded to, are the same as the four novices from Ypres who are mentioned in a certificate,† from Lady Abbess Justina Petre, as having made their noviciate in the Abbey at Ghent, in preparation for their profession at Ypres. Their names were Catharine Cavanagh, Margaret Arthur, Marie O'Connor, and Marie Cavanagh. Abbess Petre certifies that they were at Ghent for sixteen months, during which time they "practised with marvellous exactitude" the injunctions of our Holy Rule and constitutions, and acquitted themselves of all their religious duties in a most edifying manner, while their whole behaviour has been very modest, humble and gentle, and their conduct most exemplary and full of zeal for the advancement of the service of God."

But, notwithstanding this excellent testimonial, two only were admitted to profession, i.e., Margaret Arthur, who was professed on December 9, 1700, and

* Cf. *Sketch of the Persecutions Suffered by the Catholics of Ireland* (pp. 64-7), by His Eminence Cardinal Moran.

† Dated at Ghent, 17th January, 1697. See French original in Appendix.

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succeeded Dame Butler as Abbess, and Marie O'Connor* professed December 29, 1700. The two "Demoiselles" Cavanagh left apparently because they did not come up to Abbess Butler's ideals as to what religious should be, possibly also on account of the extreme poverty of the convent, although the MS. assures us that the "Queen of England had promised to provide for their maintenance."

The Queen here alluded to is, of course, Mary Beatrice of Modena, who always took the most kindly interest in the welfare of the good nuns of Ypres, and never tired of devising means of alleviating their bitter distress. In truth, she did so much for this convent that we are not surprised to find an English tourist in 1724 speaking of its having been *founded* (*endowed* would have been the more correct expression) "by the late King James's Queen for the daughters of such as followed her husband's fortunes." Just about this period she was importuning the Bishop to admit to profession at Ypres the four novices above mentioned, in whom she interested herself greatly; a subject which is alluded to in the following extract from a letter written by Abbess Caryll of Dunkirk to her brother John, afterwards Lord Caryll, secretary to the exiled Queen of England, and himself an exile at St. Germains:

. . . Our Bishop and L'Abeye de Guie is now at Paris, an[d] on[e] of them if not both will be speedily at St. Germains, they appear to be very uneasy that they could not yett comply with the Queen's desire of Pro-

*We presume this is the same as Dame Josepha O'Connor, entered as professed on that date in the Ypres list.

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fessing the four novices at Ipres, to serve her Masty the Bishop seems sollicitous, yet the feare of bringing a burthen on the Dioces oblidges him to be cautious, the truth is they are very ill situated, and has bine these thirty years in this unsettled way; if the Queen should dye (whom God preserve) theyr maintenances ceases, however my Lord to show his zeal in her Matys pious concurrance and independent of any casuality, he will try whether the 500 fls [florins] the King of France gives as an almes during his life, may be a settled foundation. I have used all my weak endeavours to further it, and have promised too of my Religious to assist the Lady Butler till her novices be fitted and experienced in Religious Discipline.*

But the Bishop was unsuccessful in procuring a settled foundation from Louis XIV, and consequently did not venture to call on the Queen at St. Germains, as we learn from another letter from Abbess Caryll to her brother :—

. . . Now I can tell you what has made my Lord Bishop chang his resolutions of goeing to St. Germains, was only to avoid the Queen's sollicitations to profess the novices; had he succeeded in his proposals of getting a settled foundation from france, he would have prevented† the Queen, in offering her Magty to receave theyr vows, but failing of this project he would not make his appearance, however, the Abbot de Guie is resolved to give that mark of respect to the Queen. . . .

Having failed in his efforts to procure a foundation from the King of France, the Bishop suggested another solution of the difficulty, and a drastic one. He proposed, in fact, that the community of Ypres should

*Caryll Papers. Additional MSS. British Museum; quoted by E. W. Beck.

†i.e., anticipated.

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be incorporated with that of Dunkirk. In this way he would be able to satisfy the Queen's wishes regarding the profession of the novices, and at the same time would be free from any anxiety as to the house becoming a burthen on his diocese. But the proposal seems to have caused a flutter among the dovecotes of Dunkirk, which we may well understand, as the latter house probably found it hard enough to support its own community. There seems, moreover, to have been some misunderstanding between the Abbesses of the two houses, arising out of the Dublin foundation, and, no doubt also, differences of nationality would accentuate the prejudice of the Dunkirk nuns against receiving the community of Ypres.

The project, however, was abandoned to the no small relief of the nuns of Dunkirk, as may be seen from the following letter, dated December 2, 1699 :—

MY DEAR BROTHER,

. . . I am bound to say much more to you from this family and myself, for the evil you have averted had we bine soe unfortunate as to have bine incorporated with these good people at Ypres, what would become of us if we had not so benefitiall a friend as you at Court his holy name be praysed for it, the same goodness reward you with health and long life, which is the dayly prayer of this community, in the meantime I am amused that such a proposal should be entertained in the thought of an inditious person; how ever I will give you another proposall in theyr behalf, the Queen maintains too Religious that was Profest in Ireland,* what if the Queen proposed to our Bishop, theyr removall to this Monastery of Ipres? If you allow of this project speak of it to her

* i.e., in Dame O'Ryan's Convent in Channel Row (?).

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Maty give at the same time our most humble dutys and profound respects perhaps their will still be the same objection, noe certainty of a foundation to be depended on however we soe frighted and alarma'd at this proiect, that I shall hardly venter any of my Religious to bring up their young ones, as I halfe consented too, by that lady Butler's importunity's, but now shall take leave of haveing any more to doe, with [them] thanks to God that I have scap't this danger by your favour. . . . I am with all the gratitude imaginable, Deare Brother,

Your affectionate Sister,

MA. CARYLL.

"It is much to be wished," says a recent writer,* "that the good Abbess had mentioned where the two religious professed in Ireland were and why they were not at Ypres," to which, we think, we can furnish a satisfactory answer. As we have already shown, two distinct foundations were made in Dublin in James's reign, one by Abbess Butler, the other by Dame O'Ryan of Dunkirk. Speaking of the latter, McGregor†, whom we have already quoted, remarks that "Dame O'Ryan and *two novices from the English Nunnery at Dunkirk* entered into it, but was obliged to quit it about the same time that the sisterhood of Ship Street left this country. *Mrs. O'Ryan and her companions returned to Dunkirk.*" These were probably the two religious alluded to, and they were, no doubt, at Dunkirk, not at Ypres, because they had belonged to Dame O'Ryan's Dublin community, not Abbess Butler's. We have not been able to trace their names in the Dunkirk list, and

* E. W. Beck, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, May, 1891.
† *Pictures of Dublin*, by J. J. McGregor, 1821.

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do not know if they were Irish, but from Abbess Caryll's readiness to part with these "too Religious that was Profest in Ireland" we are confirmed in our belief that they were, and that the difference of nationality had much to say to her unwillingness to incorporate the Ypres community with her own.

The community of Dunkirk sent a formal letter of thanks to Mr. Caryll for his services in preventing the incorporation "which had else beene inevitable," but at the same time they felt it necessary to beg his further protection :—

> The whole community does most earnestly beseech y^r^ Hon^r^ still to enterpose your credit to secure us in a business My L^d^ Bishop thinks he must bring about to satisfy the Queen, and yett not charge his own Bishoprick by proffesing the four Irish novices in the unsettled condition of that house, w^ch^ both himself, and the towne soe long intended to dissolve.

From which we learn that the house of Ypres was on the verge of dissolution at this crisis; but "though doomed to death, it was fated not to die," and was destined to outlive the Dunkirk house.

It says not a little for the unconquerable perseverance of Abbess Butler, that she should have struggled through such difficulties; but she had a good friend in the Queen, and in the end won the day, so that not only were her novices professed and her house not dissolved, but it is actually the only one of the communities then existing in Ypres which has remained to this day.*

In the recently published Calendars of Stuart

* E. W. Beck, *loc. cit.*

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Papers, in the possession of the King at Windsor, are to be found summaries of several letters in French, written by Queen Mary, and showing the great interest she took in the struggling community of Ypres.

On July 31, 1697, she writes from St. Germains to the Bishop of Ypres, to thank him for his charity to the Irish Benedictine nuns, and for the assistance he continues to procure them in the necessity they are reduced to, since the loss of Ireland; and expresses her gratitude also to his Vicar-General, the Abbé de Gouy.

She returns again to the charge on July 19, 1700, with the following letter, in which she expresses her fears lest the convent should have to be broken up, and makes generous and practical proposals in order to avert such a calamity.

My Lord Bishop of Ipres, it having been represented to me that if the Abbess of the Irish Benedictines were to die, that convent would be completely annihilated, I thought we might be able to devise a compromise regarding the proposals which have been made to you to admit the four novices to profession; that is, to receive two* of them, whose dowries will be made up in a few years, as there are already two thousand livres invested in the [funds of the] town-hall of Paris for this purpose, besides a thousand livres which I shall give them every year, as long as God gives me the means, until these two dowries, and those of the two other novices† (who might in the meantime live with the community) are completed. I propose this merely as an expedient, and I shall take upon myself all the responsibility for whatever you do in favour of these poor [ladies] persecuted and banished on account of their religion, to whom it would be a

* ? Dames Arthur and O'Connor.
† ? the two Demoiselles Cavanagh.

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crowning misfortune to lose the only establishment they have in the world, and that at a time when it would seem that the sympathy they deserve ought to procure many other [refuges] for them.

I am, with very particular esteem,
My Lord Bishop of Ipres,
Your good friend,
MARIA R.

ST. GERMAIN EN LAYE,
19th *July*, 1700.*

To this the Bishop replies in a letter of August 13, saying that he fully appreciates the reasons which oblige her Majesty to preserve the monastery of Irish Benedictines; that she is aware that it does not depend on him to receive the four religious whom she honours with her protection, but to show the great respect he has for her wishes he has hit upon an expedient with Lady Abbess for admitting to profession the two religious for whom the Queen provides dowries, and he will receive them as soon as they have arrived.

From this letter of the Bishop it would seem that the two religious were not at that time at Ypres, although they had already finished their noviciate at Ghent several years before; at least if the religious referred to are Dames Arthur and O'Connor.

On November 27, 1700, she writes to the Bishop, thanking him for his kind answer to her letter on behalf

* The original of above letter is in French, and is preserved at Ypres. There is also a copy among the Stuart Papers at Windsor (Letter Book, p. 241), which is printed in Calend., vol. i., p. 149, but is shorter, varies in a few words, and is dated differently, 19th June, instead of July.

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of the poor nuns. She regards as a good augury that the four nuns of Pontoise, who will deliver him this letter, and whom she recommends to him, have all the qualities needed to restore order and regularity in that house.*

The four religious referred to were lent for a time by the Abbess of Pontoise to Abbess Butler of Ypres to increase her community and assist her in keeping up the regular observances, as Lady Butler seems to have had no choir-nuns of her own at the time—the two nuns in whom Queen Mary interested herself so much not being professed till the next month.

The names of these Pontoise nuns are preserved for us in the following "dimissorial" given by their Abbess. Two of them, Dames Markham and Lawson, are old friends of ours, being mentioned in King James's patent as the first two assistants of Abbess Butler in the Dublin foundation :—

Dimissorial Letter from the Abbess of Pontoise permitting the departure of four of her nuns for Ypres.

I under written, by Othority given me by our Constitutions, and in Obedience and Complyance with the zealous desires of our pious and gratious Queene Mary of Great Britany, all perticular directions having bin exactly observed, acording to the Chapter of Combination in our Statutes, as my agreement with the Lady Mary Butler Abbesse of the Monastery of Benedictine Dames of our congregation at Ipers having the aprovel of the Right Honorable and Right Reverand Lord Bishop of Ipers with the consent of this Comunity, doe allow and permit Very Reverand Mother Margarite Markham, Dame Scolastica Bruning, Dame Eugenia Greene, and

* *Stuart Papers*, I., 155.

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Dame Mary Lawson to goe to the say'd monastery of Ipers for a time, there to assist the r'establishing that Comunity for Religious of the Irish nation, in the exact Observance of monasticall dissipline, retaining still the power given me by say'd statute in case of recalling them backe, given att this our Monastery of grace-dieu dedicated to the Imaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, this 28 of november 1700, sign'd and seal'd by

L. S. ELIZ. D'ABRIDGCOURT,
Abbesse.

These four nuns from Pontoise returned to their convent after a stay of less than two years at Ypres, the latter community having then made sufficient progress to be able to dispense with their services, as we see by the following letter addressed by Queen Mary "For the Lady Abbess of the Irish Nuns at Ypres," and sealed with the Royal seal. It is endorsed by the Abbess, "Our Queen's Letter to me, 1702."

My Lady Abbesse, You may assure the Bishop of Ypres, and you may also be assur'd your self that you have my consent for the return of those Religious that came from Pontoise, their business being now finish'd for which they came. At the same time I desire you to thank your Bishop for his regard towards me in this matter, and chiefly for his paternal care and protection of your Monastery to which I hope God Almighty will give a blessing, that it may be a Nursery of many devout souls in the service of God; and I doubt not but that I and mine shall be the better for your good prayers, which are very much desired by

Your good friend,
(Signed) MARIA R.

ST. GERMAINS, 23 *Sep*: 1702.

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On October 3, 1701, the Queen writes that—

Notwithstanding the overwhelming affliction she is in [on account of the King, her husband's death] she cannot let Mr. O'Donnell (who is going as confessor to the Irish Benedictine nuns) depart without recommending him to the Bishop. She has charged him to assure the Bishop how sensible she is of his kindness to that re-established community, and how obliged she is for the prayers he has had offered in his diocese during the late King's illness.*

September 11, 1702: she takes advantage of Father Polton's going to Ypres to assure the Bishop that she is sensibly obliged for the facilities he has offered to her consideration for the profession of four new nuns,† and for his continued charity to that poor house.

September 28, 1705, she writes to the Bishop of St. Omer, telling him her letter will be delivered by Mr. Creagh, Canon of Strasburg, nephew of the late Archbishop of Dublin, whose niece, Miss Creagh, is one of the two Irish girls the Bishop of St. Omer charitably maintains in the convents of his diocese. As she has a vocation to become a nun in the Irish Benedictine Convent at Ypres, where her cousin provides her with a dowry, the Bishop is asked to let the Canon conduct her thither. "The continuance of your charities to these poor exiles obliges me to repeat many thanks, and I hope you will permit me to send another girl in place of Miss Creagh."

On November 14 of the same year she sends a young

* James II died 6 Sept., 1701.

† It is not clear who the four new nuns were who are here alluded to, but the Queen refers perhaps to Dames Benedict O'Neile and Theresa Wyld, or Wyre, who were both professed a week after the letter was penned, while the other two may have been the two Dames Goulde, who were professed in April of the next year.

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lady to take Miss Creagh's place, with a note for the Bishop of St. Omer :—

The bearer is the young lady I have appointed to fill Miss Creagh's place. Her name is Lætitia Macl[e]ane, and I take the more interest in her because she was converted some time ago, having been a Protestant, and because she is a person of rank, being a daughter of Sir Alexander Maclane, a Scotchman who is at present serving in the army of Marshal Villars.

It is interesting to note that Miss Maclean subsequently followed Miss Creagh to Ypres, and both were professed there on July 7, 1710. They both persevered, and became holy religious, and we shall give their very interesting memoirs when we have occasion to chronicle their deaths, which will not be for some time, as both lived to a good old age.

In the same year, 1710, the good Abbess had the consolation of admitting another choir-nun, Dame Catharine Aylmer, to profession ; in the following year a Belgian lay-sister, and in the next year, 1712, yet another choir-nun, Dame Scholastica Goulde, being the third of her name to devote herself to God in the Convent of Ypres. Thus at last, " after many crosses and disappointments, she had the comfort of professing several so as to form a community to whom she was a continued example of fervour and regularity."* And that the good example of the worthy Abbess was not lost on the community is evident from a document issued in 1716 by the Grand Vicars, in which they extol the exemplary and regular life of the nuns, and

* Mortuary Notice, Ypres MS.

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recommend them to the charity of the faithful on account of their extreme poverty. The following is a translation of the French original :—

We the Vicars General of the vacant Bishopric of Ypres certify to all those, whom it may concern, that the Lady Abbess and the Irish Benedictine Religious, formerly established in Dublin and to-day in the city of Ypres, lead a most regular and exemplary life, and that they are worthy of compassion on account of their great poverty —which has been notably increased since the change of Dominion, by which they find themselves deprived of an annual pension which they were accustomed to receive from the Most Christian King, and of many other gifts* which they used to receive from the officers, especially those of their own nation, In testimony whereof We have signed these presents with the common seal of our vicariate.

The 9th of May, 1716.

(Here follow signatures of four Vicars-General.)

L. S.

The change of Dominion alluded to in above is presumably that which had taken place by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), three years previously, when Ypres, which had been ceded to the King of France by the Treaty of Nimeguen (1678), was once more restored to Austria, the result being that the Irish Dames, being no longer subjects of the French King, were deprived of the annual pension he had allowed them ; as also of the little presents they had been wont to receive from the officers of the French army, especially from those of the Irish regiments, which had been stationed in Belgium under the French régime.

* Douceurs.

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But the dearth of religious vocations must have been a greater trial to Abbess Butler than the want of material resources. Since the profession of Dame Scholastica Goulde, in 1712, there came again a trying interval of six years, during which there was no profession, until, in the year 1718, her namesake, perhaps her relative, Dame Theresa Butler, offered up her vows to God, being the last nun* professed by Abbess Butler. For five years more she struggled on, during which there were no more accessions to the community of Irish Dames.

And now the days of the good Abbess were drawing to a close. She had lived a life full of years and good works, and had the consolation of knowing that she had gathered round her a fervent community, rich in virtue and spiritual riches, however poor it might be in the goods of this world. And so at length it pleased the Divine Master to call His faithful servant to enjoy the reward of her labours and sufferings.

Her recollection and constant union with God in prayer [says her Death-Bill] was remarkable as also her spirit of charity, which made her often deprive herself of necessaries rather than see any of her Religious or poor in want. Though naturally of an ardent and lively temper, she acquired by the constant practice of virtue so great a tranquility and patience as not to appear even moved by the most afflicting crosses and disappointments, so that we may truly apply to her what was said of Holy Job that she "acted manfully and sustained our Lord," Who was pleased to comfort this His humble and patient handmaid by calling her to eternal rest.

The physician finding her feeble and extenuated,

* At least, the last recorded in the list of professed.

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ordered her the last Sacraments. The Community was immediately seized with grief and consternation, she alone in joy and peace, and the only person present able to answer the prayers at her reception of the Viaticum and Holy Oils; after which she called Dame Arthur, and said to her: "My dear Mother Prioress, love and take care of my poor dear children, I recommend them to you." After this she seemed ever intent in interior recollection and union with God, perfectly present until His Divine Mercy called this His Spouse, and imitatrix of His humble, poor, laborious, austere and crucified life to eternal repose, joy and crown of glory, on 22nd of December, 1723, 82 years of age, 66 of Religious profession and 38th of Abbatial dignity.

R.I.P.

Thus passed away the first and greatest of the Irish Abbesses of Ypres.

To her prudence and perseverance is due the existence of the Irish Abbey of Ypres; and, indeed, when those five long years, with no one in her community but four lay-sisters, are remembered, it would be hardly too much to speak of her as the real foundress of the house. Many another would have given up in despair after the Dublin disaster, and have retired to the quiet of some other convent of her Order. But she stuck to her post, and after a long time of waiting, gathered together a small band of novices, with whom, as soon as it was possible, she recommenced the choral recitation of the Divine Office.*

In her will,† which is preserved at Ypres, and is dated the "nineteenth day of Aprill in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and twelve" (1712), she describes herself as "Abbesse of the Convent

*E. W. Beck, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, May, 1891.
†Vide Appendix.

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of Nunns of the Order of St. Benedict of the Royall Monastrie of Gratia Dei in Dublin, now residing at Ypres, in fflanders, and Sister heire and residuary Legatee of ffrancis Butler, late of Graies Inn," etc., and goes on to declare that the true meaning of her former devise of all her interest in her late brother's Manor of Bodingham " to Daniell Arthur of London, Marchant, Nathanell Pigott of the Inner Temple, London, Esquire, and John fitzGerald of London aforesaid, Marchant," etc., was that it should be " in trust only and for the use of my beloved Children and Companions the Nunns now residing in the Convent with me."

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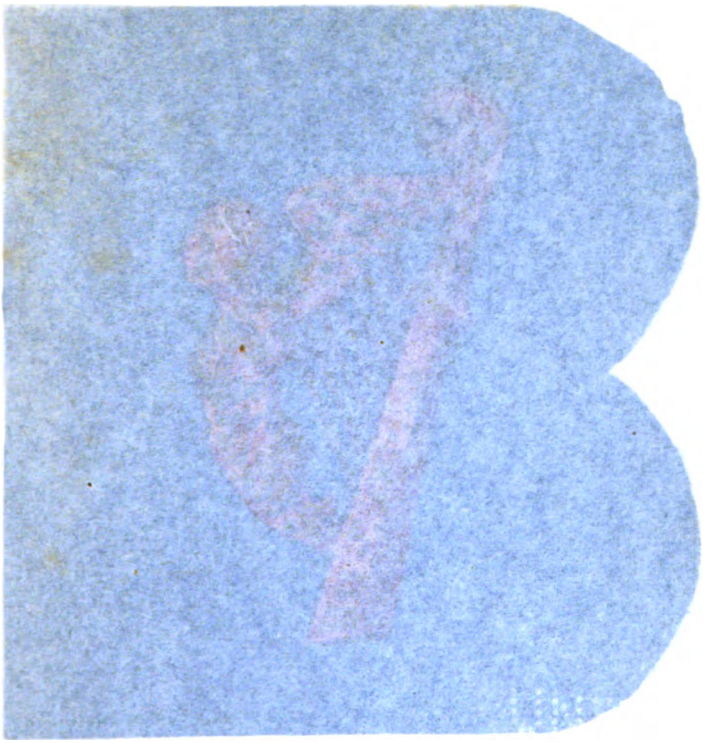
CHAPTER XVI

OF THE BATTLE OF RAMILLIES AND THE CAPTURED FLAG —THE STORY OF "DAME CLARE"—LORD CLARE AND THE IRISH BRIGADE

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair,
As yet a novice unprofessed,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betrothed to one now dead.
. . . . .
Herself almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow.
—*Marmion.*

ABBESS BUTLER'S long term of office witnessed the beginning and the end of the sanguinary war of the Spanish Succession, which broke out in the year 1704, and came to a conclusion with the Peace of Utrecht, in 1713. This memorable war, in the course of which the Duke of Marlborough was replaced by Abbess Butler's cousin, the Duke of Ormonde, must have been a source of unusual anxiety and interest for the Irish Dames of Ypres, not merely because the decisive battles were fought on the soil of Belgium, then, as now, the cock-pit of Europe, but also because our nuns had friends and relatives in the Irish Brigade, which was called upon to play a conspicuous rôle in the campaign, being prominently engaged in most if not all of the battles. Fortunately the principal scene of conflict remained far enough removed from the peaceful cloister, though one battle, that of Oudenarde in East Flanders, in which

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"The flags were unfurled in the fray
'Neath the roar of Ypres' Chimes they say."

Lines.

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CHAPTER XVI

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REMAINS OF THE TROPHY OF RAMILLIES

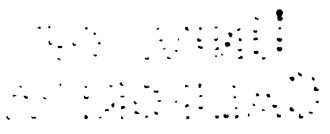
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"The flags we conquered in that fray
Look lone in Ypres' Choir they say;"

—DAVIS.

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Fitzgerald's and O'Brien's Irish Regiments of Foot and Nugent's Regiment of Horse took part on the French side, was fought out within a day's journey or so from Ypres, and the victorious troops of Marlborough and the Allies must have come still closer to that town as they tramped along to the siege of Lille which was gallantly defended by Marshal Boufflers and the Irish Lieutenant-General Lee and other Irish officers. Lee, it may be remarked, was wounded in the head by a bomb in the course of the siege, and was promoted to the Grand Cross or Commander of the Order of St. Louis.

In the year 1706 was fought the memorable battle of Ramillies, which is deserving of special mention here, not only on account of the brilliant part which the Irish Brigade and its commander, Lord Clare, played therein, but also because it is linked in a touching manner with the history of the Irish nuns of Ypres, owing to a pathetic little episode which we shall now record. The true facts are not easy to unravel, but here is the tale in brief " as it was told to me " at the convent, with such additional details as we have been able to glean from other sources.

Many of our Irish readers will remember how, when Marshal Villeroy and his French troops had been utterly routed at Ramillies, Lord Clare's Irish Brigade gallantly covered the retreating French, and still more gallantly stood at bay, and with courage almost incredible, even in the case of Irish troops, dashed through the ranks of the English regiment that was pursuing them, nor did they stay their charge until

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they found themselves in a hand-to-hand encounter with "the thronging van of the Allies." But their Irish pluck enabled them to extricate themselves from the perilous position into which it had landed them, and not only did they make good their retreat, but actually succeeded in carrying off with them the colours they had captured from the enemy. The captured colours were brought to Ypres and hung up as trophies in the convent choir. Thither they were followed by a heart-broken Irish girl, whose lover had fallen upon the field of battle, and who found balm for her bitter grief in pouring out her fervent prayers at that hallowed shrine, close to the beloved flag for which her gallant hero had sacrificed his life. There too, it seems, she learned to wean herself from that earthly love, which had proved so bitter to her, to forswear all merely human affections, and watch and wait and pray in expectation of that happy day when she and her departed hero would be united for ever in the infinite love of God.

> In the cloisters of Ypres a banner is swaying,
> And by it a pale, weeping maiden is praying;
> That flag's the sole trophy of Ramillies' fray;
> This nun is poor Eily, the Flower of Finae.

Who she was or what her real name we have not been able to find out. All we know is that she became a pensioner in the convent, where she spent the rest of her days, and where her memory is still kept green, and will be as long as the convent exists. For she is ever remembered in the pious prayers of the community, and, year by year, as her annual *obit* or anniversary comes

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round on May 16, the same month, be it remarked, in which the battle of Ramillies was fought, the Holy Sacrifice is offered up for the repose of the soul of "Dame Clare," as she has always been called in the convent, in memory of the gallant Lord Clare, the hero of Ramillies.

There seems to be a tradition in the convent that she was actually engaged to Lord Clare, hence her grief for the disaster of Ramillies and her affection for the captured flag. But this romantic detail will not bear examination, as Lord Clare's first wife, Charlotte Bulkeley, daughter of the Hon. Henry Bulkeley, Master of the Household of Kings Charles II and James II, was still living. However, "Dame Clare's" affection for the memory of that gallant soldier would be sufficiently explained by supposing her to have been a near relative of his, which opinion seems to be held by some in the convent.

On the other hand, a venerable Irish Dame of Ypres, still happily living, who is well-versed in the traditionary lore of the abbey, speaks of a tradition to the effect that Dame Clare was a niece of Father MacMahon a chaplain of the convent, who brought her thither, and whose *obit* is still kept every year: "Pray for the soul off M. Hughonis Macmahon, Priest, Benefactor, who Parted this life on 10 Novbr Anno 1712," that is to say just six years after the battle of Ramillies. Now it is worthy of remark that Eily MacMahon is the name of the forlorn lover in Davis's ballad of "The Flower of Finae," a poetical version of the story of "Dame Clare," but whether the name of MacMahon was

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suggested to the nuns of Ypres by a perusal of Davis's poem, or whether the name was handed down by an independent tradition, we do not know. It is clear from the last strophe of Davis's poem that it refers to the history of "Dame Clare," and it will not be out of place to give the ballad here in full, although it will be already familiar to many of our readers :—

THE FLOWER OF FINAE.

I.

Bright red is the sun on the waves of Lough Sheelin,
A cool, gentle breeze from the mountain is stealing,
While fair round its islets the small ripples play,
But fairer than all is the Flower of Finae.

II.

Her hair is like night, and her eyes like gay morning,
She trips on the heather as if its touch scorning,
Yet her heart and her lips are as mild as May Day,
Sweet Eily MacMahon, the Flower of Finae.

III.

But who down the hill-side than red deer runs fleeter?
And who on the lake side is hastening to greet her?
Who but Fergus O'Farrell, the fiery and gay,
The darling and pride of the Flower of Finae.

IV.

One kiss and one clasp, and one wild look of gladness;
Ah! why do they change on a sudden to sadness?—
He has told his hard fortune, no more can he stay,
He must leave his poor Eily to pine at Finae.

V.

For Fergus O'Farrell was true to his sireland,
And the dark hand of tyranny drove him from Ireland;
He joins the Brigade, in the wars far away,
But he vows he 'll come back to the Flower of Finae.

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VI.

He fought at Cremona*—she hears of his story;
He fought at Cassano†—she's proud of his glory;
Yet sadly she sings Siubhail a rún ‡ all the day,
"O! come, come, my darling, come home to Finae."

VII.

Eight long years have passed, till she's nigh broken-hearted,
Her reel, and her rock, and her flax she has parted;
She sails with the "Wild Geese"§ to Flanders away,
And leaves her sad parents alone in Finae.

VIII.

Lord Clare on the field of Ramillies is charging—
Before him, the Sacsanach squadrons enlarging—
Behind him the Cravats their sections display—
Beside him rides Fergus and shouts for Finae.

IX.

On the slopes of La Judoigne the Frenchmen are flying,
Lord Clare and his squadrons the foe still defying,
Outnumbered, and wounded, retreat in array;
And bleeding rides Fergus and thinks of Finae.

* The famous defence of Cremona in 1702, where a handful of Irish, under O'Mahony, saved the city for the French, against an overwhelming force of Imperialists. "The Irish performed there," remarks an English Whig historian, "the most important piece of service for Louis XIV. that perhaps any king of France ever received from so small a body of men, since the foundation of the French monarchy. This action of the Irish . . . saved the whole French army in Italy."

† Where, in 1703, the Irish Brigade, supported the French, under the Duc de Vendôme, against Prince Eugène and the Allies. "This happy audacity," writes Count Dillon, "very much contributed to the gaining of the battle," while Vendôme himself wrote to Louis XIV extolling, not for the first time, the "exemplary valour and intrepidity of the Irish."

‡ *Siubhail a run*, pronounced *shule aroon*.

§ For the information of the non-Irish reader, we may remark that the term "wild geese," in Irish, na Géadna Fiadhaine, was popularly applied to the numerous bands of exiles, soldiers and others, who left Ireland after the defeat of King James and the Treaty of

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X.

In the cloisters of Ypres a banner is swaying,
And by it a pale, weeping maiden is praying;
That flag's the sole trophy of Ramillies' fray;
This nun is poor Eily, the Flower of Finae.

Having mentioned the "Lady Clare," it is only fitting that we should here say a few words about her namesake, the gallant Irish soldier, through whom her memory has been immortalized.

Charles O'Brien,* 5th Lord Clare, succeeded to the title in 1693. As the Hon. Charles O'Brien, he commanded, in 1689 and 1690, one of the foot regiments raised in Ireland by his family on behalf of King James II, and against the Revolutionists. In 1691, we find him colonel of a cavalry regiment, which served as late as the second siege of Limerick. On the final failure of the Catholic and national cause and the triumph of the Dutch usurper and his Protestant partisans, O'Brien, like the rest of the flower of the Irish chivalry, set sail for France,† having already, before leaving Ireland, been made a captain in the Gardes du Corps or Body guard of King James, then an exile in France. Later on he was attached to the Regiment of Dragoons *à pied* of the Queen of England, Mary of Modena, under Colonel Francis O'Carroll, with whom he fought at the battle of Marsaglia in Italy, 1693, and on the

Limerick, and continued for many years to "flock" over to the shores of France, Spain, and other countries, rather than owe allegiance to the usurping Prince of Orange.

*For the following details concerning Lord Clare, and the part played by his regiment in the battle of Ramillies, I am mainly indebted to O'Callaghan's invaluable *History of the Irish Brigades*.

† He sacrificed for his principles his vast Irish estate of more than 56,000 acres. *See note p. 267.*

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fall of the brave O'Carroll in the fight O'Brien succeeded to his post. In the same year, as we have seen, he succeeded to the title of Viscount Clare, and three years later, in 1696, he was appointed Colonel of the regiment originally raised by his family, which was henceforth to be known again as the Regiment of Clare. In the same year Clare and his regiment were present at the siege of Valenza, in Lombardy, and in the following year, 1697, co-operated with the French Army of the Meuse. In 1701 and 1702 he and his Irish regiment were with the French Army in Germany, and in 1703 took part in the first and successful battle of Hochstädt, and at the battle of Blenheim in the following year, 1704. In the same year he was promoted Maréchal de Camp, and in the next year, 1705, co-operated with the army of the Moselle, under Marshal de Villars.

The following year, 1706, witnessed the celebrated battle of Ramillies, a day as full of disaster for the French and for their General, the Marshal de Villeroi, as it was full of glory for Clare and his regiment of Irish; for it was the scene of perhaps their most brilliant exploit, and the scene, alas! of the crowning achievement and glorious death of the gallant Lord Clare.

"At the village of Ramillies," writes O'Callaghan, "only quitted when Marlborough's sweeping success to its right rendered a further defence impossible, and last maintained, in that quarter of the field, previous to the commencement of Villeroy's retreat, the Regiment of Clare was stationed, under its Colonel, Charles O'Brien, 5th Lord Clare, and Maréchal de Camp, or

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Major-General." "Lord Clare himself," says Forman, a partisan of the Allies, and therefore an unprejudiced writer, "was noted in the French Army for his intrepidity in action," and, "at Ramillies, we see Clare's Regiment shining with trophies, and cover'd with laurels again, even in the midst of a discomfited, routed army." Captain Peter Drake of Drakerath, County of Meath, who was at the battle, with Villeroy's army, in de Couriere's regiment, tells us that "Lord Clare's ingaged with a Scotch regiment in the Dutch service, between whom there was a great slaughter; that nobleman having lost 289 private centinels, 22 commissioned officers, and 14 serjeants; *yet they not only saved their colours but gained a pair from the enemy.*" This "Scotch regiment in the Dutch service," was, according to a French account, "almost entirely destroyed"; and, according to the same account, Clare's regiment engaged with equal honour the "English Regiment of Churchill," brother to the Duke of Marlborough, which is all the more remarkable as Churchill's crack regiment, now represented by the Buffs, had, in conjunction with Lord Mordaunt's, already signalized itself in the action "by driving three French regiments into a morass, where most of them were either destroyed or taken prisoners." But Clare and his Irish proved more than a match for them, and succeeded where the French had failed, for, according to the same French authority, they captured the colours of the "Régiment Anglois de Churchill" as well as those of the "Régiment Hollandois," or Scotch regiment in the Dutch service, of which we have already spoken. But their valour did not end here, for

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their courage [remarks Forman] precipitated them so far in pursuit of the enemy, that they found themselves engaged at last in the throng of our [i.e. the English and allied] army, when they braved their fate with incredible resolution, till an Italian regiment in the service of France, and a regiment vulgarly called the Cravats, generously pushed up to their relief, and as bravely favour'd their retreat.

The same writer then adds significantly, alluding to the lost colours of Churchill's regiment:—

I could be much more particular in relating this action, but *some reasons oblige me, in prudence, to say no more of it.* However, if you are desirous to know *what* regiment it was they engaged that day, the colours in the cloister of the Irish nuns at Ipres, which I thought had been taken by another Irish regiment, will satisfy your curiosity.

With regard to these colours, the Abbé MacGeoghegan, chaplain of the Irish Brigade, likewise remarks that the "*two* colours, taken from the enemy at the battle of Ramillies, were deposited in the house of the Irish Benedictine nuns at Ypres" by Murrough O'Brien, the Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment of Clare.

It would seem, however, as if *three* colours had been captured from the enemy by Clare's regiment, as O'Callaghan's French authority tells us that they took those of Churchill's regiment, while Captain Drake mentions that, in their encounter with the "Scotch regiment in the Dutch service . . . they not only saved their colours, but gained a pair from the enemy," but perhaps he includes Churchill's colours in the latter, or the expression "pair" may be loosely used of a single standard. Be that as it may, it is a remarkable fact that the only colours lost by the Allies

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on that memorable day were those captured from the English and Scotch regiments by the Irish troops in the service of France. The honour and glory of having captured these colours seem to belong exclusively to Clare's Brigade, but at least one other Irish regiment distinguished itself in the fight at Ramillies. We allude to the Horse Regiment of Colonel Christopher Nugent, of Dardistown, consisting of two squadrons, which suffered so severely that two months after it was still listed as unfitted for service.

But to return to the hero of Ramillies. In the course of the engagement Lord Clare received no less than nine wounds, of which he died a few days afterwards at Brussels, in the thirty-sixth year of his age. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Cross at Louvain, where so many Irish exiles have found a last resting-place. Over his remains was inscribed the following epitaph :—

D.O.M.
HIC JACET
ILLMUS D. D. CAROLUS O'-BRIEN,
EX STIRPE REGUM HIBERNIÆ,
PAR, COMES DE CLARE, ET MAIGH-AIRTY, ETC.,
CAMPI MARISCHALLUS,
LEGIONIS HIBERNICÆ COLONELLUS,
QUI PLURIMIS HEROICIS,
PRO DEO, REGE, ET PATRIA,
PERACTIS FACINORIBUS,
IN PRÆLIO RAMILIENSI,
XXIII MAIJ MDCCVI VULNERATUS,
TRIDUO POST BRUXELLIS OBIJT,
ÆTATIS SUÆ XXXVI.
R.I.P.
POSUIT PIA EJUS CONJUX,
ILLMA DOM. CAROLA BULKELEY.

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which, being interpreted, means :—

D.O.M.
(TO GOD, THE GREATEST AND THE BEST)
HERE LIES
THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LORD CHARLES O'BRIEN,
OF THE ROYAL STOCK OF THE KINGS OF IRELAND,
PEER, EARL OF CLARE, AND MOYARTY, ETC.,
MARECHAL DE CAMP,
COLONEL OF THE IRISH BRIGADE,
WHO, HAVING DONE MANY HEROIC DEEDS,
FOR GOD, AND KING, AND COUNTRY,
WAS WOUNDED, MAY 23, 1706,
IN THE BATTLE OF RAMILLIES, AND
DIED THREE DAYS LATER AT BRUSSELS,
IN THE 36TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.
MAY HE REST IN PEACE.
THIS WAS ERECTED BY HIS DEVOTED WIFE,
THE MOST NOBLE LADY, CHARLOTTE BULKELEY.

The heroic nature of the struggle in which Clare's Brigade was engaged that day may be gathered from the formidable death-roll, no less than thirty-eight officers, besides Lord Clare himself, and 326 men having fallen, out of a total of 800.

Among the officers who fell was the gallant John O'Carrol, Major of the Regiment, who was mortally wounded on the same day as Clare, and died at Louvain at the same time that the latter died at Brussels, finding a last resting-place in the same church at Louvain, where an epitaph was inscribed to his memory also.

There also fell in the same fight the brave Charles O'Cahan, or O'Kane, whose brother had raised a whole company for Clare's Brigade, and who was in command of the grenadiers of the regiment in the village of

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Ramillies, when a cannon-shot tore away his legs. He had already been despatched on the spot with twenty-two more wounds by the English troops when he was recognized by his namesake, Richard Kane, an Irish officer, but a Protestant, who was serving in the English ranks, and who had his unfortunate clansman buried with military honours in the village of Ramillies the day after the engagement.

Although Davis's spirited lines on Clare and his regiment are familiar to most of our Irish readers at least, we may venture to quote them here once more, merely premising that the poet, through ignorance or by a poetic licence, has dubbed with the name of "Dragoons" what was purely an infantry regiment.

Clare's Dragoons.

(Air—*Viva la.*)

I.

When, on Ramillies' bloody field,
The baffled French were forced to yield,
The victor Saxon backward reeled
Before the charge of Clare's Dragoons.
The flags we conquered in that fray
Look lone in Ypres' choir, they say,
We'll win them company to-day,
Or bravely die like Clare's Dragoons.

CHORUS.

Viva la, for Ireland's wrong!
Viva la, for Ireland's right!
Viva la, in battle throng,
For a Spanish steed, and sabre bright!

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II.

The brave old lord * died near the fight,
But, for each drop he lost that night,
A Saxon cavalier shall bite
The dust before Lord Clare's Dragoons.
For, never, when our spurs were set,
And never when our sabres met,
Could we the Saxon foemen get
To stand the shock of Clare's Dragoons.

CHORUS.

Viva la, the New Brigade!
Viva la, the Old one, too!
Viva la, the rose shall fade,
And the shamrock shine for ever new.

III.

Another Clare† is here to lead,
The worthy son of such a breed;
The French expect some famous deed,
When Clare leads on his bold Dragoons.
Our colonel comes from Brian's race,
His wounds are in his breast and face,
The beanna baogail‡ is still his place,
The foremost of his bold Dragoons.

CHORUS.

Viva la, the New Brigade, etc.

* This is poetical licence with a vengeance. According to the Brussels epitaph the "brave old lord" was only 36 when he fell at Ramillies.

† Charles O'Brien, sixth Viscount Clare (son of the hero of Ramillies) of whom we shall hear later on.

‡ *Bearna baoghail* (pronounce *byarna bwaeil*)—gap of danger.

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IV.

There's not a man in squadron here,
Was ever known to flinch or fear;
Though first in charge and last in rere,
Have ever been Lord Clare's Dragoons.
But, see! we'll soon have work to do,
To shame our boasts or prove them true,
For hither comes the English crew,
To sweep away Lord Clare's Dragoons.

CHORUS.

Viva la, for Ireland's wrong, etc.

V.

Oh! comrades! think how Ireland pines
Her exiled lords, her rifled shrines,
Her dearest hope, the ordered lines,
And bursting charge of Clare's Dragoons.
Then fling your Green Flag to the sky,
Be Limerick your battle-cry,
And charge, till blood flows fetlock-high,
Around the track of Clare's Dragoons!

CHORUS.

Viva la, the New Brigade, etc.

But alas! poor Ireland mourned her "exiled lords" and "rifled shrines" in vain, and however proud we may feel of the glory and laurels with which the Brigade covered itself on the battlefields of Europe, we cannot but regret that Irish valour should have had no other outlet but in fighting for the cause of the foreigner at a time when the strong right arm of the Irish soldier was most needed in defence of the shrines and homes of the suffering fatherland. Nor has full

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justice yet been done to the valiant services done by these exiled Irish troops to the Continental States, especially to France, and it is no exaggeration to say that the latter country has been saved, more than once perhaps, by the timely aid of the Irish Brigade. Some day, it may be, people will begin to realize what a powerful influence the prowess and the military skill of these stalwart Irish soldiers have had over the destinies of Europe. Indeed it is not exceeding the truth to say that they have affected the whole current of modern history. It has been stated by the Abbé MacGeoghegan, who, being chaplain of the Irish Brigade, could speak with authority, that from researches made at the French War Office it appears that no less than 450,000 Irishmen died in the service of France within the co ıparatively short space of half-a-century, from the year 1691, when the great exodus began after the Treaty of Limerick, to the year 1745, the year of Fontenoy; * and it is saddening to think that so many of our brave fellow-countrymen should have shed their blood on foreign soil, in wars which, after all, only served to satiate the bloated ambition of the dissolute autocrat of Versailles, or to prop up the throne of his equally dissolute successor.

* Cf. *Life of M. Aikenhead* (Introduction), by S. A. These figures, which seem hardly credible, are also quoted and added to by Cardinal Manning (*Miscellanies*, vol. i., p. 251) as follows:— "In the seventeenth century the men who should have been our strength were in the armies of Spain, Italy, France, Germany Poland, and the Low Countries. In the eighteenth century according to the records of the War Office in France, 450,000 [Irishmen] are stated to have died between 1690 and 1745 in the French service, *and as many more it is believed between* 1745 *and the beginning of this* [*nineteenth*] *century*. Is this Imperial wisdom or Imperial strength?"

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Nor did our soldiers obtain the recognition or even the thanks that their services merited.

They have shown a great deal of gallantry [writes the Chevalier Wogan of his fellow Irish exiles] in the defence of foreign states and princes, with very little advantage to themselves, but that of being free; *and without half the outward marks of distinction they deserved.* These southern governments are very slow in advancing foreigners to considerable or gainful preferments. Their chief attention is reserved for their own subjects. . . .

But if the services of the Irish were not sufficiently acknowledged or requited by the French, who profited most by them, ample testimony is borne to the reality of France's indebtedness to the Irish troops in the following remarkable encomium, which, coming from a source hostile to the Irish, is above all suspicion of bias. In a pamphlet entitled *A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Sutton for Disbanding the Irish Regiments in the Service of France and Spain*, and dated "Amsterdam, 8th of August, 1727," the author, Forman, a Whig and Hanoverian, remarks:—

As long as there is a body of Irish Roman Catholic troops abroad, the Chevalier [de St. George] will always make some figure in Europe, by the credit they give him; and be consider'd as a Prince, that has a brave and well-disciplined army of veterans at his service; . . . should France, when grown wanton with power, forget her engagements and obligations to Britain, can she anywhere find such proper instruments as the Irish regiments to execute such enterprises as she may then undertake, in favour of the Chevalier's pretensions. . . . They are seasoned to dangers and so perfected in the art of war, that, not only the Serjeants and Corporals, but even

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the private men, can make very good officers, upon occasion. *In what part of the army soever they have been placed they have always met with success, and, upon several occasions, won honour, where the French themselves, warlike as they are, have received an affront. To their valour, in a great measure, France owes, not only most of what trophies she gain'd in the late war, but even her own preservation.* And, in King William's reign, the Duke of Savoy had a fatal proof of their courage, under the conduct of the brave Lord Mountcashel, so well known in the Court of King Charles II by the name of Justin Maccarty. They wrested Cremona out of the hands of the great Eugene, when, by surprise, he had made himself master of all the town, except the Irish quarters, and saw the Marshal Duke de Villeroy his prisoner, who was taken by Colonel Captain MacDonnall, an Irishman in the Emperor's service. *By that action, hardly to be parallel'd in history, they saved the whole French army on that side of the Alps.* At Spireback, if my memory does not fail me, Major General Nugent's Regiment of Horse, by a brave charge upon two Regiments of Cuirassiers, brought a complete victory to an army, upon which Fortune was just turning her back. At Ramillies, the Allies lost but one pair of colours, which the Royal Irish in the service of France took from a German regiment. At Toulon, Lieutenant-General Dillon distinguished himself, and chiefly contributed to the preservation of that important place. To the Irish Regiments, also, under the conduct of that intrepid and experienced officer, Count Medavé himself very generously attributed his victory over the Imperialists in Italy. And the poor Catalans will for ever have reason to remember the name of Mr. Dillon, for the great share he had in the famous siege of Barcelona, so fatal to their nation. Sir Andrew Lee, Lieutenant-General, and one of the Great Crosses of the Order of St. Louis, shewed likewise how consummate a soldier he was, when he defended Lisle [Lille] under the Marshal Duke de Bouffleurs, against those thunderbolts of war, the Prince of Savoy, and our own invincible Duke of Marlborough. And Lieutenant-General Rothe has by several memorable actions, particularly his conduct under

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the Marshal Duke de Berwick, in the late war between France and Spain, acquir'd an immortal reputation, and shown himself not inferior to any of the best of the Irish Generals abroad. *In short, Sir, the Irish troops did the Allies the most considerable damage which they received in the last war, and will do so again, if another war should happen, while they continue regimented. . . .*

The same writer remarks that the Irish troops in the Spanish service at the time he wrote were equal, if not superior, in numbers to those of France. In truth there was scarcely a Government in Europe that was not proud to have Irish officers and soldiers in its service. They were to be found in large numbers in Austria, while "there were Rothes, Lacys, Brownes, O'Dwyers, and O'Rourkes in Russia; O'Dowdas in Venice; O's and Mac's too numerous to mention in Spain and France." In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Spain seems to have been regarded as the special ally and protector of the Irish people, and indeed their confidence in the goodwill of that gallant nation was not altogether misplaced. But in the eighteenth century France became a formidable rival of Spain in the affections of the Irish, and succeeded in attracting to her shores a large number of "exiles from Erin" though vast numbers still flocked to Spain.*

France was regarded by the Irish in the eighteenth century with the same admiration and gratitude that Spain had attracted in earlier times. Not that Spain was loved the less; but circumstances had made intercourse with

* "Les Irlandois," says the French traveller, Boullaye Le Gouz, "ayment les Espagnols comme leurs frères, les François comme leurs amis. . . ."

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France at that period more constant and more intimate. In each of those great kingdoms the Irish exile was made welcome. He became a naturalised subject of his Catholic majesty the moment he set foot on the soil of Spain, and, on landing in France, he enjoyed a like privilege. . . . The dream of the Irish in the last century was that deliverance would come to them through France.

But it was only a dream, and it seems to us that there has never been much solid reason for the sentimental affection which Irishmen have entertained towards France since those distant days. The truth is that Ireland has done much for France, but France little or nothing for Ireland. Occasionally the selfish and procrastinating policy of France did permit of her sending some assistance to our countrymen, but it was invariably half-hearted and ill-timed. Indeed the distinguished patriot, Thomas Addis Emmet, who corresponded with and had personal intercourse with Napoleon, stated once in the course of a conversation which he had in the year 1812 with his eminent brother barrister, Charles Haines of the Supreme Court at Washington, that Ireland would have done much better never to have relied upon France, and that Napoleon was *the worst foe that Ireland ever had;* which is equivalent to saying that Napoleon was his own greatest enemy, in this respect at least, as he seems to have at last realized in his captivity when he had time for mature reflection. He is stated, when at St. Helena, to have expressed to Las Cases his great regret that he had made the mistake of going to Egypt, instead of to Ireland; and indeed there is little doubt that if he had gone to Ireland at that time his fortunes would have

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been vastly different, and the whole course of European history would have been changed.

Not that we regret in the least that a merciful Providence saved our country from the tyranny of French domination. The Revolution was running its course, and the once noble nation of France was starting on that downward career which was to reduce it to the pitiable condition in which we find it now—an object of contempt to the nations, the laughing-stock of Europe. Who could have believed that the day would come when the gallant soldiers of France, with whom our countrymen of the Irish Brigade were once proud to march to battle against the common foes, would be reduced to a state of such impotent degradation that the chief occupation which the Atheistic or Jewish masters of the country should deem them worthy of is that of rifling the houses and property of French citizens, turning the virtuous and defenceless women of France out of their homes, or battering in the doors of the Temple of God ?

The French Revolution sounded the death-knell of the Irish Brigade in France. At this crisis two counter-currents set in which powerfully affected the military aspirations of the Irish people, and, we hesitate not to say it, as powerfully affected the destinies of Europe. On the one hand the anti-religious tendencies of the French Republic alienated the sympathies of the existing Irish Brigade in France and acted as a deterrent to would-be recruits. On the other hand, the slight relaxation of the Penal Code against Catholics, which England saw it politic to concede, attracted

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ever-increasing numbers of Irish troops to the British colours, and thus what France lost by her persecuting policy England gained by the slight measures of toleration she felt impelled to grant. A British and Protestant writer of the period, justifying a recent mitigation of the "Penal Laws against the Papists," shews us what great importance was attached to the obtaining of Irish Catholic recruits. Having remarked that the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics had only the effect of giving to France "some of her bravest Brigades, and Austria her most distinguished generals," he concludes that "nothing . . . could be better judged . . . than to reunite to the [British] State such a numerous body of faithful subjects," by mitigating the Penal Code.

> But [he says] the more Britain rejoiced at this happy event, the more France was confounded! Political France, whose eyes were always open to her own interest, well saw the fatal tendency of such a step to her. No sooner was it seen there that the act was passed in favour of the Roman Catholics, than an universal damp was seen in every countenance; and the general cry was, "*Voilà! deux cent mille hommes armés contre nous!*" "See there 200,000 men armed against us." They lamented to think that their Irish Brigades must now fall to the ground, and that they could no longer expect to be supported by a disaffected party among ourselves . . . and to show to what length they carried their regret, the students of the English College at Douay wanted to give public thanks to God for the happy event, but they durst not do it!

Napoleon viewed the matter in the same light, for, when at St. Helena, he avowed to his physician, Dr. O'Meara, that "when the Catholic question was first

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seriously agitated, I would have given 50,000,000 [francs] to be assured that it would *not* be granted, for it would have entirely ruined my projects upon Ireland." Moreover, the Duke of Wellington, in the speech which is rightly or wrongly attributed to him, is stated to have said that of the troops under his command during the Napoleonic wars "at least one-half were Roman Catholics" and that "it is mainly to the Irish Catholics that we all owe our proud pre-eminence in our military career; and that I, personally, am indebted for the laurels with which you have been pleased to decorate my brow." With this testimony of Napoleon on the one side, and the weighty words attributed to the Duke on the other as to the value of Irish military assistance, is it too much to say that if throughout the campaign, and especially at Waterloo, the Brigade had still been on foot, and the forces of Ireland were arrayed on the side of France and against England, instead of being on her side, the issue of the battle would have been reversed, and the map of Europe would have been materially altered?

The year 1791 witnessed the final break-up of the Irish Brigade in France. On July 21st of that year the National Assembly decreed that all "the foreign troops in the service of France," with the exception of the Swiss, were to be regarded in all respects as French regiments. Now the Irish Brigade was nothing if not loyal and Catholic, and it need hardly be said that the new godless and revolutionary régime did not commend itself to our countrymen, though at the outset some of the officers of the Brigade threw in their lot with it,

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perhaps not fully grasping its real meaning. But the best part of the officers and troops of the Brigade shook the dust of France off their feet, crossed the borders, and offered their swords and their services to England, then engaged in the praiseworthy effort to restore the ancient Bourbon dynasty. They were formed into a new Irish Brigade, composed of six regiments of infantry—those of Dillon, Fitz-James, the two Walsh-Serrants, Conway and O'Connell. At the same time the refugee officers of Berwick's Regiment, assembled at Coblentz, forwarded the following loyal address to the Count de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII) for presentation to his brother, King Louis XVI, then a prisoner in the hands of the revolutionary mob in Paris :—

The officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the Irish Regiment of Berwick, full of the sentiments of honour and of fidelity, which are hereditary among them, entreat of Monseigneur to place at the disposal of the King the devotion of their lives in support of the royal cause, and to employ their arms with confidence on the most perilous occasions.

To which the Count de Provence replied that he would forward the letter which would give as much pleasure to the King, as it had to himself, and he added :

I answer you, by anticipation, that it will alleviate his troubles, and that he will receive with pleasure from you the testimony of fidelity, which James II received 100 years ago from your forefathers. This double epoch should for ever form the device that shall be seen on your colours, and all faithful subjects will read their duty there, and recognize therefrom the model they should imitate.* . . .

* Fieffé.

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And finally, in 1792, the Count presented the Irish Regiments of Dillon, Walsh and Berwick, the last remnants of the once flourishing Irish Brigade, with a "drapeau d'adieu"—a farewell banner, bearing the Irish harp, and embroidered with shamrocks and *fleurs de lis*, conveying at the same time in the following words the final expression of gratitude of the Bourbon family for the gallant services of the Brigade :—

GENTLEMEN,—We acknowledge the inappreciable services that France has received from the Irish Brigade, in the course of the last 100 years; services that we shall never forget, though under an impossibility of requiting them. Receive this standard as a pledge of our remembrance, a monument of our admiration, and of our respect; and, in future, generous Irishmen, this shall be the device of your spotless flag :—

"1692—1792."

"SEMPER ET UBIQUE FIDELIS."*

In the year 1814 the surviving officers of the Irish Brigade were presented to the restored King, Louis XVIII, by the Duke of Berwick in the following terms, which, as a Frenchman has truly remarked, "are a summary of the Irish character in all its chivalrous sublimity": "Sire, I have the honour of presenting to your Majesty the survivors of the old Irish Brigade. These gentlemen only ask for a sword, and the privilege of dying at the foot of the throne." But it was a privilege which they were not to enjoy, as King Louis, out of deference, it is said, to the British Government, to which he was much indebted for his restoration, and

* Always and everywhere faithful.

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at the urgent request of Lord Castlereagh, decided not to restore the Irish Brigade in France, although, when an exile, he had promised that, in the event of his restoration, one of the Irish regiments would be promoted to the rank of Guards of the King as a reward for their unparalleled fidelity.

We must now take farewell of the Brigade for the present, but we shall meet with it again in the course of this history. We might have said more, we could not well have said less, for the name of the Irish Brigade is indissolubly connected with that of the Irish Benedictine Dames of Ypres. The former fought with the sword, the latter with the "bright, strong weapons of obedience"* and prayer, but both were soldiers of the Cross, fighting the same good fight for Faith and Fatherland. No mere mercenaries offering their swords to the highest bidder were "these Irish soldiers of Louis of France or Philip of Spain." Whatever king they served under, whatever Continental dispute they might be engaged in for the moment, with the Irish troops the cause was always, in the last resort, one and the same; they were fighting for Ireland and the Catholic Faith. It was this which prompted them to offer their services to Catholic sovereigns, it was this which spurred them on to those deeds of valour which have immortalized their name.†

* "Quisquis . . . Domino Christo vero Regi militaturus, *obedientiae fortissima atque praeclara arma* assumis . . ."—*Rule of St. Benedict* (Prologue).

† "Officered by the representatives of those chieftains who had forfeited everything, 'save honour,' for their faith, the humblest soldier who marched in those battalions was animated by the same spirit that impelled the O'Neills and O'Donnels to forsake a country where they dared not worship God according to the custom of their

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"Follow them where you will—from Deventer to Fontenoy, from Louvain to Frankfort—the love of their religion is just as conspicuous as their gallantry is undoubted."*

The Irish Brigade has passed away, but not unhonoured and unsung; nor was it in vain that it fought. The "Irish Dames" still exist through the mercy of God, and have been privileged to witness the dawn of the triumph of that cause for which they prayed while their gallant compatriots fought and died.

Peace to your ashes! brave soldiers of the Brigade, wherever you lie, whether on the battlefields of Belgium or "of Italy and Spain, in the trenches of French Flanders, or the banks of the Rhine and the Danube," you have fought the good fight and deserved well of the Fatherland.

Signed with the Cross, they conquered and they fell;
Sons of the Cross they stand;
The Prince of Peace loves righteous warfare well,
And loves thine armies, O our Holy Land.
The Lord of Hosts is with thee, and thine eyes
Shall see upon thee rise
His glory and the blessing of His hand.

We must now say a few words about the flag, which is still kept as a trophy in the convent at Ypres, though it is a matter for regret that only one flag has been

fathers. In fact the love of their religion gave them an individuality that cannot be found in any other people. Unlike the hireling gladiators who fought for pay, irrespective of any other consideration, the soldiers of the Irish Brigades are invariably found under the banners of those sovereigns who not only professed their creed, but also provided colleges and altars for their persecuted and exiled priesthood."—O'Conor, *Military History of the Irish Nation* (Preface).

* *Ibid.*

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preserved, if we may use the expression, for it is in a sufficiently dilapidated condition. Indeed we may be thankful that it has escaped destruction and that even so much has been left. During the régime of Dame Elizabeth Jarrett (1840-1888), the only English Abbess of Ypres since the death of Abbess Cary in 1686, the flag was taken down from its place of honour in the choir, and thrown aside; the result being that one fine day some German lay-sisters, wishing to honour the feast of St. Martha, who, appropriately enough, is the lay-sisters' patron, picked up the colours and proceeded to cut them up for decorations, being blissfully ignorant of their value or significance; but, fortunately, one of the nuns intervened in time and succeeded in saving the remnant which is left us, and of which we give an illustration.

The flag, or rather the portion which is left, is of a dark blue colour, with a large harp of Erin in reddish gold thereon. A small detached figure of an animal, apparently that of a lion, of a reddish gold colour, is still preserved as part of the original flag. A venerable nun, who remembers the flag in its original entire state, assures me that the colours were blue, yellow, and red, the blue being in the place of honour next the staff. She remembers having seen the figures 17 . . and the name "Ramillies" inscribed on the flag. The staff was brought down to the parlour to be shown to a visitor about seventeen years ago, and it has not been seen since.

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CHAPTER XVII

ABBESS ARTHUR (1723-1743)

> I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house; and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.
>
> —PSALM XXV.

THE community, deeply afflicted at the loss of their saintly Superioress [continues the MS.] had the consolation of having her spirit revived in their Prioress, Rev. Dame Xaveria Arthur, a true copy of all the religious virtues of her holy predecessor. She was chosen, anno 1723, by plurality of votes to succeed the Honourable Lady Butler in the charge of Abbess. On the 19th March (Feast of the great St. Joseph), 1724, the Rt. Honourable Abbess elect was blest by his Lordship Bishop de Smedt in her own Abbatial Church.*

The new Abbess was no less distinguished by the antiquity and nobility of her family than by the virtue and holiness of her life.

The Arthurs [says Burke†] are stated to have been originally "Artureighs," and to derive their descent from a common ancestor with the O'Briens,‡ viz., Cormac

* Ypres MS.— K.P.

† Landed gentry. s.v. Arthur of Glanomera.

‡ "Since the days of persecution have passed away, it has become customary with wealthy and aspiring individuals among us, (*Majorum primus quisquis fuit*) to boast of their descent from our ancient fallen families, though often with no other right than that which the Herald's fee can confer."—Hardiman. "The immense majority of the pedigrees in the landed gentry," according to a

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ABBESS ARTHUR,

1723-1743.

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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Cas, King of Munster. The name, it is further asserted, was anglicised, in common with many others, on the invasion of Ireland by Henry II, who is stated to have conferred honours and grants of land on one of that name in 1178. In the records of Limerick the name of Arthur frequently occurs from the earliest period down to the time of Charles I, when the family estates in the county of Limerick were confiscated by Oliver Cromwell for loyalty to the royal cause.* The Arthurs then removed to the County Clare, and became seated at Glanomera. On the municipal roll of the city of Limerick are given the names of no less than forty-eight Arthurs as Mayors, etc., of that city. From John Arthur, who was Mayor of Limerick in 1340, we pass to Sir Nicholas Arthur, Knt., Mayor in 1591, who also represented the city in Parliament. Thomas Arthur was Bishop of Limerick in 1470, and Richard Arthur was . . . Catholic Bishop in 1643. Rev. Geoffrey Arthur . . . Treasurer of the Cathedral of Limerick, died 1519, and was buried there, where his monument with a curious Latin inscription may still be seen. Edward Arthur was M.P. for the city of Limerick, 1559, and Thomas Arthur 1585.

So says the Ulster King of Arms, but we prefer to take as our guide " The Pedigree and Genealogy with the trew originall Descent of the most ancient, worthy and noble family of ARTHURS, that is of the Eldest Branche in a direct line together with their matchess and Issues, etc.," as they are set forth in a fair parchment scroll some eight feet long, adorned with the blazons of succeeding generations of Arthurs, and still preserved at the Convent of the Irish Dames.† From it we learn that Dame Margaret Arthur, " Religious at

prominent officer of arms, " cannot, I fear, be characterized as otherwise than utterly worthless. The errors of the ' peerage ' are as nothing to the fables which we encounter everywhere."

* And for loyalty to the Catholic Faith also, it should be said.

† See Appendix.

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the Irish Benedictine Dames at Ipres," was the eldest of the eight daughters of Francis Arthur, who died "in Paris in ye 1712," and of his wife, Margaritt (daughter of MacNamara of Myntotton, Co. Clare), who died at St. Germains "in ye year 1710." Of her seven sisters only two survived, i.e., Catharine, who married James Creagh, nephew of the Archbishop of Dublin, and Mary, who was married to Captain O'Dea, "of my Lord Clare's Regiment." She had also three brothers who predeceased her. Her father succeeded to the family estates on the death without issue of his brother, Nicholas Arthur (Lieutenant-Colonel to the Rt. Hon. Daniel Lord Viscount Clare) "lately deceased in his Majesty's Kingdom of Ireland."

This, the elder and Catholic branch of the Arthurs, traced its descent from an English ancestor, one Robert, who lived far back in the days of the early Edwards. His son Richard, according to the pedigree, was knighted by King Edward "ye 2d," and died in 1304, but there must be some mistake here as King Edward II did not begin his reign till 1307. Thomas, the great-great-grandson of this Richard, was the first to settle in Ireland, for "coming after ye first plantation of Desmond Carew fitz Thomas, *alias* Geraldine" he "situated himself in Lymerick . . . with severall other English gentlemen, where the said Thomas Arthur married Alice, ye daughter of Thomas fitz Edmund Cummins," and lies interred at St. Mary's, Limerick. His son Thomas, who died in 1360, and is likewise buried in St. Mary's, was married to Joane Power, of Limerick, and henceforward we find the Arthurs

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allying themselves with the best Norman-Irish and Anglo-Irish families of Limerick and Clare—the Bourkes, Whites, Stritches, as well as with the Celtic families of Creagh and Macnamara. Of Nicholas Arthur, surnamed "Negislane," who succeeded his father in 1525, we are told that "he parted this life possessed of a vast and ancient estate in most Tounes of Ireland," while his son, Sir Nicholas Arthur, "had severall favores placed on him by King Henry the 8th." He was succeeded by his brother Thomas, who married the daughter of John Macnamara, of Crinough, Co. Clare, and died in 1615, being the grandfather of the Abbess.

But as the Apostle Paul exhorted his disciple Timothy to charge some of his flock not "to give heed to fables and genealogies without end: which minister questions rather than the edification of God which is in faith," we prefer to say something of the virtues of Abbess Arthur, and of her zeal for the glory of God and for the ancient Faith, in which consisted the true glories of this, the most distinguished member of the Arthur family.

Lady Margaret Xaveria Arthur [says the MS.] was the elder of six* daughters. Having, with remarkable fervour, performed the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius in a convent of Ursulines at St. Germains where the Queen of England† had placed her for education, she was enlightened by Almighty God of the vanity and misery of all human things, [upon which] this heroic soul determined to give herself entirely unto God by a total sacrifice of herself. In the doubt where to fix herself to compass this high aim of perfection, Almighty God permitted that Rev. Mr. German Odonell‡ (the first Confessor of this

* Eight. See "Pedigree" in Appendix.
† Mary of Modena. ‡ O'Donnell.

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house) went to the convent where Miss Arthur was, and God inspiring the holy man to have a conversation with her, he directed her to this house, where Lady Butler was in the greatest solitude, poverty and sufferings. She immediately fixed her choice, and after paying her Duty to the Queen of England came to Ypres, and received the Scholar's* habit from Lady Butler, May, 1695.†

Lady Arthur was one of the first subjects that Lady Butler received after her return from Dublin, [and] was sent . . . to make her Noviciate at the English Benedictines at Ghent; [whence] she returned to Ypres to make her Profession. When the Bishop would not allow it, all means were used to obtain his consent, especially by Sister Arthur who assured his Lordship they would never be a burden to his diocese (which was what he apprehended), and that she was content to live on bread and radishes so he would but grant her leave to make her Profession. [But] he persisted in his refusal during the space of *four* years and then only yeilded [*sic*] through the mediation of the Queen of England.

When at last the Bishop's consent had been obtained, another difficulty presented itself. The church was in too dilapidated a condition for the solemn ceremony of profession to be held there, but the energetic Dame was equal to the occasion.

After his Lordship had consented Lady Butler said she had not wherewith to afford the expense of settling the church for the ceremony; [whereupon] Sister Arthur immediately, with her usual fervor began to dig the earth, and carry it in baskets into the street in order to lay the pavement of the church. In fine she had her long-wished for and ardent desire of making her profession on December 29,‡ 1700, from which moment she redoubled her fervor so as to be a model of the most exact regularity.

She was chosen Prioress, Anno 1705, and remained so, by dispense from the Bishop at the solicitation of the

* i.e., Postulant's. † Ypres MS. Note vii.
‡ 9th December, in Ypres List (Weldon—Appendix).

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chapter, until Anno 1724. Her virtues shined with new lustre in her government as Abbess, [and] she not only exercised the functions of a zealous Superior, but also those of a tender and compassionate mother, being, as St. Gregory says, a servant to the servants of God.

In the year 1740 that the great frost had occasioned such a dearth that the community had nothing to eat but grown* wheat, our dear Lady Abbess became our baker and would not permit anyone but herself to make our bread, to try if she could, by putting eggs and milk in it, make it better and more eatable; herself finding her only comfort and strength in the Sacred Wounds of our dearest Lord, to which she was especially devoted. She obtained permission from Rome for us to serve [i.e., to keep] this Feast in our Office, and, as [if] in reward for her zeal, she yielded her happy soul to her Creator on 5th March, 1743, the very Feast of the Precious Wounds,

having presided over the convent as Abbess for twenty years. We have not discovered many more details concerning Abbess Arthur's period of rule.

From a Latin certificate, signed by "John Baptist,"† Bishop of Ypres, 25th June, 1726, in favour of Michael Linch (*sic*), an Irishman of the Order of Friars Minor, we learn that the said Michael Linch had filled with great zeal "for some years" the office of confessor to the "Abbess of the Irish nuns of the Order of St. Benedict at Ypres, and the boarders of the same nation residing there."

Furthermore, from a few letters still preserved we learn that the "res angusta domi" still continued during Abbess Arthur's time.

The Rev. Stephen Amiot, S.J., confessor of the Archduchess, writes from Brussels, December 5, 1727,

* *Sic* in MS. † Johann Smedt, Bishop of Ypres, 1718-1732.

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probably to the Abbess, and in Latin, " as he did not know French," to the effect that he has presented her petition to her Serene Highness the Archduchess, who replied :—That she has already granted an exemption from taxes and victuals, etc., to the Irish Benedictine nuns ; that annual pensions are not granted by her but by the King ; that as regards alms she has already been applied to by so many nuns and poor people at Brussels that she has not the wherewithal to relieve even these ; but for this once she will give the Ypres nuns a small alms of 50 German [florins ?]

Again the Cardinal d'Althann writes in Italian from Rome, October 10, 1730, to Count Giulio Visconti to the effect that knowing his great kindness and zeal for the Catholic faith, he ventures to implore the favour of his influence over the Most Serene Archduchess, Governor of Belgium, on behalf of " the Irish Benedictine Religious, exiled from their country for the Catholic faith, and in refuge at Ypres," whose cause need only be made known to every Catholic in order to claim every assistance.

The great poverty which the nuns were still enduring at this period is further revealed by two letters, in French, signed " L. Ave de Nicomédie," presumably from the Archbishop of Nicomedia, who was perhaps Nuncio at Brussels and apparently Protector of the Irish Mission. Writing from Brussels, December 27, 1740, to Abbess Arthur, he says :—

My heart feels as keenly as possible the temporal miseries of your house, but, in fine, you know that it is the usual and always adorable conduct of our Lord to try

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those who have been generous enough to embrace the cross, [while] it is of heroic virtue, in such sad conditions, to place all one's confidence in Divine Providence . . . in the meantime we shall spare nothing as regards all that may concern our Mission of Ireland. . . .

But the poor nuns received more practical sympathy from the exiled King, James III, as we learn from a letter written by Secretary Edgar to Abbess Arthur on November 17, 1740, in which he tells her how grieved the King was to hear of the nuns' necessitous condition; that the King had strongly recommended the matter in an audience he had with the Pope whose own finances are "out of order and in a bad condition" and that no money was to be expected from that quarter; that he would have the matter recommended to the Nuncio at Brussels and to the Archduchess; and finally that though the King's own circumstances were "but very indifferent," yet His Majesty, "out of a tender regard for your present straits," orders George Waters at Paris by this post to pay five hundred Livres to Abbess's order, etc.

A little more than two years later the good Abbess was called to her reward.

Lady Arthur, during her life of a private religious, had always been conspicuously eminent in the true spirit of obedience, fervour, and zeal for regular observance: these virtues shined with new lustre in her government, which was wise, prudent, charitable, firm, zealous and maternal. Divine Providence was pleased to put an end to the many labours and pains she sustained for the good of the Community, and crown this his faithful spouse and steward on 5th March, 1743.*

* K.P.

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CHAPTER XVIII

ABBESS MANDEVILLE (1743-1760)

> Thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation . . . in perils from false brethren.—ST. PAUL, 2 COR. xi.

> The mese-tent is full, and the glasses are set,
> And the gallant Count Thomond is president yet.
> DAVIS—"Battle Eve of the Brigade."

ON 3d April [1743] [says our MS.] the Chapter assembled, and by votes of the Community the Rev. Dame M. Magdalen Mandeville was elected Abbess, and on the 29th January, 1744, she was blest privately by Bishop Delvaulx in his own palace-chapel. Lady Mandeville was little niece* to our Rt. Hon Lady Butler, under whom she passed nine months' Noviceship. Such was her zeal for the interests of the Community as to go in person to Ireland to sue for her fortune which her brother would† deprive her of; having succeeded [in her object] after two years labour and trouble, she put to sea [on her return journey] taking with her the Church ornaments which Lady Butler had saved in the plunder of her monastery in Dublin, [and which Dame Mandeville succeeded in recovering]; but having reached as far as the Isle of Wight in England, on 7th of October, 1725, a violent storm wreck'd the vessel, and having kept in the ship from midnight till two o'clock in the morning, there remaining only the main mast on which she supported herself she was by the violence of the waves thrown into

* "Grand-niece."—K.P. † i.e., "wished to."

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the main ocean where she combatted till eight in the morning, when a charitable person engaged some Divers to venture out and bring her on shore, and [she] remained there eight days to have her wounds dressed, which this most dreadful event occasioned. She returned to London and, tho' with the greatest natural terror, she had the resolution to put to sea again and arrived here [i.e. at Ypres] on 17th November, 1725. Her fortitude and perseverance renders justly applicable to her these words "that many waters did not quench the ardour of her charity." *

Having been elected Abbess she exerted herself with much prudence and zeal for the good of the Community, particularly under the troublesome circumstances of the siege of the town and change of the Government, and many crossing and embarrassing events that occur'd in those years. She went thro' all with great fortitude and resignation as she did the sufferings arising from a tedious and painful dropsy of which she died, 27th November, 1760, after having received the holy Sacraments and rites of the Church, aged of sixty, thirty-four of Religious Profession and seventeen of Abbatial dignity. Requiescat in Pace. †

"She manifested great prudence and zeal," says another account,‡ "in the critical time of war, and screened by her just measures the house from the malicious contrivances of such as would have defrauded it of certain exceptions and privileges it enjoyed."

The "siege of the town and change of Government" alluded to above took place during the War of the Austrian Succession, which broke out in the year 1741, about two years before the election of Abbess Mandeville. In this war France was opposed to Austria, and

* "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it."—Cant. of Canticles viii. 7.

† Ypres MS., evidently a copy of her "Death-Bill." ‡ K.P.

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the French troops overran and took possession of the greater part of Belgium, including Ypres, which thus became subject to France, until the year 1748, when it was restored to Austria by the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

In the course of the war the French troops encamped before Ypres and prepared to lay siege to it, not for the first or the last time. Indeed the cannon's boom must have become a more or less familiar sound to the ears of the good nuns, as more than once, in their eventful history, their orisons were disturbed by the din and roar of battle. But on this, as on other occasions, Providence was not unmindful of His faithful spouses, and brave and kindly Irish hearts were to be found in the ranks of the besiegers to intercede on behalf of their exiled countrywomen within the walls of Ypres.

It was June 10, 1744. The French army was encamped outside the city walls, preparing to take the town in the name of the King of France, and the Irish Dames, whose convent was situated dangerously close to the inner side of the ramparts, were probably preparing for the worst, when, to their great surprise no doubt, a messenger from the besieging army knocked at the convent door and presented a passport from the Marshal of the French troops, granting the nuns a safe-pass through the enemy's lines, should they wish to take refuge at Lille. But it would seem that the nuns preferred to trust in Providence and stick to the post of duty,* as we learn from the following letter penned

* A similar instance of courage and sense of duty was displayed in the recent Boer war by the Irish nuns of Mafeking, who, although the Bishop, as their superior, had given them permission to leave

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the next day by a gallant Irishman in the besieging camp, to whose chivalrous thoughtfulness the passport of the preceding day was due. He had been created a Lieutenant-General in the French army but a month before, and, as such, played a hero's part in this siege of Ypres, being one of the first to mount the ramparts. Not satisfied with having obtained a passport for the nuns, he despatched a drummer the following day with a relay of horses for such of the nuns as might yet wish to retire, and with a note, in French, which is still preserved in the convent archives, and runs as follows :—

THE CAMP BEFORE IPRES,

The 11 *June*, 1744.

MADAME,

I had the honour of sending you yesterday a passport from My Lord the Marshal* by M. Bonaert enabling you and your Community to pass by our Camp and retire to Lille if you wish.

I consider myself very happy and very much honoured to have been able to render you this Little service. The Drummer who will deliver this letter is bringing you the draft horses required for your carriages.

But as it seems by your letter written yesterday that you decide to remain in your House with the greater part of your Community, allow me to wish you all sorts of prosperity and to assure you that I shall do all in my power to be of some use to persons whom I respect so highly as I do you.

It is certain that it is the intention of the King† and

before the investment of the town, preferred to remain and take their share of the duties and dangers entailed by the long siege.

*Mgr. Le Marcehal [*sic*]. It must have been either the Marshal Duc de Noailles or the famous Marshal Saxe.

† Louis XV.

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that of My Lord Marshal to spare the town of Ipres as far as possible. Your Lord Bishop has received assurance to this effect yesterday. I have the honour to be with respect,

Madame,

Your very humble and

Very obedient servant,

(Signed) CLARE-THOMOND.

The gallant soldier whose thoughtful and truly Irish heart prompted him to dictate the above characteristic note amidst the turmoil of the camp and busy preparations for a siege deserves at least a passing notice, all the more so as the noble name he bears has already been associated with the history of the Irish Dames.

Charles O'Brien, 6th Viscount Clare, (otherwise known as My Lord Comte de Clare) was the son of the 5th Viscount, whose death at Brussels from wounds received at Ramillies (1706) we have already alluded to; and of Charlotte Bulkeley, eldest daughter of the Hon. Henry Bulkeley, Master of the Household to Kings Charles II and James II. He was born at St. Germain-en-Laye in 1699, and while still a child of four years was made a captain in the family regiment of Clare. As he was but seven years old at the time of his father's death, King Louis XIV appointed his relative, Murrough O'Brien, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Clare Regiment until the young Charles should come of age, expressly reserving a right of succession to the latter, as his family had abandoned vast possessions in

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Ireland * for the cause of the legitimate sovereign, James II. The young Viscount began his active military career under the Marshal Duke of Berwick in 1719, and was present at the sieges of Fontarabia and other fortresses in Spain. In 1720, on the decease of Colonel Murrough O'Brien, he was commissioned as full Colonel of the Régiment de Clare.

During the peace between France and England, in the reign of George I, he came over to England more than once to visit his cousin, Henry O'Brien, 8th Earl of Thomond, whose family had apostatised, and so secured possession of the vast estates which belonged by right to the young Viscount de Clare; and it is stated that on one of these occasions he was presented to King George by the Earl as the legitimate heir to his titles and estates, and that the King promised him his pardon and favour and the restoration of his estates if he would only conform to the Protestant religion, and the Established Church, but not even so tempting a bribe could induce the gallant Viscount to abandon the Faith.

On the outbreak of the war between France and the Empire, in 1733, he was attached to the Army of the Rhine, under the Marshal Duke of Berwick, being present at many sieges, amongst others at that of

* His father, the 5th Lord Clare, forfeited an estate of no less than 56,931 acres on account of his attachment to the Catholic Faith and his lawful king, James II. This estate, with the rest of the Irish properties forfeited at the same time, and for the same reason, was intended by the English Parliament to be sold for the purpose of reducing the debt incurred by the war of the English Revolution; but the usurper, William, coolly bestowed these Irish estates on his favourites, especially his Dutch countrymen, the vast estate of Lord Clare being assigned to an obscure Dutchman, one Joost Van Keppel, ancestor of the Earl of Albermarle; but Parliament obliged him to disgorge.

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Philipsburgh (1734), at which he was wounded by the same cannon-shot which killed the Duke. In the course of the campaign he received rapid promotion, being appointed Maréchal de Camp by brevet in 1738. In this year his cousin, Henry O'Brien, 8th Earl of Thomond, died in Dublin, having willed his estates to his Protestant relative, Murrough, Lord O'Brien, heir of the Earl of Inchiquin, but leaving a bequest of £20,000 to his Catholic cousin, the Viscount Clare, who at once assumed the title of Comte or Earl of Thomond in addition to that of Clare, as we have seen in his signature to his letter to the nuns of Ypres. In the year 1742, we find him in Upper Austria, where he gallantly defended the city of Linz under the Comte de Ségur; while in the following year he was attached to the Army of the Rhine and fought at the battle of Dettingen.*

But his most brilliant campaign, perhaps, was that of Flanders, which led up to the siege of Ypres. He was given a command in the Army of Flanders, under Louis XV and the Marshal Duke de Noailles, by letters of April 1, 1744, and in his new capacity of Lieutenant-General marched to the siege of Menin which capitulated on June 4. Thence he proceeded to the siege of Ypres, which capitulated on June 27, mainly owing to a successful attack by Clare-Thomond. He was at the siege of Furnes, which surrendered in July, and remained with the French Army, under Marshal de Saxe, when Louis XV quitted Flanders.

* He was also to have taken part with the Irish Brigade in the abortive French expedition of 1744 in aid of Prince Charlie Stuart.

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On May 11 of the following year (1745) he was present at the glorious victory of Fontenoy, and, as every Irishman knows, it was Clare and his Irish troops who by their gallant charge against the hitherto impregnable English and Hanoverian ranks, turned impending defeat into victory and saved the day for the French. In the course of the engagement he received two musket shots on the cuirass, which, fortunately, had no serious effects, while, a few days later, he was wounded by the bursting of a bomb at the siege of Tournay.

We can only briefly allude to his further gallant exploits in Flanders, where he was continued in command under the Duke de Richelieu. The victory of Rocoux, in 1746, is to be attributed in great measure to him, while in the following year he distinguished himself by his defence of Malines, and at the battle of Laffeldt, where he was engaged with his Irish troops and, as at Fontenoy, had a principal share in the success of the day. In 1757 he was created Marshal of France, being thenceforward known as the "Maréchal de Thomond." But he did not live long to enjoy his new and well-deserved honour, having died at Montpellier some four years later, in the year 1761, at the age of sixty-three. Thus ended the brilliant career of the distinguished Irish soldier, "Charles O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, Viscount of Clare, etc., in the Kingdom of Ireland, Marshal of France, Chevalier of the Order of the Holy Ghost, Commander for the King in the Province of Languedoc, Governor of Neuf-Brisac in Alsace, and Colonel of a Regiment of Irish Infantry."*

* Cf. O'Callaghan, *Irish Brigades*, etc.

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During Abbess Mandeville's term of office, as during that of her predecessors, poverty and trials and affliction were the daily lot of the Irish Dames. In a letter addressed to her from Brussels, August 9, 1743, by the Titular-Archbishop of Nicomedia, he speaks of the "afflictions into which your poor community has been plunged, and which place it in a state of humiliation which actually pierces my heart in your crowning misfortune of the revocation of your privileges;" and he tells them that he has used all his influence with Count de Koenigsegg to recover their exemptions (i.e., from taxes, imposts, etc.), so necessary for the maintenance of their house, and has promised to put their case strongly before her Majesty the Queen.

So great, indeed, were the trials and difficulties that assailed the community at this period that they seem to have seriously thought of leaving Ypres and transferring themselves to the French King's dominions. The project is alluded to in letters of the years 1750, 1751, and 1752, written to the nuns by Secretary Edgar on behalf of James III, who endeavoured to assist them in their project; but finally, on January 25, 1752, Edgar wrote in the name of the King, enclosing a French expert's opinion on the subject of the "Translation" into France, and pointing out the great difficulties in the way. The document in question strongly discourages the project on the grounds that they would be going into another prince's dominions; that they would have to sell out their funds and procure other securities in France, which would mean certain loss; that the city of Lyons (whither, it seems,

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the nuns proposed to transplant the community) was a very expensive one to live in; and, finally, that the tendency of the French authorities was to restrict the number of religious houses, not to encourage new foundations.

The following letter from the Secretary of King James III, enclosing one from the King himself, alludes to the subject :—

ROME, *January 6th*, 1750.

MADAME,

Your La^p will see by the inclosed I have the honour to send you from the King that I delivered carefully to H. M. the letter you sent me in yours of the 5th Decm^r. I have not failled to inform the King of what you say about your Monasterys being translated into France. It would be a particular satisfaction to H. M. could he serve you in that particular, but he is sorry that there are no hopes of success in it, since the answer made to the recommendation he sent last year to France for that effect was very positive that that matter could not be thought of because your convent lay out of France, and in another Prince's dominions. Upon any other occasion that is feasible H. M. and H. R. H. the Duke will willingly employ their good offices for your advantage, . . .

It may interest some to know that the famous Alban Butler visited Ypres shortly after the siege, in the course of a tour through Europe, in the early years of Abbess Mandeville's period of office, and has left us the following short notice of the town and abbey in his *Travels through France, Italy*, etc. :—

Louis XIV fortified it [i.e. Ypres] most beautifully and with great strength; but this year Louis XV having taken it, has ordered the fortifications to be blown up at least on one side. . . .

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The Irish Benedictine nuns have a convent here, begun in the short reign of King James II by Miss Butler daughter of Toby Butler of Cullen [*sic*], Esq., in Ireland. Their revenues being placed in the town house of Paris, where the funds have sunk almost to nothing by the King's *arrêts*, the house is reduced to narrow circumstances.

The community seems also to have suffered from a dearth of religious vocations, as, according to the List of Professed, only two new nuns made profession under Abbess Mandeville, i.e., Dame Benedicta Ley (1747) and D. Ignatia Sarsfield (1753), while they had to deplore the loss of a very dear member, whose most interesting history must not be passed over.

We have already seen how Queen Mary of Modena recommended a young girl to the Bishop of St. Omer in 1705, with the words: "Her name is Lætitia Maclane, and I take the more interest in her because she was converted some time ago, having been a Protestant, and because she is a person of rank, being a daughter of Sir Alexander Maclane, a Scotchman who is at present serving in the army of Marshal Villars;" and we have also seen how Miss Maclean found her way to Ypres, and was professed there by Abbess Butler in 1710. Beyond the mere mention of her name in the list of professed we find no allusion to her in the chronicles of Ypres, but some sixty years ago the following sympathetic lines were contributed to the pages of a Dublin magazine,* long since defunct, by a pilgrim to Ypres:—

We cannot, however, conclude [says the writer in

* Duffy's *Hibernian Magazine.*

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question] without devoting a few lines more to the memory of one who, though not Irish by birth, was more so, in faith and feeling, than many a native Hibernian. We allude to a noble daughter of the house of Maclean, allied by birth to those ancient Lords of the Isles who, for ages, kept rude court by the stormy shores of Mull, in their castled home at Duart, and whose coronach for ages woke up the slumbering echoes of Morven, as the dead Macleans were borne by their clansmen to their last resting-place beneath the old stone cross that yet stands erect, despite the "Synod of Argyll," on the green bosom of Iona; allied also to that ill-fated nobleman who, with Lords Lovat and Balmerino, lost his life on Tower Hill for his devotion to the cause of "Bonnie Prince Charlie." She survived this family disaster eight years; and had, besides the consolations of religion, those also of her sisters, many of whom, like herself, had lost their dearest relatives in those terrible years which beheld England worsted at Fontenoy, and victorious at Culloden. Her history is a curious one, [and is summed up as follows in her "Death-Bill"]:—

On the 15th of October, 1754, departed this life our dear sister, Rd. Dame Mary Louisa Maclean. She was a constant example of perfect simplicity and submission to her superiors, and most amiable, obliging, and cheerful conduct with her sisters, to whom she was always ready and zealous to be helpful. She had a superior capacity for all kind of fine works; to her zeal and assiduity we owe almost all the embroidered ornaments of the Church, to accomplish which she took from her sleep—rising all the summer, with leave from her superior, as soon as there was light enough to work. She expressed great sentiments of gratitude to Almighty God for His peculiar providence over her. She was educated a very strict Protestant, as were all her family. Her worthy father, Sir Alexander Maclean, having followed King James the Second into France, had the happiness to become acquainted with the illustrious Lord Comte Fenelon, of

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saintly memory, Archbishop of Cambray, who converted him to the Catholic faith. His first effort of zeal was to get this, his only child (whom he left in Scotland), out of the hands of her mother's family, the Earl of Kilmarnock. She, having notice of her father's change of religion, declared she would never see him, lest she might be induced to apostatize from the High and Episcopal Church as he had done. At length a missioner, whom she thought a Protestant, gained on her to go and see her father. The Queen of England desired that she should be placed here, which she was much pleased at, to the end she might instruct and convert the community during her abode. She immediately began her mission with Rev. Mr. O'Donnell, as she was well versed in the Bible, which she took care to bring with her, and many other books (though at that time but fourteen years of age). Her first visit to him was a warm and learned dispute. She held out stiff, from October to the end of the year, when, enlightened by Divine grace, she made her abjuration and profession of faith on the 1st of January, 1705—her first communion on the Epiphany, which feast was, ever after, peculiarly solemn with her. She was, from that time, as humble, as she before showed pride and ostentation, so that her abbess and others (in her absence) often called her the "lamb." She received the last Sacraments in her perfect senses, and sweetly reposed in her Lord, aged sixty-four, and forty-four of her religious profession.

This good religious was followed to the grave six years later by Abbess Mandeville, who died on November 27, 1760.

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ABBESS DALTON,

1760-1783.

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CHAPTER XIX

ABBESS DALTON (1760-1783)

Her hopes, her fears, her joys were all
Bounded within the cloister wall.

"ON the 18th December following, Bishop Delvaux ordered the election of an Abbess, and on the 22nd Rev. Dame Mary Bernard Dalton, being chosen by the votes of the community, was, on 29th January, 1763, blest by Bishop Wavrans." The style of the chronicler is a little confused here, but the meaning is evident. On December 18, 1760, the Bishop ordered the election of a new abbess. Four days later, Dame M. Bernard Dalton was elected, and some two years afterwards, on January 29, 1763, she received the abbatial blessing.

The Almighty endowed Lady Dalton [continues the chronicle] with superior talents; she joined to an extensive capacity and wit quickness of penetration and solidity of judgment; a natural generosity, goodness and tenderness of heart; which gifts she most faithfully employed for the honour of the bountiful bestower of them whose greater glory she always had in view:* bringing all under her care to the performance of their duty by the force and unction of her exhortations, but still more powerfully by the persuasion of her example; being a model of every religious virtue.† Most exact in the observance of silence, constant in prayer, recollection and

* Ypres MS. † K.P.

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interior union with God, this beloved spouse of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, entflamed [i.e. inflamed] with a glowing zeal for the devotion towards the adorable object of her love, and to repair in some sort the outrages committed against Jesus in His Sacrament of Love, seconded by the Rev. Fr. Dalas of the Society of Jesus (who was the Director of the Convent), obtained from Pope Pius the Sixth* of happy memory, Grants and Bulls for erecting a Confraternity in honour of this adorable object, which was opened in our Church on the 2nd of June anno 1780, feast of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, on which day our house and all we possess, our Community and each of its members in the most solemn manner by a public act of consecration made into the hands of our Rt. Revd. Lord, my Lord Felix de Wavrans, Bishop of Ypres (who celebrated holy Mass on our altar for that intent) made an entire donation of ourselves, and all our posterity for ever, to serve as Victims ready at all times to repair the outrages to which this Adorable Object is daily exposed for our love in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar. In this Act of Consecration to be renewed every year, and in the Reparations of Honour compiled by Rev. Fr. Dalas for every Friday, appear his ardent love of God, and the burning desire he had of being consumed in reparation for the offences committed against Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Eucharist.

His Holiness, still more to excite the devotion of the faithful, granted leave for erecting a Confraternity of the Sacred Heart in this Monastery, giving besides most ample grants and privileges, in particular the inestimable treasure of Indulgences: a plenary one for every day in the year, for all those who, having confessed and communicated, devoutly visit and pray before the picture of the Sacred Heart placed on the altar of the church of this monastery.

Her Ladyship had the comfort of receiving several young subjects, whom she brought up in the true spirit of their state leading them in the road of religious per-

* "His *late* Holiness Pius VI of happy memory."—K.P.

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fection by self-denial, and disengagement from all earthly things.

Seconding the zeal of the pious and wise Director, Rev. Father Dalas, of the Society of Jesus, she established in the community a spirit of true poverty, according to that practised by the primitive Christians.*

The Almighty was pleased to crown the labours and pains of this his pious and saintly dispensatrix and steward by calling her to enjoyment of eternal repose on the 6th of October, 1783, in the 65th year of her age, 48th of her religious Profession, and 23rd of Abbatial dignity.

This is all that the chronicles record concerning the long period of Abbess Dalton's rule. Her lot appears to have been cast in comparatively peaceful times, although serious troubles began to loom upon the horizon a few years before her death.

Of Abbess Dalton, as of every good Benedictine abbess, it may be truly said that all her "glory was from within."

> Her hopes, her fears, her joys were all
> Bounded within the cloister wall:
> The deadliest sin her mind could reach
> Was of monastic rule the breach.

Her zeal for the promotion of God's glory and the sanctification of those under her charge was, as we have seen, unbounded. On June 5, 1766, she had all her community enrolled in the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart† at Bruges, as a like confraternity was not

* K.P.

† It was only in the previous year (by a decree of S.C.R., January 26, 1765) that the Holy See, in the person of Pope Clement XIII, first consented to grant a proper Mass and Office in honour of the Sacred Heart.

It is interesting to note that Père de la Colombière, the Apostle

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erected in her own convent until some fourteen years later. But it must not be supposed that the Irish Dames of Ypres had not practised devotion to the Sacred Heart long before. On the contrary, they claim the honour of having been the first to introduce this devotion into Flanders, which seems to have been the first country to take it up after it was set on foot in France; and it was from the convent of the Irish Dames that the devotion spread over Belgium. They still preserve with religious care a little silver bell, which was given them in honour of the Sacred Heart, and is only rung upon that feast. It was christened "Bernard," no doubt as a compliment to Abbess Dalton and her great patron.

Abbess Dalton seems to have been sorely tried during the first eleven years after her accession, as during all that period it would seem that she had not the happiness of professing any new subjects. But God rewarded her patience and perseverance by sending her eight new spiritual children during the latter half of her term of office. In 1771 she professed Sister M. Patrick Segeart, a lay-sister; while on St. Benedict's Day of the following year two new choir nuns, Dames M. Patrick Reily and M. Scholastica Clementina Lynch, pronounced their holy vows. Some three

of the Sacred Heart and guide and counsellor of the Blessed Margaret Mary, was sent from Paray-le-Monial to London to act as chaplain to Mary of Modena at the Court of St. James's, and it was "from St. James's Palace that the first petition was sent to the Holy See for the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart." It is also worthy of remark that the first request for a Proper Mass of the Sacred Heart was addressed to Pope Innocent XII in 1697 by the nuns of the Visitation and by Queen Mary of Modena, the great friend of the Irish Dames.

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years later Dame Mary Esmenia Fleming was professed, her good example being followed about four years afterwards by Dame Gertrude Fleming. In the following year, 1781, yet another of the same name, perhaps of the same family, Dame M. Benedict Bridget Fleming, dedicated herself to God, while in the next year, the last but one of the good abbess's earthly pilgrimage, she professed Dame M. Bernard Bridget Lynch, who, like her sister, previously professed, was destined to succeed her as Abbess of the Irish Dames.

It would seem that this Abbess was as patriotic as she was pious, her first two professed nuns having received from her, or having taken with her approval the Apostle of Ireland as their patron saint, being the only instances of such recorded throughout the two centuries and a half of the existence of this convent.*

If Abbess Dalton had the happiness of seeing her religious family increased by new accessions, she had also to lament the loss of at least three saintly children, or rather, we should say, to rejoice that, having fought the good fight, they ended their course, and passed from " the life which is death, to that death which is life," where they received the crowns, which the just Judge has laid up for His faithful handmaids. We allude to Dames M. Joseph Malone, M. Bridget Creagh, and M. Ignatia Sarsfield, who passed away in the years 1763, 1768, and 1781, respectively

The following interesting account of these nuns

*Since the above was written we are happy to say that a promising young Irish novice has commenced her noviciate with the Irish Dames, under the patronage of our great Apostle.

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has been preserved for us by the pilgrim to Ypres already quoted * :—

Dames Sarsfield and Creagh are most probably of Limerick origin, as their family names are most conspicuous among the ancient mayors, aldermen, and town councillors of that ancient borough. We even question much if the latter did not actually leave the "city of the violated treaty," with her parents, after Sarsfield surrendered it, for at the date of the capitulation she must have been about six years old. At all events, she entered the convent of the Benedictine Dames as a religieuse, at the early age of twenty, and spent the remaining sixty-three years of her life in the strictest observance of its rules. The chronicler briefly writes of her as follows † :—

On the 29th of May, 1768, departed this life our dear Sister Rd. Dame Mary Bridget Creagh, an example of zeal, fervour, and regularity. She was very active, exact, and laborious, in the many employments she went through at different times; greatly devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, and the infancy of our Saviour; and particularly zealous for the divine office in choir. She bore with edifying patience many infirmities, especially those of her advanced age, as an almost total blindness, deafness, and decrepidness of her limbs; being able only by the help of another to visit the Blessed Sacrament, which she did very frequently each day. She had the happiness to receive all the Sacraments in her perfect senses. She was aged eighty-three; sixty-two of religious profession, and thirteen years jubilarian.

Of Madame Sarsfield we have a more lengthened notice, which we give, exactly as it was penned seventy-nine years ago, and which reveals to us worldlings

* "Glimpses of Outremer," Duffy's *Hibernian Magazine*.

† The following notices of these nuns have evidently been copied by the writer from their Death-Bills, which were fortunately still extant at that time, but have probably been lost since then, as we have found no trace of them in the convent archives.

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a touching picture of cloistered life. It was never intended for publication, was never before published, and merely records an every-day chapter in the history of those who have taken up the cross in earnest, and endeavour to walk in the footsteps of Him who was "meek and humble of heart," and who wishes His followers to be so likewise:—

On the 30th of May, 1781, departed this life our Dear Sister Rd. Dame Mary Ignatia Sarsfield, in the sixty-third year of her age, and twenty-ninth of her religious profession. She was exemplary for her solid piety and fervent zeal in forwarding and embracing any practice of prayer, mortification, or any other good work that she thought could advance God's glory; her constancy and fidelity in the most punctual compliance with the first toll of the bell, to each observance of regularity even when in sickness, and under incisions in her head from painful wens that formed there, was remarkable. She suffered with most edifying patience, an asthmatic affection of the chest, which, joined to a dropsy, soon brought her to extremity. She had the fervour to come down daily to assist at the community Mass, and suffered the most violent parching thirst incident to the dropsy, without taking any drink, to have the happiness of receiving holy communion, which she had, even the day she died. Such was her union with her crucified spouse, as that about a quarter of an hour before she expired, our confessor proposed to have her raised up to place her more at her ease. She replied, "Father, if you please, I like to remain and die in this painful posture, as my dear Redeemer died on the cross." Some time before her death she petitioned our right honoured lady abbess, to say something to her very humbling, which her ladyship complied with, and, inspired by the Holy Ghost, spoke to her in a most humbling and reviling manner, which seemed to settle her soul in a great peace and tranquility. She articulated, as well as she could, the sacred names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and to the last words pronounced for her, "Into thy hands, sweet Jesus, I commend

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my spirit," raised her eyes, to show she joined interiorly and so expired.

The next name on our list is Irish, and no mistake, and to write it correctly, should be written with that genuine Milesian prefix, an "O":—

On the 1st of June, 1763, departed this life our dear Sister Reverend Dame Mary Joseph Malone, a religious of extraordinary talents, much admired by spiritual men for her sublime penetration and wit. She underwent a kind of persecution for her zeal in pursuing her entry into religion, from the doating attachment and fondness of her mother. She persevered constant, in order to comply with God's call, and contrary to all human appearance, she compassed her design by becoming a member of this community, the interest of which she laboured much for, being secretary to Lady Arthur and Lady Mandeville, she wrote all their letters on temporal business. She was most expert at her pen, arithmetick, etc., etc. She procured from her brother a gift of £600. She was so interior a soul, as in her exterior and most indifferent actions, to be so united to God, as to compose many sweet canticles, wherein are breathed most fervent acts of divine love and all virtue. Five years after her profession she became very infirm, by complicated distempers; she received the last sacrament, and expired in speaking without the least agony or particular pain. She was sixty years of age, and thirty-three of religious profession.

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CHAPTER XX

OF DAME SCHOLASTICA LYNCH, SEVENTH ABBESS OF YPRES (1783-1799), AND OF THE MARVELLOUS AND PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPES OF THE IRISH DAMES DURING THE TERRORS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear.

. . . . . .

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this shall I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.—PSALM XXVI.

Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye;
Love to her ear was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame.
—SCOTT.

ON the death of Abbess Dalton the burthen of office was placed on very young, but very worthy shoulders, at a time, too, when unusually heavy trials were in store for the Irish Dames.

The Community, by order of Bishop Wavrans [says the chronicle] assembled on 17th October, 1783, in order to elect her [Abbess Dalton's] successor, when in presence of his Lordship's Vicars the Rev. Dame Clementine Mary Scholastica Lynch was unanimously chosen Abbess. The Bishop performed the ceremony of her solemn benediction in her Ladyship's Church, on 30th November following. Lady Lynch, who had been brought up from her youth by her saintly predecessor, faithfully persevered in the practice of that virtue and perfection she had for so many

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years admired in her dear deceased.* From her first entrance into religion, Dame Scholastica resigned herself to God with all the fervour of an upright heart and soul, serving him with an uninterrupted fidelity and delicacy of conscience; the noble simplicity and candour of the children of God accompanied all her actions; the meekness and lenity which particularly characterized her made her beloved by all who knew her, and in her government she gained the confidence and affection as well as the esteem of all those under her maternal care. In her stall of a private religious, she addicted herself to, and became eminent in the practice of a perfect, blind and infant-like obedience, which made her be particularly cherished by her superiors.†

When chosen Abbess she had not quite attained her thirtieth year; however the maturity of her understanding and solidity of her judgment supplied for her age, and easily obtained a dispensation; whilst her humble, grave and modest exterior made her the admiration of all who beheld her. She zealously applied herself to preserve her flock in the true spirit of fervour and uninterrupted regularity, conducting herself towards each one of it with maternal care and tenderness, accompanying her advices and exhortations with that bounty and meekness which she particularly exerted with the weak and feeble, in imitation of her Divine Spouse.

The chronicler then goes on to relate the trials of the Irish Dames during the dark days of the French Revolution, which broke out (1789) about six years after the election of Abbess Lynch, though it was not till some three years later that the French revolutionary vandals began to molest their peaceful Belgian neighbours. In April, 1792, they crossed the Belgian

* So far from Ypres MS. The rest of the paragraph is from K.P.

† K.P.

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frontier for the first time, but fled in disorder at the very first encounter, refusing to obey the commands of their officers, and accusing them of treason, as was their wont. Towards the end of the same year, however, the country was again invaded by the French under Dumouriez, who gained a decisive victory over the Austrian troops at Jemappes (November 6, 1792), and occupied Brussels a week later (November 14). This invasion of Belgium was undertaken at first on the pretext that it was necessary to deal a blow at Austria and the Allies, but the Republican authorities were so intoxicated by the victories of their general, that the Convention at once issued a bombastic decree (November 19), proffering liberty and fraternity to all nations; and a few weeks later it was decided that wherever the French troops were victorious they should proclaim republican principles—in other words, should force their revolutionary system on their unfortunate victims. They were at first welcomed as deliverers by a portion of the Belgian population, who were imposed upon by the catchword of liberty, but it was not long before these republican wolves appeared in their true light. Their insolence, impiety and brutality, their avarice and intolerable exactions rendered them speedily odious to the Belgians, who were only too happy to be rid of them in the following year, when they suffered a crushing defeat at the battle of Neerwinden (March 18, 1793), and the victorious Austrians were welcomed back once more. But this happy deliverance was to be of short duration. In the following year the French won a decisive

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victory over the Allies at Fleurus (June 26, 1794), and for the next twenty years the unfortunate country groaned under the oppressive yoke of France.

Then [says a Belgian writer*] commenced a succession of unspeakably miserable days for us. France, which posed as the liberatrix of the peoples, treated us like slaves. She overwhelmed us with imposts and requisitions, she plundered our museums, and finished, in spite of her promises, by annexing us purely and simply by the law of 1st October, 1795 (9 Vendémiaire, year IV of the Republican Calendar). Austria, unable to defend us, was at last obliged to cede us to France by the treaty of Campo-Formio (1797).

Belgium thus became an integral part of France, being divided into departments, sharing in the fortunes of the Republic and the Empire, and receiving the Code Napoléon.

But it was only the beginning of our miseries. After our annexation by France, we had to submit to the heaviest yoke we ever had to bear. They persecuted our religion, they closed our churches, they put to death or transported our priests, they introduced among us for the first time military conscription, and they forced the sons of Belgians to shed their blood for an odious tyranny, which crushed both body and soul.

The discontent of the people found practical expression in the outbreak of the "Peasants' War," waged against these tyrants by the inhabitants of Flanders, and other parts of Belgium, who preferred to shed their blood in their own country in defence of their religion and their homes, rather than go abroad to fight

* Godefroid Kurth.

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the battles of their French oppressors. But these gallant sons of the soil were not supported by the upper classes, and, in spite of some successes, they could not but succumb, ill-armed, ill-disciplined as they were, before the vastly superior forces of the French.

In the midst of these scenes of violence and pillage, amidst the ruin and destruction of all that honest men held dear and sacred, it is no exaggeration to say that the only institution which remained erect in Belgium —in a moral and material sense—was the Convent of the Irish Dames, and even these defenceless women were not altogether exempt from violence and insult at the hands of these modern barbarians.

But let the convent chronicler tell us their thrilling experiences in her own old-fashioned style :—

A* patient suffering of tribulation being the touch-stone of virtue, our Blessed Saviour tried her as gold in the furnace, sending her a large share of his cross, by the incursion of the French troops in the Low Countries, and their horrible exertions against religion and all religious establishments. The 13th January, 1793, the weight of this scourge of heaven fell severely on Lady Lynch's Community. She had the grief to behold her sacred enclosure invaded by a band of forty or fifty armed soldiers and officers, who insolently insisted on admission. On her refusal till sufficiently authorized, they threatened to point their cannon against the house, and immediately broke down the gates and doors with the most furious barbarity; by this means they made themselves a passage into the Monastery, where they placed sentinels with their guns and bayonets, whilst at every door and gate, the national guards put a seal on the Church Sacristy, and on all other places where they hoped to find anything

* K.P. and Ypres MS.

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precious. All remonstrances were useless against the violent treatment of these troublesome guests, till having drank abundantly at the expense of the convent, they let themselves be prevailed upon to pass the night in the out parlour, and allow the divine sacrifice to be celebrated in the choir. Next morning Providence permitted that an under officer gave information that the General in Chief, residing at Tournay, being an Irishman, might possibly have some regard to the distressed situation of his countrywomen; in consequence of which Lady Abbess, though she trusted more to God than in the help of man, judged it prudent to apply to the General, as she had been advised, and soon experienced that the counsel was inspired by the Almighty, who took care of her Community. Shortly after the Commander of the town came to make excuses, took off the seals, and paid the damage caused by his unruly soldiers, whom he withdrew from the Convent; this officer, however, in taking leave, exhorted the religious to avail themselves of the liberty granted by the French nation, to return to the world with a dispensation from all sacred engagements; but the proposition was rejected with disdain, as might have been expected.

This chivalrous Franco-Irish general, who thus so opportunely came to the rescue of his distressed countrywomen, was in all probability the Republican general, James O'Moran, who first saw the light in Elphin,* County Roscommon, on the 1st May, 1739. Having joined Villon's regiment of the Irish Brigade in France, he eventually attained the rank of major-general. At the outbreak of the Revolution he unfortunately seems to have thrown in his lot with the revolutionary party and acted in concert with Dumouriez in the latter's invasion of Belgium. In 1792, he became a

* He is said to have been the son of a shoemaker in that town.

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general of division, and in August, 1793, distinguished himself by the capture of Tournai. But he soon had reason to repent of his folly in joining the Republican party, as a few days later he was accused, probably falsely, of intriguing with the enemy and was sent as a prisoner to Paris, where he was guillotined on March 6, 1794.

But O'Moran was not the only Irishman in command of the Republican forces in Belgium about this time. Charles Jennings, Baron Kilmaine, a native of Dublin, had likewise taken part in the French invasion of Belgium by Dumouriez, and, as *chef d'escadron* had distinguished himself at the battle of Jemappes (November 6, 1792); but we do not read that he came in touch at any time with his countrywomen at Ypres.

Nor was O'Moran's timely intervention in favour of the Irish nuns the only instance on record in which Irish officers of the French Republic held out the hand of fellowship to their exiled countrymen and saved them from the horrors of the Reign of Terror. It reminds us of a similar and very striking episode in the life of the Abbé Donovan, a Corkman by birth, who had received his education in France and had become a chaplain in the family of a French nobleman. On the outbreak of the Revolution his noble patron, like so many others of his class, was singled out for execution, but luckily succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the bloodthirsty Republicans and escaped with his family to England, leaving the Irish Abbé in charge of his town house with its treasures in Paris.

But as the guillotine was robbed of the Marquis, the

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Chaplain was made to take his place. It did not require many minutes . . . to find one of his order guilty of treason against the public safety; and the sentence was a matter of course.

It was a fine, bright, sunshiny morning during the Reign of Terror, while yet Marat was a popular idol, and Charlotte Corday was brooding over her thoughts of vengeance away in the quiet province, when a long procession of victims wound its way through the streets of Paris, delighting a populace still unsated with blood. On it went, accompanied by a scoffing and yelling rabble, that surged and swayed against the horse-soldiers who guarded the prisoners, and struggled to reach the scaffold with unbroken line. In one of the rude tumbrils* was the Abbé Donovan, who had been actively employed during the preceding night in administering the consolations of religion to his fellow-captives. The goal was at length approached, and the first tumbril was close to the scaffold, on which stood the executioner and his assistants, ready for their dreadful work. Father Donovan, whose appearance was the signal for many a scoff and curse from the savage crowd who were now about to enjoy their daily feast of human slaughter, believed his last moment in this world had arrived, and having whispered a few words of hope and consolation to his companions in misery, he offered up a prayer to God, and prepared to meet his fate with the fortitude of a Christian. But just as he was about to pass the narrow space which appeared to separate him from eternity, an officer, whom Father Donovan ever after described in resplendent colours, rode up to the head of the procession, and raising his voice above the hoarse murmur of the swaying multitude, cried out in the vernacular:† "Are there any Irish among you?" "There are seven of us," shrieked Father Donovan in agonized response. "Then have no fear,"

* French *tomberaux*, a name specially applied to the carts or waggons in which the victims of the French Revolution were carried to execution.

† "In Gaelic," says another version; vide *Life of Mary Aikenhead*, by S. A.

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said the officer, in a voice that sounded to Father Donovan's ears as the voice of an angel; and using his influence with the officials and guards, this man in authority had his seven countrymen put aside, on some pretence or other and ultimately procured their safety.*

But let us resume the Ypres narrative :—

The year following [continues the chronicle] the French, who had been expelled the country, returned, and after several unsuccessful attacks against the town of Ipres, came with a formidable army and artillery to surround it in July,† 1794; when they fired on it almost without interruption fifteen days together. The Irish Convent, being situated near the ramparts, was particularly exposed to danger on the last days of the siege, when the enemy's batteries were turned on that quarter, but the bountiful hand of the Almighty directed the bombs, and did not permit any of Lady Lynch's flock to be hurt by them; for though,‡ on a particular occasion when the whole Community, with the pensioners, having retired together to the work-house§ to take a little repose after so many restless nights, one of these dreadful machines fell on the garret-roof over their heads; had it fallen perpendicularly everyone had been crushed to death, but striking a beam it took an oblique direction, and fell into the neighbouring

* *Father Mathew: A Biography*, by J. F. Maguire, M.P.

† The annalist seems to be in error here. The siege of Ypres began in earnest in *June*, 1794. In that month the French general, Pichegru, having defeated the Belgian commander Clairfait, who was entrenched at Thielt, was enabled to devote himself undisturbed to the prosecution of the siege of Ypres, which he had planned already in the month of May. The result was that the troops of the garrison capitulated on the 17th June and were made prisoners of war. The French troops entered the town two days later, on the 19th June, as our MS. states further on. The fall of Ypres might have been prevented by the Allies, as there were 30,000 troops lying inactive under Cobourg, at Tournai, while 6,000 English were a few days' march off at Ostend, where they were recovering from the effects of their sea-voyage.

‡ The construction here is faulty. Instead of "for though," read "although."

§ i.e., the work-room.

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garden, which made all admire the care of Providence, and ascribe their preservation to the prayers of their worthy Superioress and their venerable Director, Rev. Father Dalas above-mentioned; he said Mass daily and gave Holy Communion in form of Viaticum; this strengthening bread, joined to the fervent exhortations of the man of God, inspired courage and administered comfort to every breast. All the measures prudence could suggest had been taken by Lady Abbess before the commencement of the siege to rescue her flock from the impending danger; she had resolved to remove from Ipres, as the constitutions permit in like occasions, and only delayed setting off on the positive promise of the Austrian commander, that he would advertise her in time; however, he disappointed her Ladyship, and only sent her word when it was too late, that she would infallibly fall into the enemy's hands if she ventured to quit the town.

God alone knows the anxieties this excellent Superioress and tender mother perpetually suffered for her children, but by the protection of the Blessed Virgin she had the comfort of seeing them all escape without the smallest hurt, notwithstanding the imminent dangers they were exposed to from the bombs which fell in different parts of the garden where they passed nights and days in watching to avoid those tremendous messengers of death, which carried destruction on every side—set fire to the houses all around—killed their neighbours just behind their walls but seemed to respect the asylum the Almighty intended to preserve as a monument of his paternal care over his children. This memorable siege was concluded by capitulation, and the French took possession of the town on 19th June, 1794.*

In October of this same year, 1794, Belgium was formally annexed to the French Republic; but it was not till the treaty of Campo Formio three years later (1797) that the annexation was acquiesced in by Austria.

* K.P.

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To increase the uneasiness of Lady Lynch [continues the chronicle] they were scarcely masters of the country, when in spite of their fine protestations of protecting religion and personal property, they attacked both with violence; the ministers of the Church were banished or confined; Rev. Father Dalas very narrowly escaped the latter; the government looking upon him, in the principles of the Revolution, as a dangerous man, sent a Commissary with armed men to take him, but happily these mercenary souls were not above a bribe.*

All religious societies, being hateful to the impious wretches then in power, were the object of their most bitter animadversion; decrees of suppression were issued forth against all the convents, that of the Irish Dames not excepted, though the orders concerning it were not immediately put into execution (by reason of their reclaiming some regard in quality of strangers, in whose favour laws had been made which were not then repealed) this Community had not less to suffer from the violent arbitrary conduct of the Commissaries of destruction, who vexed them continually by domiciliary visits and at unseasonable hours on the most ridiculous pretexts, taking inventories of all that belonged to them, placing a guard to inspect all that came in or went out of the house, threatening them frequently to drive them out of doors without any previous warning, and other ill usages.

The grief and pain these acts of oppression caused Lady Lynch, and her deep concern for † the progress of irreligion, abridged, as it is thought, a life so precious and so dear to her children; the Almighty desirous to reward the eminent virtues he had himself implanted in the heart and soul of this his faithful spouse, hastened to call her to everlasting rest; she died of a galloping decline on 22nd June, 1799, in the beginning of her forty-sixth year and towards the end of the sixteenth of her Abbatial dignity, in the very heighth [*sic*] of the French Revolution, or rather persecution, leaving the Community plunged in the deepest affliction for the loss of their saintly Abbess

* K.P. † i.e., *at*.

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at a time in which they stood so much in need of a superior and guide of her virtue, prudence, and discretion.

We may add that notwithstanding the terrors of the times, Abbess Lynch was able to receive five new choir-nuns and one lay-sister to profession. Among them were Dame Placida Byrne, who was professed in 1785, and Dame M. Benedict Byrne, who made her profession in 1795, in the height of the revolutionary troubles, and who was destined to become Abbess later on.

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CHAPTER XXI

OF THE JOSEPHITE REIGN OF TERROR IN BELGIUM, AND OF THE EXPERIENCES OF THE MOTHER-HOUSE OF GHENT THEREIN (1781-1790)

> And now, O ye kings, understand: receive instruction, you that judge the earth.—PSALM II.

IT will be observed that the Ypres chronicle makes no mention of the politico-religious disturbances arising out of the arbitrary measures of the Emperor Joseph which convulsed all Belgium during the first seven years of Abbess Lynch's rule; from which we conclude that the convent happily enjoyed immunity from vexation during this anxious period, which was only surpassed in violence by the revolutionary régime which followed close upon its heels; or it may have been that the terrible experiences of the latter caused the former to be forgotten. But though we have no evidence that the convent of Ypres was directly affected by the Josephite troubles, the mother-house of Ghent was not so fortunate, as we learn from a contemporary letter written by one of the Benedictine Dames of that convent, which is too interesting to be omitted. Before presenting it to our readers, however, we must retrace our steps and say a few words on the unfortunate events which led up to the terrible state of things which it reveals.

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During the long reign of the Empress Maria Theresa her Belgian subjects enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity such as they had not tasted for a long time previously. But in the year 1780 the good Empress died, and in the following year her son and successor the Emperor Joseph II, now emancipated from her wise control, entered upon his mad career of anti-religious innovation which was to cause much trouble to the Church and in the end to cost its author dearly. This Emperor, who, as is well known, was unfortunately imbued with the spirit of Gallicanism, Ferbronianism, Voltairianism, and all the other evil influences then in the ascendant, at once began to encroach in the most arbitrary manner upon the rights of the Church and of her Supreme Head. Joseph, in short, like so many other sovereigns, wanted to be his own Pope, and to reform the Church after his own fashion. Not satisfied with suppressing seminaries and religious houses, he undertook to prescribe the number of priests, and the kind and number of images and candles to be used in churches, and even went so far as to decree that in future coffins were to be dispensed with at funerals, and that the dead should be buried in sacks. It was this ludicrous and impertinent interference of the Emperor in matters that did not concern him which caused the witty and sarcastic King Frederic the Great of Prussia to speak of him as "My brother, the sacristan."

In the year 1781 this pseudo-reformer tried to introduce his obnoxious innovations into his Belgian dominions, but the sturdy Catholics of the Netherlands

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soon brought him to his senses. He made an attempt to replace the orthodox professors of the Universities of Louvain and Luxembourg by creatures of his own, imbued with his own ideas, but the new professors were driven out by the students and the people. The first serious outbreak, however, occurred in the year 1786 when he suppressed the diocesan seminaries and set up one central seminary after his own idea to which he ordered the Bishops to send their students. None of the Bishops obeyed, while the seminarists rebelled against the new teachers and the new Imperial seminary was left all but deserted. At the same time the Cardinal de Frankemberg, Archbishop of Mechlin, issued a pastoral condemning the teaching of the Josephist professors, with the result that both he and the Bishop of Antwerp were arrested. This serious state of affairs, far from opening the eyes of the Emperor, seemed only to render him more savagely obstinate. He replied by sending the Austrian-Irish general, Count d'Alton, at the head of a powerful army with absolute authority and strict orders to crush all opposition. "It is a question," wrote the Emperor, "of putting an end, once for all, to these litigious matters in the Netherlands. No account is to be made of the greater or less amount of blood that such an operation may cost;" and d'Alton seems to have carried out only too faithfully the behests of his despotic master. He succeeded, in fact, in exasperating the Estates of Belgium to such a degree by his oppressive measures that they refused to vote any subsidies, upon which the general retaliated by taking the extreme measure of suppressing the

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Estates of Brabant and Hainault. This became the signal for a general revolt. The people throughout the country began to arm, while the exiled "Patriots," who had taken refuge in Holland proceeded to organize a force with which to re-assert their country's liberty. Two committees were formed for the purpose; one at Breda, in Holland, under the leadership of Henry Van der Noot, the other at Hasselt, which was presided over by the barrister, Vonck. The former leader, the more popular of the two, looked to foreign powers for assistance; the latter relied more on Belgian initiative, and recruited a national army of volunteers. Both parties, however, wisely decided to act in concert, and, putting themselves under the leadership of General Van der Meersch, they speedily crossed the frontier. The Austrians were defeated in the very first encounter at Turnhout, and the insurgents, or "Patriots" as they were more correctly styled, speedily overran the country. On December 11, 1789, the people of Brussels compelled the Austrian garrison to capitulate; on the 27th the States of Brabant declared their independence. The other States soon followed their example, and finally, on January 11, 1790, the country formed itself into an independent commonwealth under the title of "The United Belgian States."

The Emperor, who was quite unprepared for such a vigorous resistance, now proposed an armistice, but it was too late. His proposals were disdainfully rejected, his troops forced to quit the country. In this well-deserved humiliation he had recourse to that very Pope whom he had treated so imperiously a short

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time before. Pius VI, forgetting his own wrongs and injuries, mercifully wrote to the Bishops of Belgium in favour of the Emperor (January 23, 1790), but in vain; the revolution was an accomplished fact. A month later (February 20, 1790) the Emperor died of a broken heart. "Your country has killed me," he remarked to the Prince de Ligne as he lay upon his death-bed, but it was not the Belgian people, it was his own folly and presumption that were responsible for this inglorious end to his career.

It only remains to sketch briefly the career of the newly-founded Belgian Commonwealth which proved a short-lived one; it did not survive, in fact, to the end of the year which saw its birth. The executive power was vested in a "Sovereign Congress" of which Van der Noot, being the popular leader, was made Prime Minister. But dissensions soon arose between his followers and those of lawyer Vonck. The "Van der Nootistes" were conservatives, while the "Vonckistes" were more or less imbued with the new ideas which were just at that time being spread abroad with such fatal results by the agents of the French Revolution. They were in fact the precursors of the modern self-styled "liberal" party in Belgium. The "Van der Nootistes" triumphed over their opponents, but were unable to safeguard the liberty of the Fatherland. Encouraged, no doubt, by these dissensions, the Emperor, Leopold II, brother and successor to the unfortunate Joseph, at once turned his attention to the affairs of the lost Belgian provinces. He at first tried pacific measures, promising the Belgians complete

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amnesty and the restoration of all their privileges, political and religious, such as they had existed before the ill-starred reign of the late Emperor, if they would only return to their allegiance. But, inspired by their recent success, and fondly and vainly relying upon assistance from foreign powers, Van der Noot and his supporters rejected these favourable terms, whereupon the Austrian troops, under the command of General Bender, proceeded to re-conquer the country by force of arms. They were opposed by the Belgian troops, under the incapable Prussian general Schoenfeld—the successful General Van der Meersch having been disgraced by his country. But the Belgians proved no match this time for the Imperial forces, and after a short but decisive campaign towards the end of the same year, 1790, they were restored to their allegiance, and, thanks to the generosity of Austria, to their former privileges.

Needless to say the country was in a state of turmoil during the progress of these events, and no doubt the din of strife reached the good town of Ypres and its peaceful convent of Irish Dames; but we have not found any records concerning the house at this eventful period. We give, however, as promised, the following letter,* written by one of the nuns of Ghent when the insurrection was at its height, as it gives a graphic account of those troublous times, and makes allusion, moreover, to the Irish general in the Austrian army, who played such a prominent, although very

* Printed in Ghent Annals by kind permission of Mrs. Tempest of Coleby Hall, Lincolnshire.

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discreditable and un-Irish, part therein. It is written by Dame Anselm Tempest to her brother, Stephen Tempest, Esq., of Broughton Hall and is dated from Ghent, December 20, 1789. The writer evidently sympathized with the "Patriots" or anti-imperialists:—

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I hope before this my sister has received my last letter with an account of our safety. I was in too great a hurry to mention any particulars, so inclosed a Pamphlet in it. We are now, thank God, quite quiet, and have more than ten thousand Patriots in town, and all the country has surrendered, so I hope now we shall live in peace and quiet. They talk of making it into a Republick, so thanks to God we shall have nothing to do more with the Emperor, for I assure you we would not undergo again for all the world such another four days siege, where nothing was to be seen or heard but what was melancholy or frightful, as the Houses on fire, shooting of Guns, Cannons, Fireballs, Bums,* etc., etc. Our street the first day was not a moment quiet, as the Souldgers Casarns† if you remember is at the top of our hill, and the Bullets came fast in at the windows, that we was obliged to spend the whole day in the cellar. At 5 o'clock in the evening they got drunk with brandy mixed with gunpowder to take of all sensibility of humanity (which was no way necessary). At that time they rung and shot most violently against our door, and swore they would have it down; I leave you to guess what we suffered in those dreadful moments. This lasted an hour. We can attribute our safety to nothing but to some Billets, which we plastered upon every door and window in the house, and done some particular devotion for many months, that we might be preserved. The words are what we found in a Book of miracles of our B[d] ‡ Lady, which words are as follows

* Bombs. † Casernes, i.e., barracks. ‡ Blessed.

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(Mary was conceived without sin). We recommended the same to some of our Friends and Neighbours, and those that had them were never molested. Every one protested that nothing but a miracle has preserved the whole country, for there was very few Patriots against a numerous army of Milletry, but God Almighty was their General and Director, for the Patriots courage surpassed everything, they was in no form nor dress, it was just like a mob, some with Guns, some with Pistols, some with Swords, Spits, forks, hatchets, etc., etc., etc., and with nightcaps on. The first day there was a violent battle fought in our street, three Cannon placed against our house, fourteen Souldgers were shot, and some of them remained for three days; I saw three shot in a garden, and had near been shot myself, for when I thought all was over, I went to peep out of a little hole into the street, where I found a flash of fire in my face of a Gun that a Souldger was letting off, believe me my curiosity was soon satisfied. The three last days we lived in the garret, hoping if the souldgers came in they would not find us. Our milletry are still in close prison, it is thought by most that Collonel Sunden, as he was the Commander in town, that he will hang for it. As each one is examined apart, they all declare the same, that he told them when they began that if they would do their best he would make them all Collonels for two days, that they might Pillage, kill and Burn the whole Town. He soon retired to the Casarns after the battle begun, to keep out of all danger, and writ letters to the Castle (the place where all the artillery and ammonition is kept) to beg the Dragoons to through out their fire Balls and Bums as quick as they could that the Town might be destroyed; happy for our end of the Town they had no fire Balls ready, and had not the Patriots all agreed together to Batter the Casarns down, he declared he would not surrender, but a Cannon Ball went into the room where he was set with all the Officers, so then he put a white handkerchief at the end of his sword, and opened the doors and asked mercy. They chained them two and two together, and carried ym to prison. They made them all give up their swords,

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hats, sticks, guns, and great coats. Never was the Milletry Pride so much tuched as to be conducted along the streets in such a manner. They did not pass our street, which we was sorry for. They examined all their Pockets and found great Treasures that they had stole, even in their hair—the officers as well as souldgers: the Emperor's troops are disgraced for ever. In Col. Sundens pockets they found great Quantity of Letters from the Emperor and General Dalton at Bruxelles, one with Strict Orders that on the 24th of last month, they should kill every priest and Religious man and woman in the country. All their spite was against us, so it was happy that the Patriots came in on the 13th. Since that they have found all the Ropes ready prepared for our executions, it makes me tremble when I think of it; I should have found it very hard to conform myself to be martyred by souldgers. All the world must own that God alone has saved us. It is now the fashion for everyone to be Patriots; we have above ten thousand listed ones in this Town, and all Towns equivalent. They are getting their uniform made as fast as they can. I suppose you know all the country has surrendered. We are to have 3 Regiments, one of Horse, one of foot, and one of Hoozars; their Cloathing, Artillery, etc., etc., won't cost much as they have found enough belonging to the Emperor. This country provided great parts of Germany with everything for the Troops, so he has also lost that. I am sorry General Dalton has got off with the Minister, as they wished to have ruined the country. This Dalton* is from Vienna, also Irish,† but not the same that you might have heard spoke of at Liege. He was heard to say, as he was running out of

* Richard D'Alton and his cousin, Edward D'Alton, were both created Counts of the Holy Roman Empire by the Empress Maria Theresa, and Knights Commanders of the Theresian Order. Both were generals in the Imperial army, but as Richard was the Emperor's commander-in-chief in the Low Countries, he is probably the person here spoken of. The D'Alton family had estates in Westmeath and Tipperary.—Ghent Annals, Ed. note.

† It has been stated that there have been no less than fourteen Irish field-marshals in the Austrian service at various times, and at one period there are said to have been more than thirty Irishmen general officers in the same service.

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Bruxelles, that he would soon bring a sufficient army that would master them all, but I trust in God it will be impossible for them to do it. We had a very kind invitation from the Convent of the Third Order at Bruges* to retire to [them] while all was over here, but we could not get out of town. There was neither Post Carriages nor Barges went for two weeks; no one might stir, so it was happy my Dr. Brother Charls did not come; he would have been killed if he had, which would have killed me, for beleave me we wanted no addition to our frights. We could have no prayers† of ten days, not even on Sunday, as all was afraid of more Milletry coming in. No place has suffered like Gant; the Paper would let you see what abomination was committed; the worst is not put in, as it was not fit to appear in print. They set a Convent in town on fire, used them ill and got into their Church, took the Ciborium out, and threw the Bd S.‡ upon the ground, trodd upon it, and threw it into the little House, and greased their Shoes with the Holy O[il]. Roasted a priest alive and burnt another; there is a great many of them hanged, and in a short time I beleave, all will. I beg my Compts to Lady and Miss Eyre, am sorry Miss should think I have forgotten her. I can never forget my friends, therefore am still gratefull for hers and all her Familys kindness to me when at Gant. She will have a letter from here soon; you will let her know the particulars of our frights. I hope to hear from you soon. My kind love to my sister. I have only place to add My Lady's,§ Mrs. Maire, Mr. MacMahon,‖ and each one's particular compts.

I am, my dear Brother,

Yours most affectionately,

M. A. T.¶

* The English Franciscan nuns, founded at Brussels in 1621, removed to Nieuport in 1637, and then to Bruges in 1662. They are now settled in Taunton, in Somersetshire.—A. G. note.

† Mass. ‡ Blessed Sacrament. § i.e., the Lady Abbess.

‖ i.e. Father MacMahon, the convent chaplain.

¶ i.e., Mary Anselm Tempest.

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When we read of such sacrileges being perpetrated by the troops of a so-called Catholic Emperor we can hardly feel surprise at the excesses indulged in by the *sans-culottes* of the French Revolution, which was on the eve of breaking out. Indeed the horrors of the Revolution were the logical result of the misdeeds and misgovernment of rulers of the type of Louis XIV and Louis XV of France, and Joseph II of Austria, and the latter Emperor lived to witness the first shocks of the revolutionary convulsion, which afforded him a practical object-lesson on the results to be expected from his policy of enslaving the Church and encouraging Voltairianism and secularism in the government of the State.

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CHAPTER XXII

ABBESS BERNARD LYNCH (1799-1830)—FURTHER REVOLUTIONARY TROUBLES AND ANOTHER PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE—THE CONVENT UNDER NAPOLEONIC AND DUTCH RULE

> The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?
>
> . . . . .
>
> My enemies that trouble me have themselves been weakened and have fallen.—PSALM XXVI.

LADY ABBESS SCHOLASTICA LYNCH was succeeded as Abbess of the Irish Dames by her sister, Dame Brigid Bernard Lynch, who was destined to hold sway over the community for a long and eventful period of thirty-one years, in the course of which the convent and the country were witnesses of several important political changes. At the time of her election (1799) the persecuting Revolutionary régime was still in full vigour and the nuns had still bitter trials to endure and another marvellous escape to thank Providence for. A few months later, however, the despotic Directory at Paris was abolished, and Napoleon entered upon his brilliant career as First Consul and Emperor. For a time he enjoyed considerable popularity among his Belgian subjects. Religious persecution gradually ceased, peace was restored to the Church by the Concordat (1801), and, the Irish Dames and the country generally began

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CHAPTER XXII

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The Earl of the protector [illegible]
of which he [illegible]

My enemies shall trouble me [illegible]
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[illegible]

[illegible] A LYNCH was succeeded
[illegible] by her sister, Dame La[illegible]
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[illegible], the close of which the convent and
[illegible] were witness of several important [illegible]
[illegible]. At the time of her election (1700) the
[illegible] jurisdictory rights was still in full vi[illegible]
[illegible] endeavoured to enhance the
[illegible] to which [illegible] pre[illegible]
[illegible]. However, the devout Lady Superior
[illegible] Lord Clanricarde upon his [illegible]
[illegible] to Galway [illegible]. For a time
[illegible] favourable [illegible] among his
[illegible] Roman [illegible] gradually ceased
[illegible] to the church by the Government,
[illegible] Irish Roman Catholics and the country generally

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ABBESS BERNARD LYNCH,

1799-1830.

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to breathe more freely. But by his subsequent high-handed proceedings against the Church and the Vicar of Christ, the Emperor lost the prestige and popularity he had enjoyed among the Catholic people of Belgium. The Napoleonic régime, which came to an end in 1814, was followed by sixteen years of Dutch rule in Belgium, which occupied the last sixteen years of Abbess Lynch's term of office, the events of which we shall now record in the words of the Ypres Chronicle as far as it goes :—

The necessity of replacing such a one in this heavy charge and burthen made them [i.e., the community] assemble on 29th June, and by unanimous votes Rev. Dame Bridget Mary Bernard Lynch, sister to the dear deceased, was chosen for Abbess. This election was confirmed in 1802, by M. Fallot de Beaumont, Bishop of Ghent, to which diocese that of Ipres was annexed in 1801.

Lady Lynch was educated in our school, [where] she always distinguished herself in the midst of all her companions by a most solid judgment and a tender piety. Later on admitted in the Noviceship, she had the courage and the longanimity to wait nine years before she could make her Profession on account of the political troubles of the time.*

Scarcely had the new elect come into office when she received the final sentence of suppression of the Community, provoked by a neighbour, who being a Frenchman and a zealous Jacobin, abhorred to see a Convent subsisting in his view; it is thought the quality of English subjects did not a little incense him against this establishment; be this as it will, the Almighty made use of him to try the fidelity of his servants, and shew his power in protecting them against the malice and efforts of men.

* Note in Ypres MS.

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Every sort of vexation was exercised to worry their patience, and force them to abandon their holy state; the Government sold their house over their heads, and gave positive orders to have it evacuated in the term of ten days, allowing nothing to be taken for the use of the religious but what was in their cells: Providence, however, furnished means to secure the Church plate and ornaments; the moveables were conveyed to an old dwelling place, which a charitable gentleman in town offered them to pass the winter in till they should obtain passports for their native island, where they desired to profit of the generous reception made by their benevolent countrymen to the English establishments already gone over.

The 13th November being the fatal day appointed for bidding eternal adieu to their sacred inclosure, the religious were prevented from going out by a violent shower of rain, and next morning the news of an entire change in the Government having been received in town, put a stop to those rigorous measures, and the Irish Dames remained in their Monastery to extol the mercies of the Almighty, who made the very elements serve them so favourably.

The community, says another account,* had all actually assembled at one of the doors with the intention of crossing the garden and going out through the great door, which is still to be seen there; when all of a sudden such a heavy storm came on that Lady Abbess said, "Wait till the worst is over." While they were actually waiting, an officer came to the door to inform them that there was a change in the Government.

It is worthy of remark that the day appointed for the expulsion of the nuns was November 13, which is the Feast of All Benedictine Saints, or "All Monks' Day," as it has come to be called, while the following day, the 14th, on which the favourable change of

* Pencil note in Ypres MS.

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Government became known, was the day on which "All Souls" of the departed members of the Order are commemorated. Pious readers will see in this more than a mere coincidence, and will have no hesitation in ascribing the wonderful preservation of the nuns to the prayers of the holy ones of the Order. In truth it was not the first time in the history of the Order that the Almighty had sent a timely shower of rain as a mark of His special predilection for St. Benedict's nuns. We read in the delightful *Life of St. Benedict*, by Pope Gregory the Great, how on one occasion the saint went down, as was his wont once a year, to pay a visit to his twin-sister, St. Scholastica, who, like her brother, had been dedicated to God from her infancy; and the holy nun, knowing by inspiration that her end was fast approaching, and that this would be their last interview, begged of her brother to remain with her and spend the night in pious conversation, but he on no account would break his rule by passing the night out of his monastery; whereupon his sister, burying her head in her hands, offered up a fervent, tearful prayer to God, in answer to which the bright blue sky became suddenly overcast with murky clouds and a thunderstorm so violent, and accompanied with such torrents of rain, broke over the house that St. Benedict and his companions were compelled to remain there all night against their will.* Now if St. Scholastica, by the power of her prayers, could call

* The deep ravine which separated St. Benedict from his monastery was filled with swollen waters, becoming an impassable torrent The scene of this episode is still pointed out at a spot near the Monastery of Monte Cassino.

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down rain from heaven when she had need of it for herself is it too much to suppose that she interceded in a similar manner on this occasion on behalf of the nuns of her brother, St. Benedict, who are under her special protection?

This providential change of Government, which coincided so happily with the equally providential change in the weather, must have been none other than the famous *coup d'état* of the 18th and 19th of Brumaire (9th and 10th of November, 1799), by which the revolutionary Directory was abolished, and three Consuls appointed, of whom Napoleon was one.

The Irish Dames fared somewhat better under the Napoleonic régime, which was thus practically inaugurated in France and Belgium, but their troubles were not altogether at an end.

After some remonstrances they were authorized to stay in their house provisionally, and, an arrangement being made with the pretended proprietor, Lady Abbess purchased it from him much dearer than he bought it, and paid for it as soon as possible; so they were for several years the only convent existing in the Low Countries. For a long time they were in great distress for want of cash, the war hindering them from drawing money from England. The payment of the rents * of the monastery placed on the public funds at Paris having been stopt from the year 1792, and on the town of Ypres from 1794, it was no easy matter to support the community, charged, moreover, with several Irish pensioners, whose parents had not withdrawn them in time [so]

* i.e., the interest (French—*rentes*) of the money invested in the funds.

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Lady Abbess was forced to sell part of her Church plate, which had been saved from the plundering French; this afforded but a momentary relief; however, by the care of Providence, and the assistance of charitable friends, no essential provisions were ever wanting. The inconveniences they often felt inspired no repining thoughts to those religious, who esteemed themselves happy to have vowed a state of poverty. For a whole year they were obliged to lie with their beds on the floor, not having a single bedstead in the house, but one chair a piece; not a cupboard, table, or seat to be found in any of the cells. In the winter of 1800 a violent storm blew down the kitchen chimney, which accident reduced the number of fire-places to one

In the midst of these trying circumstances never were the nuns more gay and chearful [*sic*]. *Fiat voluntas tua* * was as sincerely in every heart as on each one's lips; [while] the worthy Superioress sustained the courage of her subjects both by word and example. Neither terror nor persecution ever hindered the Church service from being exactly performed, † nor to this day has any part of the divine office been omitted in the choir, or other religious observances interrupted; though the smallness of their number, with the constant attendance on the school, makes this regular duty very hard to be observed.

In the spring of 1810 three valuable members were snatched away in less than a fortnight by an inflammatory fever; since which period the community (including Lady Abbess) is reduced to ten choir Dames and four lay-sisters.

In 1807 they had to lament the loss of Rev. Father Dalas, who had been for forty years the true father, counsellor, and friend of this poor community, labouring

* Thy Will be done.

† The Ypres MS. ends here with the remark :—"The religious, their successors who now inhabit the monastery, desire nothing in this world but to perpetuate the establishment to the glory of God, and the honour of the Adorable Heart of Jesus. Amen." The subsequent details are from K.P.

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indefatigably for its spiritual and temporal welfare, defending it from the wiles of the malignant by his prudent advice, and by his credit in heaven obtaining its preservation. Till his last breath his life exhibited a perfect model of zeal, piety, fervour, union with God and disengagement from all earthly objects.

For the following further details about Father Dalas we are indebted to a note in the Ypres MS :—

The Rev. Father Ignatius William Dalas of the Society of Jesus, worthy Confessor, Director, and Superior of our Community, which can never sufficiently bless and praise Divine Providence for its singular protection over our house in sending us this man of God; this man according to God's own heart eminently endowed with every quality requisite for making a perfect Director, and such a one as St. Francis de Sales says is scarce to be found among ten thousand; for he was truly versed in the practice of an interior life, consummately experienced in spiritual things, totally dead to himself, intimately united to the Almighty, and leading all under his charge straight to God by a most disinterested zeal and an almost irresistible force. A man of this character was a fit instrument for propagating the honour and glory of God, and the Almighty in his merciful designs over us conducted him to our house on the 9th of July, 1767 (some time before the suppression of the Jesuits) where he constantly laboured forty years with an indefatigable zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of this Community. He not only established a true spirit of fervour and regularity in the Community, but also among the young ladies in the school, putting it on such a footing of piety, fervour and solid virtue, that the Pensioners might have vied with the most fervent Noviceship.

Divine Providence ever watchful and wonderfully intent on the concerns of the Community made use of this saintly superior to draw us out of the most difficult and

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critical affairs; leading us safe by the wisdom of his counsel thro' the dangers of a most dreadful Siege and all the horrors of tyranny and destruction that followed from the French invasion and change of government.

In fine, this most worthy Director was to all and each individual a tender Father, sincere Friend, sure Guide and faithful Pastor, governing his flock with the true spirit of Jesus Christ, drawing all to the practice of virtue by the force of his example, being a living model of perfection, chiefly shining in a great disengagement from all transitory things. The time being come in which God had destined to crown this his faithful servant and call him to eternal repose, strengthened with the last sacraments, pronouncing the Sacred Names he breathed forth his happy soul into the hands of his Creator at seven o'clock in the morning on the 6th of October, 1807, in the 74th year of his age and 40th of his being Director of our house.

During the siege and revolution of 1793, the Rev. Fr. Dalas very narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. We have yet in the house the door of the cellar in which he was hidden; we also possess his books and writings, and his body lies in our sanctuary.

We shall here take leave of the printed version of the Ypres MS., which ends at the year 1810, and concludes as follows:—

These religious women are now, in every respect, by the blessing of divine Providence, comfortably situated in their own Convent, which is well furnished, in a retired part of the town, with a large garden, and in a very good air; they have no debts, and enjoy in perfect union with one another every advantage this holy state affords. Nothing would be wanting to their wishes for this world had they a greater number of companions to share in their happiness, and perpetuate this establishment for the

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glory of God, and the honour of the adorable HEART of JESUS, whose holy will be done. *Amen.*

To which is added the following note :—

The Irish Benedictine Dames of Ipres have always dedicated themselves to the instruction of youth, and within these several years have been charged with the education of young ladies of distinction from different parts of the Netherlands.

Thus ends the printed and latest version of the convent annals, leaving the events of a period of nearly one hundred years—from 1810 till the present day—to be filled in as best they may with the scanty materials at our disposal; for it would seem that during all this time no regular record was kept of the events occurring in the convent. Indeed it is a regrettable fact that, unlike so many other convents, that of the Irish Dames seems never to have appointed official annalists from among the members of its community, who would jot down from day to day, from year to year, from century to century, the stirring events of which this ancient convent has been the scene. For the scanty record which we have dignified with the name of "annals," and which we have taken as our principal guide so far, is rather a meagre retrospective summary than a contemporary chronicle of events.

Abbess Bernard Lynch's life had still twenty more years to run, twenty eventful years which witnessed the fall of Napoleon's Empire, the inauguration of Dutch rule in Belgium, and the dawn of Belgian independence—events of far-reaching importance, which

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cannot have been without their influence on the peace and happiness of the Irish Dames of Ypres; but for all this eventful period we have discovered nothing to put on record, with the exception of an interesting letter from Abbess Lynch to a religious in England, which we must preface with a few explanatory remarks.

On the fall of Napoleon and the conclusion of the first Peace of Paris, Belgium was, in great measure through British influence, united with Holland, under the rule of Prince William of Nassau, who assumed the title of King of the Netherlands (March 23, 1815). But the union was not a happy one, and was not destined to last long. The Belgians differed from their phlegmatic Dutch rulers in many respects, especially in matters of religion, and these differences were accentuated by the unjust and bigoted discrimination of the Dutch Government against everything Belgian and Catholic. The population of Belgium was entirely Catholic, and amounted to 3,400,000 souls, while that of Holland amounted to only 2,000,000, the majority of whom were Protestants, although even in Holland there was a large proportion of Catholics. And yet, although the Catholics of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands were thus in a vast majority, the Government was practically entirely Protestant. Moreover, although the population of Belgium far outnumbered that of Holland, the latter country sent as many representatives to the States General, or common parliament, as did Belgium. Furthermore, the vast majority of the public offices, civil and military, were monopolized by Dutchmen, and the Government was

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carried on principally, if not exclusively, in the interests of the predominant partner. "In 1830, of the seven Government Ministers only one was a Belgian; in the Ministry of the Interior, of 117 officials only 11 were Belgians; in the Ministry of War, of 102 officials only 3 were Belgians; and among 1,976 officers of the army only 288 were Belgians;" and it was sought to perpetuate these abuses by a law, promulgated by the King in defiance of the constitution, rendering the Dutch language obligatory on all public functionaries. Such was the state of affairs on the eve of the Belgian revolt. The condition of the Catholics of Belgium under the rule of the House of Orange reminds us forcibly of the actual condition of the Catholics of Ireland under the rule of the Orange ascendency, and, as the Catholics of Belgium had the manliness to shake off the intolerable yoke, the sturdy Catholics of Ireland will use all legitimate means to shake off a yoke far more ignominious.

But the Belgians seem to have felt their religious grievances most keenly of all, especially the unwarranted interference of the Dutch King and his Government in the education of the clergy and in religious matters generally. He set up a so-called *Philosophical College* (even as the Emperor Joseph before him set up his general seminary), where all the priests were to be educated. He shut up the Catholic schools and ecclesiastical colleges and forbade the Belgians to seek for education abroad. He even attempted to prevent the clergy from having any communication with the Pope whom he stigmatized as a foreign potentate.

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Such a state of affairs will serve to explain and to excuse the note of irritation apparent in the following vigorous letter of Abbess Lynch, who was evidently smarting under a keen sense of the difficulties with which the Church had to contend. She would probably not have been so hard upon England could she have foreseen the liberty and toleration accorded by her to the Catholic Church in our days :—

ABBESS BERNARD LYNCH TO MRS. SHUTTLEWORTH (Dame Teresa Shuttleworth, Abbess of the Benedictine nuns, formerly of Ghent, 1819-1837), CAVERSWALL CASTLE, NEAR STONE, STAFFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND.

✠

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BELOVED CHILD IN CHRIST,

. . . . . .

The account you give of England is dreadful, however, it is very probable that the pride of this country will meet with a down fall a very holy Bishop some years back told me that England would infallible meet its chastisement it has at least acted very unworthyly in given over good old Catholic Belgium to a protestant king the evils that accrue from thence are incalculable with regard to Religion every good Catholic stands in dread and fear that faith will at last abandon a Country heretofore so Religious every stratagem is put to work by Government in order to undermine Catholicism. We have, however, to thank God who has in his mercy granted us such a staunch clergy who with prudence tho' vigorously and with courage oppose as far as they can a mur* against all their wicked machinations this is a strong support for

* i.e., a wall. The Abbess unconsciously lapses into French here.

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the Catholics we have but one Bishop for the whole country the A.B. [Archbishop] of Mechlin and his days are very menacing being of very poor health and often dangerously ill. . . . Do pray hard and get as many holy persons as you can to implore God's mercy thro' the powerful intercession of Our Blessed Lady in behalf of this afflicted country many excuses for my horrid scribble the hand and pen is bad the heart is entirely yours in union with the adorable and loving heart of our Divine Spouse.

Dear friend

Your Ladyship's most affectionate Mother in Xt.

B. LYNCH.

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CHAPTER XXIII

REVOLT AND INDEPENDENCE OF BELGIUM (1830)—ABBESS BYRNE (1830-1840)—ABBESS JARRETT (1840-1888)—ELECTION OF THE PRESENT ABBESS (RT. REV. DAME SCHOLASTICA BERGÉ)

ABBESS LYNCH'S appeal for prayers on behalf of Belgium was not in vain. The days of Dutch rule were numbered, and the good Abbess was hardly cold in her grave when the glorious day of Belgian independence had already dawned. She died on August 21, 1830; four days later the inhabitants of Brussels, animated by the success of the French revolution of the previous month, had already raised the standard of revolt. They had petitioned the Dutch King for a redress of their grievances, but petitioned in vain, and the irritation of the people grew daily more intense, until at last a circumstance, trivial enough in itself, set ablaze the smouldering fires of Belgian discontent. On August 26, 1830, an opera entitled *La Muette de Portici* was produced at the Théâtre de la Monnaie at Brussels. The piece contains several airs redolent of the spirit of liberty, and one scene in particular which appealed forcibly to the patriotic feelings of the audience. Aroused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm they caught up the inspiring airs of the opera, and on the fall of the curtain rushed out into the streets of the capital,

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singing and crying out " Let us imitate the Parisians." Their cries attracted their fellow-citizens, who flocked to the scene of the demonstration, until the little band of theatre-goers swelled into a mighty mob, which speedily proceeded to assert its authority. The Dutch guards and patrols were overcome, the troops driven back to their barracks, and the red, yellow and black flag of Brabant, now the national standard of Belgium, was unfurled. At the same time a deputation was sent to lay before the Dutch King the moderate demands of the Belgian patriots. They merely asked for a separate administration, in other words, Home Rule for Belgium, expressing at the same time their willingness to acknowledge the sovereignty of the House of Orange as heretofore. But these just and moderate demands were refused and the revolution went on apace. The Dutch King on his part repeated the fatal error of the Emperor Joseph by relying more upon drastic measures than upon a policy of conciliation. An army of fourteen thousand picked Dutch soldiers was dispatched to reconquer and occupy Brussels, which they entered on September 23, 1830. But the sturdy citizens at once proceeded to erect barricades and rushed to arms to the inspiriting strains of the *Brabançonne*, since become the national anthem of Belgium. In the course of the struggle, which was short but desperate, the Dutch troops were driven back into the Park in the upper and more fashionable part of the city, whence, after four days' incessant fusillade, they were dislodged by the patriots and compelled to beat a retreat. Thus did Belgian courage and Belgian

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patriotism win a victory over the well-trained and well-equipped troops of the Dutch oppressors, a victory which practically ended the campaign and decided the fate of the Fatherland. On November 10 of the same year a National Congress, composed of two hundred deputies from the different provinces, assembled at Brussels and decided in favour of the complete independence of Belgium, under a constitutional hereditary monarchy, from which the Orange Nassau family were to be perpetually excluded; and on June 4, 1831, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was elected King of the Belgians, making his public entry into Brussels on the 21st.

But these events were not accomplished without scenes of disorder and bloodshed. In most of the large towns the revolution began with riots and pillaging on the part of the mob, upon which the most influential citizens enrolled themselves into burgher guards, with the view of restoring order and guiding the movement, much after the manner of the Irish Volunteers of 1782. Some of these burgher guards, that of Brussels for example, were conservatively disposed, and wished to reform abuses without going to the extreme of abolishing Dutch rule altogether. But the movement for independence, growing stronger every day, carried all before it, and those who showed any partiality towards the condemned Dutch dynasty were made to feel the vengeance of the mob. In April, 1831, the echoes of these political disturbances reached the peaceful cloister and the town of Ypres, which had so far escaped the din of the revolution. In the year 1830

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Dame Mary Benedict Byrne had been elected as successor to Abbess Lynch, and the next year we find her writing the following letter, in which she regrets the excesses of the Belgian reformers, even as her predecessor had to bewail the misdeeds of the Dutch rulers:

ABBESS BYRNE (of Ypres) TO ABBESS SHUTTLEWORTH (of Caverswall Castle, Staffordshire):—

✠

YPRES, 11*th April*, 1831.

MY DEAR HON^{d}. MADAM,

. . . . . .

I am afraid you will always find me a stupid correspondant but at the present moment I labour under a dejection of mind I had never known all owing to the dreadful circumstances we are in this city which had hitherto been perfectly quiet became last Tuesday the theatre of horrid scenes three of the finest houses belonging to the principal noblemen of the place who had rendered themselves obnoxious to the people by their attachment to the Orange party* were violently plundered by the incensed mob assisted by the soldiers sent against them no efficacious means were taken to stop the rioters from six in the evening till nine next morning when on the arrival of a General Officer the most rigorous measures took place the prison crowded strict perquisitions made in all suspected houses canons charged in different quarters of the town have made terror and anxiety prevail over every mind no personal danger has threatened us but we bitterly resent † the affliction or fears of our fellow citizens whether good or bad what our future fate will be the Almighty alone knows it can scarce be worse than the present besides these melancholy events which have greatly disturbed that joy the Paschal festival usually

* i.e., to the Dutch monarchy. † i.e., feel, French *ressentir*.

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inspires I have had a bitter mortification within these three weeks being called upon to pay upwards of £70 duty for the inheritance of our dear and ever lamented Lady Abbess for it is only under that title we possess our house and goods according to the former laws of this kingdom I mean french or dutch laws which I am told are abolished at this moment I hope it is true though the boon comes too late for me it will contribute to let me die more quietly. I was happy to have the sum which is no small one in our circustmances but you will own there is something vexatious in the thought of having so much to pay for a loss which cost us already all that could be most dear *fiat.**

. . . . . .

I entreat your Ladyship to believe me for ever in union with the Sacred Heart of our Divine Spouse

Yr affecte Sister and most humble servant

M. B. Byrne.

I have not been blessed as yet but I have the Bishop's word for it as soon as circumstances will allow him to come to Ypres our Dr† late Lady never had that advantage. . . .

Abbess Byrne, the seventh, and, so far, the last Irish Abbess of the Irish Dames of Ypres, died on January 12, 1840, after a reign of ten years, during which she successfully piloted the community through many dangers and difficulties.

She was succeeded by Dame Elizabeth (Mary Winifred) Jarrett, a native of London, who had made her profession at Ypres on June 21, 1820, and was elected Abbess, May 1, 1840, being the only English Abbess of the Irish Dames, with the exception, perhaps, of Dame Flavia Cary, their first Abbess.

* i.e., *Fiat voluntas Dei*, God's will be done. † Dear.

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In 1843 Abbess Jarrett and the nuns of Ypres received a distinguished guest in the person of Monsignor Joachim Pecci, Archbishop of Damietta and Papal Nuncio to the Court of Brussels, afterwards Pope Leo XIII of happy memory, who blessed for them a little chapel which the nuns had erected to our Lady in the corner of their garden.

About the same time she had a less pleasant experience, the already slender resources of the community being seriously crippled by the failure of Wright's Bank. In spite of this, however, she was able, with the generous assistance of Bishop Morris, O.S.B., who had three sisters in the community, and of Bishop Malou of Bruges, "to rebuild the house, replacing the old building by a fine specimen of Flemish Gothic, built of red brick with limestone dressings, and having the square cloisters, which are so essential a feature of real monastic architecture."*

These structural alterations were proceeded with gradually. During the years 1860-1863, and again from 1876 to 1880 the quaint, old historic building, which had sheltered so many generations of the Irish Dames, and had been the witness of so many stirring events, was pulled down and the handsome new structure erected after plans by Joseph Schadde, architect, of Antwerp. Finally, in 1886 the new façade in the Rue St. Jacques was finished in the very year in which the nuns celebrated the centenary of the erection of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart—

* Beck.

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thus verifying the promises made by our Divine Saviour to Blessed Margaret Mary that He would bless the houses and institutions dedicated to His Divine Heart.

For the following interesting account* of the Abbey, as it was in Abbess Jarrett's time, we are indebted to a pilgrim who visited Ypres about half-a-century ago, and whom we have already quoted :—

A few paces more, in the same street, brought us to our destination. We stood in front of the old cloister of Ypres, where many a son and daughter of Erin had stood before—filled, as we were then, with loving memories of the dear old land far away, where our common fathers dwelt. And as we looked up and beheld the date of its erection, 1612, † set in raised characters over the narrow arched doorway, we thought of all the heart-breaking sorrows of King James's "plantation," which sent so many a once happy daughter of Ireland away from her fatherland to seek peace and a home in the convent of Ypres. Oh, how we loved the very stones of that dear old building! But our reflections were cut short by the appearance of the *concierge*, who, in obedience to the summons of our friend, ushered us into the reception room set apart for strangers.

It was a lightsome, cheerful apartment, simply furnished, but rich in the sacred gems of art which adorned its walls. A beautifully carved image of the Crucified was the first object that struck the eye on entering—and round it, on either side, hung paintings illustrative of the lives of some of His more eminent servants. Before us, and separating us from the strictly enclosed daughters of St.

* From "Glimpses d'outre Mer, No. 1, Ypres," Duffy's *Hibernian Magazine*, July, 1860.

† This must have been the date of the building of the house. It was not used as a convent until 1665, and was not acquired by the "Irish Dames" until 1682.

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Benedict, was the screened grating or *grille*, as it is technically called, emblematic of their utter seclusion from the world; and, as we looked at it, we thought of the noble Roman youth who, thirteen centuries and fifty-nine years before, had likewise secluded himself from the world, and shut himself up, to commune alone with his Maker, in the wild but lovely solitude of Subiaco. He little thought, then, that in the polished, civilized nineteenth century—as it is, *ad nauseam*, styled by its egotist admirers—the most refined and cultivated spirits of the age would glory in calling themselves "Benedictines" after his name.

A slight rustle behind the *grille* announced to us that there were others beside ourselves in the apartment. The screen was drawn aside, and we stood in the presence of the Lady Abbess. There was an air of dignity and grandeur about her that, had she been an empress, could not have impressed us more—and, when she spoke and welcomed us, as fellow-countrymen introduced by a benefactor of the convent, we could hardly find words to convey our feelings of gratitude and delight. Of her features we can say nothing, for both she and the sister by whom she was attended were closely veiled; but, judging from her conversation, she must have been a person that would grace any circle fortunate enough to possess her presence. She was English, and conversed with us quite familiarly on the leading topics of the day, particularly those connected with the recent revival of Catholicity in her own country. At the request of our friend, she kindly permitted us to visit the chapel, and, after a few additional moments' conversation, withdrew, having first humbly recommended her community and herself to our poor prayers.

The *concierge*, who was in waiting, conducted us, by the street, to an adjoining entrance leading to the chapel, which she unlocked—for we must not pass through the corridor of the convent, which is strictly cloistered. The little chapel was indeed worth a visit—a perfect gem in its way, and richly ornamented in the chastest style of Christian art. We could see nobody; yet, besides the ever-burning silver lamp, we well knew that there were

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others, though screened from our view, doing homage before the tabernacle. And we thought of other adorers, too, long since passed away, many of whom often gazed with joy, and it may be with sadness betimes, on the conquered flags hung up in that very chapel by Murrough O'Brien, as an offering to God and fatherland. The roof of the Invalides in Paris is draped by but one English colour—that wrested from them at Dantzic—the Church of the Benedictines possessed two at least, from 1706 until the Revolution. Colours and worshippers are now no longer to be seen. We were unconsciously treading on the graves of the latter, for the floor on which we stood was but the roof of a necropolis. And on that roof we could read the names of sleepers whose hearts once throbbed but for the glory of God, and the welfare of Ireland—of Dame Margaret Arthur, who died in 1715;* of Madame Butler, who died in London, A.D. 1719;† of Dame Marie Benedicte Dalton, deceased in 1783; of Dame Marie Scholastique Lynch, in 1799; of Dame Marie Bernard Lynch, who departed life in 1830; and of Marie Benedicte Byrne, born in Dublin, 1775, deceased in Ypres, 1840. She was the last of the long line of Irish abbesses that governed the Benedictine Convent of Ypres; and, by a strange permission of Providence, there is not now—at least, there was not at the period of our visit—a single Irish nun amongst a Sisterhood once exclusively Irish.‡ The words of the Psalmist arose to our memory, *Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus* §—and applying them for the moment to the last Irish Abbess of Ypres, we knelt upon her grave, and gave God thanks for having afforded such a calm retreat, such a cheering home to many a sorrowing daughter of Ireland, who had seen the bravest and last of her kindred perish in the battle-field—*Semper et ubique fideles* to the cause of King Louis and the hapless Stuarts.

* This is an error. She died in 1743.

† She died in 1723; and at Ypres?

‡ Thank God this reproach can no longer be cast against the "Irish" Dames of Ypres.

§ "We will adore in the place where his feet stood."—Psalm cxxxi.

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No doubt there was many a "Flower of Finae," many an Irish girl from "where Shannon, and Barrow, and Blackwater flow," among the sisters and boarders of that dear old convent. Happily we have procured for our readers the names of a few of the former; though we regret that the writers of the obituary notices in our possession have left us no clue to the locality of the deceased. Their names, however, almost bespeak that locality.

During Abbess Jarrett's régime the nuns found themselves engaged again in correspondence with Royalty, this time with the successor of the Stuarts. An effort was made to obtain recognition and payment of the annual grant conferred on the Abbey by James's Royal Letters Patent. On October 21, 1882, the present worthy Prioress forwarded a petition to her late Majesty Queen Victoria, setting forth how James II had granted an annuity under the Royal Seal to the Irish nuns at Ypres, the Patent being preserved in the convent, and how they had been deprived of the annuity, although, according to the tenor of the Patent, it had been granted "for ever." She furthermore informed her Majesty how Queen Clementina settled upon the nuns of Ypres a capital sum of 40,000 livres, which was placed in the funds of the Hôtel de Ville of Paris and lost during the French Revolution, as likewise the fortune inherited from Mr. Butler (brother to Abbess Butler, and Cup-Bearer to James II), as well as the dowries of the nuns; and finally she asked her Most Gracious Majesty if the nuns "might not retain, according to the just laws of England, what they had so long been deprived of," and prayed

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that her Majesty might graciously accord them a grant under her Royal Seal.

To which humble petition the following reply was sent :—

WINDSOR CASTLE,
December 12, 1882.

Sir Henry Ponsonby presents his compliments to Sister Mary Benedict, and begs leave to inform her that her application should be addressed to the First Lord of the Treasury.

Application having accordingly been made to the First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. George Spencer Lyttleton wrote on January 1, 1883, from Downing Street in the name of Mr. Gladstone, saying that the latter would not fail to lay her " communication of the 15th ult." before the Board of the Treasury.

The matter having been duly laid before the Treasury Board, the following reply was received :—

TREASURY CHAMBERS,
20th January, 1883.

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—
83

MADAM,

The Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury have caused inquiries to be made in reference to your request for the restoration of a grant of £100, yearly, stated to have been made by King James II to your Abbey.

I am to inform you that a careful search for the supposed grant has been made amongst all the classes of Records where such a grant would be likely to be found.

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The Patent which you say that you possess is not inrolled, and no mention can be found either of such grant or of any payment or warrant for payment of the annuity of £100 said to be granted by James II to the Benedictine Abbey. If James II made such a grant as that in your possession during his exile, or after the 11th of December, 1688, it could have no effect, and consequently no payment from the Exchequer would appear.

I have the honour to be,
Madam,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) J. H. COLE.

SISTER MARY BENEDICT,
BENEDICTINE ABBEY,
YPRES,
BELGIUM.

Some further correspondence ensued, but no satisfactory reply was received.

Lady Abbess Jarrett died September 19, 1888, nearly half-a century after her election, but during the last few years of her life she had ceased to exercise jurisdiction as Abbess, while still retaining the title. She is said to have been very virtuous, pious and humble, but incompetent and unequal to the task of rightly ordering the affairs, whether spiritual or temporal, of the community. So much so that the late Monsignor Faict, Bishop of Bruges, felt obliged to step in and set matters to right. With this end in view, on St. Gregory's Day, March 12, 1885, he accepted the voluntary resignation of Abbess Jarrett, and handed over the entire charge of the house, with all the powers and responsibilities of an Abbess, to the

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present Abbess, Dame Mary Scholastica Eugénie Bergé, at that time Prioress. In the same year, 1885, the new acting Superior, with the approval of the Bishop of Bruges, introduced the Monastic Office instead of the Roman Breviary, which had hitherto been in use in the convent.

On the death of Abbess Jarrett in 1888 Dame Bergé was elected Abbess by the community. She had come to the convent at a very early age, and it is interesting to recall that she distinctly remembers Dame Placida Byrne (sister of the Abbess of that name), who, having made her profession in the year 1785, was a nun in the convent at the time of the French Revolution, and could tell many a thrilling story of the experiences of the Irish Dames during those stirring days. Dame Bergé made her profession at Ypres in July, 1852, and was blessed as Abbess on July 11, 1890, Feast of the solemn Commemoration of St. Benedict, by Monsignor Faict, Bishop of Bruges, " who made use of the mitre and vestments which had been worked for him by the nuns of the Irish Abbey, and also wore the pallium which had been sent him a year before as a special and remarkable proof of the Holy Father's affection and esteem. The venerable Bishop was attended by a large number of the clergy, secular and regular, and by many friends of the house; and the Holy Father himself, remembering the visit he had paid the Abbey at the time of his Nunciature, took part in the proceedings by sending a telegram conveying his Apostolic blessing."*

* Beck.

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In July, 1902, Lady Abbess Bergé had the happiness of celebrating the golden Jubilee of her profession amidst the rejoicings not only of her own devoted community, but of the citizens of Ypres of all classes and shades of opinion, among whom she is justly held in the greatest esteem. On this occasion she was the happy recipient of a special message and silver medal from the late Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII of happy memory, who alluded once more to his visit to the convent of the Irish Dames, of which he had still a vivid recollection.

Abbess Bergé is the eleventh Abbess of Ypres and the tenth of the Irish community. She is a Belgian, a native of Tournai, being the second Abbess since the days of Dame Butler who does not claim to be of Irish extraction. But, although not Irish by birth, she is, like so many of her compatriots, in full sympathy with Irish aspirations, and may be said indeed to be *ipsis Hibernicis hibernior*, more Irish than the Irish themselves; so that the destinies of the Abbey are safe in her hands; indeed the Convent of the Irish Dames has, perhaps, never been so flourishing as under her admirable sway, and the prospects for the future of the Abbey are most encouraging. The stream of vocations which seems to have become more or less parched up, if it had not actually run dry, under her predecessor's régime, has begun to flow again, slowly, perhaps, but surely and steadily. Postulants have begun to knock at the abbey door with greater frequency and persistence, and it is a matter for special rejoicing that the daughters of Erin are beginning to find their way once more to the Convent of the Irish Dames, the only

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Benedictine convent which Irishwomen can call their own—their national heritage, preserved for them since the days of persecution, at the cost of many sufferings and tribulations, by their exiled countrywomen. And this is only as it should be in a convent redolent of Irish memories. For if the community at a recent period ceased to be exclusively Irish the traditions and associations of the place must ever remain patriotic. The tombstones of the church speak of many an Irish exile whose ashes lie beneath the pavement, awaiting the day of their glorious resurrection, and the prayers of the nuns are offered up to many an Irish saint in their behalf, for the memory of some of the most glorious saints of Erin is kept green in this Convent of Irish Dames, and the Holy Sacrifice is offered up in their honour as their feasts occur each year.

On the Feast of St. Patrick, which is kept as a Double of the first class, there is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction in the afternoon, with "grand orchestre." The Feast of St. Brigid of Kildare is fêted as a Double of the second class; those of Saints Fursey, Frigidian, Columbanus, Kilian, Fiacre and Colman as greater doubles; while those of Saints Congal, Malachy, Winoc, and Dympna are kept as doubles. St. Dympna, as is well known, was an Irish saint who fled to Belgium and died there, where she is much honoured, especially at Gheel, in the Province ot Antwerp, the church of which is dedicated to her and contains her relics in a shrine, painted, it is said, by a contemporary of Memling. St. Canice is also held in veneration at Ypres, no doubt as being the

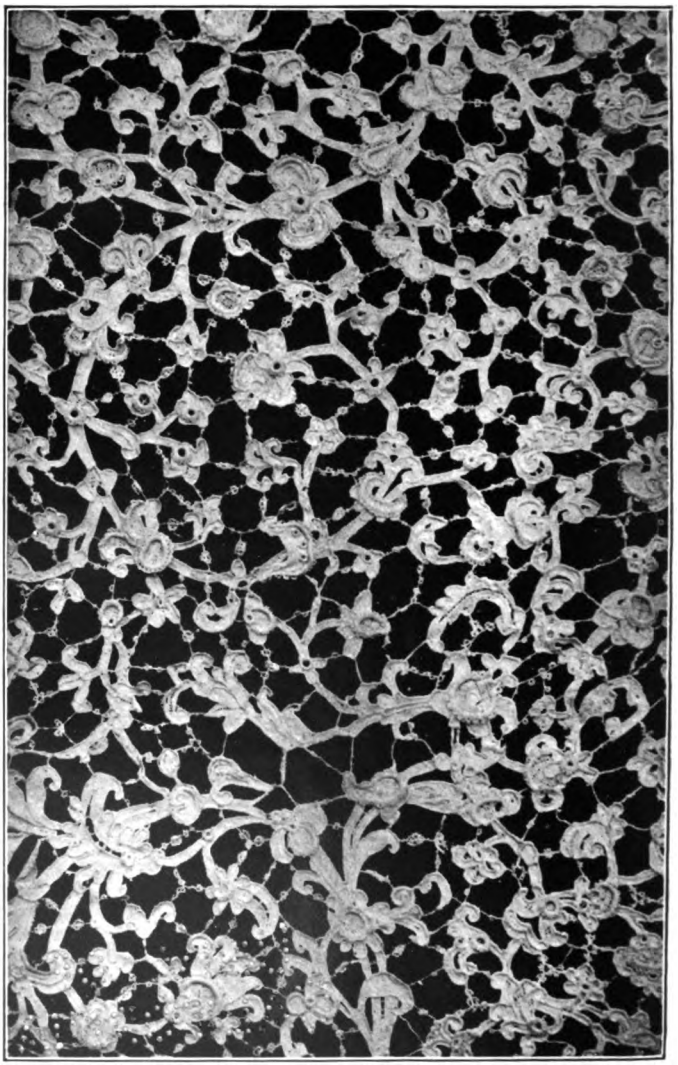
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special patron of Kilkenny, the native place of Lady Abbess Butler's family, and the writer cannot help recalling what a peculiar pleasure and privilege he felt it that it should fall to his lot to offer up the Holy Sacrifice in honour of this great Irish saint, as his feast came round, in the little Irish Church of Ypres, so far removed from the common Fatherland. May the saints of Erin ever keep watch over this hallowed sanctuary and bless and protect its inmates, and may it become the mother of many holy souls, who, by their virtues and their sanctity, shall emulate in holy rivalry the fair fame of their predecessors.

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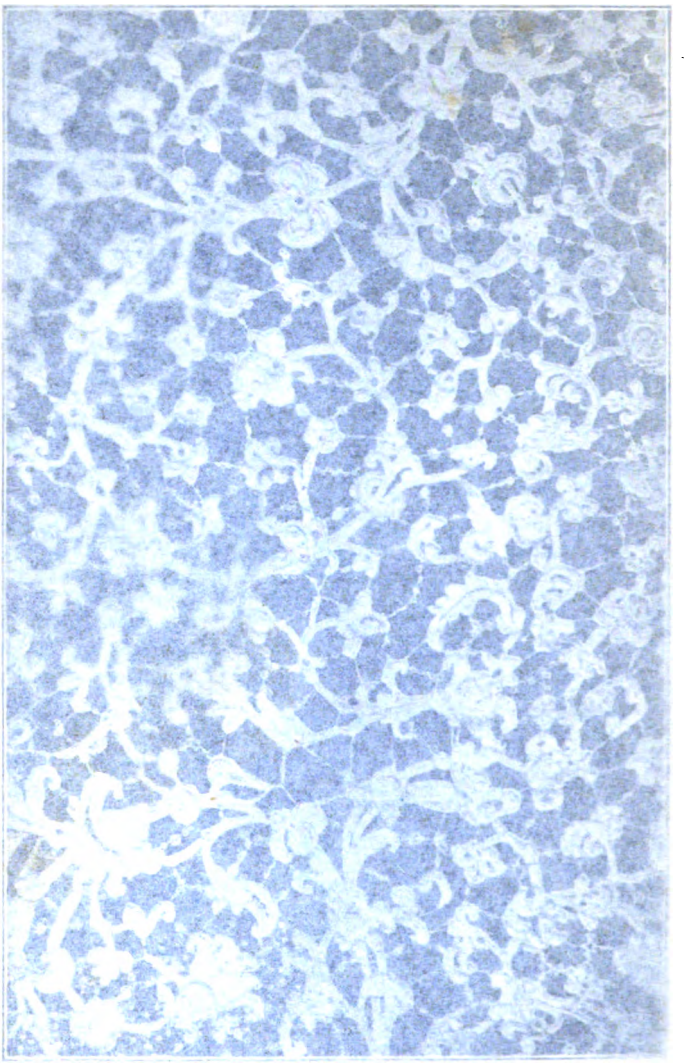
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LACE WORKED BY MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, AND PRESENTED TO THE IRISH DAMES BY JAMES II.

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CHAPTER XXIV

OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, CONTEMPLATIVE AND ACTIVE—OF THE CHIEF OCCUPATIONS OF THE IRISH DAMES, PRAYER, EDUCATION, ALMS-DEEDS—OF THE CHURCH AND ABBEY AND THEIR PRINCIPAL TREASURES

> Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.
>
> —LUKE X. 41, 42.

> Lei lo vedere, e me l'ovrare appaga.
>
> —DANTE *Purgatorio*, C. XXVII.

> Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast, and demure.
>
> —MILTON.

SOME of our readers, no doubt, will be disposed to ask us what manner of life is lived by these Irish daughters of St. Benedict. What is the aim and object of their existence? What strange and powerful impulse was it that led them to leave home and kindred and Fatherland to eat the bitter bread of exile? What is the secret of that dogged perseverance and almost superhuman endurance which enabled these weak, defenceless women to support trials seemingly unendurable, and to baffle and triumph over the numerous powerful and implacable foes who more than once sought to compass their destruction? And we answer that it was the same spirit which inspired their countrymen

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and countrywomen of the golden age of Christianity in Ireland, those valiant heroes of the Cross, who, as we are told by the ancient Irish Monk of Ratisbon, " left behind dear friends and possessions, and spurning temporal things for things eternal, crossed so many seas, so many trackless wastes, to follow Christ." It was the same spirit, but with this difference that our early apostles were voluntary exiles from their native land, whereas the exiles of Ypres were forced to quit Ireland if they wished to follow Christ more perfectly and become His brides, for the religious life, that most faithful imitation of the life of Christ, had been proscribed and banned in the name of a spurious Christianity. Jesus Christ it was who inspired their sacrifice; He it was who supported them under the trials which it entailed. " Charitas Christi urget nos," they might truly cry with St. Paul, " It is the love of Christ which constraineth us," and they wished in the words of the same great saint " to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." And what more direct road could they take towards the love of Christ, and the unspeakable happiness of Heaven, which is promised to those that love Him, than the narrow path which He Himself has pointed out. Thus were they attracted to the religious life and to the ancient Order and Rule of St. Benedict, which, like every other religious rule that flourishes in the Catholic Church, is nothing more nor less than the Gospel reduced to practice. In this venerable Order they pronounced their vows of Obedience, of Stability and of Conversion of Manners, which latter implies the vows of Poverty and

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Chastity. They vowed Obedience because Jesus Christ set them the example by becoming "obedient even unto death." They vowed Chastity because Jesus Christ and His great disciple St. Paul taught them by word and by deed the beauty and the dignity and the pre-eminence of the virginal life, the life alone worthy of those who aspire after perfection—and they vowed to aspire after perfection because their Master commanded it, "Be you perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect." And finally they vowed Poverty because Jesus Christ taught it by example and precept and laid it down as the necessary condition of perfection: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou wilt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me."

Such in brief is the meaning of the "religious life" in general. What we have said will be nothing new to most of our readers, but we have been tempted to say so much, as this little work may fall into the hands of Protestant readers, to whom the religious life is not familiar in any of its aspects. Let us now add a few words as to the special work of the Benedictine Order which may, perhaps, not be out of place, as these pages are intended in the first place for Irish readers, to whom alas! owing mainly to the chequered history of our country this most ancient Order of the Church has become a thing strange and unfamiliar.

The Benedictine Order, it need hardly be said, owes its existence and its name to the great St. Benedict, the scion of an ancient and noble family, who, some fourteen hundred years ago, whilst still a mere stripling, fearing

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the dangers and corruptions of the Imperial city of Rome, a city still to a large extent pagan in fact if not in name, resolved to abandon his ancestral home and give himself up to a life of prayer and retirement in the wild fastnesses of the mountains of Subiaco. Here were laid the first foundations of his world-wide Order, which is in the first place a contemplative one, and, this being so, the first duty and principal occupation of the Benedictine monk or nun is prayer. Indeed the venerable founder has laid especial emphasis on this in his holy Rule. "Nihil operi Dei præponatur," "Let nothing be preferred before the work of God." This is in strict accordance with the teaching of our Lord that "we ought always to pray and not to faint." "Septies in die laudem dixi tibi," "Seven times a day I have given praise to Thee" said the Royal Psalmist, and seven times a day—at the hours of Matins, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline—the Benedictines meet in choir,* according to the rule of their founder, to sing the praises of God in the Divine Office, the official Psalmody of the Church. "What a waste of time" will perhaps be the remark of the practical man or woman of the twentieth century. "How much better to be occupied all day in active ministering to the wants and needs of our fellow-creatures" chimes in the would-be philanthropist. But those who reason thus show that they do not realize the importance of prayer in the divine economy and its influence over the prac-

* Or to be strictly accurate we should say *five* times a day, as in most monasteries nowadays several "hours" are usually combined together.

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tical affairs of every-day life. Do we not read in the Holy Scriptures how, when the Israelites went out to fight against Amalec, the people of God owed the victory more to the prayer of Moses than to the strength and prowess of their warriors? "And when Moses lifted up his hands (in prayer), Israel overcame: but if he let them down a little Amalec overcame." And so has it ever been, so will it be to the end of time.

> Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

So wrote the English Protestant poet of our own days and such was the general belief and firm conviction of all in the ages of faith. Once upon a time the Emperor Charles V was in imminent danger of being wrecked along with his fleet in a violent storm off the coast of Africa. But one thought came to reassure him, even when the danger seemed at its height. Having asked the hour and being told it was midnight, "Oh then," remarked the Emperor, "the danger is past, for at this hour in Spain all the monks and nuns rise in prayer." And Charles V was a redoubtable warrior and a practical and successful politician. Such was the faith in prayer that animated a German Emperor, even at the time when the pseudo-Reformation was beginning to materialize men's minds, to weaken if not utterly

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destroy their belief in the supernatural and in the efficacy of prayer. With the spread of the so-called Reformation and its new-fangled doctrines the Benedictine Order, and with it the life of prayer and contemplation, began to decline and to be held in less esteem, but the contemplative life was only undergoing a temporary eclipse. It can never be wholly dispensed with in the Church of God. There can never be true prosperity in the world, nor can the Church, the Bride of Christ, fitly fulfil her glorious mission without the powerful, albeit invisible, assistance of the prayers of the chosen Spouses of Christ. Prayer, fervent, continual, assiduous prayer was never more necessary than in our own days, and that this is becoming better realized is evident from the marvellous revival of the Benedictine Order and of contemplative Orders generally which we have been privileged to witness within recent years, and it is an encouraging fact that it is often those who are themselves engaged in the active life who are most ready to bear witness to the utility and necessity of the contemplative life. Only a few years ago a French Bishop from Tonkin came to Europe to seek spiritual assistance for his distant diocese, and it is remarkable that, while welcoming the assistance of the active Orders, he seemed to attach far greater importance to securing a little colony of Carmelite nuns or other contemplatives who would pray for the needs of his difficult mission. And again, when about a quarter of a century ago a religious community of women went out from England to Australia with the intention of taking up active work there, and the

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active part of their programme seemed in danger of falling through, and the superior, feeling disheartened at the little good they seemed to be doing, remarked to a young, zealous, pious priest: "We can do but little;" his answer was: "If you say your office and take care of your chapel you will be doing a great work, even if you did not teach your school." And another active priest of the same mission gave it as his advice to the same superior: "If you want to do any good here, keep within," and again he said: "I know some who have their eyes on this community and are attached to it, because you keep yourselves quiet, and do not appear in public." Not that we wish in the least to underrate the splendid work done by our active Orders—our nursing and teaching Orders, Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of the Poor, and other admirable bodies, but there is a tendency in this busy, practical age to underestimate the value of the contemplative Orders and the great benefits which the Church militant reaps from their unceasing prayer. And who can tell all the blessings that have been poured out upon Ireland, the country of their birth and of their affections, and upon Belgium, the country of their adoption, upon the Church of Christ in general, and the sorely-tried Church of Ireland in particular by the fervent, unceasing prayers of the Irish Dames of Ypres? Morning, noon and night, for two centuries and more their prayers have ascended like incense in the sight of God, on behalf of their suffering country, their exiled sovereigns, their enemies, friends and benefactors, thus amply repaying those who had deserved well of them.

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Not with fond shekels of the tested gold,
Or stones, whose rates are either rich or poor,
As fancy values them; but with true prayers
That shall be up at heaven, and enter there
Ere sunrise; prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal.

If this were their only work this alone would be sufficient to justify their existence. But there is something more to be said, something that will raise them in the estimation of the votaries of the active life. Holy Church, by the mouth of her Fathers and Doctors has always regarded and proclaimed the contemplative life as in itself higher and more perfect than the active one; and the poet Dante, a true son of the Church, has endorsed this view by placing St. Benedict and the contemplatives in the seventh heaven of his Paradise. But both lives are excellent. "Truly it should be known," says the same poet in his *Convito*, "that we can have in this life two felicities by following two different and excellent roads, which lead thereto; namely, the Active life and the Contemplative." And Owen Feltham, a quaint old English writer of the age of Charles I, tells us in his *Resolves* that :—

Meditation is the soul's perspective glass, whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God as if he were nearer hand. I persuade no man to make it his whole life's business. We have bodies as well as souls. And even this world, while we are in it, ought somewhat to be cared for. As those states are likely to flourish, where execution follows sound advisements, so is man, when contemplation is seconded by action. Contemplation generates; action propagates. Without the first, the latter is defective.

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Without the last, the first is but abortive and embryous. Saint Bernard compares contemplation to Rachel, which was the more fair; but action to Leah, which was the more fruitful. I will neither always be busy and doing, nor ever shut up in nothing but thoughts. Yet that which some would call idleness, I will call the sweetest part of my life, and that is, my thinking.

There is much that is true in the words of this good old Protestant writer, though he does not grasp the Catholic idea of contemplation.

But what we wish to insist upon here is that the contemplative life does not wholly exclude the active life any more than the latter wholly excludes the former. Both are excellent as we have said; some are called to the one, some to the other, but no hard and fast line can be laid down between them. Action does not dispense with the necessity of prayer, nor does prayer preclude active work. "Happy is that house," says St. Bernard, "and blessed is that congregation where Martha still complaineth of Mary." Martha and Mary, as everybody knows, are the types in the New Testament of the Active and Contemplative lives respectively, as Leah and Rachel are in the Old Testament, and we take it that St. Bernard wishes to extol those Orders where Martha, that is action, is not excluded, while at the same time Mary, or contemplation reigns supreme, gets her due, and is not swallowed up by action, which is disposed at times to be envious of her and sometimes chafes against her. What better example could we cite than St. Bernard himself, who was eminently contemplative and always considered his monastery cell to be his true home, yet was ever busy

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in active well-doing, and exercised more influence over the Church and the Kingdoms of Europe than many a professed man of action.

And now to apply our remarks to the Irish Dames of Ypres. Prayer, as we have said, is their first and principal work, but the grace of perpetual contemplation and abstraction from things mundane is vouchsafed to none in this life, and when our nuns have fulfilled their duties in choir a considerable part of the day is left which is not spent in idleness. A convent is like a bee-hive, where every member is busy from morning till night in various occupations, all tending to the common good, but the principal occupation of the Irish Dames, after the Divine Office, is the education of young girls of the better classes, a work, which, besides being one of the spiritual works of mercy, is one of far-reaching practical importance.

Nothing is more neglected [says the immortal Fénelon*] than the education of girls . . . and yet have they not duties to fulfil, duties which are the foundation of the whole of human life? Is it not the women who are the ruin or the support of houses, who regulate all the details of domestic affairs, and who, consequently, decide in what concerns most closely the whole human race? Therefore, they have the principal share in shaping for good or for evil the morals of the entire world. . . .

These, then, are the occupations of women, which are scarcely less important to the public than those of men, seeing that they have a house to regulate, a husband to make happy, and children to bring up in the right way. . . . In fine, we must take into consideration not only the good which women do when they are well brought up, but also the evil they cause in the world when they have been

* *De l'Education des Filles.*

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deprived of an education which inspires them with virtue. It is unquestionable that the evil education of women works more mischief than that of men, since the disorders of men arise both from the bad education they have received from their mothers, and from the passions with which other women have inspired them in an age more advanced.*

What intrigues do we not meet with in history, what subversion of laws and of morals, what bloody wars, what novelties opposed to religion, what revolutions in the state caused by the disorders of women! This proves the importance of the proper education of girls. . . .

It would not be difficult to cite numerous instances in support of the illustrious Archbishop's opinion as to the evils inflicted on the world by women of perverted mind. Not to go back to the days of good Mother Eve we need only mention the misfortunes brought upon Ireland by depraved women from the days of Dervorgill to our own times, or the miseries and persecutions inflicted upon the best and bravest of England's sons and daughters since the unhappy days when religious novelties were first introduced into that country all on account of a brutal king's passion for a disreputable woman, and heresy and schism forced upon the people by a woman still more brutal and disreputable. And here we cannot forbear contrasting the two Marys we have had occasion to speak of in the course of our history—the one a pious, innocent, intellectual, well-educated, convent-bred girl, incapable of doing, or even of suspecting evil, the other, a half-educated,

* "Woe to him, my son, who desires or serves a bad woman, woe to every one who has got a bad wife"! is the warning addressed by the Pagan Irish King Cormac (in the Teagarg Riog, or "Education of a Prince") to his son, Cairbre.

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ill-bred, unfilial woman of distorted nature, whose meanness and selfishness are an everlasting reproach to her sex.

We have seen how King James II invited our nuns over to Dublin to found a convent there, and we doubt not that he attached great importance to the good results that would accrue to his kingdom of Ireland from the sound Catholic education which the daughters of Erin would receive in their school; and we have also seen how the great ones of the land showed their appreciation of the good work begun amongst them by entrusting the education of their children to the daughters of St. Benedict. It was probably with a like intent that Bishop Praets called the first Benedictine nuns to Ypres, where he hoped that by the good seed they would sow in the minds of the citizens they would counteract the poisonous, free-thinking spirit of the "Gueux," who threatened to infect Catholic Belgium with so-called "Reformation" principles. And as the Dames of Ypres served as a bulwark against Lutheran and Calvinistic free-thought in the seventeenth century, their successors, within the last centuries, have rendered a similar service by stemming the growing tide of indifference and resisting the onslaught of French free-thought, which, after all, is but the same old enemy in a new shape. It is a regrettable fact that, especially in the course of the nineteenth century, owing to the proximity of France and the indiscriminate reading of trashy French infidel writers, the members of some of the oldest and best families of

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Ypres have imbibed the poison of Voltairianism and free-thought, and have, in consequence, gone hopelessly astray, becoming indifferent Catholics and indifferent citizens. On the other hand it is a hopeful sign that not only some of the best Catholic families, but also some parents of "liberal," free-thinking views, show so much appreciation of the good work of the Irish Dames as to entrust the education of their children to them by preference, and thus the mass of free-thought and indifference is leavened by sound Catholic instruction, and the good seed thus sown in the minds of the younger generation cannot but bear good fruit, even in the most uncongenial soil.

Nor must it be supposed that in thus undertaking the active work of education the Irish Dames of St. Benedict are false to the spirit of their Order and Rule. They are only carrying on the traditions handed down from the earliest days, for it must be remembered that for many centuries the Benedictine Order undertook a great part of the active work now accomplished by the more modern Orders, and had but few rivals in the field of education. In England, especially, before the destruction of the monasteries at the so-called Reformation, the country was dotted over with nunneries of the Benedictine and other Orders, which were the most popular, if not the sole places of education for girls of all classes, and valuable testimony as to the utility and excellence of these institutions is borne by the Protestant antiquarian, John Aubrey, who, writing about a century after the suppression of the religious houses, speaks as follows of the convents of Wiltshire,

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among which the Benedictines were the most numerous, counting three large nunneries :—

> The young maids were brought up at nunneries, where they had examples of piety and humility, and modesty, and obedience to imitate and to practice. Here they learned needlework, the art of confectionery, surgery . . . physic, writing, drawing, etc. . . . It was a fine way of building up young women, who are led more by example than precept; and a good retirement for widows and grave single women to a civil, virtuous, and holy life.

We could say much more in defence of the enclosed Orders, but these few remarks must suffice in praise of Rachel, who, ever since the destruction of the religious houses at the " Reformation," and the decline of the contemplative Orders, has been bewailing her children and will not be comforted because they are not.

> How happy is the blameless Vestal's lot!
> The world forgetting, by the world forgot:
> Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!
> Each prayer accepted, and each wish resigned;
> Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
> " Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep; "
> Desires composed, affections ever even;
> Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.
> Grace strives around her with serenest beams,
> And whispering angels prompt her golden dreams.
> For her the unfading rose of Eden blooms,
> And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes,
> For her the Spouse prepares the bridal ring,
> For her white virgins hymenæals sing,
> To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,
> And melts in visions of eternal day.

We must now give a brief account of the Church and Abbey and the treasures they contain. The church, which is of oblong shape, presents a very neat and

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devotional appearance interiorly. It was begun about the year 1700, in the time of Abbess Butler, and we have already seen how energetically her successor, Abbess Arthur, then a novice, laboured with her own hands in order to hasten its completion. Though the church has now been standing over two hundred years, it is not yet consecrated, having been so far only blessed. The nuns had hoped that the year 1880, in which the new Abbey buildings were completed, and the convent was celebrating the centenary of the erection of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, might also have been signalized by the consecration of the Abbey church, but circumstances did not allow of it. However, they only await a favourable opportunity for its consecration, and such would present itself when they are in a position to reconstruct the plain façade in the Jacobus Street (Rue St. Jacques), which is out of keeping with the handsome new gabled entrance of the convent in the same street. The church, we may remark, is not orientated and runs north and south. It has the altar in the south end, while the nun's choir, which is enclosed and is considerably higher than the level of the church, is at the north end, facing the altar. The light comes through windows in the east, the west side consisting of a blind wall running along the street (Rue St. Jacques).

Among the treasures of the church we must mention in the first place several precious relics, given by King James II, or sent from Rome by James III and his son, the Cardinal Duke of York, which are enshrined in the altar and elsewhere. The Tabernacle, which comes

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from the former Jesuits' church at Ypres, is of copper gilt, with inlaid work by Bastiaan Frank representing the sacrifices of Abraham and Melchisedech, the figures and types of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The St. Dorothea, by the painter Thomas, of Ypres, was formerly in the Abbey of St. John, now the communal school. The large painting over the high altar, representing the adoration of the Sacred Heart, is by le Ducq. The church also contains an altar-frontal, with centre cut oval-shape, to receive the valuable medallions of which we shall say something when mentioning the treasures of the convent. We should also mention a chasuble and cope of rich brocaded silk, cut from the dress of the Archduchess Isabella, and an altar fringe of lace, worked by the hapless Queen Mary Stuart.* And last, but not least, a magnificent golden monstrance, set with diamonds and precious stones, the munificent gift of a generous Anglican lady, Mrs. Mitchelson, of London.

The church of the Irish Dames seems to be one of the most popular of the churches of Ypres, especially with the humbler classes. Thither people come day by day, often from long distances, to assist at early Mass, bringing with them little cakes or articles of clothing, which they lay on the altar rails, there to be blessed by the priest, who makes use of a special formula of prayer to the Sacred Heart; and it is said that in many cases children who eat of these cakes or wear the garments after blessing are cured of the

* The gold embroidery on the nuns' best red vestment formed part of the trappings of the horse of King James II.

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malady known in Flemish as *de koeke aan't herte gespannen*, in French *le cœur serré*, or *le Carreau*—in English "heart-burn." It is to this church that the pious Flemish peasants come with simple faith and confidence to recommend themselves and their children to the Sacred Heart and St. Benedict, who are especially honoured therein.

We have already seen that the Irish Dames were one of the first communities outside France to introduce devotion to the Sacred Heart after its establishment at Paray-le-Monial, and the traditions thus early begun have been handed down faithfully from generation to generation. Indeed their church is conspicuous above others for the solemn manner in which this devotion is carried out. On every Friday in the year there is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the morning and in the evening in honour of the Sacred Heart, while on the Feast itself, and every day during the Octave, there is Exposition from six in the morning till near mid-day, and for an hour in the afternoon; and on the first and last days of the Octave there is Solemn High Mass, with a sermon in French, which latter is something of a rarity in Ypres. Moreover, by a special privilege accorded in perpetuity by Pope Pius VI (Bull of 4 December, 1779) a Plenary Indulgence can be gained every day of the year on the usual conditions by the faithful who visit this chapel of the Irish Benedictine nuns. The then Bishop of Ypres, Mgr. de Wavrans, in promulgating this Bull, erected in the same chapel a Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, which has been approved of and confirmed

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by a second Bull of the same Pope, dated 11 December, 1780.

We have already had occasion to give a brief description of the adjoining Abbey of the Irish Dames in alluding to its reconstruction under Abbess Jarrett. The picturesque old house (of which we give an illustration) which sheltered the Irish nuns for so many years, has completely disappeared to give room for the present handsome structure, which occupies the same site as the original convent, nestling close to the inner side of the ramparts in the eastern part of the town. The cloister garth and gardens of the Abbey face towards the ramparts, from which the best view of the convent is to be had, while the front portion of the building, containing the entrance-porch, is situated in the Rue St. Jacques, as will be seen from our illustrations. The whole is a handsome specimen of Flemish Gothic, with picturesque turrets and dormer windows.

Among the treasures of the Abbey we may mention a piece of lace, worked by Mary Queen of Scots and her maids of honour, and presented to the nuns by King James II, for which a sum of £2,000 is said to have been offered to the nuns by a would-be purchaser, but refused by them, for, though by no means abounding in riches, they are justly loath to part with the gifts of revered benefactors. The convent also possesses a portrait of James II, presented by himself, and a much-faded portrait, supposed to be that of the Cardinal Duke of York, sent by James III, of which we have tried in vain to get a satisfactory photograph; also portraits of the following Lady Abbesses:—Butler,

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Arthur, Dalton, Bernard and Scholastica Lynch. The picture of the latter is said not to be genuine, as Abbess Lynch, who is described as a very handsome woman, would never, out of humility, consent to sit for her portrait. However, her sister, who remained in the world, and is said to have been very like her and equally handsome, was induced to dress herself up in Abbess's robes and sit for her picture, that thus the nuns might have a reminder of their beloved Abbess. This portrait, however, is scrupulously kept apart from the others lest, in the course of time, it might come to be looked upon as genuine.

This sister of Abbess Lynch settled down in Belgium and married a Monsieur Dutoit, of Antwerp. She was a generous benefactor to the nuns, to whom she presented four valuable medallions, representing the Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph, St. Scholastica, and the Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which are said to have been painted by Baltassar, the first pupil of Rubens. They were submitted for examination to the authorities of the School of Rubens at Antwerp, by whom they are said to have been valued at £1,000 apiece. Who this Baltassar was we cannot say, as we have not succeeded in tracing his name in the list of the pupils of Rubens.

In the nuns' refectory there is a picture of the Virgin with grapes, said to be by Murillo, which measures about 5 ft. by 3 ft., and was formerly in the church.

It is interesting to note that the tables in the same refectory come from Dublin, and are, we presume, relics of the Ship-street Convent.

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In conclusion, it is hardly necessary to say that, among the good works practised by the Irish Dames, works of charity hold a foremost place, and, especially, the important work of alms-giving, which has always been a characteristic feature of monastic houses. In addition to the relief afforded to the needy day by day or on exceptional occasions, the following fixed charities are dispensed on certain more important Feasts :—

On Christmas Day, to a poor man, his wife and baby (if under one year of age) are given a dinner, a trousseau, and an alms.

On St. Joseph's Day (19 March) a dinner and an alms to a poor man.

On Palm Sunday, a supper and an alms to a poor man, in honour of and out of sympathy with our Lord, who on that day knew not where to sup.

On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, a dinner, an alms and a medal to eight little girls under seven years of age, in memory of the "eight beatitudes."

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a dinner and an alms to three unmarried girls, in honour of the Most Holy Trinity.

Thus do the nuns fulfil the precept of the Rule of St. Benedict, which ordains that all guests should be received as if they were Christ Himself, but that especial care is to be taken of the poor and of strangers, "for in them more especially is Christ received."

"Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me."

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CONCLUSION

Prince Henry—A noble convent! I have known it long
By the report of travellers. I now see
Their commendations lag behind the truth.
—LONGFELLOW, *Golden Legend.*

WE have now brought to an end this sketch of the history of the Irish Dames of Ypres, and we think that our readers will agree with us that their record is a marvellous one. The foundation of their convent takes us back as far as the year 1665—the year of the Great Plague of London—and, though it was born in poverty and obscurity, and nourished in adversity, and has had to pass through centuries of storms and trials and tribulations, before which it has seen the most flourishing communities succumb, the community of the Irish Dames has bravely weathered the storm. It has kept its colours flying, has remained fixed in the spot where it was first planted, has remained true to the ideals which prompted its first institution, and still continues, in the twentieth century, the good work which it began well-nigh two centuries and a-half ago.

When it first saw the light the "Merry Monarch" was still sitting on the throne of England, though the Irish nuns, as exiles, were under the political jurisdiction and protection of King Philip IV of Spain. They then pass under the sway of the Grand Monarque, take part in the short-lived triumph of King James II

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in Ireland, and revert again to the rule of the King of France. We next find them coming under the dominion of Austria, and then again the city and convent are besieged and fall once more under the power of France. But in the besieging forces there are brave Irish hearts, who insist that, come what may, the Irish Dames must not suffer. Another spell of French rule and the town and convent revert again to Austria. Our nuns witnessed the firm establishment of the Hanoverians on the throne of England, but ever kept faithful—*semper et ubique fideles*—to the cause of the fallen Stuarts, praying for them day by day, sympathizing with them in their misfortunes, and rejoicing in their temporary successes. They escaped unhurt amidst the violent excesses of the Emperor Joseph's Austrian troops, only to be exposed to the outrages and barbarities of the still more tyrannical troops of the French Republic. But even amongst this savage crowd there is to be found one who will take thought for the welfare of the Irish Dames. Once more there is a gallant Irishman in high command among the French troops, and, though he has forsworn allegiance to the ancient monarchy, a chivalrous Irish heart still beats beneath his Republican uniform; he still, perhaps, remembers the lessons he learned at an Irish mother's knees in far-off Roscommon, and has not entirely forgotten the respect owing to the consecrated virgins of Christ, and he too resolves that, although all the rest may go under, this refuge of his exiled countrywoman must be respected.

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I would not—though 'tis my familiar sin
With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,
Tongue far from heart,—play with all virgins so:
I hold you as a thing ensky'd, and sainted;
By your renouncement an immortal spirit;
And to be talk'd with in sincerity
As with a saint.

And so the word of command goes out from this Irish general, the forces of destruction are arrested, and the convent spared by his godless Republican troops. It sees all the venerable religious houses round about engulfed in the deluge of the new paganism, while it alone remains standing, like another ark, in which the last remnant of the religious life of Belgium is to be preserved until the dove shall return with the green olive-branch of peace to proclaim that the wrath of God is appeased. For years it stands alone, the only religious house in the Low Countries, a striking witness to the strength and endurability of Irish Faith and Irish courage. True, the nuns have to suffer many insults and indignities from the apostles of "liberty, equality and fraternity," but they bear them patiently and courageously, after the example of their Divine Master, knowing that if they share in His humiliations they will triumph with Him in His Resurrection. And so it proves. They are menaced and harassed and ill-treated by the infidel French, and finally ordered out of their home, but once more God comes to the aid of His servants, and a shower of rain is the simple means He makes use of to baffle their enemies. They witness the establishing of the first Empire on the ruins of the Republic, and the

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advent of Dutch rule upon the fall of the Empire. The Dutch tyranny, in its turn, succumbs, and the last act of the political drama is ushered in by the "glorious revolution" of 1830, which gave freedom, peace and prosperity to Belgium, and liberty and security to the Irish Dames of Ypres. Thus have they seen nations and dynasties rise and fall around them, while their humble cloister still endures, and keeps on the even tenor of its way, unchanged and unchangeable amidst the vicissitudes of this unstable world; and, while ever loyal to the powers of earth, they remain ever firm in their allegiance to the *Rex Regum et Dominus Dominantium* the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." "Ipsi obligati sunt et ceciderunt: nos autem surreximus et erecti sumus"—"They are bound fast and have fallen: but we are risen and sit upright." And were it not that they are too well convinced of the uncertainty of everything human, the Irish Dames might be tempted to say with the babbling brook of the poet:—

> For men may come and men may go,
> But we go on for ever.

To sum up, this little Irish convent, "oft doomed to death, but fated not to die," is an image in miniature of the Church of Christ—"the house founded on a rock," of which it forms a humble part. Its history is an epitome of that of the Irish nation itself, seemingly overwhelmed by disasters and yet ever emerging triumphant. And as it has had its full share of the sufferings allotted to the Irish people in the past, for

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suffering has hitherto been " the badge of all our tribe," so do we firmly believe that it is destined to share in the triumphs in store for our country in the better days that are already dawning.

" We have rejoiced for the days in which Thou hast humbled us: for the years in which we have seen evils."

The Abbey of Ypres is, as we have said before, the only Irish Abbey of the ancient and world-wide family of St. Benedict, and it exists on foreign soil, but may it not be a means in the designs of Providence of winning conquests for the great Patriarch of the West on the virgin soil of Ireland ?

> The flags we conquered in that fray
> Look lone in Ypres' choir, they say,
> We'll win them company to-day,
> Or bravely die like Clare's Dragoons.

May we not apply to these words of the Irish poet a higher and a spiritual sense, and pray and work that this solitary Irish Abbey of St. Benedict may witness other fervent and flourishing Irish houses of men and women of the same Order springing up to keep it company and vie with it in holy rivalry, for, although the Irish sons of St. Benedict are not very numerous at the present day, God is able " of the stones to raise up children " to the great Patriarch of the West, as of old to Abraham. " Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband." With these words of the

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Apostle we will take leave of our readers, confident that they will be realized in the future career of the Convent of the Irish Dames of Ypres. May it be the fruitful mother of many Irish Benedictine houses and see its children's children to endless generations. —*Esto perpetua.*

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PART II

STUART CORRESPONDENCE

I

LETTERS FROM IRISH DAMES TO EXILED STUARTS

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Can you compare your king to mine,
Your Geordie and your Willie?
Comparisons are odious—
A toadstool to a lily.

—*Jacobite Song.*

In Scotland he 's deemed, and highly esteemed;
In England a stranger he seemeth to be;
But his name I'll advance in Ireland and France—
Good luck to my Blackbird, wherever he be!

—*Irish Jacobite Song.*

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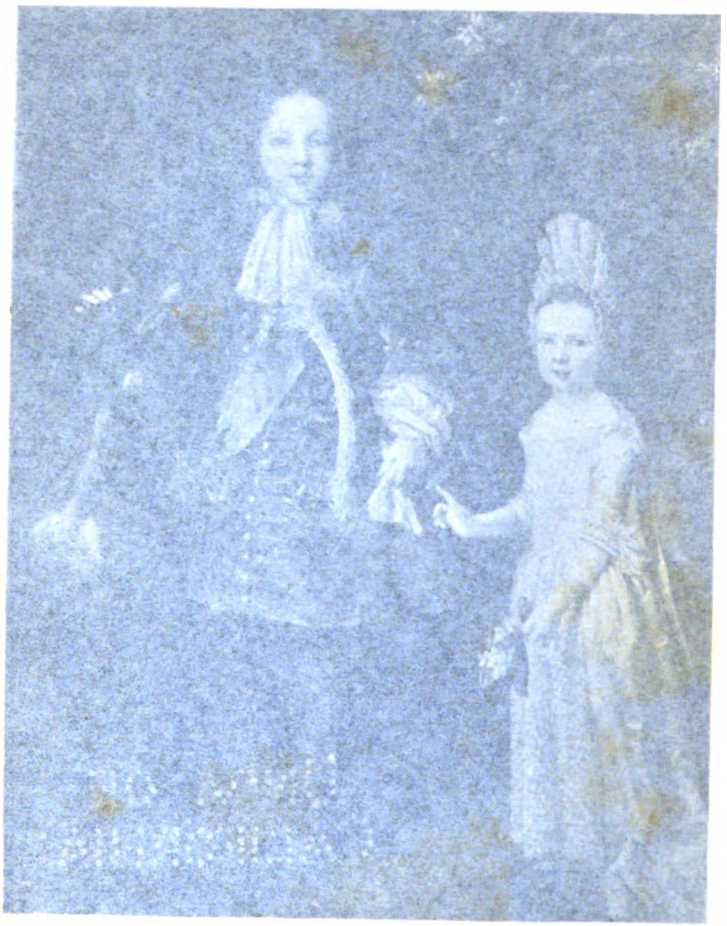
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PRINCE JAMES FRANCIS EDWARD STUART (JAMES III) AND HIS SISTER, THE PRINCESS LOUISE.

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CHAPTER I

ABBESS BUTLER'S LETTERS—EARLY CAREER OF KING JAMES III—IRISH JACOBITE ACTIVITY—HANOVERIAN USURPATION

Is cruaillighe, claonmhar 's is treasron d'on droing uilc,
Cruaidh-mhionna briste fá féula a's fá feruibinn,
'S á mbualadh re béulaibh an gcléire ar an raoite
'S ná'r dual do Clainn Séamuis corónn faor na d-trí fioghacta.

Oh foul is the treason that bids us our truth abjure
Our faith to our regal race—oh dark and impure
The breast that devised and the traitor lip that proclaims
Our throne and our truth to belong to any but James.
—Egan O'Rahilly.

The archives of the Convent of the Irish Dames of Ypres contain a goodly collection of copies of letters written by the various Abbesses to the heads of the exiled Royal Family of Stuart, as likewise many original letters received from the latter, mostly replies provoked by the loyal communications of the ever-faithful, ever-loyal Irish nuns. Our Irish Dames never ceased to pray and hope and hope and pray for the accomplishment of the much-wished for Restoration of the Stuarts, which they were never destined to see, and which we, who are wise after the event, can clearly perceive not to have been in the designs of Providence. But the good Dames of Ypres hoped against hope, and at the beginning of each year they would never fail to send their greetings to the Kings "over the water,"

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fondly suggesting and fondly believing that each succeeding year was to see the realization of their hearts' desire.

It is fortunate that duplicates of these letters were carefully made and have been preserved, as they reveal the sentiments of loyalty and patriotism which ever animated the hearts of the Irish Dames. The letters are some thirty-seven in number, beginning at the end of the seventeenth century with those from Abbess Butler to Queen Mary of Modena, and coming down as far as the year 1766, the year of the death of James III. We shall first present our readers with the Abbess's letters, reserving till afterwards those written by the Stuarts to the Irish Dames.

The following is endorsed "To ye Queene," and is undated, but from the expression "new age," we conclude it was written at the opening of the eighteenth century :—

ABBESS BUTLER TO QUEEN MARY OF MODENA.

MADAME,

In this new yeare, new age and new bierth [birth] that your Maty [Majesty] has given your subiects at Ypres haveing raised us from death to Life by your Royall protection, tis fitt that my selfe and Infant comunity dos cast our selfs at your Matys feet, to assure you we have made our adoration and offering wth the tree [three] Kings at Little Jesus his sacred feet, for both your Matyes Long Life and that our deare Prince may live to be our Redeemer, and that he may Live to have a generation Like that of holy Abraham, in Religion, Peace and Justice.

Madame our offering is poor, but united with ye merits of Christ, and applyed for your Matyes unexampled patience in suffering must be receaved in heaven, and

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surely your Maty will be sune [soon] restored to redres our comon misery, I long to see that glorious day, that I may beg to be called home for I cannot stay, whin you are gon and this I Presume to aduance to your Maty as to my Queen, my Refuge and foundress, in the meane time and for ever Remain with all profound acknowledgments

Your Matyes
Most dutifull and
obedient subiect,
MARY BUTLER.

The following is undated and unsigned, but is also apparently from Abbess Butler to Queen Mary :—

ABBESS BUTLER TO QUEEN MARY.

[*Queen Mary's charity towards the Irish Dames; the sufferings of the Irish on account of their loyalty.*]

MADAME,

Your Maty has been truly borne for ye comfort of Religion as appears by yr great zeale yu are pleased to show in advancing our Lautory* preferable to any other, as being for yr Maty Loyall subiects, oprest at home, and under noe good fortune abrod only ye honnor the Irish has of being voluntarily banished a fighting for soe great a King Queene and Princis.

We all come by my poore pen, to render yr Maty A milion of humble thankes for apeering soe timely for or Lautory wch by your Bountty will put us upon a good footing for fondation and bulding a decent houes, wt we have being truely poor and uncomfortable to us ye expectation we have of a Better gives Life to all, and ye more as being oblidged to yr Maty and gratious prences for it. After God you are our suport and may ye great God of armes, fix bouth yr Matys in yr 3 Kingdomes for wch we dayly pray as being Mad. . . . .

* Lottery.

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On the other side of the same letter is written the following variant :—

. . . for A fundation and Building a howes capable to receave gentellwomen of o^r Nation, y^s being y^e only howes of it [i.e. of the Irish Nation] in france or y^e spanish flanders, it being undertaken by y^r sacred Ma^ty and under y^r Great Protextion, we believe it allreadye done and we w^th all that shall succeed us will praise God for giveing us soe gratious a Queene and Princis and God in all eternity will reward it w^ch shall be y^e dayly prayer of

MADAM. . . .

ABBESS BUTLER TO QUEEN MARY.

[*She rejoices over defeat of the Stuart King's enemies; sympathy with Queen Mary's sufferings—prayers for her restoration to health and to the throne.*]

MADAM,

Since it appears manifestly that Heaven itself has been fighting for y^r Ma^ty in the end of this year by confounding in one night and destroying to a great degree the confederate power and forces of those who most wickedly oppose justice and the king's undoubted right, we of this little comunity and the rest of your faithful and loyall subjects at home and abroad have great reason to hope that our vows and prayers for your Majesty's speedy restoration are favourably heard of him who rules both Heaven and Earth, and that consequently we shall by his infinite mercy in this new year to come or very soon after see the accomplishment of that long wisht for happiness.

But our content on this acc^t Madam is intermixt with grief for your Majestys indisposition, thō our confidence and trust in God is at the same time very great, that by the intercession of Saint Francis off Xavierius in whose hon[our] we are performing the Devotion of 10. fridays, he will give you perfect health and a lasting one. O may his Divin goodness grant it, and ever preserve your sacred person, the King and her

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Royal Highness from all harm and bless yee with long and holy lives for to restore, and see well settled in your 3 (now distracted) kingdoms peace, plenty, and the true Religion. For that, and your Majestys other intentions we most humbly present our little annual offering of prayers* as here specifyed, each one of this your Mys own little comunity being as I in particular with most profound respect, duty and gratitude,

Madam

Yr Matys most humble, most obedient and most devoted Servant.

The above letter is endorsed "For the Queen, 1704." It would be hard to reconcile its opening statement with historical facts if it were written in that year. The War of the Spanish Succession was in full swing, but certainly the campaign of 1704 was far from unfavourable to the "confederate power and forces" of the Allies, with whom Queen Anne's Government was in league. In fact this year witnessed their great victory at Blenheim and the capture of Gibraltar, events almost disastrous to the French cause, which was identified with that of the exiled Stuarts.

But probably the letter was written in 1703, for the New Year 1704, and it may allude to Marshal Villars' masterly and successful campaign in Germany that year, in the course of which the French won the brilliant victory of Hochstädt (September 20).

ABBESS BUTLER TO QUEEN MARY (1708).

MADAM,

Yr Maty will be pleased to allow your poore subiects of Ipres to wish you a most happy and healthfull new

* Cf. page 470.

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yeare wth all ye blessings yt God can bistow upon a suffering patient Queene, A Generous King and Royall princis wch in his one [own] time will be great as apeers in ye preservation of his Maty both by his sea voyage and this past campaine, his great curage his amiable charming person makes his Maty Admired Above all ye princis in the world tis a content beyond a Kingdome to have him soe Beloved and admiered by all, I hope Madam his one [own] subiects in time see ther one folly and we dayly importune heaven for it beging yr Maty to accept or Little annual tribut of prayers and to belive noe subiects upon earth is more acknowledging of yr Maty Bounty then we are (etc.)

The "generous King" alluded to in the above letter is, of course, Prince James Francis Stuart ("the Old Pretender"), son of James II and Queen Mary of Modena, who was born in St. James's Palace, London, and was *de jure* James III, King of England. Within six months after his birth (1688) the Revolution broke out in England, but Queen Mary succeeded in escaping with the infant Prince to France. He was now, at the date of Abbess Butler's letter, nearly twenty years of age, and by all accounts fully deserved the compliments she pays him.

The expression "sea-voyage" is probably an allusion to his abortive attempt to reconquer his ancestral kingdom in the year 1706. The French expedition, with which James sailed, set out from Dunkirk on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day), and reached the Firth of Forth, in Scotland, about a week later, but was unable to land owing to bad weather and the presence of a strong English fleet, so that James was obliged to return disappointed to France, with the

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loss of one ship, the *Salisbury*, which had been formerly captured from the English. On board this vessel were many officers of the Irish Brigade, who, on being taken prisoners, were thrown into irons, sent up to London, and imprisoned like common felons, preparatory to their trial and execution. But fortunately their lives were saved, owing to the capture about the same time of several French Protestant officers in the service of England, who would have forfeited their lives had extreme measures been taken against the Irish captives. The latter, during their imprisonment in London, were much indebted to some unknown Jacobite benefactor, who sent them every day "a dinner of several dishes, with a small hamper of wine . . . from a tavern near Newgate; and they never knew to whom they were obliged for that benefaction," which can be easily understood as the benefactor ran a considerable risk by thus showing his sympathy towards these loyal "rebels."

Our officers, moreover, "seldom missed a day of having a visit from one Mr. Heffernan, famous for the harp, which he never failed to bring with him, to divert the gentlemen; and sometimes would leave it there for three weeks to avoid the trouble of fetching it." These visits of the famous Irish harper must have been a great treat to the captives, and, no doubt, he played them many a stirring Jacobite air to re-animate their spirits and cheer their loyal hearts.

On his return from Scottish waters Prince James served *incognito* as the Chevalier de St. George with the French army in Flanders, which is, no doubt, the

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"past campaine" alluded to in the Abbess's letter. He "was present," says the Duke of Berwick, thus bearing out the Abbess's flattering remarks, "at the combat of Oudenarde, where he displayed a great deal of valour and presence of mind; and he acquired, by his affability, the friendship of everyone. . . ." Several regiments of the Irish Brigade were present at this battle, which was fought in the year 1708, and resulted in a victory for the Allies.

Though suffering from a fever, the young Prince insisted on taking part in the battle of Malplaquet, the fiercest of the whole war, which was fought in the following year, 1709, and here again he distinguished himself at the head of the Horse Guards of Louis XIV. His troops made repeated charges into the ranks of the allied cavalry, penetrating even as far as the fourth line of the enemy, while the Prince himself received a sabre-wound in the final charge. "The Chevalier de St. George," wrote Marshal Boufflers to the French King, "behaved himself, during the above action, with all possible bravery and vivacity."

When the cavalry of the allies broke his lines, Boufflers ordered the Prince to advance at the head of 1,200 horse. He performed the duty so well that in one charge he repulsed and broke the German horse, and nothing but the steadiness of the English troops and the consummate skill of their commander prevented the rout from becoming general. Though wounded by a sabre-cut in the right arm, the chevalier stood his ground, charging twelve times under six hours' continuous fire.*

* Haile.

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"He was recognized by the English," says Dangeau, "as he had refused to hide his Order [of the Garter], and Skelton, who had been taken prisoner two days previously, brought back the news that all the English soldiers had drunk his health;" while St. Simon tells us the battle was lost "in spite of the efforts and example of King James."

Needless to say the Irish Brigade took part in this eventful and sanguinary battle, in which it seems to have surpassed itself in valour owing to the presence of the Prince. "The King of England" [i.e., the Chevalier de St. George], writes a contemporary Irish Jacobite historian, "was remarked for his valour and zeal, when several persons were killed and wounded about him; and his subjects, the Irish Brigade, under his gallant countenance, exhibited uncommon bravery in four occasions." "The Irish Brigade . . . overturned all that came in their way," says the French historian of the wars of Louis XIV. The allied troops "recoiled a considerable way before the impetuous onset of the Irish," says Marlborough's English biographer, Archdeacon Coxe.

The Irish Brigade in the French ranks on this memorable day of Malplaquet included Lee's, O'Brien's, Dorrington's, O'Donnell's and Galmoy's infantry regiments, besides Nugent's cavalry regiment.* There were also Irish troops in Marlborough's army, the most conspicuous being the 18th or Royal Irish Regiment of Foot, which became engaged in a sharp encounter with their countrymen, the Royal Regiment

* Cf. O'Callaghan.

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of Ireland on the French side; nor was it the first or last occasion on which Irish troops found themselves pitted against each other in mortal combat. But the French Royal Regiment of Ireland, or Dorrington's regiment, which was commanded on this occasion by Colonel Michael Rothe, of Kilkenny, was called upon to do more serious work on this eventful day, and acquired exceptional renown from the gallantry of one of its officers, Captain James Cantillon, of the exiled family of Cantillon de Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry. This deed of valour, which has been made the subject of a picture by an eminent French painter, has been thus officially recorded:—

When the left of the French army, taken in flank by the right wing of the enemy's army under the orders of the Duke of Marlborough, began to recoil, the Maréchal de Villars brought up as quickly as possible the Irish Brigade, which was in the centre. It attacked with fury the English troops, whom it repulsed. Cantillon, at the head of the grenadiers of the Regiment of Dorrington, first approached the enemy's line, exclaiming to his men *Forward, brave Irishmen! Long live King James III., and the King of France!* He had his sword broken in the combat, and fell, covered with wounds, in the midst of the ranks of the English infantry, after having killed, with his own hand, an officer and several soldiers. There remained, after the charge, only fifteen men of the company of Cantillon; the others were stretched dead, or wounded, around their brave Captain, whose glorious example they had followed.

The year 1713 witnessed the conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht, which put an end to the War of the Spanish Succession, and at the same time, in some measure, to the hopes and expectations of the Jacobite party, as

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by this treaty the King of France, who had hitherto supported James, now acknowledged Anne as Queen of Great Britain, guaranteed the succession of the House of Hanover, and undertook to induce the Chevalier to leave the French dominions, with the result that the latter retired to Bar-le-Duc, in the territory of the Duke of Lorraine. But his enemies were not yet satisfied. The "Pretender" was still too near home, so they petitioned the Duke of Lorraine to dismiss his guest, a request which only elicited the following noble reply :—

DUKE OF LORRAINE TO QUEEN ANNE.

LUNEVILLE,
26 *November*, 1713.

MADAM,

We could not be more surprised at the addresses of the British Parliament last summer than with the remonstrance of Your Majesty's Minister at Utrecht, with relation to the removal of the Chevalier de St. George from the dominions of Lorraine.

Before we could absolutely comply with the request of the Most Christian King in that affair, the profound respect we have for Your Majesty, and the tender regard for your quiet, made us apprehensive of giving the least uneasiness to Your Majesty.

But . . . . we could no longer refrain opening our arms to receive *a Prince, the most accomplished and most virtuous, of the Human Race, who only wants to be seen to be admired, and known to be almost adored. . . .*

He then goes on to administer a polite rebuke to the British Queen and her advisers :—

We therefore hope Your Majesty and the British Nation will not take it in ill part that *we cannot comply*

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with a demand so inconsistent with our Honour and the laws of Hospitality, after our protection once given to abandon to the rage of his Enemies an innocent and depressed Prince who knows no Crime but of being born the last male heir to that illustrious family, which for several ages has given so many great monarchs to the world, and amongst the rest, Your Majesty, whose conspicuous virtues and great actions have reflected as much lustre as you have received from your illustrious progenitors. . . .

The concluding compliment is, needless to say, a piece of polite adulation, and wholly inapplicable to the mean and petty nonentity to whom it is addressed.

But the Peace of Utrecht, though it apparently put an end to James Stuart's hopes of regaining his crown by force and with the assistance of France, was not altogether unfavourable to the Stuart cause, as it seemed to open up the way for his peaceful restoration to the English throne. For the Peace was a Tory measure, and made the Tory and Jacobite party more than ever popular with the people of England. In fact the feeling in favour of the exiled Stuart was hardly ever so strong as during these closing years of the reign of Queen Anne. His cause was gaining ground in England, in the ascendant in Scotland, and paramount in Ireland. Indeed it is remarkable, though only what might be expected from Irish traditions, that both in the diplomatic and military spheres, Irishmen played perhaps the most prominent part in the present movement for the restoration of the Stuarts.

The long and sanguinary war, which came to an end with the Peace of Utrecht, had sadly reduced the muster-roll of the Irish regiments on the Continent,

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and recruiting became a necessity if the Brigade was to be kept up to its former standard in point of numbers and efficiency. For this purpose, as soon as the Peace was concluded, several officers of the Brigade went over to Ireland, and recruiting went on briskly among the Irish Catholics, the only loyal portion of that kingdom. Upon this coming to the ears of the Government, a Proclamation was issued, in the year 1713, ordering the arrest of the recruiters and the recruited, the result being that the Gaols of Newgate and Kilmainham were soon crowded to overflowing with unfortunate victims, whose only crime was their loyalty and their desire to restore the legitimate King of England. So great, indeed, was the number of those arrested that a Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer sat at Kilmainham on the 2nd July, 1714, and many were condemned and executed after a mock trial before a hostile and bigoted judge and jury.

The zeal of the Jacobites was further stimulated by the visible change for the worse which took place about this time in the state of Queen Anne's health. "Having of late years grown large and unwieldy, she could no longer take her former exercise of hunting, whilst she still continued to indulge somewhat too freely at her table; and she became subject to fits of the gout, which gradually grew more frequent and severe. Other ailments also intervened. On December 24 (1713) she was seized with an inflammatory fever, and for several days remained alarmingly ill."* The news of the Queen's serious illness naturally served to encourage

* Lord Mahon, *History of England.*

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the hopes of the Jacobites and to increase the zeal of the recruiters for the Irish Brigade.

> Great numbers of lusty, young fellows, all Papists [says a contemporary Whig historian] having gone since last Michaelmas into France, on assurances being given them, that they should return home, with their lawful King, James III.—many recruiting officers being alleged to have arrived from France in various parts of the island, Dublin not excepted, where James Roche, a considerable Popish merchant, expended large sums of money in listing —and vessels sailing for France, bringing from twenty to sixty of the lower order of Irish on board, under the pretence, it was affirmed, of emigrating merely as agricultural labourers, but, in reality, as so many recruits for the Irish regiments abroad, in the interest of the Pretender.

As might be expected the result was another Proclamation by the Lord Lieutenant and further wholesale arrests. In the month of May, 1714, upon information reaching Dublin Castle that a party of 150 men had assembled on the Hill of Howth, with the view of sailing thence for France and of enlisting in the Irish Brigade, and thereby rallying to the support of King James III, a force of police and military was despatched against them and succeeded in capturing twenty-four of the party, who were thrown into prison, subjected to a mock trial by jury, and condemned for "high treason," in other words, for their loyalty. Three of the party were publicly executed in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, where the unfortunate Captain Nowlan, or O'Nolan, was publicly hanged for a similar "offence" some twelve years later. The fate of the remainder of the captive recruits was never revealed, but it is not too

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much to suppose that they likewise forfeited their lives as a penalty for their loyalty.

The alarming illness of the Queen stimulated likewise the ardour of the various regiments of the Irish Brigade in France, which were now moved within easy reach of the French sea-board in order to be ready the more easily to support James in a descent upon England, in the event of the Queen's death.

> Upon the first news of the Queen's sickness [writes Baron von Schutz, the Hanoverian Envoy, from London, January 25, 1714] several battalions had French orders to march towards the sea, under pretext of changing the garrisons. . . . Most of the Irish regiments in the French service, who made the campaign in the Upper Rhine, are arrived likewise in the Low Countries. Clare's regiment is at Douay, Galmoy's at Valenciennes, and Dorrington's, which was the late King James's Regiment of Guards, at Avesnes.*

Nor were the Irish less prominent in the diplomatic efforts made at this time by the Jacobites with the view of influencing Queen Anne in favour of her brother and thus securing his peaceful succession after her death. Among the most conspicuous of the Jacobite agents at the Court of Queen Anne at this critical period was a distinguished Irish exile, Don Patricio Laulès, otherwise Sir Patrick Lawless, who was accredited to the English Court as the Ambassador of Spain, while acting at the same time as the confidential agent of the exiled Stuart Prince.

Patrick Lawless belonged to a prominent Irish

* Quoted by O'Callaghan.

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Catholic family, his grandfather, Richard Lawless, of Kilkenny, having, in the year 1648, held the responsible post of Procurator of the Supreme Council of Confederate Catholics of Ireland during the great Civil War. Young Patrick entered the Irish army in the reign of James II, attained the rank of major, fought for the legitimate King against the Williamite rebels, and was taken prisoner at the fatal battle of Aughrim in 1691. Upon the conclusion of the Treaty of Limerick he followed King James II to France, and was appointed by him Gentleman of the Bedchamber to his son, Prince James, who afterwards nominated him as Jacobite envoy to the Court of King Philip V of Spain. The Spanish King promoted him to the command of his Irish guard, with the rank of colonel. So great was the confidence and esteem that he acquired in this capacity that when, in 1705, the Marquis de Leganez, Grandee of Spain, Governor of the Royal Palace and Grand Master of the Artillery, was arrested on a charge of plotting against King Philip, it was to Patrick Lawless that the responsible task was entrusted of conducting the noble prisoner to the Castle of Pampeluna, and again, in 1710, our Irishman had the invidious honour of escorting the Duke of Medina-Cæli as prisoner to Segovia. He distinguished himself greatly as commandant during the campaign in Spain of 1712, was created Knight of the Military Order of Santiago and Major-General, and on the conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht was appointed by Philip V as Spanish envoy to the Court of Queen Anne (1713-1714), being chosen at the same time by the exiled Prince James as the

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agent best fitted to promote the Stuart interest at the same court. Sir Patrick seems to have been cordially welcomed by Queen Anne, so much so indeed as to give serious umbrage to the Hanoverian agents. Writing to Hanover on February 6, 1714, the Hanoverian envoy remarks that "the Queen is in a dangerous situation," and he ominously adds that "Sir Patrick Lawless saw her Majesty last night, having returned from her about midnight. . . ." while a contemporary Georgite writer remarks: "The Pretender's envoy, Sir Patrick Lawless, was publicly entertained at Court, while the Elector's minister was disgrac'd, for demanding a Writ, that the Electoral Prince might come and take his place in the House of Lords."* So bitterly in fact did the Whigs and the Hanoverians resent the attentions paid to the distinguished Irishman, who acted in the double capacity of Spanish Ambassador and representative of the exiled Stuarts, that, in the year 1714, the House of Lords passed two resolutions: (1) That no person, not included in the Articles of Limerick, and who had borne arms in France or Spain, should be capable of any employment, civil or military. (2) That no person, who is a natural born subject of her Majesty, should be capable of sustaining the character of public minister from any foreign potentate.

These resolutions [remarks Lord Mahon†] were levelled entirely at Sir Patrick Lawless, an Irishman, who was then in London, as agent from the Court of Spain in the treaty of commerce. He had been an adherent of James the

*Quoted by O'Callaghan. †*History of England.*

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Second, had intrigued in the cause of his son, was in frequent and close communication with Bolingbroke, and held the Roman Catholic faith . . . some of the leading Whigs did not scruple to add several absurd and groundless allegations. Walpole had even gone so far as to allude to him, in the House of Commons, as a man "strongly suspected of having imbrued his hands in the blood of the late Duke of Medina Celi and Marquis of Leganez"—an utter calumny. The Ministers, however, wisely yielded to the popular prejudice, and sent to Lawless a friendly suggestion to withdraw into Holland.

It is worthy of note, moreover, that among the Articles of Impeachment preferred against Harley, Earl of Oxford, in the following year, 1715, was one complaining of his "receiving Patrick Lawless, an Irish Papist, as a Foreign Minister, and causing several sums of money to be paid to him." Sir Patrick was subsequently appointed Spanish Ambassador to the French Court, and also Governor of Majorca.

At the same time the Whigs were equally active, during the last illness of Queen Anne, in their efforts to secure the succession of the Elector of Hanover. We have seen how the Hanoverian envoy, Baron Schutz, actually went so far as to request that a writ might be issued empowering the young Elector, who had already been created an English peer with the title of Duke of Cambridge, to come over and take his seat in the House of Lords, the evident object being that he should be on the spot in the event of emergencies, in other words, be "in at the death" of "good Queen Anne." The envoy alleged that he had express instructions from the Court of Hanover to make this strange request, which, it seems, was a lie on his part. On the request being

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submitted to her Majesty she burst into a paroxysm of rage; in fact the Lord Treasurer informed the Hanoverian envoy afterwards that "he never saw the Queen in a greater passion," and she took the request "as the greatest mark of contempt that could be given her." It was pretty generally known, in fact, that the Queen could not bear even the idea of any member of the Electoral family setting foot in the Kingdom during her lifetime, and showed her indignation at the envoy's proposal by requesting his immediate recall. At the same time she wrote scathing autograph letters to the Electress Sophia and her son, giving them a piece of her mind. So strong, indeed, was the language in which the Queen's letters were couched that the poor old Electress suddenly dropped down dead in her garden at Herrenhausen after their perusal.

If Queen Anne was adverse to the presence of the Elector, she is said, on the other hand, to have had a strong leaning in favour of her exiled brother, Prince James, and in all probability he might have been her successor if he would only have consented to pacify the English people by abandoning the Catholic Faith and turning Protestant. "But to the great and lasting honour of James," writes the Protestant Lord Mahon, "he disdained any such unworthy compromise with his conscience; and he wrote a very able letter, to be circulated amongst his partisans in England, and in which he declared his fixed determination neither to dissemble nor to change; a rare and admirable instance of religious sincerity in princes."*

* Mahon, *History of England.*

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No one acquainted with English history or with the graphic, though not historically accurate, account of these events contained in the concluding chapters of Thackeray's *Esmond* needs to be reminded of the result of these intrigues on both sides—how the Whigs outwitted their Jacobite rivals and succeeded in putting their candidate on the throne of England "against the will of nine-tenths of the people," as the famous Dr. Johnson once remarked to his obsequious friend, Boswell.

The foreign princeling, who thus ascended the throne of England in 1714, with the title of George I, has been described by an unprejudiced writer as "heavy in look, awkward and undignified in manner and address, without the slightest tincture of literature or science, but possessing that taste for music which characterises his country . . . the society which he preferred was that of buffoons and persons of low intellect."* Though "he was himself the most notorious adulterer, and the most unscrupulous libertine in his dominions," he, nevertheless, had the inhumanity to imprison his beautiful but unfortunate wife in the Castle of Alden for the last thirty-two years of her life on suspicion of conjugal infidelity, while he had her supposed paramour murdered and secretly buried in the Hanoverian Royal Palace, where his remains were discovered during some alterations ordered by George II. He did not understand a word of English and when the time came for him to address his new Parliament he had to be taught a few words which he stuttered out by rote.

* Cf. Student's Hume.

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No wonder that the following letter by Abbess Butler, written in the year 1714, the year in which this foreign usurper was seated on the throne of the Stuarts, should breathe a spirit of righteous indignation against the Hanoverian intruder and his abettors, but we need hardly remark that when she expresses a wish that the "3 Kingdoms" should "bleed for their rebellion," she does not include the Catholics of Ireland, who were loyal as ever. The letter is endorsed " to ye Queene, 1714."

ABBESS BUTLER TO QUEEN MARY (1714).

MADAME,

this yeare has beene fatall to all your Maiestyes Loyall subiects, because oure present King may be Like his Glorious father, who was a Martyer and glorious confessor, yet his crowne was userped by the Prince of Oringe, as is his present Maty by Hanouer, Just Like our deare Redeemer yt [that] was not oned [owned] by his one [own] pople [people], yet as his church is vissible from age to age, soe I confide in or Mercifulle Redeemer that this sacread freast [*sic*] of his Nativity we shall have some hopes that all christian Princis will Joyne all ther forces to overcome all the abominable Rebles of England, a Nation hatted [hated] by all good Christians.

Madame, the Bd. [Blessed] Trinity yt gave you yr Pretious King doss still and ever will protect him, yr Maty hass Powerfulle Intercessors in heaven our Late saintly King, an Angelicall Prince and Princisses, besides your Matyes glorious Mother the duchess of Modena,* ye first Benefactrice to this poore comunity, besides the Heroycall and humble patience both yr Matyes has in this Iniurious and uniust rebellion of wicked heriticks and

* The Duchess Laura of Modena, Queen Mary's mother, died in 1687. Pope Innocent XI, in a special brief of condolence sent to the Queen, describes her late mother as a pattern to her sex.

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wicked subiects, will this new yeare, move the Bd. Trinity and or new borne Redeemer to helpe and restore both yr Maty, and may ye 3 Kingdomes blead for ther Rebellion, for wch we humbly present or small little tribuit of prayers, and for your Matyes Life and health, for if yr Maty goes to heaven we are indeed poore orphins upon earth for france and all sides failes, I am wth all profound acknowledgment,

Madame, your Matyes duttifull subiect
and obedient st [servant]

M. Bu[tler.]

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QUEEN MARY OF MODENA, A FRIEND AND BENEFACTRESS OF THE IRISH DAMES.

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QUEEN MARY OF MODENA, AT HOME AND BENEFACTRESS OF THE IRISH EXILES.

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CHAPTER II

ABBESS BUTLER'S LETTERS (*continued*) — DEATH OF QUEEN MARY OF MODENA (1718)—THE PRINCESS LOUISE—QUEEN CLEMENTINA

> Is thy name Mary, maiden fair?
> Such should, methinks, its music be;
> The sweetest name that mortals bear,
> Were best befitting thee.
> And she to whom it once was given
> Was half of earth and half of heaven.
> —OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

IN the year 1718 the nuns of Ypres had to mourn the loss of the best and kindest of benefactors in the person of Queen Mary of Modena, who passed away to her eternal reward in the month of May, after a life of sorrows and sufferings borne with truly heavenly resignation. In the following letter to Queen Mary's son, Abbess Butler tells us that she sent her condolences at first through the Duke of Ormond, but we have not discovered the Abbess's letter to her noble kinsman.

ABBESS BUTLER TO KING JAMES III.

[*Condolences on death of Queen Mary of Modena.*]

GREAT SIR,

My selfe and my Religious yr Matys Loyall poore subiects at Ipres durst not presume to write to yr Maty I sent my condolement by A Letter to ye Duke of Ormond for the death of or glorious and great Queene he being

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Absent, I must presume to suplye, A death soe holy A death of a Liveing saint and Martyer ought not to be Lamented sence this being her Matys condition Now she Inioyes [enjoys] the vision of God and wth yr Matyes one [own] father or Late holy King* and princes[s] yr Matys sister,† all Praying to the trinity yt [that] gave yr Maty to us will obtaine A happy Restoration and conversion of yr Maty 3 Kingdoms God of his Infinit [mercy] open there eyes and make ym [them] calle home a King ye whole world esteemes but ym selves, Or Prayers are dayly offered for it [we] communicate dayly in or turnes . . . I humbly thanke yr Maty for yr payement of her Matys Legacy to us. . . .

To those who are acquainted with the life of Mary of Modena, the Abbess's language will not appear in the least exaggerated. Many of our readers will be familiar with Miss Strickland's sympathetic memoir of this good Queen—the best, the loveliest and most lovable Queen that ever sat upon the throne of England, and, moreover, the kindest friend and benefactor of the Irish Dames of Ypres.

Mary Beatrice d'Este of Modena was the eldest child of Alphonso d'Este, Duke of Modena, and received her second name in honour of St. Beatrice, a princess of her own noble house of Este. She was brought up most strictly and piously by her mother, the Duchess of Modena, and while still young was sent to a Carmelite convent to finish her education. She herself had the strongest desire and fullest determination to become a nun, and when sought for in marriage by the future King of England, it was only with

* James II. † Princess Louise.

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the greatest difficulty that her repugnance was overcome, and a consent wrung from her.

> She had at that time [writes James II, her future consort] a great inclination to be a nun, insomuch that the duchess, her mother, was obliged to get the Pope to write to her, and persuade her to comply with her wish, as most conducive to the service of God and the public good.

The Earl of Peterborough, an English Protestant nobleman, who was entrusted with the delicate task of choosing a consort for James, thus describes the impression made upon himself by the young Princess at his first interview :—

> The princess Mary of Este appeared to be at this time about fourteen years of age ; she was tall and admirably shaped ; her complexion was of the last degree of fairness, her hair black as jet, so were her eyebrows and her eyes, but the latter so full of light and sweetness as they did dazzle and charm too. There seemed given unto them by nature sovereign power—power to kill and power to save ; and in the whole turn of her face, which was of the most graceful oval, there were all the features, all the beauty, and all that could be great and charming in any human creature.

Nor are these expressions at all exaggerated. The painter Lely seemed "never weary of multiplying portraits of a Princess who completely realized his *beau ideal* of female loveliness," while the poet Dryden loved to sing of this "queen of beauty." But perhaps the most remarkable tribute to the beauty and virtues of Mary of Modena is that of the noble poet, the Earl of Lansdowne, who, having complimented, as in duty

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bound, the reigning beauties of the Court of William and Mary, chivalrously goes out of his way, at the risk of offending the usurpers, to address his most rapturous verses to the exiled Queen :—

Princess, adored and loved, if verse can give
A deathless name, thine shall for ever live.
O happy James! content thy mighty mind,
Grudge not the world, for still thy queen is kind;
To lie but at her feet more glory brings,
Than 'tis to tread on sceptres and on kings:
Secure of empire in that beauteous breast,
Who would not give their crowns to be so blest?

Nor was she wanting in intellectual accomplishments :—

Mary Beatrice [writes Miss Strickland] corresponded fluently in Italian, French, and English, and she possessed sufficient knowledge of Latin, to read the Scriptures daily in the Vulgate. This practice she never omitted, however much she might be pressed for time.

Queen Mary's beauty was only equalled by her virtues and her sufferings. The coldness and indignities which she had to endure from her bigoted English subjects because she was of the ancient Faith; the perfidious treachery and base ingratitude with which she was treated by her unnatural step-children, the Princesses Mary and Anne; her exile and flight with her infant son are matters of history. But her saintly life during her exile in France, as revealed in her correspondence with the nuns of Chaillot; her resignation to the Divine Will in her bitter trials and sufferings; her forgiveness of her enemies; the

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tenderness and anxiety she always showed for the unfortunate Jacobites who had risked all for her husband's cause; her continual self-denial in order to have the wherewithal to relieve their necessities; all this, perhaps, will not be so familiar to our readers.

Never did she tire of doing good. We have already seen how she exerted herself to provide dowries for penniless Irish girls, exiles from their native land, who wished to consecrate themselves to God in the Irish Convent of Ypres, or in other religious houses. There seemed to be no limits to her charity.

> Yesterday [she writes in a letter to Mother Angélique of Chaillot] we came to the resolution to sell some jewels to pay the pensions [of James's followers] for the month of September, and it follows that we must do the same for every month . . . And in respect to our poor [she continues] I never shall consider that I have done my duty till I have given all I have; for it will not be till then that I can say, with truth, that nothing remains to me, and it is impossible for me to give more.

And she was as good as her word, for "by degrees she sacrificed every ornament she had in the world for the relief of the unfortunate British emigrants."*

For seventeen years she bore with heroic patience the terrible malady, a cancer in the breast, which was destined to cause her death. "I know not what God will lay upon me," she writes to Mother Angélique of Chaillot, alluding to this disease, "but in this, as in everything else, I try to resign myself without reserve into His hands, to the end that He may work in me,

* Strickland.

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and for me, and by me all that it may please Him to do."

The same beautiful spirit of resignation breathes forth in the following letter to the same community :—

QUEEN MARY BEATRICE TO THE SŒUR DÉPOSÉE OF CHAILLOT.

25 *March*, 1700.

I have an hour before supper to give you my poor news, the word is a true one, for I have nothing good to say of either my body or my soul, which are in a poor and languid condition. . . . As to my body, I cannot say that I am ill, but I have still that gland in my breast, which does not decrease. . . . I do not know what God means to do with me . . . I try to abandon myself without reserve into his hands, that he may do in me, of me, and by me all that he pleases. You know that what little devotion I have, rests principally in the last words of the Gospel of this great day.* *Ecce Ancilla Domini*.† Say them sometimes for me, I beg of you.

16 *April*, 1700.

. . . If God hears my prayers for you, and yours for me, we shall become two great saints. I have made many resolutions, during this holy time [Easter] to do my best to become one, but alas! I am so miserable that on the smallest occasion I break my strongest resolutions.

And again, some years later, when the malady was making alarming progress, she writes to the same convent for prayers, asking—

For an entire resignation to God's holy will . . . and that I may feel a holy indifference as to the cure or augmentation

* Feast of the Annunciation.
† "Behold the Handmaid of the Lord."

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of my malady, and that the Lord would inspire the physicians and surgeons, in their treatment of me, to do whatever may conduce most to His glory, and the good of my soul, in healing me, if by that means, I am still able to serve Him better . . . or else to give me the patience and fortitude necessary to suffer the greatest torments, if it should be more agreeable to Him.*

In the month of April, 1718, a final attack of her malady announced her approaching end, and on the morning of the 7th May following she died "like a saint as she had lived,"† in the sixtieth year of her age and the thirtieth of her exile.

The Queen of England [wrote her contemporary, the Duc de St. Simon] died at St. Germains, after ten or twelve days illness. Her life, since she had been in France, from the close of the year 1688, had been one continued course of misfortune which she sustained heroically to the last. She supported her mind by devotional exercises, faith in God, prayer and good works, living in the practice of every virtue that constitutes true holiness. Her death was as holy as her life. Of 600,000 livres allowed her yearly by the King of France, she devoted the whole to support the destitute Jacobites with whom St. Germains was crowded. . . . Combined with great sensibility she had much wit, and a natural haughtiness of temper, of which she was aware, and made it her constant study to subdue it, by the practice of humility. Her mien was the noblest, the most majestic, and imposing in the world, but it was also sweet and modest.‡

"She will some day be a great saint," wrote the Princess des Ursins to the Princess de Vaudemont,

* "Lord, give me the grace to drink the chalice Thou hast prepared for me" was her prayer, as recorded in the Chaillot MS.
† Dangeau.
‡ *Mémoires*, etc., Vol. xv.

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while Mary was still alive; and the great preacher, Bourdaloue, once said of her: "I know no one so holy or more worthy of veneration. Since I heard her I strike my breast, and say to myself—that Queen will judge us some day."

Among the recipients of her bounty we need hardly say the faithful Irish were not forgotten, for had they not lost everything owing to their fidelity to her husband's cause? But their numbers and their poverty were so great that many had to go without relief. After the Peace of Utrecht many of the English and Scottish Jacobites were able to return to their country, so that the Court of St. Germains was almost deserted:

> But that does not relieve me [writes the Queen] for the town is full of Irish who are poverty itself; 20,000 came into France, and of those only 6,000 effective are left, the rest have perished in the wars, but their wives and children remain on our hands; as soon as it became known that my dowry was to be paid other Irish prepared to come to France, but I told Mr. Dicconson to notify to them that those who came would receive nothing.

The death of this good Queen inspired an Irish poet, John O'Neaghtan, of the County of Meath, one of the earliest writers of Jacobite poetry, with a beautiful elegy, which Dr. Hyde pronounces to be one of the most musical pieces he has ever seen, even in Irish. He has given the following version of the first stanza in the original metre:—

> Slow cause of my fear,
> No pause to my tear.
> The brightest and whitest,
> Low lies on her bier.

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Fair islets of green,
Rare sights to be seen,
Both highlands and islands
There sigh for the Queen.*

We need make no apology for reproducing here O'Neaghtan's poem in the original Irish, with Henry Grattan Curran's translation,† which, we may remark, is a very free rendering of the original, and may be more fitly styled a paraphrase. Curran's verse is not wanting in poetic feeling, though it will not commend itself to the critical.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN MARY OF MODENA,

BY JOHN O'NEAGHTAN.

Fáth éagnach mo theóil, d'fág Gaoidhil fá cheoid,
Bean riaghta na n-iarthach, gáth dhadha, ceart cóir,
Flaith fialmhar na reódh, cneadh fianach na n-óg,
Gan díoghadh fá liogadh, m'fáth caointe go deóigh!

Ar lí ghlan an óir, tá a dhaoidh tair, car cóir,
A bhaoithe go dírneach, ar aon dath 'r an róir,
Dídh caor ann a beóil, gan chaonadh ann a chlódh,
Acht mine agus caoine, gan gnaonadh do gnódh.

A réimh-chorp ba táir, mar ghéir ar an ear,
Ba ghleigeal a géagha, a méura'r a bar,
Gan béim ar a gnar, a héadan ná 'n car,
Gur fáruigh a fála, 'r a tnáth do ba dear.

* Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, ch. xliii.
† See Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*.

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Seo an Máire do mó, dá dtáinig go fóil,
Act Máire a'r Máire, agus Máire nó dó;—
Seo an Máire gan gó, finne bar do na beódaib,
An Rígbean mar d'íoc fúd, a cíor leir an gcró.

. . . . . .

Fá deimioll fá deoid, tá an fpéir ann fan lá,
Mná fíge atá 'g caoinead gan fgíth ar a mobrón,
Tá an taorda tá an t-óg fá dlaoidteact a ngleóid,
O d'íoc fúd an Rígbean, a cíor leir an g-cró!

'S lag géimneach na m-bó, ar léana ní'l feor,
Na héin ar na géugaib, tá 'n éugmar a gceoil,
Ní'l éirg ar an lá, ní'l léim ag an eó,
O d'íoc fúd an Rígbean, a cíor leir an g-cró!

Ir tearc ádbar ir mó 'ná ádbar mo gleóid!
Sgéul cráidte do tárlaig, 'r an áit-fo go nóid
Tá gárda ann gach ó, tá a gcáirdeas do'n Róim,
Na Spáinne mar fágbad, léir-báidte, mo dóig!

Ní'l tádbacht ann mo glór, 'r ní fáigfead mo dóig
Na gnára táid láidir, a'r an t-Ard-acair beo,
Léir-báidte ann fa ngo, neart Pádraoh na mbrón,
'S fug Maoíre gan dít leir, 'r a daoine gan clódad!

A rígfhlait deirt dóir, fug Maoíre ar a' dtóir,
Na Gaodail atá taoíb leat, trát díbean a'r fóir
Scuir díomar ar fpleoíd, lucd craoírad na brón
Do díbir go mí-deirt ár n-daoine 'r ár nóit!

ENGLISH VERSION BY H. GRATTAN CURRAN.

Dark source of my anguish! deep wound of a land
Whose young and defenceless the loss will deplore;
The munificent spirit, the liberal hand
Still stretched, the full bounty it prompted to pour.

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The stone is laid o'er thee! the fair glossy braid,
The high brow, the light cheek with its roseate glow;
The bright form, and the berry that dwelt, and could fade,
On these lips, thou sage giver, all, all are laid low.

Like a swan on the billows she moved in her grace,
Snow white were her limbs, and with beauty replete;
And time on that pure brow had left no more trace,
Than if he had sped with her own fairy feet.

Whatever of purity, glory, hath ever
Been linked with the name, lovely Mary was thine;
Woe! woe, that the tomb, ruthless tyrant, should sever
The ties which our spirits half broken resign.

Then, having invoked a curse upon the usurper who brought such sorrow upon James and his Queen, the poet foretells that the fame of his patrons, "the glorious, the just," will live for ever in song, and he goes on to describe how all nature, animate and inanimate, mourns for the death of Queen Mary.

The mid-day is dark with unnatural gloom—
And a spectral lament wildly shrieked in the air,
Tells all hearts that our princess lies cold in the tomb—
Bids the old and the young bend in agony there!

Faint the lowing of kine o'er the seared yellow lawn!
And tuneless the warbler that droops on the spray!
The bright tenants that flashed through the current are gone!
For the princess we honoured is laid in the clay.

The death of this good Queen and true friend of the Irish was a "sorrow's crown of sorrows" for the children of the Gael, but they, alas! are in the throes of persecution and helpless to assist themselves or

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strike a blow in the cause of justice. Nor can they count on assistance from abroad, for even their old ally, Spain, has abandoned the cause of the Stuarts.

What woe beyond this, hath dark fortune to wreak ?
What wrath o'er the land yet remains to be hurled ?
They turn them to Rome ! but despairing they shriek,
For Spain's flag, in defeat and defection, is furled—

But God is eternal and His grace is all-powerful :—

Though our sorrows avail not—our hope is not lost—
For the Father is mighty !—the Highest remains !—
The loosed waters rushed down upon Pharaoh's wide host,
But the billows rush back from the foot He sustains.

Just Power ! that for Moses the wave didst divide,
Look down on the land where Thy followers pine ;
Look down upon Erin ! and crush the dark pride
Of the scourge of Thy people—the foes of Thy shrine.

The "Angelicall Princess" to whom allusion is made in several of Abbess Butler's letters, is, no doubt, the Princess Louise, the second child and only daughter of King James, by Mary of Modena. She was born at St. Germains, June 28, 1691, and educated most piously and religiously under the eyes of her saintly mother, who wished her to learn not only English, Italian and French, but also some Latin, it being the language of the Church. When she was four years old,* her father set out for Calais with the inten-

* Cf. *French Memoir of the Princess Louise Marie*, by a Sister of Chaillot. *Stuart MSS.*, ii., 482. (Roxburghe Club.)

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tion of making arrangements for another descent upon England, and the King's friends were hopeful of success. But the little Princess had a dream in which her father appeared to her, returning with a blue mantle, instead of red, and said to her, " My daughter, this will be my England." She recounted her dream next day, and shortly afterwards James returned disappointed. She was naturally of a gay and lively disposition, and while still very young was passionately fond of the theatre, the opera and dances. But her great affection for her mother attracted her to the convent of Chaillot, whither Queen Mary of Modena used frequently to retire. At first she found the convent but little to her taste, but by degrees the peace and holiness of the place began to grow upon her. She seemed to lose all her innocent frivolity and to acquire " as much taste for piety as she had before for pleasures." During the last three years of her life she seems to have spent much of her time at the convent, and followed Queen Mary in all her exercises of piety, to the great edification of the nuns. Her progress in piety and virtue was most remarkable during the last year of her life. Upon someone remarking to her that a convent was not the most suitable place for a young Princess, who ought, at her age, to be enjoying the pleasures of the world, she answered that " she thanked God she had been deprived of them, for with her disposition they would have been her ruin." And she added with much fervour and sincerity : " I often offer to God the prayer in the *Imitation*—' Changez pour moi, Seigneur, en amertume tout ce que ce monde auroit d'agréable, et il me semble

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que je suis exaucée.'"* Once, when expressing her horror of the doings of a notorious apostate, she said, "I thank God every day of my life for having been born in the Catholic faith, a happiness which I prefer to all crowns." The death of the Dauphin of France and his sister impressed her forcibly with the vanity of all things earthly, and she repeated several times that she absolutely wished to be a saint, that God alone appealed to her heart, and she would cry out, "Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo"—"I will sing for ever the mercies of the Lord."† On April 10, 1712, she was seized with small-pox. On the following day she made her general Confession to Father Gaillard, after which she looked forward cheerfully to death.

You see, Madam [she said, addressing her mother, Queen Mary] the happiest person in the world. I have just made my general confession. I think I have made it as well as possible, and if someone were to come and tell me just now that I am to die, I could not do otherwise than I have done. I have abandoned myself into the hands of God. I do not ask Him to spare me my life, but only that His will may be accomplished in me.

To which the Queen replied: My daughter, I cannot say as much, for I acknowledge that I ask of God to preserve

* "Change for me, O Lord, into bitterness all that the world may have that is agreeable and it seems to me that I am heard." She is thinking probably of the words of the *Imitation of Christ*, Bk. iii., ch. 26: "O Deus meus dulcedo ineffabilis, verte mihi in amaritudinem omnem consolationem carnalem" . . . "O my God, who art unspeakable sweetness, turn for me into bitterness (i.e., make me look upon as bitter) all carnal comfort;" or, perhaps of Bk. iv., ch. 16, where the same sentiment recurs: "Verte mihi omnia terrena in amaritudinem;" "Change for me all earthly things into bitterness."

† Psalm lxxxviii.

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your life that you may be able to serve Him and to love Him still better than you have yet done.

Madame [replied the princess] if I desire to live it is for that reason only, and because I think I can be of some consolation for you.*

But God willed otherwise, for after a few days' illness He called the pious Princess to Himself. She died April 18, 1712, before she had attained her twenty-first year. Her heart was enshrined in a silver urn and conveyed to the Convent of Chaillot, where it was placed, according to her request, beside the hearts of her father, King James II, and her grandmother, Queen Henrietta of England—foundress of the convent. Her body was deposited, like that of her father, in the Church of the English Benedictines, there to await the restoration of the Stuarts, when it was to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

The death of this promising young Princess was a great blow to her mother and the Stuart party. She had been her father's favourite child, the greatest comfort in his sorrows. "See what God has given us," he exclaimed, presenting the newly-born Princess to the Queen, "to be our consolation in our exile;" and he named her La Consolatrice—"his comforter"—as "he had now one daughter who had never sinned against him." She was one of the most beautiful children in the world, while her talents were of a very high order,† and her charity, even when she was a mere

* Words of the Princess Louise dictated by Queen Mary to nuns of Chaillot. See French original in *Stuart MSS.*, ii., 217.

† Strickland.

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child, knew no bounds. "From a very tender age she paid for the education of several of the daughters of the British emigrants, Protestants as well as Catholics, and nothing could induce her to diminish her little fund by the purchase of toys for herself."

A delightful account of the young Princess's youthful faith and piety is given in a letter of Hamilton's, in which he describes a pilgrimage which she had organized for the members of her Court to a shrine in the forest of St. Germains in order to pray for the cure of the Queen's Treasurer, who suffered from the ague. It seems the party was joined by a certain "Chevalier la Salle, who had accompanied them, not out of devotion, but gallantry," and who, as a punishment for his worldliness, was ordered by the Princess to sit at the foot of a tree at a respectful distance, and rinse the glasses while the more pious members of the pilgrimage were enjoying their *al fresco* lunch, and laughing at his discomfiture. In the midst of it all the Queen's Treasurer, who had been prayed for, appeared on the scene, to the no small amusement of the merry pilgrims.

The same witty writer, in his facetious style, describes the young Princess and her brother in a letter to the Duke of Berwick as follows:—

> The King, our master, increases daily in wit, and the Princess, his sister, becomes more and more charming. Heaven prevent her being stolen from us! . . . The two are always near their august mother, to whom they pay the most dutiful and tender attention. . . . A painter might choose the figure of our young king for a model of the god of love, if such a deity could dare be represented in this

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saintly court of St. Germains. As for the Princess, her hair is very beautiful, and of the loveliest shade of brown; her complexion reminds us of the most brilliant yet delicate tints of the fairest spring flowers; she has her brother's features in a softer mould, and her mother's eyes.* . . .

The death of this accomplished young Princess was the occasion of the following beautiful and touching lines, which we quote from a letter addressed by Queen Mary to the Superioress of Chaillot, May 19, 1712 :—

But what shall I say to you, my dear mother, of that beloved daughter whom God gave to me, and hath now taken away? Nothing beyond this, that since it is He who hath done it, it becomes me to be silent, and not to open my mouth unless to bless His holy name. He is the Master both of the mother and the children; He has taken the one and left the other, and I ought not to doubt but that He has done the best for both, and for me also if I knew how to profit by it. Behold the point, for alas, I neither do as I say, nor as God requires of me, in regard to His dealings with me. Entreat of Him, my dear mother, to give me grace to enable me to begin to do it. I cannot thank you sufficiently for your prayers, both for the living and the dead. I believe the latter are in a state to acknowledge them before God, for in the disposition He put into my dear girl at the commencement of her malady, to prepare herself for death, I have every reason to hope that she enjoys or soon will enjoy, His blessedness with our sainted king, and that they will obtain for me His grace that so I may prepare to join them, when, and where, and how, it shall please the Master of all things in His love to appoint.

If the Irish Dames lost a great friend in the saintly

* Anthony Hamilton to Duke of Berwick. Quoted by Haile.

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Queen Mary of Modena, they found another in the good Princess Clementina, who, by her marriage in the following year (1719) with the "Old Pretender" (James III), became *de jure* Queen of England. In a French letter written by Abbess Butler on September 3, 1719, and evidently addressed to the new Queen, she alludes to the marriage and says that "Heaven itself seems to have brought about such a glorious alliance," and she winds up by saying that she

> Would have to doubt of the divine attributes of the Almighty if she hesitated to hope that, although she is nearly eighty years of age, she would have once more the honour of assuring her Majesty at Whitall [Whitehall] of the profound submission of, etc.
>
> MARIE BUTLER DE DUBLIN,
> *Refugiée A Ipre.*

Writing again in French on December 20, 1719, she speaks of the sufferings of her community, which, however, "appear nothing to us in comparison with the sorrow we feel at seeing your Majesties so far separated from London," where she hopes to present her respects.

As the good Queen Clementina, who now succeeded the saintly Mary of Modena as legitimate Queen of England, proved herself, like her predecessor, a special friend and patron of the Irish Dames of Ypres, with whom she carried on a regular correspondence, we must devote a few lines to her memory, and give some account of her romantic match, which so delighted the good nuns of Ypres, and in the effecting

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of which our countrymen played such a prominent part.

The importance of making a speedy and good matrimonial alliance was fully understood by King James III and his partisans. Accordingly, in 1716, he sent Owen O'Rourke to the Elector Palatine to make proposals for the hand of a princess of his family, but the Elector declined on political grounds. Next year he applied to the Duke of Modena for the hand of his eldest daughter, and, later on, to the Czar of Russia, the King of Sweden, and the Landgrave of Hesse, but all these schemes fell through. In his negotiations with the Czar he dispatched the Duke of Ormonde to the Russian Court, associating with him Sir H. Stirling, Daniel O'Brien (later on created by James Earl of Lismore), Mr. Jerningham and Wogan of Rathcoffey. They were to apply for the hand of one of the Czar's daughters, and bring about a reconciliation between Peter the Great and Charles XII of Sweden, who was a sworn foe of the usurper, George I. The Czar seems at first to have favourably entertained James's proposal. "As to Matthew's [the Czar's] offer about Marsfield" [i.e., the marriage], writes General Dillon to James in a cypher letter, "it's a steadfast proof of his sincere intention and true desire to unite with Patrick" * [i.e., King James]. But this attempt to provide the King with a wife also came to nought.

Not so the negotiations for the hand of the Princess Maria Clementina Sobieska, youngest daughter of

* *Stuart Papers*, Windsor (Glover). London, 1847.

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Prince James Sobieski, and grand-daughter of the famous hero, John Sobieski, who delivered Austria from the Turks.* Her mother was the Princess Hedwige of Bavaria-Neuburg, sister of the Empress Dowager, and connected with the reigning Queen of Spain. So that this young Princess, whom James's Irish matrimonial agent, Charles Wogan, had picked out for his master, promised to be an important acquisition from a political point of view. She had only just attained the age of "sweet seventeen," having been born in 1702, and is described, moreover, as having been "a pretty blue-eyed girl, with beautiful hair that reached nearly to her feet; romantic, high-spirited, and remarkably quick-tempered," just the girl, thought the "impressionable Irishman," to comfort and cheer the "sad, dreamy young King."† So it was arranged that the alliance should be brought about, but James's right-hand man, the Earl, or Duke of Mar, as he had now become, considered that this matter was too delicate and important a one to be entrusted to an Irish Catholic, and so it was confided to a Scotch Protestant, the Hon. James Murray, afterwards Earl of Dunbar. Things had progressed so far that James had already sent the crown jewels to Clementina, and had gone to Bologna to meet her, when news came that his future bride had been arrested on her journey

* For which he was acclaimed in Scriptural language as "a man sent from God, whose name was John." Irish readers will be interested to know that Sobieski's physician was the learned Bernard O'Connor, a Kerryman (1666-1698), author of a *History of Poland*.

† Cf. the interesting article on "Queen Clementina," by A. Shield, *Dublin Review*, 1898.

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and imprisoned in the Castle of Innsbruck, by order of her kinsman the Emperor, at the instigation of his British allies. The canny Scots, to whom James had entrusted the affair, having utterly failed in their mission, James was obliged to have recourse once more to the enterprizing Irishman, to whom he apologized for having superseded him by his incompetent rivals. Wogan volunteered to rescue the Princess and carry her off, for he had experience in these matters having himself cleverly escaped from the Tower of London, where he had been imprisoned for his share in the Jacobite rising of 1715, and so, armed with full credentials from James, he set out to accomplish his adventurous task, which he brought to a triumphant conclusion in spite of the misgivings of the French Intendant of Strasburg, who likened it to " an attempt to make a hole in the moon." However, as we are engaged in writing the history (romantic enough in itself, in all truth) of a convent of—

> Pensive nuns, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast, and demure,

not that of runaway princesses, we cannot enter into the exciting details of the escape of Clementina, details, moreover, probably familiar to many of our readers. Suffice it to say that having overcome opposition and obstacles almost insurmountable, Wogan and his rescue party arrived at Innsbruck on April 27, 1719, in the full determination to rescue the Princess or die in the attempt.

There were Wogan himself [of the Wogans of Rath-

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coffey, Co. Kildare, as everyone knows] and Major Gaydon* [his uncle, and Irish, like himself]; O'Toole—who had blue eyes, and could speak German, interview Austrian officials and show the passports; Major and Mrs. Misset—the last a bright little French-bred Irishwoman† . . . and Jenny the maid who must stay behind in the runaway princess's place.‡

It was on a wild wintry§ night, albeit late in April, that the Princess, in accordance with pre-arrangements, stole out of the Castle into the slushy midnight streets, and was conducted by Wogan through drenching sleet and puddles of snow to the tavern, where the rescue party awaited them. She was able the more easily to elude her gaolers as, her royal lover being away at Madrid, her guards were relaxed, no mischief being suspected. Without delay they set out post haste for the Italian frontier, but had not got far when the Princess suddenly remembered she had flung the crown jewels of England behind the door in the inn, so they must needs stop and send someone back for them. On Sunday morning, April 30, at 3 a.m., they reached the Italian frontier, where they sang a *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for their escape from Austrian territory, and on May 2 they arrived at Bologna. There it was that, on May 9, 1719, at the early hour of five o'clock, Princess Clementina, having dressed herself out in her best attire, wearing a white dress and pearl necklace,

* Richard Gaydon, of Irishtown, Major of Dillon's Regiment.
† Wife of Major (? Captain) John Misset, of Kildare.
‡ Shield, *loc. cit.*
§ So much so that the sentinel on duty at the Castle was away from his post, having gone to a tavern opposite to warm himself with a "wee drappie."

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and a white ribbon in her hair, and having gone previously to Confession, for she was a pious little princess, was married to the King in the person of his proxy, Murray, the ceremony being performed by an English priest, whom Murray had brought to Bologna, Wogan, of course, acting as witness.

Next day Clementina, now Queen of England, proceeded to Rome, where she received a right royal welcome from Pope Clement XI, who was her godfather, and who lodged her in the Ursuline Convent at his own expense. At the same time, as a mark of admiration for the gallant conduct of her rescuer, he proposed to make Wogan a Roman Senator, an honour which he accepted on condition that his companions in danger were to be honoured with the like dignity; and so our four chivalrous Irishmen—Wogan, O'Toole, Gaydon and Misset—were received with a flourish of trumpets by the Senate assembled in state at the Capitol (June 15, 1719), where Count Albani, Prince of the Senate, delivered an oration in honour of the Princess and her rescuers, and conferred on the latter the title and privileges of Senators of Rome, the highest distinction at the disposal of the city, and only conferred on kings, princes, relatives of the Popes, or those distinguished for bravery or other eminent merits.*

* After this adventure, Wogan and Misset entered the service of King Philip of Spain, who promoted both to be colonels. Misset died Governor of Oran in Barbary, in 1733. In the same year Wogan acquired great distinction by gallantly defending himself at the head of 1,300 Spaniards from Oran against 15,000 Moors. Though 544 of his own party were either killed or wounded (Wogan himself being among the latter) he succeeded in keeping the infidels at bay

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Later on in the same year Clementina was married with great splendour to the King in person at Montefiascone. But, alas! the marriage was not fated to be altogether a happy one, although, for the first few years, James and his bride were devoted to each other, and their mutual affection was increased by the birth of an heir, Prince Charles Edward, who was ushered into the world with great éclat and rejoicings at Rome on New Year's Eve, 1720.

In July, 1722, Clementina's mother died, and Abbess Butler seems to have condoled with her on her loss, receiving the following reply (written in French) from the Queen :—

QUEEN CLEMENTINA TO "Mme. BUTLER, ABBESSE DES DAMES BENEDICTINES IRLANDOISES D'YPRES."

MADAME BUTLER,

I am too much persuaded of your zeal and your affection to have any occasion to doubt of the part which you take in the irreparable loss which I have suffered of my dear mother,* you do me a real pleasure by remembering

and inflicted on them a loss of 2,000 killed or disabled, for which he was rewarded with a Governorship. He was a man of literary tastes and corresponded with Dean Swift, who sent him copies of his own works, and those of Pope, Gray, etc., for Wogan's camp library. In one of his letters to Wogan the Dean remarks: "I cannot but highly esteem those gentlemen of Ireland, who, with all the disadvantages of being exiles and strangers, have been able to distinguish themselves by their valour and conduct in so many parts of Europe, I think, above all other nations."

Gaydon and O'Toole returned to their posts in the French Army. The former was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, and died about 1745. O'Toole, serving as Captain of Grenadiers, fell in the last action between the French troops and those of the Emperor Charles VI in the campaign in the Moselle.

*Clementina's mother, the Princess Sobieska, born Princess Hedwige of Bavaria-Neuburg, was sister of the German Empress Dowager. She was daughter-in-law of the Queen of Poland, who is

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her in your good prayers to which I recommend her as well as myself and I feel assured you will not forget us therein. I am very glad moreover that my recommendations have been of some consolation to you, be persuaded that it will always be a pleasure to me to contribute to the welfare of your Community as well as to your own particular satisfaction, being with very perfect esteem, Madame Butler,

Your good friend,

CLEMENTINA, *R.*

BOLOGNA, 6 *October*, 1722.

It seems to have been about this time that Clementina fell into a sad and serious, if not melancholy state, and perhaps the death of her mother may have partly been the cause of it. Be that as it may, she seems to have grown rather peevish and wayward in her manner and conduct. Among other instances, she made a great grievance of her not being taken fully into the confidence of the King in political matters, for which she was wholly unfitted. It is from this period that we may date the unhappy misunderstandings between her and her husband, which embittered their lives and, no doubt, rejoiced their enemies. Their estrangement has been attributed by prejudiced writers to infidelities, of which James seems to have been groundlessly accused. The principal cause, however, seems to have been the Earl of Mar, who had been dismissed from James's service on account of his treachery, but had the support of the Queen. Mar's

said to have taken such a dislike to her as to oppose the election of her own son James, lest Princess Hedwige should become Queen of Poland. As a result Augustus II, Elector of Saxony, was elected King of Poland in the place of James Sobieski, Clementina's father.

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jealousy of Hay, afterwards Lord Inverness, who superseded him, and the Queen's wayward character at this period sufficiently account for these unpleasant quarrels, which soon became the talk of Europe, being fanned into flame and exaggerated by Mar's false reports.

In a letter of January 18, 1724, to Lady Abbess Butler, Clementina seems to allude to this subject, saying she has no doubt of Lady Abbess's sympathy with her in the " sad events which have happened to her."*

On March 5, 1725, she gave birth to her second son, afterwards Cardinal Duke of York, and on May 3 the King writes to thank Lady Abbess and the community of Ypres for having sung a *Te Deum* on that auspicious occasion. But this happy event did not bring about a perfect reconciliation, and on November 15, 1725, matters came to a crisis, when the Queen left the palace with Lady Southesk and retired to the Convent of St. Cecilia, in Trastevere, Rome, where she remained for more than a year and a-half in spite of James's pressing invitations to her to return. James having at last consented to sacrifice Lord Inverness, which he did at the latter's own request, Clementina eventually yielded to the Pope's persuasions, and condescended to leave the convent, on June 2, 1727. It happened to be the very day on which George I expired suddenly, and, as James was busy in planning a new descent on England, his meeting and reconciliation

* " Les tristes evenements [sic] qui me sont arrivés."

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with the Queen did not take place till the beginning of the following year, 1728.

The rest of the good Queen's life was devoted to works of genuine piety and charity. She joined the Third Order of St. Dominic, and became intimate with the celebrated Franciscan friar, Father, afterwards St. Leonard of Port Maurice, who gave his first mission in Rome in 1730. He became her spiritual director and guided her in her efforts to attain the heights of perfection, to which she ardently aspired. She watched with motherly care over the poor penitent women, whom the holy friar had rescued from a life of sin, and assisted and befriended young girls who aspired to the religious life. She delighted in making vestments and ornaments for poor churches with her own hands, and induced ladies of the first rank at Rome and elsewhere to imitate her example.

Many of Blessed Leonard's letters testify to his esteem and affection for the Queen. He returns frequently to the praises of this princess, whom he looked upon as a saint, and who had for him all the veneration of a spiritual daughter.*

He dedicated to her his *Hidden Treasure*. She would not allow him to address her as "Majesty," but only as his daughter. Her favourite maxim was, "All that is not eternal is pure vanity." Pious chroniclers all enlarge rapturously upon her saintliness. They tell how she heard every day as many Masses as she could, her greatest pleasure being to assist, kneeling motionless, without any cushion or support. . . . She tried to attend three or four Benedictions every day, causing her horses to gallop through the streets of Rome, so that she might be in time for all.†

* *Vie du B. Leonard de Port Maurice*, par F. Labis. Quoted by A. Shield.

† Shield.

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Thus did Clementina prepare herself for eternity, and atone for any errors she might have been betrayed into in her past life. "The only error she ever committed," writes a contemporary, and most probably a Protestant writer, "was owing to ill arts and to her natural vivacity of temper. It was atoned for by repentance, frequently expressed in most moving terms, and her whole behaviour from the day of their reconciliation to the day of her death was a continual proof of the sorrowful sense she had of that fault towards a husband who never could be justly charged with one towards her, even upon that unhappy occasion." But the good princess's earthly pilgrimage was drawing to a close. "Weary and unfortunate, I sink beneath the burden," she wrote in the year 1733. On December 18 of the following year she died at the early age of thirty-two of asthma, or, perhaps, of grief as she herself suggested. Good Father Leonardo was grieved at the loss of his spiritual child, and promised to say all the Masses he could during a year for the repose of her soul.

The King, too, who had watched by her dying bedside with loving tenderness and care, was deeply and sincerely grieved at her death, as is evident from the following touching letter, written February 12, 1735, to her spiritual director * :—

Many thanks to my highly esteemed Father Leonard for his letter of the first of this month. I have always intended to write to you, since the loss I have had, but time has constantly failed me. However, I have not

* *Vie du B. Leonard.*

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omitted to burn, without reading it, one of your letters, which was found with other papers under the Queen's pillow, after her death.

All that you say to me of her gives me great consolation. She was, beyond doubt, ripe for heaven, where I hope she will obtain from God what her soul desired. I still have much to say to you about her and about myself, but I do not care to confide such matters to paper; the more so, as I experience some difficulty in writing with my own hand. For this reason I am impatient to see you again; as much to receive consolation and help from your teaching and kind words as to inform you myself of some circumstances, which are for me, and which will be for you, a subject of consolation in what concerns the Queen.

I am very much obliged to you for your prayers for the Queen's soul, and the share you kindly give me in them; prayers in which I have great confidence, as I shall always have the most sincere friendship for your person.

JAMES *R.*

There is preserved among the archives of Ypres Abbey a copy of the long and detailed contemporary account of the state funeral of Queen Clementina which took place on June 22, 1735, and was carried out on a scale truly magnificent, and all at the Pope's expense. Her body was embalmed at her death, and clothed in the simple Dominican habit, she being a tertiary of that Order. But at her funeral she was "dressed in royal robes of laced gold and ermine, under which her hair hung loose about her neck—the lovely hair that her knight-errant had so admired when she was carried off in triumph from Innsbruck. She was next conveyed to a bed of state in the great Church of the Apostles, under a canopy surmounted with a crown and surrounded with lights. Thirty-two cardinals, in their

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purple mourning habits, knelt round while the mendicant Friars chanted the office for the dead. Then the body was borne to St. Peter's in procession; all the religious orders in Rome, the clergy of St. Peter's, the Chamberlain and clergy of Rome, the choir of St. Peter's and the whole chapter following. The streets were lined with guards, and all the windows and balconies were crowded with sight-seers. After the High Mass, her ladies removed the regal robes, leaving only the simple Dominican habit, white tunic and scapular and black cloak with capuce, and they put the veil of the nuns about her head."* Her body was then placed in the coffin and deposited "for the present" in the crypt, under the north aisle of the great basilica. On the next day the solemn Requiem Mass was chanted. "Her heart was taken to the Church of the Holy Apostles, where a mural tablet commemorates her: "Hic Clementinæ remanent præcordia nam cor cœlestis fecit ne superesset amor."† The Pope raised another and larger mural monument to her in St. Peter's, which bears her portrait and faces the great monument by Canova, raised by George IV to the memory of her husband and sons."‡

Such was the honour which the Pope showed to one who was truly Queen of England, though her disloyal subjects did not permit her to set foot within her kingdom, and her ashes were laid to rest by the banks

* Shield.

† "Here rest the 'præcordia' (i.e., the heart's receptacle) of Clementina, for heavenly love did not allow the heart (itself) to survive."

‡ *Ibid.*

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PRINCESS CLEMENTINA SOBIESKA, A FRIEND AND BENEFACTRESS OF THE IRISH DAMES.

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of old Father Tiber, instead of mingling with those of her predecessors within the hallowed precincts of Westminster.

Thus did Clementina end her short, sad pilgrimage on earth, and though she never ascended the throne, which was hers by her husband's right, she lived long enough to learn to despise all earthly honours and to win for herself an enduring crown in eternity. Peace to her memory, to which we have offered this little tribute, as she was ever what she always in her letters styled herself to be—the "good friend" of the Irish Dames of Ypres.

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CHAPTER III

LETTERS OF ABBESS ARTHUR (1723-1743) AND ABBESS MANDEVILLE (1743-1760)—THE IRISH DAMES AND PRINCE CHARLIE'S EXPEDITION.

Ní inneórad féin cia hé mo rcór,
Beró inarin roéil tar 'éir go leór;
Acc gurób-re Donnac Dé na gcómacc
go b-fillfó mo laoc gan baogal beó.

The name of my darling none must declare,
Though his fame be like sunshine from shore to shore;
But oh! may Heaven—Heaven hear my prayer,
And waft the Hero to my arms once more!
—JOHN CLARACH MACDONNELL'S "Lament for Prince Charlie."

GOOD old Abbess Butler was called to her reward (1723) without seeing the realization of her fervent hopes and prayers for the restoration of the Stuarts; but the intimate friendship and interchange of letters between the Irish Dames and the exiled Royal Family were continued under her successors.

In a French letter endorsed "ye year 1733," her successor, Lady Abbess Arthur (1723-1743), writing to Queen Clementina for the New Year, assures her that although their prayers have not been hitherto heard, they will continue to "present them at the feet of Him who is as much adorable in His delay as He is powerful to display His justice and mercy, when we least expect it"—that even the war, which is in itself a scourge,

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may be turned by the Almighty to the advantage of the king.

"The war" alluded to in Abbess Arthur's letter was, we presume, that which broke out in the year 1733 between France and the German Empire, owing to the attempt of the Emperor Charles VI of Austria to force a Saxon king upon Poland in place of the native king-elect, Stanislas Leszczynski, father-in-law of Louis XV of France. On October 12, the Marshal Duke of Berwick was ordered to cross the Rhine with a large army, including five Irish battalions, those of Berwick, Bulkeley, Clare, Dillon and Roth, counting about 3,300 men and officers. About ten days after the passage of the Rhine, which occupied a week, the fortress of Kehl, near Strassburg, was taken and thus the German part of the campaign was ended. It was at this siege of Kehl that an incident took place in connection with the Irish Brigade which is worth recording. It seems that some irregularities occurred in one of the regiments of the Brigade, upon which its Lieutenant-Colonel was despatched by the Duke of Berwick with a grave report on the matter to Louis XV, who, upon opening the unwelcome message, remarked with evident signs of displeasure, "The Irish troops give me more uneasiness than all the rest of my forces;" to which the Lieutenant-Colonel promptly replied, "Sire, all your majesty's enemies make the same complaint."

In April of the following year, 1734, the Duke of Berwick at the head of the French army, including the Irish regiments of Bulkeley, Dillon, Berwick and Fitzjames, crossed the Rhine again, and having

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dislodged some 12,000 Germans from their position at Etlingen, proceeded to the siege of the formidable fortress of Philipsburgh where the Duke was killed by a cannon ball. At this siege of Philipsburgh, which capitulated on July 18, the trenches were mounted by the Irish Brigade, the battalions of Clare and Dillon being specially mentioned as having distinguished themselves.

This short war came to a conclusion in the following year, 1735, with a brief campaign in Germany, in which the Irish regiments of Clare and Dillon played a distinguished part, the other regiments of the Brigade having been left behind in Flanders. "The Irish Regiments" (says a contemporary writer, alluding to those of Clare and Dillon) "bravely secured the retreat of the French army out of the Empire, altho' closely followed by the brave Count Leckendorff, who did his utmost to cut off their rear, but was as bravely disappointed, by the intrepid behaviour of the Irish."

At the outset of this brief war, the French under the Marshal Duke de Villars invaded the Duchy of Milan but the Irish Brigade was not engaged in the Italian campaign. It is interesting to note, however, that perhaps the most stubborn resistance which the French troops met with was at Pizzigitone, which was stoutly defended by its governor, one Langton, an Irish officer in the Imperial service.

But to mention matters of a lighter vein than "war's alarums," on the back of the preceding letter of Abbess Arthur there is a communication from a certain James Adam Coppinger, dated "Ostende, 12 9^{ber},

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1733, to his "Dear Cozen," telling her he is sending by "one of the Sisters of your convent," "one Catty of good Congo Tea"; which shows that the Irish Dames, amidst all their trials and privations, had good friends who thought sometimes of providing for their creature comforts.

Writing again in French for the year 1734, Abbess Arthur assures the Queen that the community of the Irish Dames participates in the joy caused by the universal esteem which

> Our August Prince of Wales has already acquired on his first entry into society—such an auspicious beginning and the great promise given by the Duke of York are only a foretaste of the hundredfold which the King and her Majesty are laying up day by day in the treasures of the Almighty by his longanimity and patience in such prolonged trials, and why should we not hope then that the day is near when God, who is also just, will give his majesty his due, in spite of earthly leagues, which are mere feeble reeds in His sight—as witness the Restoration of Joas, and of the Royal Prophet, etc.

"Our August Prince of Wales" of the above letter, is, of course, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie," "the Young Chevalier," who was barely fourteen at the date of this letter. In this same year, 1734, the Duke of Liria, afterwards Duke of Berwick, happened to be passing through Rome on his way to assist Don Carlos in his struggle for the Crown of Naples, and volunteered to take charge of Prince Charlie should his father allow him to accompany the expedition. The invitation was accepted, and the little fourteen-year-old prince, having been

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made a General of Artillery by Don Carlos, bore himself manfully at the successful siege of Gaeta.

The handsome and accomplished youth, whose doings were eagerly reported by the English ambassador, was now introduced by his father and the Pope to the highest Italian society, which he fascinated by the frankness of his manner and the grace and dignity of his bearing.

His brother, Henry Edward, Duke of York, and afterwards Cardinal, was about nine years old at the date of this letter. A few years previously (1731) when he was not yet seven, James, Field-Marshal Keith, had written of him :—

The little Duke is much on his good behaviour. He has ordered a journal of his actions to be kept and given me, that you may see how well he behaves. I never saw any child comparable to him. His brother has already got the better of his governors, which makes him a little unruly; but I fancy he will be bold and no dissenter—two great and good qualities.

A year later the Marshal writes from Rome :—

The Duke of York believes I send you a journal of his actions; he stands in great awe of it, lest his faults should be published in Europe and Asia, and is very fond to do any good thing to be put in the journal.

Later on the poet Gray describes the future Cardinal as having " more spirit " than his elder brother; while another English visitor to Rome about the same time seems to have been likewise more favourably impressed by the little Duke than by his more famous brother. We allude to Samuel Crisp, who saw the two young

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princes at a carnival ball given by a member of the Roman nobility in the year 1739, when the Duke was about fourteen years old.

I think, I may say with truth [writes Crisp] they are two as fine youths as ever I saw; particularly the youngest, who has more beauty and dignity in him than even one can form to oneself in Idea; he danced miraculously, as they say he does all his exercises; singing, I am told, most sweetly, and accompanies himself, and is, in short, the admiration of Everybody.

This appreciation of the two young princes is partly shared by the Frenchman de Brosses, who writes in the following year:—

The younger is the more popular of the two in Rome on account of his handsome face and charming manners. . . . Both princes are devoted to music and understand it thoroughly. The elder plays the violoncello very well, and the younger sings Italian songs with a clear child's voice and in the best taste. They give a concert once a week; it is the best music in Rome and I never miss it.

And here we may mention that these two accomplished young princes owed their early education, in part at least, to an Irishman, their first tutor having been Thomas Sheridan, who later on accompanied Prince Charles to Scotland (1745) and was knighted by him. His father, Thomas Sheridan, a Jacobite Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, had been Chief Secretary for Ireland in the reign of James II, and the latter's private secretary in his exile.

Writing to the King (James III) in December, 1741,

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Lady Abbess Arthur having first thanked him for an alms he had sent, continues :—

I confide, sir, and heartly pray that this ensuing year may be the happy one of yr majesty's and Royal Familys Restoration sure the all seeing eyes of a mercifull just and omnipotent God will no logner [*sic*] defer makeing it His one [own] work to confound the vain prudence of the world were it not for this hopes our hearts would break when I reflect sir of the miraculous Restoration of St. Edward after many years exile and that of so many other Monarchs of yr Majestys Royal Predecessors can't dout of our Blesd Lady's and St. Peter's obtaining the same grace for you Sir and Royal Family. . . .

Little more than a year after writing the above the faithful Abbess was called to enjoy an eternal crown, being succeeded by Abbess Mandeville (1743-1760) under whom the traditional loyalty to the cause of the exiled Stuarts continued to flourish in the convent of the Irish Dames.

The new Abbess's term of office witnessed Prince Charlie's ever-memorable expedition to Scotland in the historic '45—the most brilliant exploit in the whole career of the young Chevalier. It is now pretty well realized that the expedition of '45 was largely an Irish affair. Irish exiles in France and elsewhere contributed men and money, Irish officers helped with their trusty swords, and we may add that the young Chevalier was accompanied in his perilous adventure by the fervent prayers of the Irish Dames of Ypres, who followed his fortunes with intense and sympathetic interest, as we learn from letters still preserved in the convent archives.

Already, in January, 1744, Prince Charlie had

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secretly left Rome for France, where an imposing expedition was being fitted out in his interest, including the Scottish troops in the French service, and the famous Irish Brigade under the command of Lord Clare. But the elements once more fought against the Stuart cause, and the expedition came to nought. In the following year, 1745, however, the Prince, inspired by the glorious French, or rather Irish victory at Fontenoy, formed the bold design of sailing to Scotland with a few faithful followers, and of thus winning back his ancestral kingdoms without the aid of foreigners. On August 5, 1745, he landed at Borrodale, in Moidart, on the coast of Inverness, accompanied by his seven trusty followers, henceforth known to fame as "the seven men of Moidart," of whom no less than four were Irish.

The news frae Moidart cam' yestreen
  Will soon gar mony ferlie;
That ships of war hae just come in,
  And landed royal Charlie.
Come through the heather, around him gather,
  Ye're a' the welcomer early;
Around him cling, wi' a' your kin,
  For wha'll be king but Charlie!

Of these Irish companions of the Prince, two, George Kelly and Sir Thomas Sheridan, were loyal Irish Protestants, the other two, Sir John MacDonnell or MacDonald and Colonel John O'Sullivan, were Irish Catholics. O'Sullivan, who was the prime mover and the Prince's right-hand man all through this memorable enterprise, came of a good Kerry family. When nine years old he was sent to Paris for his education,

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and at the age of fifteen proceeded to Rome to prepare for the priesthood, but his vocation lay in another direction. On the death of his father he returned to Ireland, sold his family estate, or as much of it as his ancestors had succeeded in saving from confiscation, and returned to France, as the Protestant persecution rendered it impossible for him to aspire to an honourable career in his own country. Shortly after his arrival in France, he was successful in getting an introduction to Marshal Maillebois, who at first appointed him tutor to his son, but soon afterwards, on the recommendation of the Marshal, who discerned considerable military talent in the young Kerryman, O'Sullivan embraced the military profession and accompanied his patron in an expedition for the conquest of Corsica. Maillebois, it would seem, was in the habit of drinking "not wisely but too well"; in fact he is said to have become habitually intoxicated every day after dinner, and to have been more or less incapable the rest of the twenty-four hours, so that the whole conduct of the campaign devolved on the shoulders of O'Sullivan, who acquitted himself successfully and acquired renown for himself and his patron. On his return to France he served with the French army in a campaign in Italy as well as on the Rhine, in which he so distinguished himself that one of the French generals reported of our Kerryman that "he understood the irregular art of war better than any man in Europe nor was his knowledge in the regular much inferior to that of the best general then living."

We next find him in the service of the exiled

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Stuarts, who fully appreciated his worth. "I am glad to find O'Sullivan is now with you," writes James III from Rome in March, 1745, to Prince Charles then in France. And again writing to the Prince in 1747, he once more expresses his satisfaction that O'Sullivan is with him, and adds:—

I have made him a Knight since you desire it and he deserves it. . . . I must do him the justice to say that by all I have heard, or marked of him myself, I am glad you have him about you, and I am persuaded he will serve you with diligence and fidelity, and never give you reason to be dissatisfied with him.

Charles soon contracted such esteem for him [says a contemporary London memoir *] that he was never easy, but when this agreeable Irishman was with him! Indeed no one who knows Mr. Sullivan can deny his being one of the best-bred, genteelest, complaisant, engaging officers in all the French troops, which in these respects, are certainly inferior to none in Europe. To these external accomplishments were added (and Charles soon perceived them in Mr. Sullivan) a sincerity of heart and an honest freedom of both sentiment and speech, temper'd with so much good nature and politness, as made his conversation and friendship equally useful and agreeable. But if Charles was highly pleased with Mr. Sullivan, the latter thought himself no less happy in the regard paid him by the former to whom, in return, he passionately desir'd to render all the service his abilities, strengthened by the favour of the Great Monarch, were possibly capable of rendering. Of this Charles was well satisfied; and he, on the other hand, expected no small things from the good sense, the solid judgment, the political knowledge, and the military skill of Mr. Sullivan. Nor was he deceiv'd, either in the pro-

* Contained in the Supplement to *Young Juba or the History of the Young Chevalier*, printed in London, 1748.

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secution, or the end of his famous expedition. For to the abilities of this gentleman we are chiefly to attribute the success with which the unexperienc'd Charles, with a handful of raw Highlanders, so long maintain'd a sharp, and, for some time, doubtful dispute with the whole force of his Brittanick Majesty, in which he surprizingly over-run and (as far as he pleased) plunder'd, not only the major part of the Kingdom of Scotland, but also a great part of the rich and powerful nation of England itself. A nation which is, or might be, the terror and arbitress of all Europe! But this great spring and first or chief mover of all the Stuart army's motions, like that of a clock or watch (which animates and moves the whole machine), was unseen, and all its operations unperceiv'd by the gross of Charles's followers. Mr. Sullivan's authority and influence over Charles, as the automatical spring in its box, was so closely conceal'd from the eyes of the world, that none but the most prying, curious, artful of the Highland Chiefs, and those that were the most entrusted, and, as it were, let into the mystery, knew how greatly this gentleman was favoured and confided in both by Charles and the French Government. Though in fact he was the ***** General,* he never openly acted as such; and his advice was given in secret, and his orders never came directly from himself. While *he* did all, *Charles* appeared as the principal, and, in his name was every thing transacted.

That this estimate of O'Sullivan's influence is not at all exaggerated is clear from the independent testimony of a contemporary writer in the *True Patriot*, who remarks, "The principal person, upon whom the Pretender's son hath depended in this expedition, is Mr. Sullivan, by birth an Irishman, and educated in a Romish College abroad where he entered into Priest's

* Could these five asterisks stand for the "treasonable" word "KING'S"?

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orders,"* and concludes, "To the abilities of this man, we may justly attribute the success with which a handful of banditti have so long been able to overrun and plunder a large part of this opulent and powerful nation."

But to return to Prince Charlie. On the 30th August, N.S., a few weeks after his landing in Moidart, his standard was unfurled in the vale of Glenfinnan in the presence of the Highland clans—for the most part Camerons of Lochiel and MacDonalds of Keppoch —who had rallied to his cause. The adventurous little band then set out on its eventful march, with Colonel O'Sullivan as Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master General, and on the 28th of the following month they had captured Edinburgh and occupied Holyrood House, the ancient palace of the Stuarts, where Prince Charlie held a brilliant but short-lived court. It happened that just at that time the celebrated Irish wandering harper, Denis O'Hampsey, or Hampson,† was making his second professional tour in Scotland, and "being in Edinburgh, when Charley the Pretender was there, he was called into the great hall of Holyrood palace to play before the Prince. The

* This is incorrect. O'Sullivan was never ordained priest. He married and left a son, Thomas Herbert O'Sullivan, who was an officer in the Irish Brigade at the time of the American War of Independence, and was to have taken part in an expedition to Ireland under the famous Paul Jones, but, having committed an assault on the latter, young O'Sullivan fled from France to America, where he entered the British Army at New York, but quitted it for the Dutch service, in which he was promoted Major, and died at the Hague about 1824. His son, John O'Sullivan, sometime American Consul in the Canary Islands and at Mogador, in Morocco, was shipwrecked in 1825 leaving a son, Hon. John Louis O'Sullivan, U.S. Minister to the Court of Portugal, 1854 to 1858, and the last of his line.

† Born 1695; died 1807, at the age of 112.

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tune called for was "The King shall enjoy his own again," and the venerable Irish minstrel lustily sang the words to the accompaniment of his harp :—

I hope to see the day,
When the Whigs shall run away,
And the King shall enjoy his own again!

words which seemed at length destined to be accomplished though it was still unhappily true that "a stranger filled the Stuarts' throne."

A few days later Charles fought and won the battle of Prestonpans, and by December had made his way to Derby, within two days' march of London, where the news of his approach caused a panic, commercial and otherwise. But after a short rest at Derby he began reluctantly to beat a retreat, in the course of which he defeated the English general at the battle of Falkirk (January 28, 1746), a victory which, as we shall see, put the Irish nuns of Ypres into "ecstasies of joy." And well might they rejoice over a victory which, like that of Fontenoy, was in a large measure due to the courage and timely assistance of the troops of the Irish Brigade who accompanied the expedition, and saved the day by coming to the support of the gallant Camerons and Stuarts who had been outflanked by the English right and were beginning to yield ground.

Having rested his troops at Inverness, Charles resumed the offensive, and, having captured Fort George, he despatched Brigadier Stapleton and 300 of his Irish picquets to reduce Fort Augustus, then a

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strong fortress, now the site of a Benedictine abbey. This task being successfully accomplished, the Irish were ordered to co-operate with a body of Highlanders in the siege of the still stronger fortress of Fort William, at the western entrance of the Caledonian Canal, and were assigned the difficult task of conveying the siege artillery from Inverness to the fort, a distance of 61 miles over rough mountain paths. But the combined efforts of Irish and Highlanders were unable to reduce this strongly fortified post, and our countrymen returned to Inverness to reinforce Prince Charlie's troops against the advance of the Duke of Cumberland, who was already at Aberdeen. A month later the two armies were face to face on Drummossie Muir, where, on April $\frac{16}{17}$, 1746, was fought the sanguinary battle of Culloden, which practically ended Prince Charlie's career, and gave a death-blow to the Stuart cause. To O'Sullivan as the Prince's right-hand man was entrusted the task of choosing the ground and arranging the disposition of the Stuart forces, a task which he carried our with skill and prudence, but Prince Charlie's troops, worn out as they were by hunger and fatigue, were hopelessly out-matched by the better-equipped, better-fed, and, in point of numbers, vastly superior forces of the enemy. In this historic fight, as in previous engagements, the Prince's Irish troops played a conspicuous part, the Jacobite second line being under the command of Brigadier Stapleton at the head of some 400 men of the Irish Brigade, while on their rear were posted the seventy-five Irish horse of Fitzjames's regiment, of whom

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one troop under Captain Shea had the honour of acting as a bodyguard to the Prince. And even as at Ramillies the Irish troops protected the retreat of the retiring French, so too at Culloden they gallantly covered the retreat of the Highlanders, who were threatened with annihilation by the enemy's cavalry.

How proud were we of our young prince,
And of his native sway!
But all our hopes are past and gone
Upon Culloden day.

There was no lack of bravery there,
No spare of blood or breath,
For, one to two, our foes we dared,
For freedom or for death.

The bitterness of grief is past
Of terror and dismay:
The die was risked and foully cast
Upon Culloden day.

Prince Charlie's romantic adventures after the fatal fight at Culloden are familiar to everyone, but it is not so generally known that for his escape from the battle-field and from the many subsequent perils that assailed him, he was indebted in great measure to the zeal and vigilance of his faithful Irish. In vain did Sir Thomas Sheridan and the other Irish companions of the Prince urge him to quit the fatal field, and had not O'Sullivan seized the reins of the Prince's horse and led him forcibly away, it is possible that he would have lost his life along with his fortunes on that disastrous day. For five months he was a fugitive among the islands and highlands of Scotland, being closely

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pursued by the enemy and exposed to "privations of every kind, fleeing from island to island and from rock to rock, tormented by hunger and thirst, unprotected from the cold, and constantly exposed to every kind of weather."

Towards the end of June, the Prince with "his dear O'Sullivan and his faithful O'Neill" and ever-trusty Ned Burke, found shelter and hospitality in the Hebrides, amidst the loyal Catholic clan of MacDonalds of South Uist; but, upon his whereabouts becoming known, the island was surrounded by his enemies, prominent among whom were three Scots captains, all eagerness to earn the £30,000 promised for the capture of their Prince and fellow-countryman. As the danger became hourly more imminent, Prince Charlie with none but O'Neill to accompany him made good his escape to the neighbouring isle of Benbecula—then, probably, as now, at least half-Catholic. Poor O'Sullivan worn our by suffering and fatigue, had to be left behind in hiding in South Uist, though the Prince, we are told, felt parting with him like "tearing his heart from his body." On their arrival in Benbecula the two fugitives reached a hut at midnight, and O'Neill having ventured to enter, was agreeably surprised to find there Miss Flora MacDonald, whom they had met before in South Uist.

Kind Providence to thee a friend,
A lovely maid, did timely send,
To save thee from a fearful end
Thou royal Charlie Stuart.

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Who has not heard of the brave Flora MacDonald, and of the risks she ran and the hardships she underwent to save the unfortunate Prince from the fury of his enemies? But how many are aware that it was only at the earnest entreaties of the true-hearted O'Neill, who, to use his own words, "demonstrated to her the honour and immortality that would redound to her, by such a glorious action," that the noble girl was induced to run the risk of compromising her relatives by aiding the Prince to escape. Finally a scheme was planned out, but, as Flora herself declared to Bishop Forbes, "the Captain [O'Neill] was the contriver of the scheme, and she herself was very backward to engage in it. . . ." In accordance with this plan of the resourceful Irishman, which proved eminently successful, Flora MacDonald obtained a passport from her step-father, MacDonald of Armadale, enabling her to set out for her mother's home in the neighbouring island of Skye, and to take along with her a male attendant, and "one Betty Burke, an Irish girl," whom Flora was anxious to engage as being very clever at spinning. This "Betty" was none other than the Prince himself, who was dressed up in a style befitting the character he was to assume in "a callico gown, with a light coulered quilted petticoat, a mantle of dun camelot, made after the Irish fashion, with a hood joined to it." In this disguise Charles successfully escaped from the island of Benbecula, just in time to elude his pursuers, who were close upon his heels. He was accompanied by Flora

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and by a trusty Highlander, Neil Mac Echan* of the MacDonnell clan; but in spite of the Prince's entreaties and O'Neill's urgent request, our countryman had, as a matter of precaution, to be left behind. "I now," says O'Neill, bemoaning his "hard fate" at being separated from his "illustrious hero," "could only recommend him to God and his good fortune, and made my way, amidst the enemy, to South Uist, where we had left Colonel O'Sullivan." Next day he joined O'Sullivan, who, "as he was so reduced by the long fatigues that he had undergone in the mountains as not to be able to walk," was induced by O'Neill to board a French cutter, which was seen hovering round the island, having "on board two Captains of the Irish Brigade and a number of volunteers." Having appointed a trysting-place with O'Sullivan in the Isle of Raasay, which the Prince had already fixed upon as a rendezvous, O'Neill set out in search of his royal master, but as luck would have it, failed to meet either one or the other. In his bitter disappointment he returned for greater safety, as he thought, to the island of Benbecula; but (alas! that such fidelity should meet with no better reward), he was there betrayed, and captured by one "Captain MacNeal, in a rock over a loch, where," says O'Neill, "I had skulked for four days, and [was] brought to Captain Fergusson, who used me with the brutality of a pirate, stripped me, and had ordered me to be put into a rack

* His son became an officer of the Irish Brigade in France (Dillon's Regiment), and was made Marshal of France and Duke of Tarentum, under Napoleon, to whom he remained faithful to the last.

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and whipped by his hangman, because I would not confess where I thought the Prince was," but a humane lieutenant of the Scotch Fusiliers with drawn sword interposed in time to save O'Neill from this barbarous treatment, by threatening to run Fergusson through should he dare to treat an officer in such a manner. He was eventually placed as a prisoner on board the *Eltham* man-of-war, where he was perhaps not altogether sorry to find a fellow-prisoner in the person of Flora MacDonald, whom he is said to have admired, and who had been arrested on her return to her home at Armadale, in Skye. On meeting O'Neill on board "she went playfully up, and slapping him gently on the cheek with the palm of her hand, said, 'To that black face, do I owe all my misfortune,'" but the Irishman assured her it was a misfortune she ought to be proud of. To make a long story short, however, the brave Flora was sent a prisoner to London, but released the following year, while the gallant O'Neill after a term of confinement in Edinburgh Castle, was shipped to the Continent as a French officer

Hard fate, that I should banish'd be
And rebel call'd with scorn,
For serving of the kindest prince
That ever yet was born.

O'Sullivan likewise escaped to France in the French cutter already mentioned, and, proceeding at once to Versailles, informed the French court of Prince Charlie's perilous position and the urgent need of despatching

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vessels to his assistance, with the result that two French frigates were sent out in search of him, in command of Colonel Warren of the Irish regiment of Dillon, who was promised a baronetcy by King James in the event of his bringing back the Prince in safety. Warren, who was accompanied by two other Irish officers in the French service, Captain Sheridan and Lieutenant O'Beirne, set sail with his two gallant ships from St. Malo in September, 1746, and, directing his course round the west coast of Ireland, succeeded in safely reaching Lochnanuagh, the very spot on the Scottish coast where Charles had landed on his adventurous enterprise little more than a year before. Some time elapsed before he could find out the Prince and convey to him the welcome news of the ship's arrival; but eventually on the 1st of October, Charles, who was accompanied by 130 of his faithful followers, was taken on board the *Heureux*, and the gallant little vessel, mindful of its auspicious name, was soon "running before a fair wind along the Irish coast," and on October 10, happily reached Roscof near Morlaix in Brittany, where the Prince landed with the faithful companions of his exile. Shortly afterwards the youthful hero made a triumphant entry into Versailles, where he was welcomed with open arms by the French king and his court, who eagerly listened to the Prince's tale of his adventures. Well would it have been for Charles's reputation had his career terminated with the conclusion of this glorious though unsuccessful enterprise.

It would seem that already, on September 6, 1745,

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only one month after Charles's landing in Scotland, the Abbess of Ypres had already got news of the expedition, and wrote to King James to promise the assistance of her prayers and those of the Irish Dames as we gather from the following reply from

SECRETARY EDGAR TO ABBESS MANDEVILLE.

ALBANO, *Octr.* 19*th*, 1745.

MADAM,

I received in due time your Laps.* letter of the 6th Sepr, and had the honour to deliver to the King that inclosed in it, and to inform H. M. of the contents of Your Laps. to me, as I have done of that I now receive of the 20th Sepr, H. M. commands me to acknowledge the receipt of Your letter to him, and to thank you and your worthy Community for your constant as well as extraordinary Prayers for him and his Family, and for The Princes success in his present glorious undertaking, May your good Prayers be soon heard, that justice may triumph over Iniquity and usurpation, and that The Royal Family and the 3 Kingdoms may be happy in each other. . . .

The King himself wrote a few months later as follows :

KING JAMES III TO ABBESS MANDEVILLE.

ROME, *January* 17*th*, 1746.

I return you and your worthy Community my hearty thanks for your good wishes in the new year contained in your letter of the 6th Decemr, and for your Prayers for me and my Family, to the continuation of which, especially upon this important occasion, I recommend Ourselves, And you may be all of you well assured that upon the success of the two Princes my Childrens present

* Ladyship's.

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endeavours for my Restoration, I shall be glad of occasions when I can contribute to your real advantage, and give you marks of my favor and protection, and you of my particular regard and consideration.

(Signed) JAMES *R.*

The following letter of encouragement was written to Prince Charlie, while he was still in Scotland, and less than six weeks after his glorious victory at Falkirk. It is endorsed "to Royal H^{s} y^{e} Prince of Wales the 8th of March, 1746."

ABBESS MANDEVILLE TO PRINCE CHARLIE.

SIR,

Permit my having the honour to present your Royal Highness mine and familys most profound dutiful Respects and affectionate loyalty as all that regards your Royal person has ever been infinitely dear to myself [and] poor little flock I beg laeve [*sic*] to Congratulate your Royal Highness on the wonderful happy success which God is pleased to give your armes in your truly glorious and magnanimous interprize the complete victorys your Royal Highness has gained in several battles especially at falkerke [Falkirk] put us all in to extasys of joy and thanksgiveing to the Almighty who has so visibly protected your Royal person and Loyal subjects; Sweet jesus Bless preserve and prosper our Dear Christian Hero to the end you may Subdue all your enemies, and hasten on that thrice happy day of his sacred Majesty and Royal familys Restoration for which end our prayers are dayly redoubled with all the ardor of our souls particularly hers that has the honour to be with most profound Dutifull Respect

Sir,
Your Royal Highnesses
Most Dutiful Loyal Subject,
And obedient humble servant,
MARY MAGDALEN MANDEVILLE.

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The next letter which we give was addressed to George Kelly, Prince Charles's Secretary, as we learn from the endorsement, "Y^s to M^r Kelly, our Prince's Secretary, y^e 22d of june 1747." He was an Irish Protestant Jacobite, a B.A. of Trinity College, Dublin, and a parson, but, to his credit be it said, a staunch non-juror. He threw himself heart and soul into the cause of the Stuarts, and in the year 1722 was arrested and sent to the Tower about the same time as Bishop Atterbury (to whom he acted as confidential secretary), the Duke of Norfolk, Captain Denis O'Kelly and others, for complicity in a plot to restore the exiled Royal Family Kelly was seized at his lodgings in Bury Street, London, by three agents of the Government, to whom he delivered up his sword and papers, which they left in a window recess, while they proceeded to search the house, upon which Kelly, seizing his opportunity, snatched up his sword again and with a lighted candle in one hand, set fire to the incriminating papers, while, with his sword in the other, he threatened to run through the first man that should dare to interfere. When he had completed his important work, he surrendered himself again, and was sentenced to be imprisoned at the pleasure of George I, and his successors, death being the penalty for any attempt to escape. For thirteen years he remained a captive in the Tower, whence he at last succeeded in escaping in the following manner. For some time, it seems, as his health had suffered much from his long imprisonment, he had been accorded permission to drive out pretty often to any place

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within ten miles of London, but always in the custody of some government or prison official. Now on the evening of the "5th November," 1736, on his return from a drive to Epsom, he was set down inside the "Traitor's Gate" of the Tower (Kelly was no traitor), when the warder took leave of him, suspecting no possibility of escape. Kelly, however, instead of going to his quarters for the night, succeeded in slipping off to the Sallyport Stairs, leading to the Mint, and, meeting the coach which he had quitted at the Traitor's Gate, he succeeded in passing out of the Tower unrecognized between 7 and 8 o'clock at night, when it was quite dark. It would seem that he was aided in effecting his escape by a certain Rev. Myles Macdonnell, a Catholic priest, and a near relative of his, who in a letter from St. Germains, May 4, 1747, to James III at Rome, alludes to Kelly as "not only my very near kinsman, but a person for whom I exposed my life, to release him out of the Tower of London, and for whose sake I am actually in exile." A reward of £300 was offered for the arrest of Kelly, who took the first convenient opportunity after his escape to write to George II in defence of the step he had taken, thanking the king at the same time for the attention shown him when in gaol. From London he made his way to Thanet in Kent, where he succeeded in inducing two fishermen to carry him across to France. On being landed in Calais he handed them five guineas, saying, "If anyone enquires for George Kelly you may say he is safely landed in France." It was only after their return to England that they

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heard the proclamation of a reward for Kelly's arrest read out one day in an alehouse, and thus learned too late what a valuable prize they had let slip through their hands. In the early part of the year 1745, he went on a secret political mission to Scotland on behalf of Prince Charles, and later on in the same year accompanied the Prince in his memorable expedition to that country, being, as we have seen, one of the famous "seven men of Moidart." On the return of Charles to the Continent, Kelly acted for several years as his secretary, in which capacity he became an object of envy and jealousy to some of the Prince's Scottish followers, being accused of being too partial to his Irish fellow-countrymen; indeed, if we are to believe the statement of the Scotch Lord Strathallan, Kelly "never was a friend to any Scotsman." Influence was brought to bear against him at the court of King James III at Rome, and finally through the exertions of Keith, Earl Marischal, he had to resign his office, though he continued to remain on friendly terms with the Prince. We shall see in the following letter what a high opinion the Abbess of Ypres had of Kelly's loyalty to the Stuart cause.

ABBESS MANDEVILLE TO PRINCE CHARLES'S SECRETARY, 22 JUNE, 1747.

S^r^

Y^r^ Estim'd valuable fav^r^ of 12 last jan^r^ should have been gratefully acknowledg'd in due time by me, but the just and truly inexpressible affliction I was in together with my little flock for the disappointment of our D^r^ [Dear] Royal Prince, did not permit me to importune

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you or renew yr just affliction by the melancholly lines which I shou'd have writt had I then taken pen in hand, the inscrutable judgements of God are to be ador'd and not penetrated, our comfort is that his precious life escap'd from them bloody hounds* who sought his destruction, the Same Omnipotent hand who has wrought such prodigies in his Dr Royal Person will quickly compleat this great work by a speedy restoration our hopes are doubly animated by the various and extraordinary crosses and afflictions which his R : H : has suffer'd, all which we regard with the eyes of faith as an infallible and happy presage to a speedy and compleat conquest, for 'tis by the Cross our Great christian Hero must conquer, in conformity to his great King and Captain Jesus Christ, his R : H : has had a plentiful Share of the Cross, which he bore with an heroick patience, and magnanimity of soul, there only remains now the victory, which I hope is nearer att hand than People immagine, our daily prayers, sighs and tears are offer'd with all the energie of our souls for this great end, O Sweet Jesus avert yr wrath from our poor unhappy and afflicted nations, oppress'd by the tyrranical yoake of usurpers, and restore our Saintly Monarch the Far [Father] of his People, with our Royal Princes, our unhappy nations by their crimes and disloyalty have render'd themselves unworthy of such glorious Souveraigns, but the measure of their iniquity is now compleated, and I hope God is touch'd with pity for 'em and that their conversion is att hand, I console my self with the Strong hopes and comfortable assurance that our King will be restor'd much sooner than is imagin'd, I beg Sr you'll have the goodness to present my self and poor Little flock att his Royal H :'s feet, with the assurance of our most affectionate Homage and Loyal dutie, we humbly beg leive to Kiss in Spirit on our Knees that glorious hand by which God has wrought such wonders, may that same hand compleat the Speedy confusion and

* i.e., "Blood hounds." The good Abbess's language is not so bad as it sounds.

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utter destruction of all his enemies, dare I presume to present his R: Highness a small trifle of nunns work, a sword-string and some other little toys, a poor mark indeed of our dutie and as far inferiour to his merit as tis to the extensive goodwill of our loyal hearts, but his R: H: knows how to distinguish the good hearts of his humble handmaids, and his great soul will not disdain this poor little mite, assuring him that he has not in the whole world more faithful, affectiont and loyal subjects than his poor Irish Dames of Ipres.

She then goes on to present her respects to Prince Charles's brother, Prince Henry, soon to be known as Cardinal Duke of York, and alludes to a visit which the latter had paid to the convent of the Irish Dames. We have no other record of this visit, but we think it must have taken place most probably in the winter of the eventful years '45-46, when Prince Henry spent six months at the Flemish coast, waiting in suspense for the setting-out of a French expedition for England which was destined never to sail. He had left Rome secretly on August 29, 1745, and had hastened north to the assistance of Prince Charlie. On his arrival in France he went to pay his respects to Louis XV at Versailles, and was appointed nominal commander of the French forces collected at Dunkirk and other parts with the object of creating a diversion in favour of Prince Charlie then in the midst of his successful career in Scotland. But, as we have said, the proposed expedition never came off, and it has been suggested that the Duke of Richelieu, under whom Prince Henry was to have held a command, was bribed by the British Government to procrastinate. Certain

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it is that Richelieu displayed no enthusiasm for Prince Henry and his cause, and openly sneered at his piety. "You may, perhaps, gain the kingdom of Heaven by your prayers," remarked Richelieu one day to the future Cardinal, who, by attending Mass, had kept a Council of War waiting, "but never the kingdom of Great Britain!"* In truth the young Prince was already learning to prefer the kingdom of Heaven to that of Great Britain. In April, 1746, only a few weeks after he had attained his majority, the Stuart cause received its death-blow by the disastrous defeat of Prince Charles at Culloden. When the fatal news was brought to Prince Henry, it found him upon his knees in church. He received it with calm and resignation, for already, disheartened and disillusioned, he had resolved to fight for an eternal kingdom, leaving the pursuit of an earthly crown to his more ambitious and worldly-minded brother. May it not have been his visit to the convent of the Irish Dames and the examples of self-renunciation that he witnessed there which inspired him with this resolution, or at least encouraged him in carrying it out?

I humbly beg His Royal Highness the Duke of York will please to accept the assurance of our most affectionᵗ dutie and profound Respects, we shall never forgett his wonderful affability and gracious condescendance in permitting his humble handmaids the comfort of Kissing his hand twice, when we had the honʳ and happiness of enjoying his agreeable Presence in our poor little cottage, which he vouchsaf'd to Enter, and heard mass twice in

* Vaughan.

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our little Chapel, we were all so transported with joy that we were not capable of observing a just or due decorum with regard to his R: H:, which I'm sure he easily excus'd, as he Knew the affection[t] loyalty of his Irish nunns, loyalty is realy hereditary in a most peculiar manner to our poor afflicted nation, 'tis manifest in an extroardinary [*sic*] [degree] in y[r] Deserving Person which renders you an hon[r] to our Country, the valuable Character you bear from all hands, is I assure you S[r] as [*sic*] subject of sensible joy and satisfaction to me and mine tho' I have not the hon[r] of y[r] acquaintance, I have that of telling you att present my real and sincere sentiments sans compliment, I am truly glad you have the hon[r] and happiness of being so near our D[r] [Dear] Prince's Person, if you'll judge proper to fav[r] me with a line from y[r] obliging hands in order to give me an acc[t] of his R: H:'s health, twill prove a Singular Comfort to me and each of my Comunity, who all join me in assuring our worthy Compatriot of our Respectful Compliments, and that I am with Sincere estime and Regard

S[r]

y[r] most oblig'd humble serv[t]

[Unsigned].

[P.S.]—I beg you'll have the goodness to make my kind compliments acceptable to Coll: [Colonel] O'Brien and Mr. Constable.

But the good nuns were not satisfied with offering prayers. They wished to make a little present to Prince Charlie, and what more suitable gift could they offer the martial young Prince than one which would remind him of his military adventures in the past and be a good omen for the future; and so they set to work to make "a poor, insignificant trifle of nunns work," which they forwarded with the following letter endorsed, "with the soord string."

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ABBESS MANDEVILLE TO PRINCE CHARLIE.

j: M: B: *

SIR,

As your Great and Magnanimous Soul is truly grounded in a most profound humility j Confide this glorious vertue will plead my pardon for troubling your Royal Highness with the reiterated assurance of mine and Communitys most profound dutiful Respects, as also my great presumption in beging leive to have this honor of presenting your Royal Highness a poor insignificant trifle of nunns work, which is as far inferiour to our affectionate good will as tis unworthy your acceptance, but being Convinced of your incomparable affability, j dare assure my self that your Royal Highness will graciously pardon the liberty, j take, and not disdain to Regard the most loyal heart of the faithfulests of subjects who (after God) has no other object So near att heart as our Saintly Monarch and his glorious offspring, the thrice happy days of your Restoration is drawing near, the past prodigies and inconceivable afflictions and Crosses which your Royal Highness has suffered is a much more happy and secure presage to your future glory (both temporal and eternal) than if all your enemies were dead att your feet, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence so do's the kingdom of Christ upon earth which must be conquered by the Cross, tis for this reason our Divine Saviour has given you so plentiful a share of his Cross by which you are to crush the head of the infernal Goliath and Deliver your 3 afflicted nations from the tyrranical slavery of usurpers, tis for this glorious end he has chosen you as a 2d David and given you so great a soul according to his own heart, the same omnipotent God who has begun this great work will finish it by your means in spite of all the opposistion [*sic*] of men and Devils, sweet jesus conserve you and confound all your enemies which are and shall ever be the daily ardent prayers off all your humble

*Jesus, Mary, Benedict.

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handmaids and loyal subjects here, especially of her who has the honour and happiness to be with the profoundest Respect and Loyal Dutie

Sir,

Your Royal Highnesses most faithful
Subject and obedient humble servant,

MARY MAGDALEN MANDEVILLE,
Abbess unworthy.

To his Royal Highness
Ye Prince of wales in yeare 1747.

On another occasion the Abbess sends the Prince a "Patrick's Cross" for the feast of the Apostle of Ireland, with the following letter:—

SIR,

j most humbly [beg] leive to present your Royal Highness mine and Communitys most Respectful dutiful best wishes of a thrice happy feast on that of our Glorious Apostle Saint Patrick presuming of your great goodness and wonderful affability j take the liberty to beg your Royal Highness will graciously please to honor us with your acceptance of a Cross mead [made] after the jrish fashion beseeching the Almighty to Crown all your Crosses by a Speedy happy Restoration in this world and a Glorious etternety in the next for which our dayly ardent prayers are offerd perticularly hers who has the honor and happiness to be with the profoundest Respect

Sir

Your Royal Highness

humblest of yr handmaids.

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ABBESS MANDEVILLE TO KING JAMES III.

(Endorsed " for y^e year 1748.")

j: M: B:

SIR,

Permit my having the honor of ending this year by renewing mine and communitys hommage to your Majesty perswading my Self you'l graciously accept them for the ensuing year which we have the honour to wish your Majesty and his Royal Highness the Cardinal Duke of York replenish'd with all spiritual and temporal Blessings we Strongly confide and will heartily pray that thiss new year may prove the happy one of your Majesty and Royal Familys Restoration sure the all Seeing eye of a Merciful just and omnipotent God will no longer Difer [defer] to look down with pitty on our poor blind and unhappy nations and now mak it his own work to Confound the vain prudence and pollicy of those who by want of zeale for Gods glory and the salvation of souls Refused to give their human help in so Glorious an enterprize,* God forgive them when we Reflect of the miracrous [miraculous] Restoration of Blessed St. edward and many other Monarchs of your Majestys Royal predecessors these wonderful disposisons of Devine providence keeps up our sincking spirits and makes us hope by God's infinet Mercy that our Deliverance is neere at hand; I dare affirm that amongst the many prayers offered for this effect none are more sincerely ardent then this the annual

* She probably alludes to the English Jacobites, who failed in the hour of need.

" Had English might stood by the right,
As they did vaunt full vain, Joe;
Or played the parts of Highland hearts,
The day was all our ain, Joe."

" It is said in the Chevalier de Johnstone's Memoirs that Prince Charles " was first invited into Great Britain, and then abandoned to his fate, by a great part of the English aristocracy."

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tribute my self and poor community presum to present your Majesty. . . .

Sir,

Your Majestys Most obedient humble servant and faithful Loyal subject

MARY MAGDALEN MANDEVILLE,
Abbess unworthy.

Ipres the 4th of Xr 1747.

The following, which is undated and unsigned, but apparently in same handwriting as last one, acknowledges some timely relief sent by the King :—

Sr

This acknowledyes yr very agreeable kind favr of 10th ult which inclos'd the Bill of an 100 Roman Scudis, which was duly accepted, 'twas truly a great and necessary relief to this poor Comunity in our present Distress of much late sickness, and our little rents being stop'd by the Queen of Hongry, we have just reason to bless the admirable Providence of God, who never fails relieving us *in tempore opportuno*, our gracious King being the means which God was pleas'd to make use off in procuring us this relief, his Divine Goodness was pleas'd to bless his Majesty's unparallell'd humility w'th Success in our favr, for if his Royal Person had not interfer'd in it, we shou'd n'ere have receiv'd the Pope's charity, when I behold his majesty thus to abuse his Royal Dignity to so low a pitch, as to vouchsafe (my King and Souveraign as he is) to be the bearer of my lettr, how ought I to sinck and blush for confusion, I that shou'd think myself truly happy cou'd I have the honr and comfort of kissing his feet with utmost sentiments of affectionr Respect, must confess on the perusal of yrs I was struck with admiration, astonishment, and no less edification, att his Majesty's most profound humility in not disdaining Personally to deliver a lettr from his poor vassal and humble subject,

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were I to say what my grateful heart dictates att pre[sent] it would prove displeasing to so humble a Monarch, shall only add *non est inventus similis illi Qui conservaret Legem excelsi*,* this Sentence is well adapt to His Majesty, who always has kept, and do's practice the Law of the Highest, viz., the law of humility, charity, Benignity, etc., which the King of Kings came on Earth to teach and practice, and which is so hard and sublime a lesson, that there are but few that know how to practice it, because the wisdom of the Gospel is follie in the eyes of the world, therefore our King may justly be stil'd the Solomon of our Present age, and a 2nd David as I'm convinc'd he is a man according to God's own heart, for without a peculiar Share of God's Spirit, and an extraordinary degree of his wisdom 'twould be impossible for his Royal Person to join such profound humility and so much majesty, with such a beautiful grace, be pleased to lett his majesty know how grateful I and mine are for the heaps of unmerited favrs we do frequently receive from his bountiful Royal hands the honr of his inestimable kind and most Paternal lettr was an inexpressible comfort to me and poor Comunity who all Kissed his Royal Sign on our Knees with true affectiont Respect since we can't have the honr of Kissing his Royal hand. . . .

We have already alluded to the Duke of York's decision to quit the world and embrace the ecclesiastical state. The young Duke, as we have seen, had arrived in Paris from Rome, shortly after Prince Charlie's victory at Preston Pans, and was preparing to set out to his assistance with an auxiliary expedition, when news of the reverse at Culloden arrived. Instead, therefore, of setting out himself, he assisted in fitting out the two French vessels which were despatched

* "There was not found the like to him . . . . who kept the law of the most High,"—words spoken of Abraham. Eccl. xliv.

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to Scotland and succeeded in rescuing Prince Charlie, who landed safely in France, and, as a result of his heroic adventures, became for a time the lion of the French court and French society.

But the young Duke of York was of a more serious turn of mind, and his brother's defeat at Culloden seemed to open his eyes to the vanity of human ambition and the folly of devoting all his energies to the attainment of a restoration, which now seemed farther off than ever. The result was that he decided to leave the world and prepare for the priesthood, with which end in view he left Paris secretly and arrived in Rome, May 25, 1747. On June 30 he received the tonsure from the Pope himself in the presence of his father and the Stuart Court, and four days later it was announced that his Royal Highness, who was now only twenty-two years of age, had been made Cardinal-Deacon.

The King, his father, acquiesced in a truly Christian manner in the young Duke's decision, and wrote to inform Prince Charlie, his "dearest Carluccio," as he addresses him, of the important step his brother had taken, and he added :—

> I am fully convinced of the sincerity and solidity of his vocation; I should think it a resisting of the will of God, and acting directly against my conscience, if I should pretend to constrain him in a matter which so nearly concerns him. The maxims I have bred you up in, and have always followed, of not constraining others in matters of religion, did not a little help to determine me on the present occasion, since it would be a monstrous proposition that a king should be a father to his people, and a tyrant to his children.

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But Charles Edward saw the matter in another and more worldly light. He considered that the association of his family with the Roman purple would alienate still more his prospective Protestant subjects, and his chagrin was increased, when he was informed that the young Duke, following his own wishes and those of the Pope, was not going to be content with being merely a Cardinal, but had decided on taking Holy Orders, thus precluding all hope of his having any heirs.

His Royal Highness was ordained priest on September 1, 1748, and four days later said his first Mass in his father's private chapel, the King and several members of the Stuart Court receiving Holy Communion from the young Duke's hands. Twelve days later he was created Cardinal-Priest by Pope Benedict XIV.

The important step thus taken by the Duke of York was so distasteful to his elder brother, Prince Charlie, that the latter ceased to have any communication with him, and the estrangement thus unhappily begun between the two brothers, hitherto on such affectionate terms, was to last for many long years owing to the relentless, unforgiving spirit of the elder brother. On the other hand, it caused equal satisfaction to the Hanoverian usurpers, who were duly informed of it by Sir Horace Mann, their political agent and spy in Italy :—

The Pretender's second son is to be made a Cardinal [he writes exultingly to Horace Walpole, immediately upon the news becoming known]. He pretends to wear

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ermine on his *Cappa* as a sign of Royalty, and consequently to take place of Cardinal Ruffo and all the other Cardinals, by whom he insists on being visited. All this and much more has alarmed their Eminences. Cardinal Ruffo went to Castle Gandolfo to expostulate with the Pope upon it . . . The future young Cardinal's family is settled; he is to have a Monsignore Leigh for a *Maestro di Camera*, a very noble Irishman born at Cadiz of a little merchant there; two Sicilian Marquises for his Major-Domo and Cup-bearer. . . .

And in the following year, on the Duke's decision to be a priest becoming known, Mann writes again :—

The Cardinal D'Orco [i.e., of York] . . . has determined to take Priest's Orders, which the Pope has consented to do with reluctance; fearing, I suppose, that there may be occasion for his getting heirs to the crown of England. He has alraedy begun the progress of Sub-Deacon's Orders, and is to be a complete Priest the first of September, and is to say his first Mass, the 8th in his own chapel, being the Virgin's Birthday.

And again, a few days before the ordination, he writes :—

The Cardinal D'Orck advances apace in the Priesthood. He has received all the inferior Orders, and is to be a complete Priest in a few days. His brother is furious, and declares he will never see him. . . . The Cardinal is all Devotion. He fasts and prays as much as his mother used to do, and, they say, has ruined his constitution already.

And finally, many years later, the same Sir Horace Mann remarks with evident satisfaction that the Duke of York " by putting on the Cowle has done more to

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extinguish his party than could have been effected by putting to death many thousands of their deluded followers."*

But the pious nuns of Ypres took another view of the matter as we learn from the following letter written to the Duke of York, apparently on the occasion of his elevation to the priesthood.

ABBESS MANDEVILLE TO PRINCE HENRY, CARDINAL DUKE OF YORK, 13th October, 1748.

j. M. B.

SIR,

As your Royal Highness was graciously pleased to permit me the honor of presenting you mine and poor Communitys Dutiful Respect on your Saintly Choyce j presum att present having the honor an happiness of congratulating your Royal eminence for having crowned your great and glorious undertaking; by which you Crush all worldly pollicy and human prudence, following the Dictates of the Divine Spirit who certainly has been the author and conductor of your generous Resolutions i am fully persuayded his Majestys perfect conformity to the will of God in consenting to so great a Sacrifice will Draw innumerable Blessings on his Sacred Majesty and Royal Family followed by a speedy Restoration to his three kingdoms, where your Royal eminence will have the comfort and happiness to Crown his most Sacred Majesty and Govern Gods Church to his honour and glory in our three nations, for which our ardent prayers are and shal be dayly offer'd humbly beging your Benediction and Royal protection for myself and poor little flock in an affair where the Glory of God and temporal advantage of your humble handmaid seems to be deeply engaged and which j presume to expose to your secretary not

* Letters of Sir Horace Mann.

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daring to trouble your Royal Highness with so tedious a narration hoping you'll have the goodness to pardon her who has the honour and happiness of being with profound Dutiful Respect and inexpressible veneration

Sir,

Your Royal Highnesses faithful subject
and most obedient humble servant,

MARY MAGDALEN MANDEVILLE,
Abbess unworthy.

Ipres the 13 8br 1748.

ABBESS MANDEVILLE TO KING JAMES III, 7th December, 1750.

j. M. B.

SIR,

My apprehension of proving importune to your majesty hindered me from having the honor of complying with my Dutie in expressing the Deep Sense of gratitude j feel and no less Confusion to find my self and poor Community so Highly honor'd by your Sacred Majesty's Repeated goodness and Fatherly protection in our favor at the Court of Rome and France a grace far above all we coud possibly merit or presume to expect but what may not we hope for from a Monarch whose Charity is inexhaustible and whose profound humility Renders him more glorious in his Banishment than any other Monarch on his Throne; j am Confounded when j behold my King and master not disdain to act personally for his poor humble but turly [*sic*] Loyal Subjects.

She concludes by asking His Majesty to accept

our tribute of Communions and prayers for the insuing year which attended with inumerable Blessings a glorious and speedy Restoration we have the honor to wish your Majesty and his Royal eminence our Dear Cardinal Duke

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as to our Dear Christian Hero the Prince of Wales tho we cant know where he is we have the Comfort of being assur'd by several hands that his Royal Highness is in perfect health and high Spirits sweet jesus preserve him and Grant he may soon appear glorious and victorious in Subduing all your majesty's enemies for which end we shal never cease importuning Heaven. . . .

Ipres the 7th of X^br^ 1750.

In the reply (dated January 5, 1751), of the King's secretary to the above letter he says he is glad to hear of Prince Charles being in good health, and would like to know how the nuns obtained the good news. His surprise may be easily understood, as Charles's movements after his return from Scotland and his expulsion from France in 1748 were for a considerable time a mystery. He is believed to have returned incognito to the neighbourhood of Paris, and even to have ventured to London in 1750, and 1752, in the hope of furthering his cause. But his friends and foes alike were in utter perplexity as to his whereabouts. He had ceased all communication with his younger brother the Cardinal, and wrote only by fits and starts to his poor old father the King, who was sometimes "in actual doubt as to whether his truant Carluccio were dead or alive." So great was the old man's anxiety that he requested his son the Cardinal Duke to approach Cardinal Albani, the political opponent of the Stuarts, on the subject, thinking that the latter might have some information of the missing Prince's whereabouts from a hostile source. Albani at once communicated with Sir Horace Mann, the Hanoverian agent in Italy,

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who, in a despatch home of August 28, 1750, writes that the Cardinal Duke owned to Albani

that the Pretender his father now and then received a letter from him [Prince Charlie], sometimes by one and sometimes by another, with news of his health only, but that those letters were never dated nor any mention made of the place whence they came; adding that the Father was quite in despair. Cardinal Albani . . . concludes by saying that if his father and the Pope (who is equally curious to be informed of him) cannot succeed, it is no wonder that other people cannot discover where he is . . .*

Writing for the year 1755, the Abbess asks permission to

offer our penetrated Loyal hearts to your Majesty the Dearest object (next to God) of our fidelity and affection . . . and tho God smees [seems] hitherto not to regard our ardent prayers for your Sacred Majestys Restoration we never will dispond in the least . . . tis then and only then that your three kingdoms will be truly happy; for they never can have any real comfort till they enjoy their Lawfull Souveraign and best of monarchs; we [hope] confidently that this new year will prove the propitious time for so Great and joyful a Blessing; assuring your Majesty that none can have more sincere nor ardent wishes in that regard than your own little community of jpres and we shall by God's grace bigin this year with Redoubling our supplications to Heaven for the speedy obtaining that and all other favors capable to render our Dear monarch and their Royal Highnesses truly great and Glorious in this world and the next.

Sir,

Your Majesty's, etc.,

MARY MAGDALEN MANDEVILLE,
Abbess unworthy.

Ipres the 7th X^br^ 1754.

* Earl Stanhope, *Decline of the Last Stuarts*, quot. by Vaughan.

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And again, writing for the New Year, 1756, she remarks :—

Tis a bitter affliction to me and mine that our prayers hitherto have proved so fruitless, [but they will perservere in prayer ; and she continues] permit me and community the honour of thanking your majesty for your inestimable favor in granting us your Royal picture ; which we all Languish to see and we confide that some of us will have the comfort to see the Dear glorious happy originall in your way to London ; sweet Jesus grant this happy sight to the faithfulest of your handmaids. . . .

Four years later the eyes of the faithful Abbess were closed in death without having had the consolation of beholding the " happy sight " for which she had longed and prayed so much.

And here we may remark that loyalty to the Stuarts was not confined to the community of Ypres, but was shared in by the other convents, as may be seen by the following extracts from a chatty letter written by Dame Xaveria Pearse, an Irish nun of the Dunkirk house, to her aunt, Dame Bridget Creagh of Ypres, at that time a venerable nun of seventy-eight years of age.

MADAME,

MADAME CREAGH RELIGIEUSE
AUX Dmes BENEDICTINES IRLANDAISES
A IPRES.

Rd Mor JUBILARIAN,

[Having given a short account of the first English convents in the Low Countries, the writer proceeds to ask for information about the foundation of Ypres.]

And now Dr Aunt 'must ask a few questions, was yr

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first esstablishment at Ipres, and in wt year, yu once told me, but as I cant find yr letter, have forgott, who was yr first Abbess for as I take it, you came from us, and ye time of yr establishment is mark'd 1682* wch must be a mistake, I believe yt in 82 D. Elizabeth Pulton was sent from Dunkirk to assist yr beginning house, you'l know by your records. . . .

We hear our Dr King† is in a languishing state of health, nay some said dead but that cant Credit, he may truly be stil'd a glorious Conf[essor] and Mart. [yr]. his Son the Cardinal gives great edification both as to manners and Charity to the poor, I'me told there's hopes of a Restoration of our banish'd Friends, may yu live to see it. . . .

Then follows some playful Irish humour :—

I shall [pledge] yr health on 17th and doubt not yr pledging me, for after perusing this long epist. you'l stand in need of some refreshment, my respects to your worthy Conf[essor] and assure each of my being reciprocally their affect Sister beging their prayers on ye 26 doubting not of yrs. for

Dr Aunt,

Yr affect Niece humble Servant to command,

M. X. PEARCE.

July ye 14 1763.

[Postscript]. . . . One question more and I'le have done, you'l say tis high time did you ere peruse the journal of our Princ's‡ adventures from the battle of Culloden to his banishment out of france, if not can lend it with leave from ye owner how truly was verify'd in him what the Royal

* The year of its establishment as an Irish house, several of the first nuns coming from Dunkirk to assist therein.

† "Our dear King," i.e., James III.

‡ Prince Charlie.

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Prophet says in his 90th Psalm which we daily say at Complin—Qui habitat,* etc.

I advance daily towards my wish'd for journey's end wishing I were as prepared for y^e^ next life as I'me willing to quit this.

Good night dear Aunt.

In another letter the same chatty correspondent writes :—

D^r^ AUNT,

Conformable to promise on y^e^ 10th I take pen in hand to wish y^r^ d^r^ self a happy feast on 17th, with assurance all on y^t^ day shall be for y^r^ intention, attend'd with affection, my Hono^rd^ Lady [Abbess] joins me, and w^th^ all y^ts^ kind bids me add she'le give her Nuns a glass of wine on 17th to drink y^r^ health. . . .

The "17th" was, perhaps, Dame Creagh's profession day, which, however, is given as the 7th (July) in the List of Professed, but the use of different styles would explain the discrepancy.

* "He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Heaven."—Ps. xc.

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CHAPTER IV

ABBESS DALTON'S LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE ON DEATH OF KING JAMES III—END OF THE YPRES LETTERS —DEATH OF PRINCE CHARLIE

Cá b-fuil tú, a Séarlaif? Ná déan-fe aon mhaill!
Díbir tar chéun-mhuir go h-earcaíd na Gaill,
Bain fuaim ar gaé bréan-fhoc, a'r féid fuar na hadhairce;
Suas leis na ceóltaíb, go módhmhar meadhrach
Ag triall cum do fóirce-fa, a Síle ní Gadhra!

Where art thou, Charles! ah, linger no more,
One flash of thy sword—and our foes shall retire;
A clang of thy trumpet once heard on our shore,—
And we'll start to thy wedding with Sheela na Guire.*

ABBESS MANDEVILLE was succeeded by Abbess Dalton in the year 1760, the year which saw the Hanoverian family firmly secured on the throne of England by the accession of George III. But the traditional loyalty of the Irish Dames to the exiled Royal Family continued to flourish under the new Abbess, at least until the death of James III, six years later, when regular correspondence with the Stuarts seems to have come to an end.

James had been a great sufferer for several years before his death; so much so that, as far back as the year 1756, Pope Benedict granted him a dispensation from fasting before Communion.

The Pope has lately granted a privilege to the Pre-

* More correctly, Sheela ni Gara, or O'Gara—a fictitious name for Ireland.

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tender of an uncommon nature in the Roman Church though very trifling in itself,—to drink either broth or chocolate before he communicates on account of his habitual indisposition of stomach, which prevents him from fasting so long as the Church prescribes before that ceremony [*sic*]. The Pope has wrote what is called a Decretal Letter on this subject, in which among other examples he quotes that of Pope Julius III, who granted the same privilege to Charles the Fifth after his abdication.*

On December 27, 1763, the King's secretary, Andrew Lumisden, writes to the Abbess that he has no good news to tell of his Majesty, who is "almost constantly in bed" by doctor's orders; while at the beginning of 1765 he writes that he could not even present the Abbess's letter to H.M. the King as the latter cannot attend to any business. In December of the same year James took to his bed for the last time, and an altar was erected in his apartment at his own request, where daily Mass was said by his son, the Cardinal Duke, or by one of the chaplains; but it was the Irish Franciscan Fathers of St. Isidore's, Rome, who had the honour and privilege of attending him in his last illness, and of administering the last rites of the Church. On Christmas Day he received Viaticum from the hands of one of the Fathers, and expired before midnight on January 1, 1766. On the 14th of the same month his secretary, Lumisden, breaks the news to the nuns of Ypres: "With a heart overwhelmed with affliction I'm forced to tell you that his most sacred Majesty my royal master died the 1st instant at nine and a-quarter at night."

* State Papers, Tuscany.

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Thus passed away, in the 78th year of his age, King James III of England, a constant protector and benefactor of the Irish Dames of Ypres. Born in his ancestral Palace of St. James, in the year 1688, the year of his father's explusion by the English revolutionists, heir-apparent to the English throne from his birth, and Prince of Wales by creation of his father, his title to the crown of Great Britain was indefeasible, though he spent his long *de jure* reign in exile. His reign must be considered the longest in English history, as he died in the 65th year of his kingship, whereas the late Queen Victoria, to whom that distinction is usually accorded, died in the 64th year of her reign. He seems to have been a profoundly religious Prince in spite of the prejudicial assertions of the Hanoverian writers, whose interest it was, by spreading false reports, to magnify his faults and blacken his character.

His mother, Queen Mary, writing to a nun of Chaillot, January 7, 1700, to thank her for prayers on the occasion of the First Communion of young Prince James, speaks of him thus :—

> Thank God that dear son appeared to me in very good dispositions ; I could not restrain my tears to see him make his First Communion, it seems to me that I offered him to God with all my heart, asking Him to let him live but to serve, honour, and love Him ; the child appears to me well resolved to that . . . *Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in eo.*

Queen Mary's trust in God and the young Prince was not in vain. He fulfilled in after life the good promise of his early childhood, and ever remained a

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staunch Catholic in spite of the strongest inducements to barter his religion for brilliant worldly prospects.

On the death of James II, the Queen, as Regent, issued a manifesto, setting forth the claims of her son, Prince James, to the English crown, in reply to which the Duke of Hamilton and the Scottish confederate Lords sent Lord Belhaven on a loyal mission to St. Germains. The noble Lord, on being admitted to an audience with the Queen, most strongly urged upon her the desirability of the young Prince's becoming a Protestant, promising her that if he did so there would be no difficulty in obtaining his recognition by Parliament as the King of England on the death of William. He even promised to proclaim him King at once, without waiting for William's death, on this one condition of his becoming a Protestant, but the Queen indignantly spurned the proposal, answering that she "would never be the means of persuading her son to barter his hopes of Heaven for a crown; neither could she believe that any reliance could be placed by others on the promises of a Prince who was willing to make such a sacrifice to his worldly interests."

The young King on attaining his majority endorsed these noble sentiments of his saintly mother, as may be seen from the manly letter written by him to Pope Clement XI, of which the following is a summary :—

JAMES III TO POPE CLEMENT XI

1706, *June 27.*

ST. GERMAINS.

Having attained the age at which our father directed by his will that we should become *sui juris* [? *nostri juris*]

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our first duty is to render to your Holiness the homage and filial obedience due to you. Though driven from both our country and our throne for sake of religion alone, and by the furious hatred of the heretics, we must trust that the greater wrong we suffer from men, the greater help our worldly affairs will receive from the Ruler of all things. But, whatever may happen therein, we are resolved that, with God's grace, no temptation of this world, and no desire to reign, shall ever make us wander from the right path of the Catholic faith, having been taught how infinitely the kingdom of heaven transcends all the kingdoms of this world. We earnestly desire your apostolic benediction.*

But, though firmly convinced that the Catholic Faith, for which his father James II had sacrificed three kingdoms, and rather than abandon which he himself refused the same three kingdoms, remaining an exile for conscience sake, was the one true faith to which all men were called, he was too good a Catholic not to tolerate the conscientious convictions of those who had not received the light and remained outside the Church in good faith. Prince James, like his father, was no bigot, and though he flatly refused to turn Protestant, even for the sake of the crowns of England, Ireland, and Scotland, he never tried to force his religion upon others. So far, indeed, did his tolerance extend that, with the exception of the convert Lord Middleton, his suite and household at Bar-le-Duc consisted almost entirely of Protestants, for whom he himself appointed the Protestant non-juror Lesley as chaplain. Hence the report was spread abroad that he himself had become a Protestant, but on December 30,

* From the Latin Entry Book I, p. 35. *Stuart Papers* Windsor), Vol. i. 205.

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1713, the Prince wrote to his mother to reassure her as to his fidelity to the Catholic religion.* Queen Mary translated the passage into French for the benefit of the nuns of Chaillot. The following is a re-translation :

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE KING, MY SON, WRITTEN BY HIM, TO ME, IN ENGLISH, THE 30TH OF DECEMBER, 1713.

I doubt not that the reports positive and circumstantial as they are, which are in circulation, about my having changed my religion, have reached you, but you know me too well to be alarmed ; and I can assure you, that with the grace of God, you will sooner see me dead than out of the Church.

In her letter to the Abbess of Chaillot enclosing the preceding extract, the Queen writes :—

I have been delighted to see these lines written by his hand, and am well persuaded that they are imprinted on his heart. I have written to this dear son, that I threw myself on my knees after I had read them, and thanked God with all my heart that through His mercy both were inspired with the same sentiments, he in wishing rather to die, and I in desiring rather to see him dead than out of the Church.

Prince James's liberal attitude towards Protestants, which seems to have amounted even to partiality, appears to have aroused some jealousies among his Catholic followers, for we find him defending his conduct thus in a letter of February 28, 1718, to Pre Gaillard, Queen Mary's confessor :—

They would force me to the same measures which were

* Haile.

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the source of my father's misfortunes. . . . As to the rest I know my duty, thank God, and it appears to me that I do it; *I am a Catholic, but I am a King; and subjects, of whatever religion they may be, have an equal right to be protected. I am a king; but, as the Pope himself told me, I am not an Apostle.** I am not bound to convert my people otherwise than by my example, nor to show apparent partiality to Catholics, which would only serve to injure them later. . . .

Manly and sensible words, which, if they had only been acted upon by his father, would have saved him from many misfortunes. King James had made the fatal mistake of trying to act the apostle, and convert others, before he had been fully converted himself.

It must be confessed, however, that the Catholics, at all events the Irish Catholics, had good reason to complain of the young King's favouritism, for James III showed himself almost as stupid and ungrateful in his conduct towards the ever-faithful Irish as his father had done before him, and even went so far as to dismiss from his councils these zealous and loyal followers, than whom none were more trustworthy or reliable in peace as in war.

Writing on April 16, 1718, Lord Stair, the Hanoverian minister at Paris, complains of the services rendered to the exiled King by the Irish General Dillon :—

One thing shocks me above all [he says] that Mr. Dillon, a Lieut.-General in the French service, dares take upon himself to act as the Pretender's minister here as openly

* In saying this the Pope alluded, perhaps, to the mistaken zeal of King James II.

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as he does. It seems to me that it would be well to send me an order to speak somewhat strongly on this point. . . *

But he had no need to protest, for next month he is able to inform the British Government that James himself has dismissed his faithful Irish servant, and replaced him by the Scottish Earl of Mar, who, it may be remarked, proved a traitor :—

As for Mr. Dillon [writes Stair] I have just heard from a very good source that the Pretender has ordered that henceforwards neither the Queen nor Mr. Dillon, nor any other person at St. Germains, are to meddle in his affairs. They are to be directed by Mylord Mar and the Council the Pretender has in England.

Three days later he writes :—

It is true that the Queen at St. Germains and all her Court, *the Irish and the Catholics* have orders to meddle no more with the Pretender's affairs. . . . The grief of this has perhaps contributed to that Princess's illness. She expected to die of a fever a few days past. She was a little better yesterday after being bled.

But the illness, whatever its cause, proved fatal. Queen Mary had expired almost before the ink of the above letter was dry.

As an example of the Catholic spirit with which Prince James was animated, we may mention that on the safe return of Prince Charlie from Scotland his father, in fulfilment of a vow, made a pilgrimage to Loretto, with his younger son, the Cardinal Duke, and

*Pub. Record Office, France, No. 347.

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offered there to our Lady, as Sir Horace Mann tells us, "a piece of armour with his eldest son's picture engraved upon it, and set with jewels." *

It is also interesting to note that in the year 1751,† he endowed the Church of Santa Maria in Campitelli in Rome, the titular church of his son, the Cardinal Duke, with a sum of money for the purpose of founding a confraternity and perpetual Mass for the conversion of England. Thither he often came with his younger son, the Cardinal, to pray, through the intercession of our Lady, for the return of England to the Faith; and to this day in the same church every Saturday, about eleven o'clock, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and a Low Mass, followed by Benediction, is offered up for the conversion of England in accordance with the terms of Prince James's foundation.

On the death of James III, Abbess Dalton wrote the following letter to his son, Prince Charlie, to condole with him and salute him as *de jure* successor to the throne of England, and at the same time to recommend the Irish Dames to his protection :—

ABBESS DALTON TO PRINCE CHARLES.

I humbly Beg Your Majesty will Graciously please to permit me the honnour of assuring you that none of Your Subjects can present you more Respectful and filial Compliments of Condolence for the loss of our most Honourable and most regretted of Sovereign[s] than my Self and Community who have and shall acquit our Selves of

* State Papers, Tuscany.

† See Kelly, *Life of Cardinal York*; but Father Chandlery (in his *Pilgrim Walks in Rome*) assigns the foundation to the year 1766, which was the year of James's death.

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every duty for the repose of his Soul. I humbly Beg Your Majesty will vouchsafe to admit us at your Sacred feet with the most Respectfull duty hommage and submission our hearts and souls are capable off, towards our most Respected honoured and Beloved of Sovereigns and Masters after God, whose place you hold to us, Beseeching Your great goodness to accept the tribute of our Loyal hearts in our const[ant] Prayers at the throne of Mercy for the conservation and prolongation of your precious life conserv'd by miracles that we may have the happiness of your Majesties Reign during a long series of happy years entreating you will please to honour with your Royal favr and Protection this Your Majesties first Royal Abbey of Irish Benedictin Nunns of Dublin compos'd of your Loyal and devoted Subjects and Particularly her who has the honnour to Be with the most ardent Loyalty and profound submission and Respectful Duty,

Sir,

Your Majesties

Most Obedt humble Servt and

Dutyfull Loyall subject,

MARY BERNARD DALTON,

Abbess of the Irish Benedict[ines].

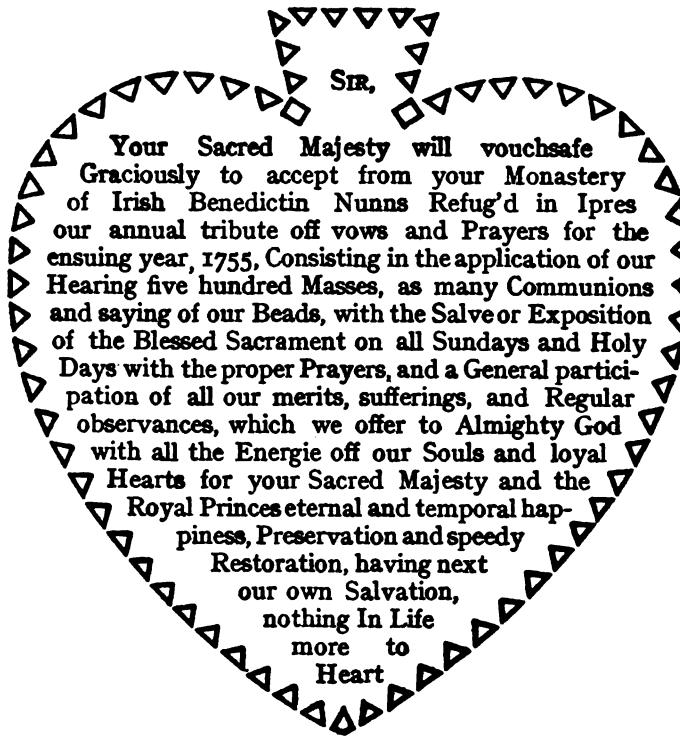
IPRES, *febr* 28, 1766,
to King Charles 3rd
on King james 3d's
death.

The Abbess also wrote a letter of condolence to James's younger son, the Cardinal Duke of York, and received replies from him and his brother Prince Charlie, which we shall give further on.

And as if these expressions of loyalty were not sufficient, it had been the custom of the Irish Dames for several years to send a written statement of the prayers

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and suffrages offered for their Majesties, inscribed on a paper in the form of a heart, with ornamental fringe, a copy of which exists among the Abbess's letters, as follows :—



On the back of the heart is a statement to the effect that a similar one was sent off to the Royal Family each year from 1761 to 1766 (the year of King James III's death), and Abbess Dalton adds the following note: "1st of Janr, 1766, King James ye 3d dyed, I condold,

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by letr with both his sons and for ano 1767 only wrote to the secretary to pay my duty on New Year to the King [Charles III] and Duke."

Thus does the series of letters from the Abbesses of Ypres to the exiled Kings come abruptly to an end. The Irish Dames of Ypres had been eminently loyal and devoted to the cause of the fallen Stuarts as long as that cause was worthily and legitimately represented, but it would seem that they decided not to identify themselves any further with Prince Charles Edward. And they acted wisely. His reputation had become tarnished, he was disowned by the Holy See, and it would seem, moreover, although the fact may not have been generally known, that, yielding to "low ambition and the pride of kings," he had already bartered his Faith for the crown of England, a contemptible step, especially unworthy of one whose father and grandfather had sacrificed three crowns rather than abandon the Catholic Faith.

Among the Stuart Papers at Windsor there is a declaration drawn up by another hand in the name of Charles Edward, probably about the year 1757, in which it is distinctly stated that in 1750 he visited London and there in due form abjured "Popery" and reconciled himself to the Church of England—evidently with a view to recovering the crown. There is also preserved a memorandum or heading in his own handwriting as follows: "My reasons for declaring myself a Protestant at ye age of 30ty my being at London ye year 50ty," etc. His "reasons" have not been preserved, but can easily be guessed. By this

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act of apostasy he forfeited all claim to the crown of Ireland and to the loyalty of the Irish people, for it is not likely that our intensely Catholic people would have welcomed a wretched renegade as King; and the Irish Dames, whether they were aware of the facts or not, were well advised in ceasing all correspondence with Prince Charlie.

It was not till after the death of James (1766) that the Pope ceased to espouse the cause of the Stuarts. James was King *de jure*, if not *de facto*, and as long as there seemed reasonable hopes of his asserting his claim the Popes defended his just and righteous cause. But James was now dead; Culloden had been fought and lost twenty years before; and the Stuart cause seemed more than ever hopeless. To encourage it would not have been for the public good; it would, in fact, have been merely encouraging the selfish and senseless ambition of the gallant but dissipated young Chevalier who now represented the royal House of Stuart. It would, moreover, have been affording a further pretext to the English Government for persevering in its tyrannical attitude towards the unfortunate Catholics of the British Isles. Under these circumstances the Court of Rome, with its characteristic tact and good sense, refused to recognize the claim of Prince Charles to the title of King of England. And in doing so it did not pronounce on the merits of the question. It did not thereby decide that King George was the legitimate King of England; its decision was merely tantamount to saying that the new Government had become firmly established, that the people of

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England did not desire a change, and that it was the tacit desire of the Holy Father, the Father of Christendom, that his Catholic children should recognize facts and accept the constituted authority. Pope Clement in fact acted with regard to the Government of George III much in the same manner as his successor, Leo XIII, did with regard to the attitude of French Catholics towards the Third Republic.

This decision of the Sovereign Pontiff was naturally very mortifying to Prince Charles, whose cause was warmly taken up by the Cardinal Duke and the French Ambassador, with the result that the Pope consented to consult the Sacred College of Cardinals on the matter; but the Cardinals almost unanimously approved of the Pope's policy. And so when Charles arrived in the Eternal City his presence was officially ignored by the authorities. His brother, it is true, went out of his way to show him all the marks of attention due to Royalty. Some of the other Cardinals followed suit, as did also the Rectors of the English, Irish and Scotch Colleges, but these latter were temporarily banished from Rome for having thus ignored the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Time, however, showed the wisdom of the decision of the Holy See. It is said that already in his wanderings in the Highlands of Scotland Charles had betrayed habits of intemperance, but now he had become a confirmed drunkard. In the autumn of 1766, the very year in which his father had died, he drew his sword upon one of his own companions in a drunken quarrel at his own hunting lodge at Albano, to which untoward

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incident his brother, the Cardinal, alludes in the following pathetic letter to a friend :—

I have very little to say except to deplore the continuance of the bottle; that, I own to you, makes me despair of everything, and I am of opinion that it is impossible for my brother to live if he continues in this strain. You say he ought to be more sensible of all I have endeavoured to do for his good; whether he is or not is more than I can tell, for he has never said anything of that kind to me. What is certain is, that he has a singular tenderness and regard for me and all that regards myself, and as singular an inflexibility and disregard for everything that regards his own good. I am seriously afflicted on his account, when I reflect on the dismal situation he puts himself under, which is a thousand times worse than the situation his enemies have endeavoured to place him in; but there is no remedy except a miracle, which may be kept at last for his eternal salvation, but surely nothing else.

"The miserable effects of intemperance, as exemplified in his own brother, induced the Cardinal to draw up his well-known paper on the *Sins of the Drunkard* for distribution among the clergy and faithful of his diocese. It is a complete summary of the Catholic doctrine on the subject, and has since been translated into several languages. In England at the present day it forms the substance of the temperance resolutions directed to be read in every church and chapel of the Catholic diocese of Liverpool, on the first Sunday of February and July."*

Cardinal York, it need not be said, as soon as he

* Kelly, *Life of H. B. Stuart.*

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understood that the Sovereign Pontiff was determined in the matter, dutifully submitted to the Pope's wishes regarding the Stuart claims, and eventually succeeded in persuading his brother to forego the title of Charles III, and to be content with that of Count of Albany. Shortly afterwards Charles, as a proof of his sincerity, paid a visit to the Pope in the company of his brother, and in the course of the audience was treated merely like any other distinguished visitor. He seemed now to have become his better self, and was well and favourably looked upon by the Roman Court and Roman society. In 1772, at the suggestion of the French Government, he was married to Louise, Princess of Stolberg, on which occasion he signed his name in the register as "Charles III, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland."

In 1775, the year of the Jubilee, he expressed his intention of assisting in the solemn processions, and asked to be allowed to do so as a king, but finding the Pope inflexible on this point he returned in high dudgeon to Florence, where his evil genius got the better of him once more, and he became more than ever a slave to his drunken habits. His conduct, moreover, towards his wife was so cruel that she was obliged to separate from him (1780), and retire temporarily to a convent.

In the beginning of the year 1786 Charles took up his residence again in Rome, where, two years later, early in January 1788, he had a serious stroke of paralysis. As it was evident the end was near, Cardinal York called in the Irish Franciscan Fathers to attend

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the dying Prince and to administer the last Sacraments, a duty which it had been their privilege to perform for his father Prince James. At the request of the Cardinal two members of the community, Fathers James and Francis MacCormick, took up their residence at Charles's palace, and assiduously prepared him for the end, which came rather suddenly on the night of the 31st January, 1788. The Prince, who was in the 68th year of his age, had received the last rites of the Church, and died in excellent dispositions.

Thus came to an end the once promising career of Prince Charlie—a sad example of brilliant expectations frustrated and high hopes ruined by the fatal vice of intemperance. Thanks to the one brilliant achievement in his long, chequered, and sadly blighted career, and the poems and songs innumerable to which it has given inspiration, his memory has become enshrined in the hearts of countless admirers, who only remember him as the gallant young Chevalier who made such a noble attempt to gain his ancestral throne. But we venture to think that the enthusiastic worship of his partisans has placed him too high upon the pedestal of fame. The ever-memorable expedition of '45, which has cast a halo of glory and romance round the Prince's memory, owed its success in a great measure to the trusty services of the Prince's right-hand man, O'Sullivan, who had, perhaps, the largest share in directing the undertaking, while Charles reaped the glory; though, to give the Prince his due, he displayed admirable courage and gallantry during the most critical and trying times of his arduous campaign, and no less

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admirable patience, endurance and generous self-forgetfulness in the terrible hardships which it entailed, especially after the disaster of Culloden. But this, after all, was only a single episode in a long life. A man must be judged by his whole career, and it must be confessed that in the trials, disappointments and adversities, which were his share during the long period of forty-two years which elapsed between his return from Scotland and his death, Charles did not display that grandeur of character which we might have expected from one who had begun life so hopefully. True heroism of character shines forth best in adversity, which shows what stuff a man is made of, and, judged according to the Christian standard at least, Charles was not a hero. He had conquered his external foes when a mere stripling, but never throughout his long career did he learn to conquer himself and his baser passions. But he was not altogether devoid of all good qualities. In spite of his many lapses he seems to have inherited much of the piety of his parents, and this spirit breaks forth in the dutiful letter written to his father on the eve of his setting out for his memorable expedition to Scotland :—

. . . I should think it proper [he writes] if your Majesty pleases, to be put at His Holiness's feet, asking his blessing on this occasion ; but what I chiefly ask is your own, which I hope will procure me that of God Almighty upon my endeavour to serve you, my family, and my country, which will ever be the only view of

Your Majesty's dutiful son,

CHARLES P.

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During the whole period of that eventful expedition he never ceased to commend his cause to Providence, in whose watchful care he had implicit belief; and even when a refugee in the den of the "seven robbers" of Glenmoriston he used to retire, we are told, every morning and evening to perform his devotions in private, while, by his timely admonitions, he succeeded in curing those wild freebooters of their inveterate habit of swearing. It is also to his credit that during this critical time he had the manliness to avow himself a Catholic, though he must have known full well that by the simple expedient of proclaiming himself a Protestant, or at least making a show of religious indifference, he would have attracted many followers to his cause, perhaps have ensured its triumph. Would that he had always remained thus true to himself. Well would it be for his memory could a veil be thrown over his after life, but though we cannot condone his miserable lapses, they may be explained, to a great extent by the unfortunate habits of intemperance which he contracted amidst the rigours and privations which were his lot in the inclement climate of the Highlands and islands of Scotland. But all's well that ends well. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well," having had the happiness of being reconciled to Mother Church before his death and of dying in her arms—a grace which we may attribute, in part at least, to the pious prayers of the Irish Dames and of the many saintly members of the Stuart family who were interceding for him in Heaven, of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, of the pious King James II, and the saintly Mary of Modena, not to speak

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of his good mother Clementina, and his ever true and ever faithful brother, the venerable Cardinal of York.

On the death of Prince Charles, his brother, the Cardinal Duke of York, the last of the Royal Stuarts, inherited all his rights and claims to the throne of England, and, to make his pretensions clear, assumed the title of Henry IX, though by becoming a priest he had tacitly abandoned all serious claim to the succession. It would seem, however, that the Irish Dames, being loyal daughters of the Church, as soon as the wishes of the Holy Father became known to them, dutifully acquiesced therein, and ceased to acknowledge, by any external manifestations at least, the claims of Charles and his brother. So, too, it would seem, did the nuns of the mother-house of Ghent, and the other houses of the congregation, which had been devotedly attached to the Stuarts as long as their cause was a right, just and reasonable one, and had the support of the Holy See; but they gradually, though, no doubt, after many a heartfelt struggle, became reconciled to the new dynasty in accordance with the wise policy inaugurated by the Holy Father. A striking illustration of the altered relations thus brought about between the exiled English nuns and the Hanoverian dynasty is had in the fact that, in the year 1782, the Duke of Gloucester, brother to King George III, with the Duchess and their two little children, while on a tour on the Continent, actually paid a visit to the Abbess and nuns of the mother-house at Ghent, and were delighted with their reception, as may be seen by the

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following letter, an echo of this eventful visit, which is still preserved at the Convent of Oulton :—

FRIDAY MORNING,
½ past seven.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are very much obliged to the Lady Abbess and her family for their kind enquiries—can assure them they were far from being fatigued at the Convent, on the contrary, they think with great satisfaction of calling upon the Lady Abbess at their return, and supping with the Lady Abbess and her Family.

The following is written in a child's round hand, and bears a seal on which is a coronet with the initials S. M.:

Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester thanks the Lady Abbess of the Convent at Ghent, and all the ladies for their politeness to her in the morning, and hopes the Duke and Duchess will bring her and her brother to sup with them in their return to England.

Friday morn,
July ye 11th 1782,
GHENT.*

Later on when the French Revolution broke out and the English communities abroad ceased to enjoy that liberty and peace which they had hitherto enjoyed and which had been their principal motive for living in exile, they returned again to England, where the old spirit of persecution had begun to give way to tolerance, and, it need hardly be said, they have ever since proved themselves as loyal subjects of the new dynasty as they had been of the old. But the Irish Dames, as we have

* *Ghent (Oulton) Annals.*

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seen, preferred to live on in exile, partly perhaps owing to the fact that there was no inducement for them to return to *their* native country, Ireland, where persecution was still the order of the day. In that country the Hanoverian régime had conspicuously failed to make itself acceptable, or rather, we should say, it had succeeded in making itself deservedly odious to the great mass of the people, with the result that, even after the death of Charles Stuart, or nearly thirty years after the accession of George III, there seem to have been still some who fondly longed for a restoration of the Stuarts as the only hope of redressing their wrongs. At all events the following letter, penned by an Irish officer in the Neapolitan army in the year 1789, the year after Charles Stuart's death, will show that there were not wanting Irishmen who still clung, with the hereditary loyalty of their race, to the Stuart family, and were ready to acknowledge the Cardinal Duke as King. It was written on the occasion of the death of Charles's daughter, the good and pious "Duchess of Albany," whom he had legitimised and tried, as far as possible, to constitute as heir of the Stuart claims in the event of the death of Cardinal York; but she did not live long enough to urge her claims, having, at the comparatively early age of thirty-six, followed her father to the grave, in the very year after his own death.

BRIGADIER O'DEA OF THE NEAPOLITAN SERVICE TO THE CARDINAL YORKE ("HENRY IX.")

MAJESTY,

I am certain Yr Majesty will receive many and many compliments on the death of the respectful Dutchess of

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Albany; but can boldly say without the least vanity that mine are of the most sincere, both by duty and a true inclination. I therefore condole with Yr Majesty with a true Irish heart on this very disagreeable subject, on which I don't find proper to enlarge, for not to renew yr just chagrean and mine. My Brother, who kisses your Majesty's hand, charges me to assure you in his name of his equal respectful and sincere sentiments, and I have the honor and glory to conclude with the highest considerations, gratitude and respect,—Your Majesty's Most devoted Humble Servt and most faithfull Subject,

NAPLES, DENIS O'DEA.
8th Decr., 1789.*

Truly noble sentiments! But the voice of the gallant Brigadier sounds like that of one crying in the wilderness, a faint last echo of the long-sustained hymn of Irish Jacobite devotion now dying away upon the breezes. Jacobitism had ceased to be a practical policy, though it has lived on even to our own days as an historical sentiment. With the death of James III in 1766 and the refusal of the Pope, the Father of Christendom, to acknowledge his successor, the Stuart cause had received its death-blow, in Catholic Ireland at least. Since then Charles had died; so had his daughter, the "Duchess of Albany," and, now, no one was left to represent the direct Stuart line, save the good Cardinal Duke of York, who had shown a truly royal spirit by abandoning an earthly crown for a heavenly one, and, while insisting on his hereditary title of King of England, had voluntarily cut himself off from all hopes of handing on the succession, by becoming

* *Stuart Papers.*

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a priest. This, the last, and one of the best of the royal Stuarts, lingered on into the beginning of the last century, till the year 1807, when the Stuart hopes were buried with him in the grave.

Great indeed, but sadly ill-requited, was the devotion which the Irish had ever displayed towards the Stuart family. They had been plundered and persecuted under the reign of the first Stuart King of England. They suffered a like fate under his son and successor, Charles I, and yet, in spite of persecution, they rallied to his standard and fought his battles when his own people had abandoned him. But little thanks did they receive from the false, faithless monarch, who did not scruple to break his most solemn pledges and promises to the Catholics of Ireland. An Irish officer saved the life of his son and successor, Charles II, at the battle of Worcester, and Irish officers stinted and sacrificed themselves for the same King in his exile,* but the country only met with the basest ingratitude and most cruel persecution upon his restoration to the throne. They lost all in the cause of his thankless brother, James II, and had no choice left but to go into exile with him or suffer unspeakable persecution at home. In the subsequent efforts made for the restoration of the Stuart family the Irish exiles played a prominent part. They were, indeed, the very heart and

* "When King Charles II was in exile the Irish Officers then abroad were very kind to him; most of them privately contributing a good part of their pay to help to support him in his distress; yet they were nothing considered for it after the Restoration," so writes the Hanoverian pamphleteer, Forman (*Letter to the Right Hon. Sir R. Sutton, for Disbanding the Irish Regiments*, etc.), who holds up this act of ingratitude as a precedent worthy of imitation.

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soul of the Stuart cause, and seem generally to have been called upon when some particularly difficult or dangerous enterprise was to be undertaken.

We have seen how the post of honour was given to the Irish troops in England when the Dutch invader was to be opposed, and later on when poor Queen Mary had to flee from St. James's the dangerous and responsible task of protecting her in her flight was entrusted to three Irish officers, " who remained near the captain during the voyage, ready to perform any desperate action in the event of their interference being required." It was the ever-faithful Irish who made the last stand for the true faith and the legitimate King, and opposed almost single-handed the overwhelming army of English, Scotch and foreigners, Dutch, German, French, Danes, who combined in their might to do battle against them at the Boyne. They played a leading part in the attempts of Prince James, the " Old Pretender," to gain his throne in the years 1708 and 1715, and, as we have seen, proved good men and true to the same Prince in the lighter affairs of love. It was an Irishman, Walsh, a merchant of Nantes, who supplied the vessel and conducted Prince Charlie over to Scotland in the eventful '45, and the first message sent by the Prince from Scotland to his father King James, at Rome, was dispatched by Walsh's vessels, and contained a request that the King would reward his benefactor with an Irish Earldom. It was some members of the Irish Brigade who were mainly instrumental in rescuing the Prince when a fugitive in the Highlands of Scotland, and in bringing him safely back

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to France, and in subsequent, less known Jacobite plots our countrymen were sure to have a hand.

Mr Segrave, an Irish officer with only one arm [writes Thicknesse in his *Memoirs*] formerly well known at the *Café de Condé* at Paris, assured me that he had been with the Prince in England between the years 1745 and 1756 and that they had laid a plan of seizing the person of the King (George II) as he returned from the play, by a body of Irish chairmen, who were to knock the servants behind his coach, extinguish the lights and create confusion, while a party carried the King to the water-side and hurried him away to France.

When the conduct of Prince Charles, after his return to the continent, gave displeasure to his Jacobite followers, it was our countryman M'Namara, "a gentleman . . . who has a natural eloquence and an excellent understanding,"* whom they selected to go to Paris to remonstrate with the Prince and bring him to his senses; and an Englishwoman of Hanoverian views, who met the Prince at Rome, about the year 1775, tells us that "two gentlemen constantly attend him; they are of Irish extraction, and Roman Catholics, you may be sure."† But the Prince did not prove amenable to the good advice of his Irish friends. He continued in his dissipation, and his conduct towards his wife became so violent that in the year 1780 the poet Alfieri, "in conjunction with Madame Orlandini and Mr. Gehegan, two Irish members" of the Prince's suite, contrived a plan for her escape to

* Dr. King's *Anecdotes of His Own Time.*
† Miller, *Letters from Italy.*

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a convent in Florence, whence she was shortly afterwards secretly conveyed to Rome "in a coach over which Alfieri and Gehegan mounted guard with loaded pistols, until the Tuscan frontier was passed. . . ." But, though the influence of his Irish friends did not succeed in reforming the Prince during his life, it is consoling to know that by the good offices of the Irish Franciscan Fathers he was reconciled to his God upon his death-bed.

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LETTERS FROM THE EXILED STUARTS AND THEIR ADHERENTS TO THE IRISH DAMES OF YPRES

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Malcolm—. . . Comes the King forth, I pray you?

Doctor— Ay, sir: there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but, at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given in his hand,
They presently amend.

. . . . . .

Exit Doctor.

Macduff—What's the disease he means?

Malcolm— 'Tis called the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good King:
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven
Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,
All swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery he cures;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. . . .

—MACBETH, Act IV., Scene 3.

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The convent of the Irish Dames possesses also a considerable number of letters received from the exiled Stuart sovereigns and their adherents. They are to a large extent merely formal replies to the Abbesses' letters, and, however interesting at times, are without any historical importance. The collection includes the following :—

From Queen Mary of Modena, 3 letters; James III, 30; Queen Clementina, 17; Prince Charles, 1; and the Cardinal Duke of York, 1.

There are three letters dated respectively, 1718, 1720, and 1721, from Rome, and signed 'Da : Nairne,' of a formal character and of same tenor as the others. David Nairne was Under Secretary, Clerk of the Council, and afterwards Secretary of the Closet to the exiled kings.

Richard Creagh (an Irish Jacobite and relation of Abbess Arthur) contributes four, dating from October 28, 1721, to October, 1730.

There are two letters from the Rev. Cornelius Bohilly (an Irish priest ?). One dated Rome, January 23, 1727, in which he takes occasion to chide the Abbess of Ypres for her efforts to have him—a most unworthy subject—" appointed Bishop of Corke, a post for which he has no aptitude or ambition." Writing again on 25 Oct., 1727, he tells her that on the 13th of the preceding month he sent her a letter of recommendation

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from Cardinal Cienfuegos, Imperial Ambassador at Rome, to Count Visconti, and now sends one from the General of the Jesuits to Fr. Amiot, confessor of the Archduchess. He says the Royal Family are well, but rumour has it that owing to English influence, France will oblige the King (James III) to leave Avignon.

Four are from George Kelly, (an Irish Jacobite, whose adventurous career we have already related). One is dated 1747, the others 1748. The first and last are dated from Paris; the others have no indication of the place of writing, which may be owing to the fact that Kelly was Secretary to Prince Charlie, whose movements were kept a secret about this period.

Writing on June 19, 1748, he says:—

> The Prince is very well, and knows nothing yet of his leaving this country, when the peace is made, the government of England will probably insist upon it, in which case, he cannot expect to he better treated than his father was.

There are fifty-two letters from Edgar (Secretary to James III) which we shall notice further on. He died September, 1762.

And finally six letters signed "Andrew Lumisden," dated from Rome, and ranging in date from December 28, 1762, to January 6, 1767.

This Andrew Lumisden (1720-1801) was private secretary to Prince Charles Edward in 1745; was present at the battle of Culloden in the following year, and included in the consequent Act of Attainder, but succeeded in escaping to France. He acted as under-secretary to the Chevalier de St. George at Rome in

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1757, and as principal secretary from 1762-1766. He was permitted to return to England in 1773, and "pardoned" in 1778.

We have already had occasion to quote Lumisden's letters to Ypres on the occasion of King James's death. His letters, like those of the others, are mostly formal, acknowledging the Abbess's New Year's greetings, which he has presented to his Majesty and to H.R.H. the Duke of York.

In his first letter Lumisden announces the death of M. Edgar (James's secretary) "last September."

We have looked carefully through the above correspondence and made selections therefrom, which we shall now present to our readers, beginning with the Royal correspondence.

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CHAPTER V

LETTERS FROM THE STUART SOVEREIGNS

THE letters of Queen Mary of Modena are three in number—one to the Bishop of Ypres and two to Abbess Butler. We have already given the former and the first part of the latter in recounting the good Queen's efforts on behalf of the convent. The remaining letter to the Abbess is dated from St. Germains, "ye 21th of January, 1718," and contains merely a formal acknowledgment of the Abbess's good wishes for Christmas, and thanks for her and the community's prayers "for my consolation and the King my son's preservation."

Those from Queen Clementina are 17 in number, and dated from Rome, with the exception of three from Boulogne and one from Montefiascone. They range in date from February 20, 1721, to February 28, 1733, are sealed with the Royal Seal, and invariably signed "votre bonne amie, Clementina R." They are mostly merely acknowledgments of the convent's New Year's greetings, with expression of the Queen's affection for the Abbey and her desire to serve it. We have already reproduced one of Clementina's letters, and it will suffice to give here the following from the French as a further specimen :—

QUEEN CLEMENTINA TO ABBESS BUTLER.

MADAME BUTLER,

I have received the kind letter which you wrote me

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on the occasion of the new year, and I read it with all the more pleasure as I found therein sentiments full of zeal and of affection for the King and for myself. You could not give us stronger or better proofs thereof than the wishes and prayers you have offered up and continue to offer up for us. Be assured that we appreciate them, and that we shall be always disposed to give you proofs of the especial consideration we have for you, and shall be always anxious to contribute, as far as we can, to your advantage and that of your community, being with esteem, Madame Butler,

Your good friend,

ROME, CLEMENTINA, *R.*
20 Feb., 1721.

The letters from James Edward, "the Old Pretender," as the disloyal Whigs would call him, James III, as we prefer to style him, are some thirty in number, ranging in date from May 3, 1725, to January 21, 1759. They are almost invariably dated from Rome, and addressed in English "To the Lady Abbess of the Irish Benedictine Dames," or "Irish Benedictine Nuns," at Ypres, and sealed with the Royal Seal. They are mostly replies to the Lady Abbess's congratulations for the New Year, and reiterate his Majesty's special predilection for the convent, and his promises to assist it when it will be in his power to do so.

The first in order of date is the following in reply to the congratulations of Abbess Arthur and the Irish Dames on the birth of an heir, who was to be known to history as the Cardinal Duke of York, the last of the Royal Stuarts :—

JAMES III TO ABBESS ARTHUR.

MADAME,

I return you thanks for your congratulatory letter

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upon the birth of my son the Duke of York, and am very sensible of the demonstrations which you and your worthy Community have shewd of your zeal and loyalty upon the occasion of this new blessing which God Almighty has been pleased to grant me. I recommend myself and family to the continuation of your good prayers, and do assure you that I have for you all the esteem you justly deserve from me, and shall allways be willing to give you proof of it when occasion offers.

(Signed) JAMES *R.*

ROME,
3 *May*, 1725.

We have already given the King's letter on the occasion of the Scottish Expedition of '45.

His sons, Prince Charles and the Cardinal Duke of York, each contribute one letter as follows :—

PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD STUART TO ABBESS DALTON OF YPRES, THANKING HER FOR HER LOYAL CONDOLENCE ON DEATH OF KING JAMES III.

ROME,
March 25th, 1766.

MADAM,

I take extremely well of you the compliment of condolence you make me on the death of the King, my father, of blessed memory, that zealous and inviolable attachment you have always preserved to the Royal family, cannot but make me wish for proper opportunities to give you marks of the particular regard, and consideration I have justly for you. I recommend myself to your and your worthy community's constant good prayers.

CHARLES *R.*

For the Lady Abbess of the Irish Nuns at Ypres.

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THE CARDINAL DUKE OF YORK TO THE SAME.

(He compliments the Irish Dames on their loyalty to the King and to the Faith.)

FRASCATI,
March 25, 1766.

MADAM,

I thank you kindly for your letter of condolence on the death of the late King, my father. The zealous, dutiful, and affectionate expressions you make use of on that occasion justly deserves to be taken notice of, and show plainly that you, and your community ever true to the old principles of your country, persevere with no less constancy in your loyalty than in your religion. I esteem it a particular favor that together with your good Religious you recommend me often to Almighty God in your prayers, and devotions, and hope you will not fail to continue the same practise, you may be persuaded that on my side I shall be glad on every occasion to do all in my power to make you sensible of the singular esteem and regard I have for you, and your community.

HENRY, *Cardinal.*

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CHAPTER VI

LETTERS FROM KING JAMES'S SECRETARY—NOMINATION TO IRISH SEES—THE KING'S EVIL—STUART PORTRAITS—LETTERS OF AN IRISH JACOBITE

THERE are no less than 52 letters, in the convent archives, from James Edgar, secretary and amanuensis to King James III. They are usually dated from Rome —two or three times from Albano—and range in date from January 13, 1734, to March 25, 1766. They are mostly formal letters, containing the King's replies to the congratulations, etc., of the Abbess and community, and wind up with an account of the state of health of the Royal Family.

The following selections from Secretary Edgar's correspondence may prove of interest to our readers :—

On January 9, 1737, he writes as follows concerning the beatification of "the late Queen," referring, no doubt, to Queen Clementina, James's Consort, who had died in the odour of sanctity a few years before (January, 1735) :—

> I have the honor to send your LaP [Ladyship] here inclosed The King's answer to the letter you sent me for H. M. in yours of the 9th Decemr. . . . As to what you ask me about the late Queen, There is no such thing as her Life published here or anywhere else that I know of, and tho' nobody doubts of her eternal happiness, The Pope has as yet taken no step toward her Beatification, for In such matters they proceed here very leisurely, and with the greatest exactness and precaution.

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July 17, 1737, he writes that the King

> will have attention to what you [i.e. Lady Abbess] say in favor of your Relation, Father Macnamara, when he comes to determine on the choice of a proper person for being Bishop of Limerick, In such matters H. M. always acts with impartiality, and in the manner he thinks most conducive to the good of the Mission. . . .

It may be remarked here that, since the Revolution of 1688, the Stuarts had enjoyed the privilege of nominating candidates for vacant Irish sees—a privilege which, though it encroached on the liberties of the Church, seems to have been conscientiously exercised, as the preceding letter testifies. But on the death of King James III, in 1766, and the refusal of the Pope and the Sacred College to acknowledge his son Charles as King of England, the right of nomination was taken away from the Stuart family and vested in the Congregation of Propaganda.*

Among the Stuart papers belonging to the King and preserved at Windsor Castle† there is an interesting letter, dated July 12, 1714, from James III to Cardinal Imperiali (Cardinal Protector of Ireland) on this very subject of nomination to Irish sees. In it he insists on his right of nomination and complains of its infringement. He points out that the Pope still acknowledges it, but he demands from his Holiness an authentic Act expressly declaring and confirming his right! He will always use this right

> With so much attention to the welfare of the mission,

* The last Stuart-nomination to an Irish See was that of Philip MacDavett to the See of Derry.

† Vol. i., p. 329.

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the rules of the canons, and the tranquillity of my own conscience, that he [the Pope] will never have reason to regret having given me this mark of his fatherly affection and of the trust he has in my zeal for the faith, and for the interests of the Church, and in my inviolable attachment to the Holy See, for which I feel proud to suffer.

The King's name, as nominator, must be inserted in the brief given to the Bishop—

because it is for my interest that every Bishop, who by his dignity is a peer of my kingdom, should know that he owes his nomination to me. . . .

With regard to the political danger which is feared therefrom, it does not exist; for the Bishops take care to conceal their briefs so that they never fall into the hands of Protestants, and besides—

I venture to say the name of the Pope [which appears on every Brief] is more hateful to them than mine, and much more capable of arousing a persecution, it being notorious that my Protestant subjects hate nothing in me more than my religion and my attachment to his Holiness.

He will forget the past provided his right is assured, "and no more bishops, peers of my kingdom of Ireland, are made without my knowledge and nomination."

But if, in addition to his other sufferings, his rights are refused by Rome, he will take measures, when Providence puts him in a position to be able to do so, to preserve what belongs to him and what his father was in possession of even during his exile. And then he softens down this threat by the following declaration of allegiance :—

However it may be, you may assure his Holiness on

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my behalf that with the grace of God nothing in the world shall ever be capable of separating me from the Holy See, and the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman faith, nor from the respect and filial affection I shall always possess for him.

I have much confidence in your zeal for me and for that afflicted Church of Ireland, of which you are the worthy Protector, and hope you will work effectually for the consolation and satisfaction of both in this important matter.

From this letter we learn what importance James attached to his right of nomination to Irish Bishoprics, and incidentally we infer how highly he rated the influence of the Irish Bishops over the people to whose continued allegiance he evidently attached the utmost importance.

And that the Stuarts did not regard their right of nomination as a mere empty honour is forcibly brought home to us by a letter of King James II, which we may be permitted to quote in illustration of this subject. We have seen how the King had, in 1688, obtained the appointment of Dom Philip Ellis, an English Benedictine, as titular Bishop, and Vicar-Apostolic of the newly-created Western Vicariate, and had him consecrated in the Royal Chapel of St. James's. But it is doubtful if he ever saw his diocese, as, on the outbreak of the Revolution in the same year, he was arrested and thrown into Newgate Prison. On his release, shortly afterwards, he withdrew to St. Germains, and soon after went to Rome. About the year 1705 he resigned his derelict Vicariate, and was made Bishop of Segni, in the Pontifical States, in 1708.

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King James seems, and with good reason, not to have been satisfied with the way in which the Bishop discharged the obligations of his high office, and consequently thought it fit to write him the following premptory note :—

1695, *Oct.* 30.—The same reasons which at first prevailed with me to desire Pope Innocent XI that bishops might be appointed in the several parts of England for the better service of God, and government of the Church, now also oblige me to signify to you that these good intentions of his Holiness and my own are in great part frustrated by your long absence from that considerable district committed to your charge. That at first I know was excusable by reason of the sudden alarm caused by the revolution, and your want of health since may probably have been a just excuse for your not attending all the while the duty of your charge. You are the proper judge whether that impediment still subsists. If your health will now permit you to execute your office and pastoral function as it is your duty to do so, so it is also mine to require it from you. But, if for want of health you still find yourself unable to bear the fatigue and burden of your charge, it will be necessary that you signify the same to me that I may provide accordingly, and nominate some fitting person for the spiritual government of the district now under your direction.*

We may add that the exiled King's patronage seems to have been exercised at times in respect of benefices on the Continent as we find his secretary writing on February 8, 1742, to Abbess Arthur to say that he regrets that her recommendation of some party for the "Canonicat of Mont Cassel" came too late "that benefice having already been given some days

* *Stuart Papers* (Windsor), vol. i., p. 108.

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ago at H. M^{s}. recommendation to Abbé Power, an Irish gentleman and a Priest of merit and virtue."

May 17, 1742—Secretary Edgar writes that he has "procured a Relick of the Holy Cross for Dame Moloni and entrusted it to the Abbé Power, but begs the Abbess in future not to ask him to procure any more Indulgences or Relicks, "for these are really things quite out of my way."

August 21, 1744—The King commands him to thank the Abbess [Mandeville] and community for their prayers, "and for the zealous and dutiful sentiments you express for the Restoration. . . ."

And H. M. besides directs Colonel Obryen [O'Brien] his minister at Paris, to favour and assist you upon occasions, so you may freely write to him, when you may think you stand in need of his help, and if your applications to Cardinal Tencins* and the Bishop of Soissons pass through his hands . . . they would have the better effect.

ROME,
January 5th, 1751.

MADAM,

I have the honor to send Your Lap here inclosed The King's answer to the letter you sent me in yours of the 7th Decem^{r}. which I layd before H. M. who was pleased to tell me upon the question you ask me that he never blessed Rings on Good Friday nor any rings at all at any other time as far as he remembers. H. M. would be very glad that your project relating to France should succeed, he has recommended it in as trong [*sic*] manner oftner than once, and will bes till [*sic*] ready to employ his good offices in that respect, whenever your Lap thinks they may be useful,

* Cardinal Tencin, who succeeded Cardinal Fleury in office and influence at the Court of Versailles, owed his promotion to the Cardinalate to James's influence at Rome.

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H. M. has also often represented your present bad circumstances to this Court, in hopes of obtaining for you some small relief, but as it is the hardest thing in the world to get anything of charity from that quarter, his endeavours in that respect have been useless. . . .

You will find here enclosed some of The Kings and The Dukes hair, that of H. R. H^{s} is very short, on account that his head is so often shaved. . . .

[*Postscript.*]

I observe what you say of having frequent news of The Princes being in good health, tho' you did not know where he is, It is no doubt a great comfort to hear that H. R. H. is well, but I should be glad to know by what canal you have that good news.

I cannot but here tell your Lap that as the King touches often for The Evil, he blesses little Silver Medals, which fastened in a Ribon he puts upon the touched persons neck, but these medals are never employed but for The evil only.

The allusion to the shortness of his Royal Highness the Duke of York's hair refers, perhaps, to the tonsure which, as an ecclesiastic, he was now obliged to wear, or it may be explained by the fact of his wearing a wig, according to the custom of those times.

With regard to the King's Evil, we have found among the Ypres documents a slip of paper with the following explanatory remarks, which may have been furnished by the King himself :—

The Kings of England have for these many ages practis'd the ceremony of touching for the Evil, which is perform'd by the King's touching the jaws of the infirm Persons, and putting a medal about their necks, which medal is also sent to the absent, but to pretend to cure that distemper by any other means or in any other manner is superstitious and unlawful.

It would appear that originally it was the custom

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for the Sovereign to wash the diseased part with water after assisting at Mass, but this rite was omitted in the new "Ceremonies for the Healing," drawn up in the reign of Henry VII and retained in some editions of the Book of Common Prayer till the middle of the eighteenth century. According to the new rite the King merely touched the sufferer and hung a medal or touch-piece about his neck, while prayers were recited by the Court chaplain. Great importance was attached to the touch-piece, which seems to have been regarded as a sort of charm, for, as a French chronicle of Charles the Second's visit to the Hague has it :—"No one is so perfectly cured as not to be attacked again by the same disease, if he be so unfortunate as to lose the coin which the King hangs about his neck when he is touched in which case he must be touched again."*

Allusions to the King's Evil occur again in the following letters, from which we learn that the King had sent Dame Malone one of the medals which he was in the habit of blessing as a preservative against the malady. But it would appear that the good Dame only wanted the medal as a souvenir, as she was not suffering from the King's Evil, unless an excess of loyalty is to be considered as a royal malady. His Majesty seems consequently to have been seized with qualms of conscience, and his anxiety lest the medal should be regarded as a relic is, to say the least, amusing.

It is hardly necessary to remind our readers that the "king's evil" is an old name for scrofula, which was said to be cured by the King's touch. The custom

* Cf. Vaughan, p. 204.

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of touching for the evil is said to have been begun by King Edward the Confessor in 1051, and seems to have been in especial favour in the days of King Charles II, who is stated to have touched close upon 100,000 of his loyal subjects. Queen Anne also believed in her royal healing powers, but the custom of touching for the evil was discontinued on the accession of George I (1714).

In the recently published *Stuart MSS.* (Windsor), Vol. ii., will be found a list of cures worked by the touch, or prayers of King James II in the years 1702 and 1703, with attestations of witnesses; and certainly the sufferings he had gone through and the degree of sanctity he had reached at that period would warrant a belief in the efficacy of his prayers. His grandson, Prince Charlie, touched a child for the evil at Holyrood in the eventful '45, but probably not with much success.

SECRETARY EDGAR TO ABBESS MANDEVILLE.

ROME, *Aprile 20th*, 1751.

MADAM,

I have received Your Lapˢ letter of the 16th March, and have had the honor to lay it before The King, and I have also communicated it to My Lord Lismore. . . .

You will find here inclosed for Your scribe Dame Malony a Medal of The Kings for the Evil, it is blessed by H. M. but it is positively required that this Medal should never be applyed to any other ail but the Evil only. . . .

ROME, *Jan. 11th*, 1752.

[Having assured the nuns that the King will do all in his power to assist them in their project of "translating" the community into France, he continues]

I wish with all my heart that what you have heard of The Frinces marriage etc., were true, but really, I know nothing certain of it, and give no credit to such reports.

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All I know of H. R. H. is that he is in good health, and I long to hear that he may be soon again in motion and action.

He then goes on to refer again to the King's Evil :—

As to the King's Medal for the Evil which you desire me to send you, if I could I would do it with pleasure, But H. M. cannot give those Medals to be sent to anybody but those that have that distemper, or who will take care to see them applyed to those who have it, Those Medals being only designed for such as are affected with the Evil, and not to be kept without use, as akind [*sic*] of Relicks, This being the case, H. M. would not have given one of these Medals to send to your Scribe Dame Malony, unless he had thought she might have had the Evil, or wanted it to be applyed to some friend of hers who had it, Dame Malony is therefore desired to dispose of it in that way as soon as she can, But if your Lap and she should both desire to have a silver Medal about the bigness of a Crown, struck upon the Princes Birth, upon letting me know it, I shall take care to send them to you. . . .

The reports as to the Chevalier's marriage, alluded to in the above letter, probably had their origin in the *liaison* he formed about this time with Clementina Walkinshaw (daughter of a Scottish Jacobite), whom he first met in 1746, at Bannockburn House, while he was engaged in the siege of Stirling. She is said to have joined him in 1752, probably in Paris. This union was all the more objectionable to his Jacobite followers as she was believed, but probably unjustly, to have betrayed their plans to her sister, who was a confidante of the Hanoverians. A child, Charlotte Stuart, was born of this union in 1753 (legitimated 1784, died 1789), but seven years later, in 1760, the mother separated

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from Prince Charles owing to his ill-usage. Clementina, with her infant daughter, fled for refuge to a convent in Paris, where she lived on a pension of 10,000 livres a year, granted by King James III. On James's death she was left penniless, until the Cardinal Duke offered her an annual allowance of 5,000 livres, but only on condition that she should sign a paper declaring that no form of marriage between Charles and herself had ever taken place. "Yet it was only with the greatest reluctance that Clementina Walkinshaw could be induced to sign such a document even under financial pressure,"* from which we are disposed to do the poor girl the charity of supposing that, in whatever light Charles himself may have regarded the union, she herself at least believed that she was really and validly married to him. She survived Charles many years, having died as late as the year 1802, at Friburg, in Switzerland, whither she had fled from Paris during the reign of terror.

ALBANO, *Septem*r. 30*th*, 1755.

MADAM,

I have received Your Lap^{s} letter of the 4th of this month, and have done myself the honor to lay it before The King, In return to which H. M. commands me to tell, with his kind compliments, that he will willingly send you his Portrait, but not with the attitudes you mention, which is a particular he cannot comply with, So if you should wish to have his Picture, a simple one only, as he has upon other occasions sent it to several others of his friends, let me know it, and I shall endeavour to get it ready to be sent by The Father Jesuit you name, who you say is to part next Spring from Rome, and H. R. H. The

* Vaughan.

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Duke . . . says he will see to procure for you som Reliques and send you them by the same Father.

In a letter, dated Rome, January 12, 1756, he alludes again to the King's portrait, which he has had successfully taken, and will send it by the Father Jesuit :—

As to your desire of having H. Mᵉ. Picture in original, and at full length, it was what H. M. could not agree to, for for these several years he has not sit for his Picture, and were even the Pope or any other person to desire it of him, it is what he would excuse himself from.

Finally, on February 3, 1756, he writes that he has sent off the two pictures of the King and Cardinal Duke, carefully put up in a box, but not by the Father Jesuit, who has to go by France, and the pictures would be an " embaras " to him, but by Father Henry Colle, Rector of Douay, who travels *viâ* Germany.

These portraits of the exiled King and Duke arrived safely * at their destination, to the great delight, no doubt, of the loyal Irish Dames ; but the irrepressible Lady Abbess was not yet satisfied.

H. M. thinks it needless [writes Edgar, January 17, 1758] to send you that you now desire of his sister the late Princess Louisa, and as to what you mention of a piece of Linning [i.e. linen] dipt in his blood when it may happen he has a vein opend, H. M. has considered of it and gives me the inclosed paper to send you in answer to what you say on that matter.

* They have unfortunately been lost ; or perhaps stolen during the rebuilding of the Abbey. But a portrait of himself presented by James II, is still preserved ; also a portrait, supposed to be that of the Cardinal Duke, which may be the one alluded to in the above letter.

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However, the worthy Abbess gained her point as regards the portrait of the Princess Louise, but not as regards the royal blood, as we learn from the following letter :—

ROME, *January 22nd*, 1759.

MADAM,

I have received the letter Your Lap is pleased to write to me of the 19th Decmr. and have the honor here to send you The Kings answer to the letter for him inclosed in it. Now I am to tell you that upon my laying your letter to me before H. M. he has been graceously pleased out of the regard he has for you and your worthy community and upon your repeated instances, to order the Picture of the late Princess his sister to be done for you . . . But as to your other request for some Linnen dipt in his blood, when I red to him that article, he said nothing upon it, and by what I see you need think nothing more of the matter.

As to the Relicks you want and again mention, I have done what I could to serve you in that particular, but finding great difficulties in it, and such matters lying quite out of my way, I cannot but insinuate to you that now there being a countryman of yours, Abbé Keating, Secretary to The Cardinal Duke, if you should write to him on the subject, he may probably give you more satisfaction than I am able to do.

Among the half-dozen letters, ranging in date from October 28, 1721, to October 17, 1730, of Richard Creagh, an Irish Jacobite, one is to Abbess Butler, the others to his relation, Lady Abbess Arthur.

In a French letter, dated " Albano, ce 28e Octobre, 1721," to Abbess Butler, he adds in a postscript :—

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"Le Roy, La Reine, et le Prince de Galles se portent Dieu Merci parfaitment bien."

His letters addressed to his relative, Lady Abbess Arthur, are less formal, and at times amusing. Indeed he seems to have been the very type of a jolly, rollicking Irish gentleman.

Writing from Rome, March 7, 1725, to the "Most Revd. Mother and Dear Cousin" he asks her Ladyship never to take the trouble to copy out her letters "whatever mistakes, blots, or interlines may happen in 'em" . . . you ought not to be so nice with me who deal so freely with you, as you have seen by my sending you lately the Queen's answer without as much as writing one line to yourself from want of time." He has received her Bishop's attestation which he will present with a Petition to the Holy Father.

In the meantime [he goes on] I have the pleasure to acquaint your Ladyship with the agreeable news of our Dear Queen's being happily deliver'd of a fine Prince . . . His Holiness came himself in the afternoon to our Palace to christen the new born Prince, and at the same time finish'd the Ceremonies of the christening of the Prince of Wales which were not before compleated. He gave the Duke of York for names Henry, Bennet, Maria, Thomas, that is all I can at present remember of 'em. . . .

Madam,

Your Ladyship's most humble and most obedient servant and affectionat kinsman,

R. CREAGH.

Postscript.]

G've me leav to assur here Cousin Creagh* of my best

* Dame M. Bridget Creagh, a nun of Ypres.

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respects. I was not well informed of the Names given to the new Duke of York when I writ 'em on the other side. These are they, Henry, Edward, Bennet, Alfred, John, Lewis, Thomas, Maria, the name he will be called by, will be Henry.*

On February 14, 1726, he writes from Rome :—

Here inclosed I send your Ladyship the Queen's † answer which has been writ a good while before it was sign'd and sent me from the Convent of Ste Cecile, where her Majtie is since the 15th of November last, and God knows when she comes out of it. I have not had the honour to see her since her Retreat. Judge you then Dear Cousin, of the trouble and perplexity I am in. . . .

On June 15, 1729, he sends his best wishes, through Lady Abbess, to his cousins, Goulds ‡ and Creagh—he has not had a word from Cousin Andrew Creagh § at Belgrade this long while—all the Royal Family are, thank God, in good health.

On October 17, 1730, he sends a letter of recommendation from Cardinal Althan to Conte Visconti, "who is the chief man that governs all near the Arch-Duchess," to be sent to Brussels with a petition to her Highness, representing the melancholy situation in which the nuns find themselves.

* The poor little Prince had no less than twelve names, all told.

† Queen Clementina, who had retired for a time to the convent of St. Cecilia, Rome, owing to a difference with her husband, James III.

‡ There were three Dames Goulde, nuns at Ypres.

§ Probably, like so many Irishmen at that time, an officer in the Austrian service.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

SOME IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF YPRES ABBEY

1665—Dame Marina Beaumont invited to Ypres by the Bishop, and Convent founded.

1669—Dame Beaumont blessed as first Abbess.

1681—She treats with Abbess Neville for the surrender of Ypres to Pontoise, but eventually makes terms with the English Benedictine nuns of Paris.

1682—August 27—Abbess Beaumont dies, and, by mutual consent of the other Abbesses, the Convent at Ypres is reserved exclusively for the Irish nuns of the Ghent Congregation.

November 19—Dame Flavia Cary elected as first Abbess of the Irish Dames of Ypres.

1683—Several Irish nuns from the various houses of the Ghent Congregation sent to Ypres, and " a legal donation made of the house to the Irish nation."

1684—Dame O'Ryan returns from Ireland with considerable funds and five or six pupils and postulants for Ypres.

1685—Dame O'Ryan goes back to Ireland and stays on there, founding later on a Benedictine School in Dublin.

1686—February 20—Death of Abbess Cary.

August 29—Dame M. Joseph Butler elected Abbess of Ypres.

1687—Abbess Butler invited by Tyrconnell on behalf of King James to make a Benedictine foundation in Ireland. Several Pontoise nuns sent over to Dublin in advance.

1688—Abbess Butler with some nuns from Ypres arrives in Dublin (October 31), and opens a Benedictine school in the new Convent in Ship Street.

1690—Battle of the Boyne. Abbess Butler's convent sacked, and nuns dispersed by the Usurper's troops.

Dame O'Ryan's convent broken up about the same time.

Abbess Butler returns to Ypres, where for many years she leads a semi-solitary life in the old convent.

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1700—Having courageously waited and persevered during ten long years of trial and suffering, her patience is at length rewarded by the profession of two choir-nuns for Ypres. The community of Irish Dames is thus resuscitated, and building of church begun.

1723—Death of Abbess Butler.
Election of Abbess Arthur.

1743—Death of Abbess Arthur.
Election of Abbess Mandeville.

1744—Siege of Ypres by the troops of Louis XV. A Franco-Irish General in the besieging army comes to the rescue of the Irish Dames.

1760—Death of Abbess Mandeville.
Election of Abbess Dalton.

1766—The Irish Dames enrolled in the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart at Bruges.

1780—Bull of Pope Pius V, authorizing the erection of Sacred Heart Confraternity in convent of Irish Dames.

1783—Death of Abbess Dalton.
Election of Abbess Scholastica Lynch.

1792—Owing to French Revolution the convent loses its income from money invested in Paris funds.

1793—The convent attacked and forcibly entered by the French Revolutionary troops, but the Irish Dames are protected by the Franco-Irish Republican General O'Moran.

1794—After several unsuccessful attacks the French troops lay siege to Ypres, which surrenders after a bombardment of fifteen days. Belgium annexed by the French Republic, which decrees the suppression of all religious houses, including that of the Irish Dames, who are respited, but continually harrassed by the Republicans.
The convent's income from the public funds of Ypres suppressed.

1799—Death of Abbess Scholastica Lynch.
Election of Abbess Bernard Lynch.
The French Republican Government issue final decree for the suppression of the Irish convent and fixes a date for its evacuation by the nuns, but they are saved by a timely downpour of rain.

1815—Belgium united with Holland by Treaty of Paris.

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1830—Death of Abbess Bernard Lynch.
Election of Abbess Byrne.
Belgian independence achieved by a "Glorious Revolution" against the House of Orange and Dutch misrule.

1831—Anti-Orange riots in Ypres.

1840—Death of Abbess Byrne.
Election of Abbess Jarrett.

1843—Visit of the Papal Nuncio, Monsignor Pecci (afterwards Pope Leo XIII) to convent of Irish Dames.

1860-1863—Old convent partially demolished and new building erected on site.

1876-1880—Work of rebuilding continued.

1886—New Façade in Rue St. Jacques completed.

1888—Death of Abbess Jarrett and election of Rt. Rev. Abbess Scholastica Bergé, now happily reigning.

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APPENDIX B

INSCRIPTIONS ON TOMBSTONES IN THE CHURCH

The pavement of the Church is dotted with tombstones covering the graves of the holy abbesses and sisters of the convent, and one or two intimate friends and benefactors. We have transcribed these inscriptions, not only on account of their intrinsic interest, but also that they might be thus the better preserved for the instruction and edification of future generations; and indeed it is time to save them from oblivion, as several of the inscriptions have been already partially obliterated by the wear and tear of ages. We have appended translations of some of them, which we have rendered more or less literally in order to preserve the sense and style of the original. This, we hope, will serve to explain and excuse the imperfection of the English rendering.

The first stone (on the left or Epistle side) is to Abbess Butler's brother:—

D. O. M.
PIÆ MEMORIÆ PERILLUST: DÑI
D. FRANSCISCI BUTLER TOPARCHÆ
C . . . . . Comit . . K . . . . . IN HIBERNIA
NOBILLISS: BUTLERORŪ PROSAPIA
ORIUNDI FIDE FIDELITATE FIRMITATE
IN DEUM ET REGEM CLARI ET 14 FIBŘ
ANNI 1719 PIE LONDINI DEMORTUI
ÆTATIS AN: 71. HOC AMORIS SUI ET
MÆRORIS MONUMENTUM COR DILECTISSIMI
FRATRIS SUI CONTEGENDO POSUIT MÆSTA
SOROR RDA ADM: DOM MARIA BUTLER
HUJUS MONASTERII ABBATISSA
BENE PRECARE PIE LECTOR.

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Which may be translated as follows:—

D. O. M.*
To the Pious Memory of the Most Illustrious
Francis Butler, Esquire, Governor of
C . . . . . in the County of K[ilkenny] in Ireland
Of the Most Noble Family of the Butlers
Eminent for his Faith, Fidelity and Constancy
Towards God and the King, and on 14 Feb.
Of the year 1719 piously deceased in London
In the 71st year of his age. This Monument of
Her Love and her Grief enshrining the Heart
Of her most beloved brother, was placed by his Sister
The Very Rev. Lady, Mary Butler
Abbess of this Monastery
Good reader, a fervent prayer.

The second stone covers the remains of Abbess Butler (first Irish Abbess of Ypres), and of seven of her religious Sisters, according to the inscription, which runs as follows:

✠

D. O. M.
Memoria
Reverendissimæ Dominæ
Dnæ Mariæ Josephæ
De Butler
Iæ Abbatissæ ac
Fundatricis hujus Monasterii
quæ obiit 22 Nbris 1723
Ætatis suæ 82, professionis 66
Abb: dignitatis 38
Et 7 consororum
R.I.P.

The inscription is not historically correct. She was the *third* Abbess of the convent, but the second after its

* *Deo Optimo Maximo*—"To God, the Best and Greatest."

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reconstitution as a community of "Irish Dames." Nor was she the "founder of this Monastery," but only of the house in Dublin. She was, however, the first Irish Abbess.

The third stone covers (we presume) the remains of D. Margaret Arthur (third Abbess of the Irish convent), and five of her religious Sisters, and is inscribed as follows:

✠

D. O. M.
MEMORIA
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DNA MARGARITÆ
D' ARTHUR
2DÆ ABBATISSÆ
HUJUS MONASTERII
QUÆ OBIIT 5 MARTII, 1743,
ÆTATIS SUÆ 69, PROFESSIONIS 43,
ABB: DIGNITATIS 19
ET 5 CONSORORUM.
R.I.P.

The fourth stone, which covers the grave of Abbess Mandeville, is thus inscribed:—

D. O. M.
HIC JACET
PERILLUSTRIS ET AMPLISSIMA DNA DNA
MARIA MAGDALENA
MANDEVILLE
HUJUS MONASTERII PER 18 ANNOS
ABBATISSÆ QUAM ÆTATIS SUÆ ANNO
CIRCITER VIGESIMO QUINTO
IN MAXIMO MARIS PERICULO CONSTITUTAM
NOBIS SERVAVIT OMNIPOTENS
ET MISERICORS DEUS
HANC ÆTATIS ANNO 61 VIRGINUM CORONA
DONANDAM AD SE VOCAVIT DIE
27MA 9BRIS ANNO 1760 PROFESSIONIS 34
REQ: IN PACE.

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[TRANSLATION.]

D. O. M.
HERE LIES
THE VERY ILLUSTRIOUS AND MOST DISTINGUISHED LADY,
MARY MAGDALEN
MANDEVILLE
FOR 18 YEARS ABBESS OF THIS MONASTERY
WHO, BEING, WHEN ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE,
IN THE GREATEST DANGER OF DROWNING AT SEA
WAS PRESERVED FOR US BY THE ALMIGHTY AND MERCIFUL GOD
HE CALLED HER TO HIMSELF
TO BESTOW UPON HER THE CROWN OF VIRGINS
ON THE 27TH NOVBR, 1760, IN THE
61ST YEAR OF HER AGE, AND 34TH OF HER PROFESSION.
MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.

The first large stone in the centre of the church bears the following inscription to Abbess Arthur —·

DIGNISSIMA ANTISTES QUÆ TERTIO NONAS
MARTIAS PLACIDE OBDORMIVIT IN CHRISTO
ANNO REPARATÆ SALUTIS 1743, ÆTATIS 69, RELIGIONIS
43 ET ABBATIALIS DIGNITATIS 19 HABES LECTOR
IN HOC EVENTU TUM LUCTUS TUM GAUDII
ARGUMENTUM QUIA SI MORITUR TEMPORI
NASCITUR ÆTERNITATI NEC ALITER MORI DEBET
QUÆ SEMPER VIXIT UT MORITURA, ET QUÆ
MORIENS DEUM DOCUIT TIMENDUM ESSE NON MORTEM
ALTRUM MORS ALTRUM VIRTUS MINISTRAT, SED CUM
A DOLORE IMPEDIATUR GAUDIUM A GAUDIO DOLOR
QUOD FACERE UNUM POTES AC DEBES A
MARGARITÆ XAVERIÆ ARTHUR
PIISSIMA VITA, SANCTISSIMA MORTE
DISCE VIVERE DISCE MORI
REQ : IN PACE.

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[TRANSLATION.]

THE MOST WORTHY PRELATESS WHO ON THE 5TH DAY OF
MARCH CALMLY FELL ASLEEP IN CHRIST
IN THE YEAR OF SALVATION 1743, THE 69TH OF HER AGE,
THE 43RD OF HER RELIGIOUS PROFESSION, AND 19TH OF HER
ABBATIAL DIGNITY.
BEHOLD, O READER, IN THIS EVENT, A MOTIVE BOTH FOR GRIEF
AND JOY,
FOR IF SHE DIES TO TIME SHE IS BORN TO ETERNITY
NOR OUGHT SHE IN ANY OTHER WISE DIE WHO ALWAYS LIVED IN
THE EXPECTATION OF DEATH,
AND WHO IN DYING TAUGHT US THAT GOD, NOT DEATH, IS TO
BE FEARED.
DEATH ITSELF SUGGESTS THE LATTER, VIRTUE THE FORMER;
BUT SINCE JOY IS OBSTRUCTED BY GRIEF AND GRIEF BY JOY
DO THAT WHICH ALONE CAN AND OUGHT BE DONE BY YOU,
FROM THE MOST PIOUS LIFE AND MOST HOLY DEATH OF
MARGARET XAVERIA ARTHUR
LEARN HOW TO LIVE, LEARN HOW TO DIE.
MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.

Inscription on the second large stone in centre of church (Abbess Byrne's tomb):—

D. O. M.
MEMORIA
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DOMINÆ MARIÆ BENEDICTÆ
BYRNE
SEPTIMÆ HUJUS MONASTERII ABBATISSÆ
QUÆ NATA DUBLINII IN HYBERNA
ANNO SALUTIS 1775
A TENERA JUVENTUTE SPRETO MUNDO
HIC STATUM RELIGIOSUM AMPLEXA EST
OMNIBUS VIRTUTE PRÆLUCENS TANDEM OMNIUM VOTIS
IN ABBATISSAM FUIT ELECTA.
UT VERA MATER SUMMA CUM ÆDIFICATIONE
HUIC COMMUNITATI PRÆFUIT
INTER ABUNDANTES CONSORORUM LACRYMAS
AD DILECTUM SPONSUM LÆTA EVOLAVIT,
12 JANUARII ANNO 1840.

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ÆTATIS SUÆ 65, PROFESSIONIS 45, ABBATIALIS DIGNITATIS 10.
SUB EJUS ADMINISTRATIONE
UNA SOLUM EX CONSORORIBUS DEFUNCTA EST.
R.I.P.
LARGITIONE PIÆ FAMILIÆ JARRETT.

[TRANSLATION.]

D. O. M.
TO THE MEMORY
OF THE RT. REVEREND LADY,
MARY BENEDICT
BYRNE
SEVENTH ABBESS OF THIS MONASTERY
WHO, BORN IN DUBLIN, IRELAND
IN THE YEAR OF SALVATION 1775,
FROM HER EARLY YOUTH DESPISED THE WORLD, AND
DID HERE EMBRACE THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.
IN VIRTUE OUTSHINING ALL, SHE FINALLY, BY THE VOTES OF ALL,
WAS ELECTED ABBESS.
LIKE A TRUE MOTHER, WITH THE UTMOST EDIFICATION
SHE PRESIDED OVER THIS COMMUNITY.
AMID THE ABUNDANT TEARS OF HER RELIGIOUS SISTERS
SHE TOOK HER JOYFUL FLIGHT TO HER BELOVED SPOUSE
ON THE 12 JANUARY IN THE YEAR 1840,
THE 65TH OF HER AGE, THE 45TH OF HER PROFESSION, AND 10TH
OF HER ABBATIAL DIGNITY.
UNDER HER ADMINISTRATION
ONE ONLY OF HER SISTERS IN RELIGION DIED.
R.I.P.
BY THE MUNIFICENCE OF THE PIOUS JARRETT FAMILY.

The third large stone in centre of church :—

✠

D. O. M.
MEMORIA RSSIMÆ DÑÆ
DNÆ MARIÆ BERNARDÆ
LYNCH
6TÆ HUJUS MONASTERII ABBATISSÆ QUÆ HANC
ECCLESIAM AMPLIAVIT EXORNAVITQUE ANNO

2 M

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DNI 1822.
MULIERIS VERE FORTIS. PERSECUTIONUM
TEMPORE HUNC CONVENTUM AB IMMINENTE INTERITU
VINDICAVIT SUBDITIS OPTIMA MATER ERAT
OMNIBUS ET GREGEM VIRTUTIS EXEMPLAR
. . . . . .
OBIIT 21 AUGUSTI ANNO 1830
ÆTATIS 74, PROFESSIONIS 49
ABBATIS DIGNITATIS 32
SUB EJUS REGIMINE 10 RELIGIOSÆ DECESSERUNT
R.I.P.

[TRANSLATION.]

✠

D. O. M.
IN MEMORY OF THE RT. REVD. LADY,
MARY BERNARD
LYNCH
6TH ABBESS OF THIS MONASTERY, WHO
ENLARGED AND ADORNED THIS CHURCH IN THE YEAR
OF OUR LORD, 1822. A WOMAN TRULY VALIANT
IN THE TIME OF PERSECUTION SHE RESCUED THIS CONVENT
FROM IMMINENT DESTRUCTION; TO ALL HER SUBJECTS SHE WAS
THE BEST OF MOTHERS.
. . . . . .
SHE DIED 21 AUGUST IN THE YEAR 1830
THE 74TH OF HER AGE, 49TH OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION,
AND 32ND OF HER ABBATIAL DIGNITY.
UNDER HER RULE 10 RELIGIOUS DEPARTED THIS LIFE.
MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.

Tombstone (near the confessional) of Abbess Lynch and five nuns:—

✠

D. O. M.
MEMORIA.
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DNÆ MARIÆ SCHOLASTICÆ
LYNCH
5TA HUJUS

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MONASTERII ABBATISSÆ
QUÆ OBIIT 22 JUNII 1799
ÆTATIS SUÆ 46, PROFESSIONIS 27
ABBATIALIS DIGNITATIS 16
ET 5 CONSORORUM.
R.I.P.

Inscription on tombstone of Abbess Beaumont, first Abbess, and foundress of Convent, and two Sisters :—

✠
D. O. M.
MEMORIA.
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DNÆ MARIÆ MARINÆ
BEAUMONT.
1MÆ ABBATISSÆ AC
FUNDATRICIS HUJUS MONASTERII
ANGLO-BENEDICTINIS
QUÆ OBIIT 27 AUGUSTI 1682
ÆTATIS SUÆ 66, PROFESSIONIS 46
ABBATIALIS DIGNITATIS 17
ET 2 CONSORORUM
R.I.P.

Tombstone of Abbess Cary, second Abbess. "One only of her Sisters died" :—

✠
D. O. M.
MEMORIA
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DNÆ MARIÆ FLAVIÆ
CARY
2DA ABBATISSÆ
HUJUS MONASTERII
ANGLO-BENEDICTINIS.
QUÆ OBIIT 20 FEBRUARII 1686
ÆTATIS SUÆ 70, PROFESSIONIS 53,
ABBATIALIS DIGNITATIS 5
UNA SOLUM EX CONSORORIBUS DEFUNCTA EST.
R.I.P.

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Of Abbess Dalton "and 7 Sisters":—

✠

D. O. M.
MEMORIA
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DOMINÆ MARIÆ BERNARDÆ
DALTON
6Æ ABBATISSÆ
HUJUS MONASTERII
QUÆ OBIIT 6 OCTOBRIS 1783
ÆTATIS SUÆ 65, PROFESSIONIS 48
ABB. DIGNITATIS 23
ET 7 CONSORORUM
R.I.P.

Of Abbess Jarrett "and 22 of her Sisters" in religion:

✠

D. O. M.
MEMORIA
REVERENDISSIMÆ DOMINÆ
DOMINÆ MARIÆ WINEFRIDÆ
JARRETT
10MÆ ABBATISSÆ
HUJUS MONASTERII
QUÆ OBIIT 19 SEPTEMBRIS 1888
ÆTATIS SUÆ 88, PROFESSIONIS 68
ABB. DIGNITATIS 48
ET 22 CONSORORUM
R.I.P.

On tombstone of Father Stamford (*alias* Dalas), S.J., "for 40 years director of this monastery":—

✠

D. O. M.
MEMORIA R. P.
G. IGN. STAMFORD
EX SOC. J. HUJUS MNTERII
DIRECT. PER 40 AN. OBIIT
6 OCT. ANNO 1807. ÆTATIS 84
R.I.P.

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APPENDIX C

WILL, ENDORSED "THE LADY ABBESSE BUTLER'S WILL IN FAVOUR OF THE COMMUNAUTE OF NUNS OF HER CONVENT."

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN the Nineteenth day of Aprill, in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand seaven hundred and twelve, I, MARY BUTLER (abbesse of the Convent of Nunns of the order of St. Benedict of the Royall Monastrie of Gratia Dei in Dublin, now resideing att Ipres in fflanders and Sister heire and residuary Legatee of ffrancis Butler, late of Graies Inn, in the County of Middlesex, Esquire, deceased, being in good [health] of body and of sound and disposeing mind and memory, Doe make this my last Will and Testament in manner following. FIRST, I bequeath my soull to Almightie God, my body to the Earth to be decently Interred att the discretion of my Executors hereafter named. ITEM whereas I have by will and Testament beareing date the first day of March, in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand Seven hundred and elleauen, given and Devised unto Daniell Arthur of London Marchant, Nathaniell Pigott of the Inner Temple London Esquire and John fitz Gerald of London aforesaid Marchant theire heires Executors and Administratrs. to theire owne use as Tennants in Common not as Joint Tennants all the Lands Tenements and hereditaments Reall and personall which did belong to my said brother ffrancis Butler in his life time in the Mannor of Bodingham als [alias] great Bodingham, als Bodingham Hall with the rights members and appurtenances, and which he gave devised and left unto me my heires Executors and Administrators by his last will and Testament bearing date on or about the first day of September in the yeare of our Lord god one thousand seaven hundred and foure as in both the Said wills is particularly described NOW I the said Mary Butler by this my last Will and Testament doe declare and make knowne to all whome it may concerne that the true intent and meaning of the donation and devise I made of the premisses to Daniell Arthur, Nathaniell Pigott and John ffitz gerald and theire heires Executors and Administrators by my said former Will, was and is to be in trust onely and for the use of my beloued Children and Companions the Nunns now resideing in the Convent with me To whom I absolutely give and grant the Same by this my last will and Testament To have and to hold to them and theire heires and Successors for ever, And my will is that the said Lands Tenements and hereditaments with the rents, issues

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and proffitts thereof and of every parte and parcell thereof shall for ever hereafter belong and appertaine to the said Convent of Nunn and theire heires and successors without any lett hinderance o molestation of any person or persons whatsoever claiming an right tytle or Interest by from or under me my heires Executors o administrators, AND of this my last Will and Testament I make my said beloved Children and Companions the Nuns now residein with me and every of them jointly and severally my Executors, hereby revokeing all former wills and grants by me made that may any [way] preiudice the Interest or Tytle of the said Convent, and Declareing this to be my last will and Testament IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name putt my seale and published the same as my last will and Testament the day and yeare first above written.

Signed Sealed and published by the said Mary Butler as her last will and Testament in presence of us and when the words *health* and *way* were interlined.

MARY BUTLER, Abbesse

Mar. Quirk Christopher Archbold William Harrison.

L. S.

APPENDIX D

CERTIFICATE FROM ABBESS PETRE OF GHENT (*see* p. 210).

Moy Justine Petre Abbesse des Dames Benedictines A Gand Je Declare par cette que les Demoiselles Catharine Cavanagh, Margarite Arthur, Marie Oconnor, et Marie Cavanagh Relligieuses Novices de Notre Monastere Des Dames Irlandoises Ordre de St. Benoist A Ipres, et Envoyees dans notre Couvent du meme Order [*sic*] dans cete Ville De Gand pour y faire leur Novitiat et probation avant D'etre admises A la professe au dit Cloitre D'ipres, ont eté icy L'espace de seize mois, et que pendant Ledit terme, elles ont pratiquee avec une merveilleuse exactitude Les Ordonnances de Notre St. Regle et Constitutions, et se sont acquitée de toutes Leurs Devoirs Relligieuse d'une maniere très edifiente, et tout Leur Comportement a eté bien Modeste, humble, et Douce et Leur procedée tres Exemplair et zelée pour L'avancement du Cervice De Dieu, C'est icy Le temoignage asseurée et Signée De

Justina Petre Abbess Indigne.

L. S. A Gand Ce 17me de Janvier 1697.

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