

given them some pewter spoons with the temperance pledge stamped on them; and as they were too poor and too ascetic to drink anything stronger than tea, the pledge was not likely to be broken.'

Manning, a convert six years later, had a unique experience. He was able to say his three Masses, and to say them in Rome, on the first Christmas Day after his conversion. Cardinal Wiseman conferred on him the tonsure a week after his reception, and he was ordained priest before he had been for three months a Catholic. Father Faber, it is interesting to remember, instructed him in the ceremonies before he said his first Mass, which he did at Farm street, having for his assistant priest the French Jesuit (he always did love French Jesuits, then and thereafter) Father Ravignan. By the Christmas of that year he was settled near the Collegio Romano in Rome with his nephew, afterwards well known as Father Anderson, S.J.—a name that has escaped some of the fame that was its due. 'I sometimes think that we Jesuits are warranted to strike only on our own box,' was one of his own pleasantries at the end of his life. Be that as it may, there ought to be a very general memory and recognition of the conspicuous attainments, services, and personality of a man who, in all these, was remarkable. Nobody, it is true, more consistently avoided any such recognition. He had his own rewards. One of them, we like to think, was that first Catholic Christmas of his in Rome with Manning

THE 'ADESTE FIDELES

As the 'Adeste Fideles' is sung until Candlemas Day, February 2, this word about its origin will be interesting:—

Individual authorship the 'Adeste Fideles' may not have had. The atmosphere of the monastic scriptorium breathes, however, through its melodious strophes. It is in many respects unique in Christian hymnology. More than any other church song it blends prophecy, history, prayer, exultation, and praise. If it were printed side by side with the Nicene Creed it would be found an astonishing versification of that august prose.

Every line of the 'Adeste' is a casket of faith and love. Upon its cadences many hours must have been spent for the crystallisation of sublime truth into crisp and dazzling syllables. 'Adeste,' approach; 'fideles,' ye faithful; 'laeti,' joyful; 'triumphantes,' victorious; 'venite,' come; 'adoremus,' let us adore; 'Dominum,' the Lord.

The hymn was sung on the Continent in the Latin form, which was so musical that it is memorised almost without effort. It is found continuously from the middle of the seventeenth century. It is believed that in many centres of devotion it was made also a recitation as if in oratorio. Plays drawn from Holy Writ were in vogue during the same period, and the 'Adeste Fideles' would have been a congruous incident in either a Passion play, a miracle play, or a Madonna play. It was usual in those plays to introduce the folk melodies which in every country have become the basis of the national music. As these plays were gradually prohibited by the Church on account of violations of strict decorum which insensibly crept in, oratorio succeeded to the vacated place, and many of the melodies disappeared or were framed into new settings.

CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE IN IRELAND

Christmas in Ireland, as in every Christian country, is a time of gladness and rejoicing. But in the little green isle it is especially a time when the deep religious faith of the people is seen. The Irish heart, too, always warm and kind, overflows during the holy season with good nature and hospitality. In every city, town, and village enthusiastic preparations are made for the coming of the great Yule festival. Indeed, the atmosphere of Christmas pervades for days and days before its arrival; nor is the happy excitement of the people soon lost when Christmas has gone.

The young people gather holly, stringing the leaves together, and with mistletoe decorate their homes. The good Irish mothers, helped by their dark-eyed colleens, prepare the ingredients that make up the big plum pudding, which, surrounded by the burning flames of a certain favourite Irish sauce, will be carried to the dinner table Christmas Day. The

Christmas dinner is a family reunion. The boys are home from college, and the girls from the convent; and father and mother, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces join hands in a happy family gathering.

In many parts of Ireland midnight Mass is celebrated. Whoever has been present at one of these Masses will never forget the wonderful faith and simple devotion of the Celtic people. Immense multitudes attend these midnight Masses. It is a pretty sight on an early Christmas morning to see the crowds of people wending their way over the hills or through the lanes to the Christmas Mass. After Mass the congregation gather around the crib, and on bended knees make their heart's offering and adoration. Every church in Ireland, no matter how poor or how secluded, has a crib. Sometimes these cribs are not very artistic, but nevertheless they are always surrounded by believing hearts. There is one priest in Ireland known to the writer who takes much pains and not a little pleasure in putting together a small crib, composed of pieces of cork. This simple crib is big enough to rest on the communion rails, yet it always attracts a constant stream of visitors, who kneel on the communion steps and gaze upon it with reverence and faith. In Dublin many of the churches erect very costly and artistic cribs. The beautiful churches of the Passionist and Oblate Fathers have in past years brought visitors from far and near to see the wonderfully life-like and beautiful representations of the stable and the new-born Saviour.

But while the song of the angels in that far-away long ago is being re-echoed in the hearts of the Irish people at home, millions of her exiled children are thinking of Ireland on distant shores. Nothing so easily awakens in the hearts of these Irish exiles such tender memories of home and kindred as the thought of Christmas in Ireland. It recalls a picture of that dear old Homeland and Motherland, with its green mountains rising so proudly above the storm-tossed billows. In thought the exile sees once more old faces, old scenes, and old friends. He hears the bells of Ireland's great cathedrals, abbeys, and churches pealing throughout the length and breadth of the Isle of Saints. From the ancient city of Armagh he hears the bells of the national cathedral of St. Patrick. Amid the historic hills of Donegal he listens to the chimes of St. Eunan's, Letterkenny. Over the ramparts and walls of Derry comes a sweet message from the bells of St. Eugene's Cathedral. Across the green fields of Monaghan are heard the peal of bells from the magnificent cathedral of St. McCartin. Down the bay of Dublin the breezes bear the deep rich tones of the chimes from old St. Patrick's, accompanied by the music of a hundred bells from the Irish metropolis. The bells of St. Mel's, Longford, and St. Kiernan's, Kilkenny, proclaim the Christmas tidings through the midland plains. Along the beautiful river Lee the world-famous Shandon bells are softly playing the Christmas hymn. Near by the bells of St. Finbar's, Cork, are telling joyful news to the southern rebel city. And from above the heights of Queenstown Harbour the bells of St. Colman's magnificent new cathedral are sending far out on the western sea a greeting to Ireland's exiled sons and daughters.

But while the exile sadly thinks of home and country, fond messages and tender greetings are speeding to him across the ocean from dear old Irish mothers, warm-hearted Irish fathers, and loving brothers or sisters. What nation can boast of such undying affection which binds together the hearts of the Celt throughout the world in one common love and attachment to home, country, kith and kin? O Ireland, dear Motherland, with the words of a fellow-exile we greet thee. From afar we hail thee, Mother Erin, this blessed Christmas morn, and wish thee and thy God-fearing people the blessings of the Babe of Bethlehem. Bravest in adversity, generous to a fault, faithful ever to God's trust, circled with the silver light of the ocean, you still stand without a stain on your banner, Queen of the Sea.

Christmas fern is a plant whose fronds remain green throughout the winter. Christmas rose, or Christmas flower, is so called because the open rose-like flower of the plant blossoms during the winter months.

Christmas box, although now exactly synonymous with Christmas gift, was not always so understood. Originally it held the gift; for it was a money-box with a slit through which coin could be dropped. It was carried by apprentices, porters, servants, and others at Christmas time for the reception of money presents.