

wonder how the execution of the sentence could have been so long delayed.

My withdrawal from the Party and from Parliament followed the Baton Convention. My dislike—it might with truth be said aversion—to Parliamentary life went to unreasonable lengths, but it was ineradicable. The feeling was deepened to a point almost beyond bearing by recent contact with the meannesses which, I suppose, infest the underworld of politics in every country. But by a curious turn of destiny, it took me more time and pains to secure my escape for good from the English Parliament than it takes (and legitimately takes) the average British citizen to gain admission to it; and this time again the one thing unforeseeable happened to drag me miserably back. Before retiring in shattered health to Florence, where I spent the next nine months without seeing an Irish paper, I had implored my friends in Cork to put a summary end to all controversy by accepting in my place any candidate the Hibernian Party might please to nominate, and had specially enjoined the fifteen Parliamentary colleagues who shared my views to make no further protest that could trouble the smooth working of the Party. A very little tact, not to say decent feeling, on the part of the triumphant Party managers, would have delivered them from any further anxiety.

(To be continued.)

A Complete Story

The Breviary Explains Itself

(From the *Ecclesiastical Review*.)

1.

The Padre looked at the time table and then grumbled, "Still an hour," which means, as I found out, that in another hour we should get home, his and my future home. Though curious enough about the new place, I kept very quiet because the Father, while not praying, kept a close eye on me. He was little concerned with my insides and feelings, but was examining my uniform. I do not mean the overcoat (which here they call "binding"), nor the overalls of black made by the nun of the convent from which we had just come. What seemed to engage his attention was the front, under my vest—the rabbi and Roman collar, so to speak, which I call *De Anno et ejus partibus*. He was evidently somewhat disturbed (despite his learning in liturgical matters) about the Epacts, and Dominical and Golden Letters—*Cyclus Epactarum, Litterae Dominicales, Litterae Aureae*. There was a certain satisfaction however in instructing the Padre. He wanted to know things from the bottom up—always. So I kept on telling him some things which of course he knew already. *Repetita juvant*. There are twelve months in the year, and that makes fifty-two weeks or three hundred and sixty-five days, and nearly six hours, during which the sun travels through the zodiac. After four years those six hours over the three hundred and sixty-five days make up, as everybody can see, an additional day of twenty-four hours. That day is tacked on at the end of February, in what the Americans, who for the most part speak English, call Leap Year. We say *Bissextilis*; that is, a year when a day is added twice, once for every six months.

I said "nearly six hours," to be accurate, since some seconds are wanting, which after they amount to a day must be made up. Hence Pope Gregory XIII., who had to rule the Church for about a dozen years when Luther had caused trouble with his mis-called reformation business, tried to bring some order into the habits of people by revising the calendar. We had of course a calendar before; but like the Greek and Latin poems of the humanists—Erasmus and his ilk—it largely borrowed from the pagans, and was confusing enough. A clever Roman general, Julius Caesar, who aspired to the papacy some fifty years before Our Lord established it, tried to exercise the function of Sovereign Pontiff and began by making a calendar. It did not satisfy people for any length of time.

Meanwhile the Church was established, but being persecuted it was unable to attend to the calendar. When

eventually the real Popes were permitted to have their say to the world at large, matters were rather mixed up. Even the great Gregory I., who had organised the liturgical functions and the chant in the Church, must have been handicapped, if not napping, because in his *Responsoriale* he never mentions the Circumcision or Ash Wednesday, though he has Christmas all right on the twenty-fifth of December, and he also gives the feast of the Chair of St. Peter on February 22, which is not surprising, seeing that he sat upon it.

After a while came the other Gregory who took things in hand. First he reorganised the methods of canon law and the study of theology. For this purpose he called the most learned men to Rome. He opened at least six national colleges in the Holy City—never minding what people said about the Irish and the Germans. In fact he found out for himself what was going on in the much-maligned States of Central Europe by having nunciatures in Vienna, Cologne, and even Lucerne. In his discussion with the learned men around him he discovered that we were all at sixes and sevens with the sun and the moon, though these were the celestial bodies set by God in the sky to regulate our days and nights. We were actually behind ten days in our calculations with heaven. So Gregory XIII. sent out a Bull ordering that after the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4, we should all on waking up on the following day count it as the fifteenth of October—just as if we had been asleep for ten days. And so it happened. The Franciscans had talk at supper that evening, and when they woke up for Matins the Friar Lector read from the new Martyrology about St. Fortunatus on the Aurelian Way, and three hundred martyrs of Cologne, and St. Hedwigis, but never a word about the whole group of saints, including two popes, St. Mark and St. Callistus, and St. Denis the Areopagite, whose feasts had occurred in the ten days that were skipped.

So they set to work quickly making more saints, and a few years later sent P. Felix Cantalicus and P. Pascal Baylon straight to heaven, though without their canonisation papers immediately. It stirred the other Orders also to make more saints. The Jesuits had already despatched their holy Founder and Francis Borgia and Francis Xavier to engage tickets for Paradise, and young Stanislaus of Kostka was blessing the cradle of Aloysius Gonzaga to hail him as a companion saint twenty-three years later. Friar Thomas of Villanova also had earned his crown by observance of the Augustinian Rule, and as bishop and "Father of the Poor." So had Peter of Alcantara and John of Avila, leaving behind them the odor of sanctity, so as to invite and attract those who were still living to follow and swell the lists of my calendar. Meanwhile there was Cardinal Charles Borromeo among the seculars still busy at Milan, though soon to go Home; and dear Teresa, working at Lisbon, who was to take St. Hedwigis's place on October 15 and make the Queen of Poland move up to October 17.

2.

As I was saying, Pope Gregory sent out a Bull to make everybody drop ten days which the calendar makers had added to the age of the world as if Almighty God had not done rightly His business. Everybody that knew anything about astronomy saw of course at once that the Pope was right; only the Russians did not; and it took Englishmen about a hundred and seventy years to see it, although it was no joke. So since 1752 the Britishers have conformed to our way in reckoning time; but their stubbornness dissatisfied the Americans and they soon after declared their independence, accepting of course my calendar, with the arrangement for future calculation that had been made by Pope Gregory XIII.

To avoid trouble as far as possible hereafter Pope Gregory laid down the rule that, whilst the year according to the common reckoning has three hundred and sixty-five days, all those years whose numbers are divisible by four hundred, and those divisible by four, but not by one hundred shall have three hundred and sixty-six days. Thus it comes about that, beginning with 1700, three out of every four centesimal leap years—that is 1700, 1800, 1900, not however 2000—should have three hundred and sixty-five days in our calendar reckoning.

T. Baster, Ltd.

Beef and Pork Butchers, Bacon Curers, and Small Goods Manufacturers, 133-135 Ponsonby Road. Try our famous Royal Cambridge Sausages; they are delicious. All Leading Grocers. Phone 1114

Auckland