

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MONASTERY AND COLLEGE OF ST. GREGORY THE GREAT.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS.

WE have recorded the struggle for existence and the early days of St. Gregory's at Douai. We now proceed to trace its progress until days of further trial dawned upon it, in more than one instance threatening its utter destruction. Father AUGUSTINE BRADSHAW, its first Prior, witnessed, as we have seen, the firm establishment of the monastery so generously and munificently founded by the good Abbot Cavarel, and started it also on its collegiate career. His own energetic spirit was infused into the infant establishment, and it seemed to grow wonderfully into maturity. Though founded only in 1611, we read of it in 1614, but three years after its foundation, as having developed to a surprising degree of perfection. John de Foucquoi, Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of Marchienne, in a letter dated October 4th, 1614, states that there were then living in the service of God in the house of St. Gregory the Great at Douai, eighty Monks, who were models of piety, and were noted for their learning and zeal for religious discipline. Many of them were Doctors of Divinity or Licentiates in Arts, and had written works of great service in defence of the Faith. Eight of this community, he states, were engaged in teaching the higher studies of Theology and Philosophy in his own College and Monastery at Marchienne; they were similarly engaged in their College at Douai, and were at the same time preparing themselves to be labourers in our Lord's vineyard. They assisted also the parishes in the neighbourhood by hearing confessions, preaching, and advancing the good of religion by their devoted lives. The letter adds that those who had gone over to England upon the Mission from St. Gregory's, were doing great good by their self-sacrificing labours, and were proving themselves to be true ministers of Christ by their zeal and their sufferings. Nine had been imprisoned, and some of these had died under the hardships which they had

to undergo. Four had been put to death, and all were showing a most devoted and loyal attachment to the Apostolic See and the Catholic Church. It is clear that Almighty God blessed the first efforts of those who were devoting themselves so earnestly to the work of renewing and continuing what their predecessors had done for the good of religion in England.

It is not our purpose, and it would not, perhaps, be in harmony with the "Downside Review," to put forward a dry chronological list of the Priors of St. Gregory's; we feel that it will be more interesting to limit our record to names and facts of more prominent importance. Foremost amongst honourable names both in time and in renown stands Father LEANDER JONES, generally known by the name of Leander á S^{to}. Martino, from the name of the famous Benedictine Abbey at Compostella, the house of his profession. He was of Welsh parentage, was born in London, and began his education at the Merchant Tailors' School, whence he passed as scholar to St. John's College, Oxford, in 1591, being at that time only sixteen years of age. In that college he occupied the same chamber as William Laud, afterwards the well-known Archbishop of Canterbury. It seems that the early friendship thus formed was never forgotten. Leander (to call him by the name by which he is always designated, his name in religion, for his Christian name was John), first devoted himself to the study of law, took the degree of Bachelor in that Faculty, and gained a fellowship in his College. Whether he had all along been a Catholic secretly, or became a convert, we are not able to ascertain; but we find that after a time he tore himself away from all the University associations, which the venerable Cardinal Newman in our own days has told us were so dear to him, and went forth as a voluntary exile, to devote himself to the service of a Church whose claims he recognised as paramount to every other claim. He left Oxford, parted from his friends, his country, and abandoned all earthly and worldly associations, went over to Spain, entered the Abbey of Compostella, with which his name has ever been identified, and was there, in the Monastery of San Martino, professed somewhere about the year 1600. He afterwards pursued his studies and took the degree of Doctor of Divinity in the University of Salamanca. He was then ordered by his Superiors to prepare for the English Mission, and proceeded to St. Gregory's at Douai. On his way from Spain to France, resting and taking up his abode, as Monks are apt to do on their journeys, in Monasteries of the Order, which happen to be upon their route, he remained

for some time at the Abbey of St. Remigius at Rheims, where he was requested to remain for a time in order to assist in training the novices then going through their time of probation. On reaching St. Gregory's, he was appointed to the important office of General Superior, or, as it was then called, Vicar-General over all the Spanish Monks connected with the English Mission. When in 1619 the English Benedictine Congregation was formally approved of by Pope Paul V., by the Brief "Ex incumbenti," Father Leander was appointed the first President-General. In the General Chapter of the newly-formed Congregation of 1621, he was appointed Prior of St. Gregory's, which office he held for four years. It was not the practice at first for Superiors to hold the same office in consecutive terms, and in 1625 he was succeeded by Father Rudesind Barlow, of whom we shall soon have occasion to speak. Again in the Chapter of 1629 he was raised to the Priorship for another term of four years, and in 1633 again became President-General of the Congregation, which dignity he held until his death in 1635.

In the year 1634, whilst he was President, his early friend William Laud was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. The wife of Charles I., then reigning, Henrietta Maria of France, a sincere Catholic, hoped that a renewal of intercourse between the two friends might lead to Laud's conversion, and Father Leander was invited over to England by the queen. The event, however, so much desired did not occur, for Laud remained and died in his error. Pope Urban VIII., whose name the English Benedictines ever hold in veneration, as the author of the Bull "Plantata," the Magna Charta as it may well be called of the Congregation, took occasion of Father Leander's presence in England to initiate the work, afterwards carried on by Panzani, of opening, if possible, diplomatic relations between England and Rome, and of even bringing about the submission of the English Episcopate to the Holy See, a task which also unfortunately proved to be fruitless. Whilst engaged in these negotiations, the good Father Leander was seized with his last illness, and died on the 27th of December, the feast of his baptismal Patron St. John the Evangelist, in the year 1635, in the sixtieth year of his age. Wood, in his "Athenæ Oxonienses," speaks in most laudatory terms of this great ornament of the University of Oxford. He calls him, and most deservedly so, the glory of the Benedictine Order, and tells of his great learning and influence. He was a man of extraordinary eloquence, and an oriental scholar of high repute. For twenty-four years,

notwithstanding other numerous and onerous duties, he discharged the offices of Professor of Theology and Hebrew. He was well-known, also, for his almost universal information in questions of art and science; and his name will stand for ever illustrious, as shedding glory upon the Benedictine Order, at the period of its revival in England.

Together with Father Leander Jones stands almost in equal prominence his contemporary, Father RUDESIND BARLOW, who alternated with him the Priorship of St. Gregory's. He was born of an ancient Lancashire family, and was brother to the Protomartyr of the Anglo-Benedictine Congregation, Father Ambrose Barlow, of whom an account appears in the last number of our Review. Father Rudesind, like Father Leander, belonged to the Spanish Benedictine Congregation, though to a different Abbey. He was professed at Cella Nova in Galicia, and after completing his studies and taking the degree of Doctor of Divinity joined the community of St. Gregory's in 1611, the year of its solemn inauguration. In the first General Chapter of the English Congregation in 1621, he was chosen President-General, and held the office for eight years. From the year 1614 till 1621 he was Prior of St. Gregory's, and he filled that post again from 1625 till 1629. He succeeded afterwards in escaping all responsibility of office, and remained for the last twenty-seven years of his life a conventual in his Monastery. For twenty years he was Professor of Theology in the neighbouring Abbey of St. Vedast, and numbered amongst his auditors many of the most eminent bishops, abbots, and divines of that period. He ranked as Canonist and Theologian amongst the most eminent of his time. Such value was set upon his writings that, after his death, a bishop, who had been one of his pupils, offered a great price for his manuscripts; but owing either to his humility, or, as Dr. Oliver, quoting Weldon, states, through the work of an enemy, they were destroyed, and could nowhere be found. He outlived his brother the Martyr by fifteen years, and died at St. Gregory's September 19th, 1656, in the seventy-second year of his age, the fifty-first of his religious profession, and forty-eighth of his Priesthood.

We pass over some names of whom there is not much to record which can interest our readers; but, in 1657, we find the office of Prior held by one who deserves especial notice. This was Father BENEDICT STAPYLTON or Stapelton, of the noble family which holds the title of Lord Beaumont, of Carlton Hall, Yorkshire. From his earliest youth he gave evidence of great innocence and virtue.

He was educated at St. Gregory's, and felt from an early period of his youth a strong desire to devote himself to the holy state of religion. He was professed at St. Gregory's in the year 1643, in the twenty-first year of his age. His amiability and goodness gained the affection of all in the community; and in his love for religious discipline he was most edifying in the discharge of all, even the most humble duties of conventual life. He was gifted with talents of a high order, and as these were aided by great diligence and conscientious industry, he soon attained to great eminence in learning. For sixteen years he was Professor of Theology and Philosophy both at St. Gregory's and in the Abbey of St. Vedast's; and as a recognition of his attainments and services he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity in the University of Douai. He was chosen Prior of St. Gregory's in 1657, but still continued Professor of Theology, not allowing with his diligent habits one office to prevent the fulfilment of the duties of the other. After holding the office of Prior for rather more than four years, he was especially invited over to England by King Charles II., to be chief chaplain to his newly-married queen, the Princess Catherine of Portugal. He remained some years in England; and in 1669 he was chosen President-General. His great learning and holiness of life, his prudence and zeal, his conciliatory and winning ways combined to make him a most able and worthy Superior over the Congregation which he continued to govern till his death. On the occasion of making an official visitation to the Monastery of St. Laurence's, at Dieulwart in Lorraine (now at Ampleforth), he was attacked with ague. One of the Fathers who attended him during the last days of his life has left on record a very detailed account of every circumstance of this his last Presidential act, both before and during his last illness: how he went through the details of the visitation, seeing each of the community singly; how he attended the conventual duties in the refectory and the Church: and how by way of recreation he rode on horseback with some of the community to a chapel of St. Mary Magdalene on the summit of a high hill in the neighbourhood, and there prayed for some time with unusual fervour: how delighted he was with the landscape, the river Moselle winding like a serpent through the valley beneath, and bestowed an alms on the old hermit who had charge of the chapel. The patience with which he bore his sufferings during his last illness, his unwillingness to give trouble to his affectionate attendants, the gratitude he expressed for every service that was rendered to him, and especially to a faithful servant man, named

Philemon, who had long been his companion, all are recorded with the veneration with which the biographers of saints love to narrate every smallest circumstance of their last hours, collecting such details with something like the care with which the early Christians used to collect the blood and relics of the martyrs.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 4th of August, whilst the Angelus bells were ringing, in the year 1680, his soul passed happily away amidst the prayers and tears of his orphan children. The following epitaph was inscribed on his tomb: "M. S. R. A. P. Benedicti Stapylton, Ecclesie Metropolitanae Cantuariensis Prioris Cathedralis, Congregationisque Anglo-Benedictinae Præsidis Generalis, Qui in Monasterio S. Gregorii Duaci professus, Ejusdem bis Prior fuit, et in eadem Academia S. Theologiae Doctoratum et Cathedram adeptus est, Deinde in Apostolicâ Angliæ Missione XX. Annos impendit, Augustissimæ Angliæ Reginae Sacellanus Domesticus, Denique in diætæ Congregationis Generalem ter successive electus, quod munus postquam per XI. annos feliciter administrasset, suis moriendo destituens, Ingens sui desiderium et ingentem suis luctum reliquit. Obit in hoc Monasterio, Prid Non August. A.D. 1680, Ætatis suæ 58, Professionis 38, Sacerdotii 34.

“ ‘Requiescat in Pace.’ ”

THE MONKS OF OLD.

(Continued from page 190.)

IV. The Monks were almost the only artists, or patrons of art. Mr. Walpole, in his "Anecdotes of Painting in England," and incidental notes on other arts, observes, that as all the other arts formerly were confined to cloisters, so also was architecture, too; and that when we read that such a bishop, or such an abbot, built such and such an edifice, they often gave the plans, as well as furnished the necessary funds. "The justness of this observation," and the Rev. Mr. Bentham, "appears in this instance of rebuilding St. Peter's at York, of which Eanbald and Alcuin were the chief architects; in that of the church belonging to Gyrwi Monastery built by Abbot Benedict Biscop.; and those of the churches of Ripon, Hexham, and Ely, by Bishop Wilfrid; and in many other