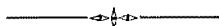


The doctrine, indeed, of the "survival of the fittest" does not always seem to obtain with regard to hymns, and very inferior compositions, crude in style and rhyme, have sometimes a long-continued popularity, due often to the tunes with which they are associated. The recent centenary of Cowper's death reminds us that his "There is a fountain filled with blood" has found favour with millions during more than a hundred years, and yet, if it were written for the first time to-day, the too realistic imagery of its first verse would probably exclude it from admittance into any first-class magazine. The "hymns that have helped" (to use Mr. Stead's phrase) are not always those which are intrinsically most perfect. It is therefore almost impossible, except in a few cases, to foretell with any degree of certainty how far any new hymn may become imbedded in the national literature, and it is perhaps safer not to prophesy. Possibly a hundred years hence the criterion of taste in these matters may be very different from what it now is; though we scarcely dare hope, however fervently we may desire, that with the progress of culture and enlightenment wars and war-hymns shall then be but memories of the past.

S. C. LOWRY.



#### ART. VII.—PERVERTS TO ROME: WHO AND WHENCE ?

ONE of those astonishing pieces of self-delusion which never cease to cause unstinted amazement in other people has lately been paraded by a correspondent of the *Record*. He had seen a list of perverts to Rome from the ranks of the English Church Union, and was moved to some indignation thereat. Accordingly he wrote as follows (*Record*, June 7, 1901) over the signature, "A Member of the E.C.U.":

"You give in the *Record* this week the names of over eighty Anglican clergy who have seceded to the Church of Rome of late years. But your list is confined to clerical members of the English Church Union. This makes the list a comparatively short one. The majority of clergy who have 'gone over' to the Roman Communion have not been E.C.U. men at all. The total number of clerical converts (or perverts) is about 500, I regret to say. I have their names before me as I write. Many, no doubt, though not members of the Union, were High Churchmen; but very many were Protestants of various kinds. In fairness to us, I think, sir, this fact ought to be borne in mind."

Pressed by an inquiring correspondent to name some of

these "very many . . . Protestants of various kinds," he refrained from satisfying this inconvenient curiosity; but he explained in general terms (*Record*, June 21, 1901) that "among 'Roman recruits' are to be found men who were not only agnostics and Dissenters, but 'liberal Evangelicals,' 'moderate High Churchmen,' 'broad High,' 'broad Low,' 'High Church Anglicans,' 'old-fashioned Churchmen,' colourless 'moderates,' and 'no-party men.'" It will be perceived that the "Member of the E.C.U." was no longer dealing with clerical perverts, but, without directing attention to the fact, had entirely shifted his ground. He no longer dealt with perverts from the ranks of the English clergy, but with perverts as a body, lay and clerical—Churchmen, Non-conformists, and people of no faith at all.

This change is important, and not in the least so because it very much complicates the difficulty of meeting the charge made. Mr. Gordon Gorman's latest list of perverts to Rome was published in 1899, and, as it is a Roman book, we may assume that its author does not understate the case for his own side. He gave<sup>1</sup> the total number of Anglican clergy who had up to that date gone over as 446. This total has since been increased, but I doubt whether "about 500" is not a rather careless exaggeration. The other classes which supplied recruits are given thus: Anglican sisters, 37; peers, 27; members of the nobility, 417; baronets, 32; medical profession, 60; army officers, 205; naval officers, 39; legal profession, 129; authors, poets, and journalists, 162; public officials, 90. Educationally analysed, his list shows: Graduates of Oxford, 445; of Cambridge, 213; of Trinity College, Dublin, 23; of London University, 11; of Durham University, 10; of Scotch Universities, 9; and members of King's College, London, 10.

Mr. Gorman begins his list, wisely, but significantly enough, with the Oxford Movement, and in his Preface he is careful to explain for how many years he has given time and thought to his task. He alleges that the "converts" now amount to nearly 10,000 per annum—a claim which, in view of the statistics of Roman Catholic marriages, seems to demand at least a corresponding leakage from the Roman Church. There are, in fact, good reasons to believe that Rome in England loses every year at least as many people as she gains. But that is a subject which may well demand separate treatment; here the original interest is with the clerical perverts.

Before, however, parting with Mr. Gorman, I should like, for the benefit of "A Member of the E.C.U.," to quote a few

<sup>1</sup> "Converts to Rome," pp. xi, xii.

lines from the Preface (p. viii). They are as follows: "Last year I had the pleasure of meeting for the first time a young gentleman of an old and distinguished Kentish family. During the course of an interesting conversation he told me that he owed his conversion, some six years previously, to a series of sermons he heard at an Anglican church, given by the Rev. B. W. Maturin." Here, no doubt, is an excellent illustration of the normal way in which the E.C.U. party, in its extreme members, act as feeders for the Church of Rome. Mr. Maturin, a Cowley Father, was, it will be remembered, not long in following the "young gentleman" into the Church of Rome. He "went over" himself in 1897.

But now to consider the main plea. It is suggested that the party for which the E.C.U. stands does not provide a majority of the clerical recruits for Rome. First we have to remark the misleading mode in which—doubtless from the circumstances under which the question arose—the case is put before us. It will surely be agreed on every side that all members of the E.C.U. are not of one colour. Despite recent events, a certain number remain only moderate High Churchmen, dissenting from much that is now said and done by their leaders, but feeling drawn by loyalty and associations to remain within the Union. This admission is called for that we may not be accused of injustice.

In the next place, it has to be remembered that the rise of the Tractarian Movement and the foundation of the E.C.U. were not contemporary events. Newman, Manning, Wilberforce, and the great earlier floods of clerical recruits had passed over to Rome before the E.C.U. was founded in 1859. They cannot have been, as English clergy, members of a Society which, up to the date of their secession, had had no existence. The attempt, therefore, to make capital out of the proportion in which the E.C.U. members stand to the total number of the clergy who have gone over strikes one as ingenious, but a little wanting in candour. The true comparison, of course, is with the number of clergy who have gone over since the E.C.U. was founded. Now, it is computed<sup>1</sup> that 166 clergy have 'verted since the E.C.U. began its existence, and of these 88, or more than one half, were members of the E.C.U.

It has now to be remembered that some extreme Churchmen do not appear to think it worth their while to join the E.C.U. The Rev. A. J. Bratt, who went over from the notorious Church of St. Matthew's, Sheffield—whence others have also seceded—does not appear to have been a member

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<sup>1</sup> By "E. G. B.," *Record*, June 28, 1901.

of the Union. His name is not in the Church Association list, and I cannot find it in the E.C.U. *Directory* for 1898. Yet it will hardly be pretended that a curate of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, could be other than an extreme Churchman. It is, however, so familiar a fact that many advanced Churchmen are outside the E.C.U. that the position need not be illustrated in further detail on this side. There is a positive aspect. Is it, or is it not, a significant thing that certain churches and organizations should be so intimately associated with the supply of clerical recruits for the Roman army? A glance at the list of E.C.U. perverts, prepared by the Church Association, shows us the names of certain parishes occurring again and again. St. Bartholomew's, Brighton, provides no fewer than four of its clergy. It is a church in which the services of Rome are imitated with a completeness nowhere surpassed. All Saints, Plymouth, provides three names. A curate went over in 1893, another in 1895, and then the Vicar himself in 1900. St. Peter's, Vauxhall, has sent over three recruits, two of them in one year—1898. Other clerical perverts came from such familiar strongholds of extreme neo-Anglicanism as St. Augustine's, Stepney; St. Agnes, Kennington; St. John the Divine, Kennington; Hensall, Yorks; Cowley St. John's, Oxford; St. Margaret's, Liverpool; and Holy Cross, St. Pancras. It is significant, too, that four officials of the E.C.U. have gone over, and that one of the latest perverts was private chaplain to its leader, Lord Halifax. As to the laity, I have no means of arriving at statistics; but it is common knowledge that lay perverts constantly find their way to Rome by the convenient path of neo-Anglicanism.

Is it, however, true that "Protestants" find their way also to Rome? I have not yet been able to verify the case of an adult who passed direct from a sincere and earnest apprehension of the Christian faith, as understood by an Evangelical Churchman or a Protestant Nonconformist, into the communion of the Church of Rome. But this does not prove that such cases do not exist. There may be a good many of them; but it is a fact that people do not, when challenged, seem able to give an instance.

I have guarded myself by saying "adult," and by demanding in the pervert a previous interest in faith which was apparently sincere and earnest. There are obvious reasons for making these conditions. They exclude two classes of perverts to Rome which ought not to exist. The first of these classes consists of children and young people who are perverted against the will, and occasionally it would seem without the knowledge, of their parents. Roman Catholic schools are a

powerful proselytizing agency. This is especially the case in regard to convent schools for girls. In their desire to obtain a good education at a small cost, and particularly to obtain cheap instruction in foreign languages, some Protestant parents send their girls to Roman Catholic schools. The results in not a few cases have been to import a life-long sorrow into the family. "In boarding-schools kept by nuns," says Dr. McCabe, who, although he left the Church of Rome, holds a position in the eye of the world which makes it impossible to set his evidence aside, "whatever promises may be given to parents, it is regarded as a sacred duty to influence the children as much as possible."<sup>1</sup> The extraordinary multiplication of Roman Catholic middle-class schools amongst us may be taken as offering countenance to Dr. McCabe's declaration that this is not an aim to which Romanists give prominence; but "it is certainly an important item in their esoteric programme."<sup>2</sup> That there have been "Protestant" pervers of this type nobody can deny.

The other class of pervers includes those who adopt the new faith for some personal advantage. There are still a few places in England in which a small trader has little prospect of success unless he be of the same faith as the majority around him. That accounts for a few gains; but these cases can be excluded from any consideration of the relative influences of neo-Anglican or Evangelical training. Probably the converts had no particular faith at all. Of much the same class are the matrimonial captures of Rome. She is the deadly opponent of mixed marriages. So far as the power of Rome avails, no Romanist shall marry save with Romanist. The man or the woman of the other faith (or no faith) must therefore enter the Roman communion. Sometimes (as in the case of the late Mrs. Lynn Linton) the endeavours to procure conversion are unavailing; the heretic remains obdurate. Then, if, as in that case, Rome is supreme, the engagement is broken off. But affection may determine the situation, or the person may have no particular religious belief, or the energetic attacks of the priest in charge of the affair may prevail. Rome has another convert. But such cases are so well understood that the loyalty of marriage-converts is always more or less under suspicion. Finally, there belong to this class the persons who are described by Dr. McCabe in the following severe terms: "It is well known that many of the much-vaunted converts of Farm Street and of Brompton are simply *décadents* who are attracted by the sensuous character of the services, and who

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<sup>1</sup> "Twelve Years in a Monastery," p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

would transfer their devotion to a temple of Aphrodite if one were opened in West London with similar ceremonies."<sup>1</sup>

But, setting all such cases aside, are there not perverts who come from religious households, and were at one time devout and sincere Churchpeople, rather Low than High? Unquestionably there are. But what has been the course pursued? I will take an instance, the circumstances of which are personally familiar. The pervert was born and reared in an Evangelical household. Until he left home, his friends and companions had not the smallest reason for supposing that he swerved an inch from the convictions firmly held by his father. Away from home, he drifted after a time from the old moorings. When he was ordained, it was no longer as an Evangelical but as a very advanced High Churchman. All his clerical life was passed amidst pronounced neo-Anglican surroundings, and from these he went by an easy transition to Rome.<sup>2</sup> I suspect it will be found that this has been the general history of those who were once Evangelicals, and finally found themselves in the Church of Rome. But to charge "Protestantism" with their fall is plainly absurd. They were safe enough whilst they stood in the old paths, but when once they began to stray trouble began. It is the teaching which familiarized them with Roman doctrine, Roman ritual and Roman casuistry that must bear the blame of their fall. If we are not to take this view of the facts, then I suppose it may be claimed that Newman and Manning were both examples of "Protestant" perversions to Rome.

It is possible, however, that we may hear less and less of the extraordinary theory that aping Romanism is the surest defence against perversion to Rome. For of late the most extreme wing of the Ritualistic party has become so bold in its approximation to Rome that a good many well-worn pleas are being flung aside; their shelter is no longer deemed requisite. Doubtless this amazing appeal to credulity will find a place amongst them.

A. R. BUCKLAND.

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<sup>1</sup> "Twelve Years in a Monastery," p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> The case of the Rev. James Maconechey, a recent pervert, has been made much of. It is understood that Mr. Maconechey, who was ordained in 1858, was for many years a Moderate Churchman; but, as he has held no cure since 1896, the general public have no means of knowing through what process of development he has passed in recent years.