

ET CÆTERA

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"Tis sixty years since." On February 14, 1865, the watchers around Cardinal Wiseman's death-bed at York Place knew that the end could not be far off, and in the morning of the 15th the first Archbishop of Westminster went to his reward. This "diamond jubilee" so to speak, of the passing of one of the most illustrious churchmen of his century may fittingly be recalled just now, when the question of his ancestry is being discussed in our correspondence columns and the creation of a new Catholic diocese is turning men's thoughts back to the great events of 1850, in which Wiseman played the chief part. To note the contrast between the tone and attitude of the British Press and the British public in that year and in the days following the Cardinal's death, is to realize the place which he had made for himself in popular esteem during those fifteen intervening years.

Among many misused and overworked phrases, "epoch-making" readily occurs as an example; but in the case of Cardinal Wiseman it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that his life-work, with its attendant influences, did indeed mark, for the Catholic Church in England, the creation of a new epoch. When he began to labour in this country he was in a land of Vicars Apostolic; when he closed his eyes in death it was as Archbishop and chief of a restored hierarchy which from that day to this has grown and developed as the need demanded. The famous old pro-Cathedral at Moorfields, where his body lay in state, has long been only a memory, but a greater, nobler building now holds the Westminster *cathedra*. There, too, in the crypt chapel, are the remains of the great Cardinal who died sixty years ago, hard by those of his immediate successor in the Archbishopric. Westminster Cathedral speaks to us, in its material grandeur, of the present; but down there in the crypt are links with the past, memorials in more senses than one. Cardinal Wiseman himself might have preferred, could the future have been revealed to him in life, to continue to lie surrounded by his fellow-priests at Kensal Green; but his worth made him the servant of posterity, and in the great Cathedral he has a rightful and honoured resting-place.

The Bodleian Library is to have an artistic and permanent memorial of its association with the present Sovereign Pontiff. Mr. Philip Laszlo, we learn, has presented to the famous library his portrait of Pius XI, painted last year, showing His Holiness seated in his robes of state. The Pope is the most illustrious of those now living who have used the Bodleian, and Oxford University sent him a message of congratulation three years ago, on his election to the Papacy.

There is a pathetic interest about the February number of the Dominican monthly *Blackfriars*, for an article which we had marked for notice as among its principal contents is from the pen of Father Alfred Swaby, O.P., whose death is reported in another column. Although he wrote far less than some of his brethren in the Order, Father Swaby was a man of distinct literary gifts, and his genius could express itself happily both in humour and in serious exposition. The *Blackfriars* article, in all likelihood his last piece of writing, deals learnedly with a theory of the Eucharistic Sacrifice propounded by Bishop Macdonald, D.D., formerly of Victoria, Vancouver, who bases an antiquity for it on Henry VIII's *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*. It is not often that this side of the "professional widower" finds its way into a Catholic discussion, and the Dominican article is the more interesting, therefore, in showing us, with copious quotations, exactly how the royal Tudor stood up to Luther and vanquished him on the point at issue. Father Swaby denied Henry as a prop to the Bishop's theory, a theory which in its concept would destroy the great tradition of the Church "that the Sacred Passion from the Garden to the Cross is itself the absolute Sacrifice of Redemption, and as such in no

way derives sacrificial character from the Last Supper." On the contrary, he wrote that polemically the *Assertio* has descended to our times "in order to smite the new theory in defence of Trent and Tradition!" Whatever comments Father Alfred's article may arouse, its brilliant author, alas! is no longer with us to receive them.

Eros, on his fountain at Piccadilly Circus, has been doubly in the public eye of late, for the many newspaper paragraphs about him have brought upward glances at the figure from hitherto heedless and hurrying passers-by. Now that the graceful bowman is to disappear, even though it is only for a time, a sense of loss seems to pervade the Circus, and there is a regular Love's lament. The thought of the Piccadilly fountain brings with it the reflection that symbolism on London's outdoor monuments is rich in respect of almost everything except Christianity. Cupids and winged Victories, figures of Peace and Plenty, flaming orbs and soaring birds, Allegory in a hundred forms, but hardly ever a figure or emblem to point the mind definitely to the Christian faith. It is true there is Charing Cross, but nobody looks at it; and St. Pancras honours its patron saint on the little fountain near the Convent of the Holy Souls. A few more instances of the kind might be found in a scouring of city and suburbs; but take them for all in all, Londoners have signally failed, as yet, to stamp the impress of even a nominal religious allegiance upon their public monuments. It is left to Catholic and Anglican churches, and to private choice in other places, to elevate the Cross above the turmoil of the streets and to set up here and there a crucifix or the statue of a saint.

Lord Denbigh will have found an article to gladden his heart in last Saturday's *Spectator*, where the matter of growing sugar-beet and making sugar in England is dealt with in terms of enthusiastic hopefulness. The industry is to become thoroughly established this year; our soil and climate are congenial for the purpose, and arrangements have been made for the immediate construction of many more factories to supplement the three already in being. The Government subsidy, for ten years, on a triennially decreasing basis, is to make the sugar-beet industry financially sound, and after that period it is hoped that little or no help of the kind will be needed. But the *Spectator* writer is among those who see more in this development than a mere piece of successful agriculture and sugar-production; for "it has always been maintained by the stalwart pioneers, of whom Lord Denbigh is the chief, that in the sugar industry lies the best hope of reclaiming our lost acres, and increasing the plough-land of Britain. One industry does not necessarily drive out another; and in history the effect of sugar-growing—especially in France, Germany and Holland—has been to increase the general fertility of the soil and general activity on the land." That should be good news even for those who don't take sugar.

M. Georges Hugo, who has died of pneumonia at the age of fifty-seven, had a notable man for a grandfather; but although Victor Hugo earned a niche in the temple of Fame by his literature, Georges Hugo, who did nothing very much beyond a little writing and a little painting, proved himself the greater man of the two. He refused to be bound in the shackles of unbelief in which his grandfather brought him up, and therein he was one of a not undistinguished French company. As the *Times* recalls, he one day said to a friend: "Have you ever observed how the grandchildren of the Republican aristocracy are rejecting all the opinions of their forefathers? Renan's grandson has been converted to Catholicism. I am as good a Catholic as he is, and I am a Monarchist as well. Am I right or wrong in thinking that we are reverting to the tradition which made France strong and beautiful? That is what the future will show." The future, perhaps: may it be so; but the strength and beauty of France are in this sense in doubtful keeping while the Herriot spirit is at work.