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COL. R. M. JOHNSTON.

STORY OF HIS CONVERSION AS RELATED BY HIMSELF

Brought up a Baptist But by Observation and incessant Study Was led into the Bosom of the Catholic Church—Some of His Principal Reasons for the Step Taken.

Rev. Father Price, the famous zealous missionary of North Carolina received by request recently a brief history of the reasons that led the distinguished convert, Col. Richard Malcom Johnston into the Catholic Church. The article first appeared in Truth, a monthly magazine edited by Father Price for the purpose of disseminating Catholic doctrine among the people of his jurisdiction. The communication reads as follows:

Dear Father Price:—You have requested of me several times to send you some account of my experiences during the period before I became a member of the Catholic Church. Although I cannot be led to suppose that what a person of no greater importance than I am has to say about himself, even under a nom de plume, will be of any value to others, yet with intent to comply with the wish of a dear friend, I decide to submit to you a few pages.

However interesting to oneself be the trials of his own mind upon the most serious subject for him and all men's consideration, it would be a rather pitiable vanity to suppose that they could be so to others. Yet it may not be amiss sometimes, for even such as I, to give some of the reasons for the satisfaction felt when those trials, the most perplexing and painful of all, were ended.

I was brought up a Baptist by parents the memory of whose virtues I have always indulged with unspeakable fondness and gratitude. Our community was mainly Baptist, and I have never known one which had a larger number of constituents, particularly female, who were devoted to Christian obligations. These lived in unwavering faith in Christ, and died in humble hope of eternal life through the merits of His atonement. They knew no more of the Catholic Church than of an occult language. What they had heard was told by its enemies, most of them not better informed.

I cannot but smile, though sadly sometimes, while calling back some of the things that used to be told about the Pope, Anti-Christ, the Scarlet Woman, and other men, women and things under his lead. With a simple-minded, uncultured people, there were no ways of controverting such audacious misrepresentations.

Becoming a member of the denomination at the age of seventeen, it was not many years before I seemed to feel a hunger for a more living, nourishing sustenance than was afforded by a discipline, which, with all of its honesty, appeared to me more and more constrained and narrow.

When I became a man of thoughtful ways, I became deeply, anxiously impressed while reading the Holy Scriptures (which I studied considerably) by some things which, although pointedly inculcated therein, were or seemed to be, ignored by all professing Christians with whom I held intercourse.

One of these was Holy Communion, another the authority imparted by our Lord to His disciples to pardon sins. I could not but feel that Christ at the Last Supper must have wrought this miracle to be perpetuated throughout all succeeding generations.

I do not quote passages familiar to Scripture readers. While struggling with the question I have done so to many a cultivated Baptist clergyman, and been answered sometimes in brief, obscure words, unsatisfactory even to himself, and sometimes with sighs.

Our Lord, in so many words, bestowed the power to forgive sins, and said that after His ascension He would send the Paraclete to keep in His followers recollections of His teachings and do so until the end of the world. The Paraclete did appear at Pentecost, and He is upon the earth now, fulfilling His mission to guide into all truth.

And this is the infallibility so noisily railed at and so little understood. It means simply that mankind, those who entirely trust in this essential, indispensable truth, will be secure against wilful mistakes in their faith in Christ.

If we ask a Baptist or another Protestant clergyman if he is infallible, he will answer "no" in emphatic denial. Put such a question to a Catholic priest, he will answer "yes, for I preach none other doctrines than such as my mother Church believes and teaches, assisted and guided as she is by the Holy Spirit."

There it is, a man like me, knowing himself to be blind, powerless to find his way out of the obscurity in which he gropes, beset by toils, pitfalls, snares, wrong-doings and temptations, is constrained to follow the guide who claims to know the way certainly instead of the one who admits that he does not.

I read many, many books, that of the unhappy Land, persecuted because he could not be hostile to the Church to the degree demanded by the rank-

ers of his time, Janus and Anti-Janus, Milner's End of Controversy, Ives' Trials of a Mind, the debates between Gladstone and Newman and Manning, Balmer's History of Civilization, and others. When I decided at last, I felt a peace beyond all understanding, and a surprise that I had not found before what then seemed so luminously clear. A matter which made me lose faith in Protestant forms of worship was the absence of authority in effecting conformity with discipline, variant as this is. Some of them of late years have held meetings for the trial of clergymen who preach doctrines not in harmony with their denominations, but they seldom amount to any well-defined decision, or effect settled security, for Protestantism is committed against punishment for heresy, a word whose sense is known to so few.

Hereby, as you know, is a choosing to believe, or professing to believe otherwise than as the Church believes and teaches, while Protestantism professes to allow entire freedom in this regard. Yet trials are had on questions which seem of especial audacity, and discussions are had inside and outside of meetings, which end sometimes in acquittal, sometimes in most reprimand; and the defendant, if he be vain, feels like priding himself for the notoriety into which he has been lifted, and the harmlessness of its consequences upon himself.

The Low Churchman regards the High Churchman with suspicion, and is in turn regarded with pity, and the Bishop, waxing High or Low, or oscillating between, can only piously counsel or meekly remonstrate.

Let a Catholic priest preach other doctrines than he has received from the Church; soon, very soon, he gets from his Bishop a missive, brief, polite, yet fully significant, notifying him to vacate his rectory by such a date, when another will be there to accept it.

Far the greater number of Protestants, devout, honest as the best, are kept out of the Catholic Church from ignorance of its doctrines, its history, the lives of illustrious men and women, its saints and martyrs, its vast achievements throughout all conditions of its existence, for the wealth of the human race. Such as these need only information, prudently imparted. The great defalcation under the sovereigns, Henry and Elizabeth, has spent its greatest strength, and thoughtful minds in Great Britain, noting and pondering upon the continually recurring detection of the monstrous falsehoods upon which its claims were based, are either coming back to the one fold or lapsing into Agnosticism.

Conversions are counted by the many many thousands every year. For at least there are not very many who do not desire to possess and hold the truth. Prejudice and bias are hard to overcome, because slow to be convinced that what they conscientiously believe tends to evil and misfortune. I could say much about other matters in Catholic belief and practice, as praying for the dead, that as we read in II. Maccabees, xii., "they may be loosed from their sins"—indulgences, that great Pons Asinorum, about which perhaps more absurd things are spoken than any other tenet in our faith, giving to the dying the consoling support, of extreme unction, and maintaining marriage to be one of the sacraments of the Master. Denial of this is tending to make all clear minds whist at its enormously multiplying soul dissolutions of families, and fountains of all forms of degeneracy.

Much I might say upon these and other matters. But this is enough, and I am tired. I was glad when I heard you had started your monthly. It was well to start it there. Your North Carolinians are an unpretentious people, loyal to their convictions and courageous in maintaining them, hospitable to strangers, and listening respectfully to what they have to say. They have done as much as any other Southern State, according to disposable means, for the education of their poor, and as I have been credibly told, more than any other towards preserving records and traditions of their forefathers.

I sincerely hope that your modest little enterprise may accomplish as much as you hope for on the line you are pursuing with so much industry and singleness of mind. Very truly and affectionately yours,

RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON.

First Irish Catholic Mayor.

For the first time in the history of New Haven, Conn., an Irishman and Catholic has been elected to the mayoralty and it is a pleasing circumstance to note that neither nationality nor creed entered into the political contest. The city election in New Haven recently were carried by the Democrats with a sweeping victory. Every candidate on their ticket was elected to office. Mr. Cornelius T. Driscoll, the Democratic nominee for Mayor, received a plurality of 1,500 votes over the Republican candidate, Mr. Farnsworth.

The work of demolition of the buildings on the property at 122, 124, and 126 West 17th street, New York, begins next week. This is the site for the new parochial school of St. Francis Xavier's church. It is hoped that by October 1st the new building will be erected.

"WEARING OF THE GREEN."

He laid his blacked pipe aside, A moisture dimmed his eye And made its blue as 'oft a hue As April's misty sky. The morning frost was on his beard, The winds of March were keen, But all his heart was warmed to hear The "Wearing of the Green."

The burden of his years of toil Was lifted from his back; His furrowed cheek was smooth as an young.

His grizzled hair was black, The stiken flag and snowy plumes— They passed him all unseen; He walked again where first he sung The "Wearing of the Green."

The mossy rocks and rugged glens Sent back his voice again, And Mary, in her cabin door, Took up the old refrain. She had a shamrock in her breast, The kerchief's fold o'erween, And redder lips have never thrilled The "Wearing of the Green."

His Mary's old and feeble now, Her scanty locks are white; She dozes by the fire all day And grumbled all the night. But they are wedded lovers yet, And on each other lean, And still she hums, in quavering tones, The "Wearing of the Green."

Come sun or shadow, once a year The hands are sure to play The good old tune, the dear old tune, Upon Saint Patrick's day. 'Tis like a breath from ood and hill, Though oceans roll between; 'Tis sweet to every exile's ear— The "Wearing of the Green." —Minna Irving, in Leslie's Weekly.

LITTLE JOHN'S LETTER.

Little John was six years old. A pair of trousers torn at both knees, fair, curly hair, thick and rich enough to ornament the heads of two fine ladies; a pair of large blue eyes that still tried to smile betimes, although tears seemed more natural to them, so red and swollen were their white lids; a little jacket of a fashionable shape, but hanging in shreds; a girl's boot on the right foot, a collegian's shoe on the left—both too long, too large, and, alas! too worn—the vamps rising independently from the soles before, and not a vestige of the heel behind. He felt cold and hungry, in the middle of his rags, for it was a winter's evening, and he was fasting, since noon the previous day, when a sudden thought flashed across his little brain. He would write a letter, a letter to the Blessed Virgin! This is how little John, who knew neither how to read nor write, nevertheless wrote his letter.

At the corner of the avenue, not far from L'Esplanade, over there in the Quarter-Gros-Callon, there was a shanty with the word "Editor" over the door. The "editor" was an old soldier, cross, brave, not by any means bigoted, on the contrary, not rich either, and who was not lucky enough to be sufficiently crippled to have a right to enter the hotel "Des Invalides."

John peeped through the windowpanes, and saw him smoking his pipe while waiting for customers. Going in he said:

"Good morning, sir; I come to have a letter written."

"The price is ten sous," answered Papa Bowin, for this brave old soldier, who was perhaps the hundred-thousandth atom of the glory of a marshall of France, was called Le Pere Bowin. John, who had no cap, could not take it off, but he said politely: "Ah, then excuse my having troubled you, and he opened the door to leave, but Papa Bowin, who found he looked like a nice little fellow, asked him, "Are you the son of a soldier?"

"No," answered John, "I'm mamma's son."

"Good," said the "editor," "and you haven't ten sous?"

"Oh, no! I haven't even one sou." "Your mother neither, most likely; its easy to see that. Its a letter to try to get something for dinner, something to make the pot boil, eh, my little one?"

"Yes, that's just it," said John.

"Come here. For ten lines and a half a sheet of paper one will not be much poorer."

John obeyed; Papa Bowin got his paper ready, dipped his pen in the ink, and in the best hand wrote: "Paris, 17th January, 18—," and under the date, "To Mr.—"

"What's the gentleman's name, Tiny?"

"What gentleman?" asked John. "Really, the person, parbleu. The gentleman you want to write to. The party who's to give you a soupe." John understood this time, and answered: "It's not a gentleman, sir."

"Ah, ha, a lady then?"

"Yes—no—that is to say—"

"Look here, you young monkey, do you mean to say you don't even know whom you want to write to?"

"Oh, but yes, I know," said the child. "Say them, and be quick about it." Little John had grown very red. The fact is, its rather embarrassing to open one's heart to a public letter-writer under such circumstances. But he gathered up his courage and said: "Its to the Blessed Virgin I wish to send a letter."

Papa Bowin did not laugh now. He put down his pen, took his pipe from his mouth, and said sternly: "Midget! I presuppose that you don't come here with the intention of insulting an ancient warrior. If you weren't such a mite I'd shake you! Clear off! Turn to the left and look outside to see if I'm there. Begone!"

Little John did not wait to be told twice, but turned on his heels, I mean those of his feet, as his shoes had none left.

Seeing him so gentle, Papa Bowin changed his mind a second time, looking closer at him.

"Mille Canoni!" muttered he. "There is misery enough in this Paris all the same! What's your name, child?"

"John."

"John what?"

"Nothing but John."

Papa Bowin felt his eyes watering, but he only shrugged his shoulders. "And what do you want to say to the Holy Virgin?"

"I would tell her that mamma is asleep since four o'clock yesterday, and if she would be so kind as to wake her up—I have tried, but cannot!"

The old soldier felt his heart swelling, for he dreaded the truth now—still he asked: "What did you mean about the soup just now?"

"Ah!" said the child, "we want some so badly. Before she went to sleep mamma had given me the last morsel of bread."

"And she—what has she eaten?"

"There were already two days she said: 'Eat, little one, I am not hungry!'"

"How did you try to wake her?"

"Oh, as I always do—I kissed her!"

"Did she breathe?"

John smiled, and the smile lit up his face till it was beautiful.

"I do not know, don't people always breathe?"

Papa Bowin turned his face aside, for large tears were trickling down his cheeks. He did not answer the child's question. And his voice trembled as he continued: "When you kissed her, did you remark something unusual?"

"Yes, she was cold—it is so cold in our room!"

"And she was shivering, is it not so?"

"Oh, not she was beautiful—her two hands quite still, crossed on her breast and white—white, like wax! Her head was fallen back, almost behind the pillow, so that she seemed to be looking into Heaven through her half-closed eyelids."

Papa Bowin was thinking to himself, "And I—I, who have enough to eat and drink, how often have I envied those richer than myself, and there is that poor mother dead—literally dead of hunger. He called the child, who came, took him on his knees, and said very gently, "Little man, your letter is written, sent and received; bring me to your mother!"

"Willingly—but why do you weep?"

"I am not crying," said the old soldier, smothering with kisses, and wetting the baby face with tears. "Do you weep? But you, little John, you will shed tears by and by when you know—but you are my son now—what an old fool I must be! But I too had a mother—a long time ago—and behold! I seem to see her clearly there, as lying on her bed, she said to me before leaving forever: 'Bowin, be an honest man and a good Christian! The picture of the Holy Virgin hanging on the wall seemed to smile at me, and now it comes back to heart and memory. For, although always an honest man—as for Christian I am not sure.'"

He arose, still holding the child in his arms, and pressing him to his breast, added, as if addressing some one invisible: "Look! look! dear old mother, be satisfied. My comrades may laugh at and mock me if they like, where thou art I wish to go, and I will bring with me this tiny one, poor angel! he will never more grieve me. His letter, which has not been written, has nevertheless gained a double answer: He has a father—and I a heart!"

That is all. The poor mother died of hunger. Could not be called back to earth. Who was she? I don't know.

But there is, somewhere in Paris, a man—still young—who is "editor," but not in a shanty, nor for letters of ten sous. He edits good, beautiful thoughts in the form of articles. And you all know his name.

We will call him "John," simply, as in old times. Papa Bowin is now a happy old man; always honest and brave—and what's better, a true Christian. He rejoices in the fame, and glory of the "tiny one," as he sometimes calls his now celebrated adopted son, and he often says—for it was he who told me this story—"I know not who the postman is who carries letters such as John wished to write—but they never yet missed to arrive straight at their address in Heaven."

"Like father, like son," is an old adage, homely as well as true. It is perfectly natural for the child to inherit the disposition and tendencies of the parent. There may be for either good or evil, but they are lasting. As the child grows older, they become a part of his individuality, and exert an small influence on his life.

THE BROTHERS CASE

THE QUESTION OF TEACHING CLASSICS IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

The Roman Authorities to Decide—The Grand Work of the Cause of Blessed De La Salle in the United States—Some Notes on the History of the Order.

The contention between the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the Superior of the congregation in France, in the important matter as to whether they shall continue to teach classics in their schools, submitted to the Roman authorities by Bishop Byrne, has been decided, although the decision is not yet given out. The decision will be as follows:

I. The Christian Brothers in the United States must not open any more schools in which the classics will be taught.

II. The Christian Brothers' schools in which the classics have been taught up to the present are to be tolerated, at least for the time being.

To understand this matter says the Roman correspondent of the Freeman's Journal, it must be borne in mind that the constitution of the Christian Brothers contains a clause which explicitly declares that the classics are not to form a part of the training to be imparted in their schools. The Christian Brothers in the United States, notwithstanding this clause, introduced the classics into the curriculum of their schools, and the Superior of the congregation in France accepted the situation, at least tacitly, for many years. Some five years ago, however, it was decided that the old rule forbidding the teaching of the classics should be enforced in America as elsewhere. The decision was submitted to the Propaganda, and the latter issued a decree (which I understand has not been published) ordaining that after a lapse of two years the States should cease to teach Latin and Greek. At the expiration of that time the American Brothers petitioned their superiors for a further prolongation. The Superior decided recently that no delay had been allowed, and insisted on the enforcement of the constitution of the congregation, and the decree of the Propaganda. The American Brothers appealed to the American Bishops to take up their case. Some forty-odd Bishops sympathized with their cause and appointed Father Byrne to plead in Rome before the Propaganda for a continuation of the present system. The Superior sent their representatives to Rome, and to all Bishop Byrne's arguments, but objected that the constitution of the congregation was made to be obeyed, and that the Propaganda has already decided that the constitution in question is to be enforced.

The Christian Brothers were introduced into the United States by Archbishop Mooney of Baltimore, and now constitute four provinces in this country. First in order comes the Baltimore province, the head of which resides at the Normal Institute, Annapolis. This province includes the Brothers who are teaching in the Baltimore and Philadelphia archdioceses, and in the jurisdiction of Baltimore, Washington, and New York. The Baltimore province has about two hundred Brothers, and those Brothers who are teaching in the Baltimore archdiocese, now a part of the Baltimore province, are about twenty. The Baltimore province has also the jurisdiction of the Baltimore archdiocese, and in the dioceses of Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Burlington, Cleveland, Detroit, Manchester, Providence, Springfield, and Syracuse, as well as those in the Halifax archdiocese. Probably there are four hundred and fifty Brothers attached to these institutions. The jurisdiction of the provincial of the St. Louis province is at St. Louis, Mo., and his authority extends to all the institutions of the order in the St. Louis, St. Paul, St. Peter, Chicago and New Orleans archdioceses, and to those in the dioceses of St. Joseph, Kansas City and Nashville. The province contains close upon two hundred Brothers. The Brothers of the Christian Schools were brought to the Pacific slope in 1889, to take charge of St. Mary's College, then in San Francisco, but now at Oakland. Their provincial who resides at this college, supervises the houses of the order in Archbishop Riordan's jurisdiction and those in the archdiocese of Sacramento.

The American houses of the order have produced some noted men during the half century that the Brothers have been in existence here. Brother Patrick, who became assistant superior general of the order, and who visited his country ten years ago, was called to Paris, where he is in the United States, and was an enviable reputation for learning, energy and piety. Brother Justin is another noted name, and to come down to more recent times, Brother Marcellan, who is charge of the Catholic educational exhibit at the World's Fair held at Chicago in 1893, and whose Bishop appointed him called another "Vincent" because of the splendid plan which he originated and executed for the Catholic educational exhibit. And then there was the learned Father De La Salle, whose learning was such that he approached the learned accomplished men of the Catholic literature of many more learned, and distinguished names on the rolls of our Christian Brothers, but these names are already known to many who are members of an order whose actor is already mentioned, and who seek no other reward than the consciousness of work well done, and tilling its down to the reward of those who in that many have lived.

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Eighteen colleges were sent to the conference of Christian colleges in Chicago. The eighteen colleges controlled by the Order of Brothers of the Christian Schools, were deferred from joining with the other institutions by order from the Superior of the order in Paris. The reason for the prohibition order was explained as follows by Monsignor Dwyer, head of the Catholic mission in Paris: "For several years past the Christian Brothers have been allowed to teach the classics in their schools in this country. It was a privilege granted temporarily by the government of France in Paris. The present constitution of the Christian Brothers in the United States, however, forbids the teaching of the classics in their schools. The government of France, however, has decided that the old rule forbidding the teaching of the classics should be enforced in America as elsewhere. The decision was submitted to the Propaganda, and the latter issued a decree (which I understand has not been published) ordaining that after a lapse of two years the States should cease to teach Latin and Greek. At the expiration of that time the American Brothers petitioned their superiors for a further prolongation. The Superior decided recently that no delay had been allowed, and insisted on the enforcement of the constitution of the congregation, and the decree of the Propaganda. The American Brothers appealed to the American Bishops to take up their case. Some forty-odd Bishops sympathized with their cause and appointed Father Byrne to plead in Rome before the Propaganda for a continuation of the present system. The Superior sent their representatives to Rome, and to all Bishop Byrne's arguments, but objected that the constitution of the congregation was made to be obeyed, and that the Propaganda has already decided that the constitution in question is to be enforced."

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The American houses of the order have produced some noted men during the half century that the Brothers have been in existence here. Brother Patrick, who became assistant superior general of the order, and who visited his country ten years ago, was called to Paris, where he is in the United States, and was an enviable reputation for learning, energy and piety. Brother Justin is another noted name, and to come down to more recent times, Brother Marcellan, who is charge of the Catholic educational exhibit at the World's Fair held at Chicago in 1893, and whose Bishop appointed him called another "Vincent" because of the splendid plan which he originated and executed for the Catholic educational exhibit. And then there was the learned Father De La Salle, whose learning was such that he approached the learned accomplished men of the Catholic literature of many more learned, and distinguished names on the rolls of our Christian Brothers, but these names are already known to many who are members of an order whose actor is already mentioned, and who seek no other reward than the consciousness of work well done, and tilling its down to the reward of those who in that many have lived.

Eighteen colleges were sent to the conference of Christian colleges in Chicago. The eighteen colleges controlled by the Order of Brothers of the Christian Schools, were deferred from joining with the other institutions by order from the Superior of the order in Paris. The reason for the prohibition order was explained as follows by Monsignor Dwyer, head of the Catholic mission in Paris: "For several years past the Christian Brothers have been allowed to teach the classics in their schools in this country. It was a privilege granted temporarily by the government of France in Paris. The present constitution of the Christian Brothers in the United States, however, forbids the teaching of the classics in their schools. The government of France, however, has decided that the old rule forbidding the teaching of the classics should be enforced in America as elsewhere. The decision was submitted to the Propaganda, and the latter issued a decree (which I understand has not been published) ordaining that after a lapse of two years the States should cease to teach Latin and Greek. At the expiration of that time the American Brothers petitioned their superiors for a further prolongation. The Superior decided recently that no delay had been allowed, and insisted on the enforcement of the constitution of the congregation, and the decree of the Propaganda. The American Brothers appealed to the American Bishops to take up their case. Some forty-odd Bishops sympathized with their cause and appointed Father Byrne to plead in Rome before the Propaganda for a continuation of the present system. The Superior sent their representatives to Rome, and to all Bishop Byrne's arguments, but objected that the constitution of the congregation was made to be obeyed, and that the Propaganda has already decided that the constitution in question is to be enforced."

The Christian Brothers were introduced into the United States by Archbishop Mooney of Baltimore, and now constitute four provinces in this country. First in order comes the Baltimore province, the head of which resides at the Normal Institute, Annapolis. This province includes the Brothers who are teaching in the Baltimore and Philadelphia archdioceses, and in the jurisdiction of Baltimore, Washington, and New York. The Baltimore province has about two hundred Brothers, and those Brothers who are teaching in the Baltimore archdiocese, now a part of the Baltimore province, are about twenty. The Baltimore province has also the jurisdiction of the Baltimore archdiocese, and in the dioceses of Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Burlington, Cleveland, Detroit, Manchester, Providence, Springfield, and Syracuse, as well as those in the Halifax archdiocese. Probably there are four hundred and fifty Brothers attached to these institutions. The jurisdiction of the provincial of the St. Louis province is at St. Louis, Mo., and his authority extends to all the institutions of the order in the St. Louis, St. Paul, St. Peter, Chicago and New Orleans archdioceses, and to those in the dioceses of St. Joseph, Kansas City and Nashville. The province contains close upon two hundred Brothers. The Brothers of the Christian Schools were brought to the Pacific slope in 1889, to take charge of St. Mary's College, then in San Francisco, but now at Oakland. Their provincial who resides at this college, supervises the houses of the order in Archbishop Riordan's jurisdiction and those in the archdiocese of Sacramento.