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Augustus Henry Law,

SAILOR AND JESUIT.

(1833-1880.)

WE live in days in which it is commonly said that the age of Saints, even as the age of miracles and of chivalry, is passed. And yet the Holy See is ever busy in raising fresh *Beati* to our altars; the "causes" of other great servants of God are constantly being investigated and promoted; and the lives of holy men and women, many of them our contemporaries, are daily coming to light, proving, if proof be necessary, that the note of holiness is as true of the Church to-day as ever. Such a life it is of which we now attempt a short sketch.*

Augustus Henry Law was born on the 21st of October, 1833, at Trumpington, a village near Cambridge. His father, a clergyman of the Church of England, and his mother were both truly religious, and devoted themselves to the education of their children. Their home at East Brent, in Somersetshire, was an ideal one, and we can trace its wholesome influence throughout the life of Augustus. As a boy, he showed great aptitude

* This sketch is based on a "Memoir of Fr. Law," by his father (3 vols.); "Life of Fr. Law," by Ellis Schreiber (Quarterly Series); and "Notes in Remembrance, and last Relics of Augustus Law, S.J.," by Fr. Matthew Russell, S.J.

and diligence in his studies, and his character developed rapidly. He was very full of fun, warm-hearted, and thoughtful for others, while his devotion to his mother knew no bounds. He was, however, soon to lose her. In October, 1844, Augusta, the eighth child, was born, and though at first all went well with both mother and child, a sudden change occurred, and she sank rapidly. Her death was most edifying and in harmony with her life, characterized, as it was, by thought for the children she was leaving and by resignation to the will of God. For Augustus especially, she had words of parting advice, and these he never forgot. "Throughout your life," she said to him, "never forget these words: 'Thou, God, seest me' (Gen. xvi. 13)." Their home was naturally broken up by this sad event. Mr. Law went to reside at Wells, of which he was Chancellor, and the boys returned to their school, distant but a few miles from their former home.

And here an extract from a remarkable meditation written by Augustus before he was twelve years old, may fittingly be inserted. It is quite original, and shows how, thus early in life, the grace of God was doing its work in his soul. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10)," is the text on which it is based. He writes: "That day will be an *awful* one, when our Blessed Lord comes down to judge us. Every one will have to give an account of his deeds, whether good or evil. Some will be doomed to eternal destruction, and go with the devil and his wicked angels to Hell, others will go with our Blessed Saviour to Heaven, where they will live in eternal life for ever and ever. Everyone will receive his due. People cannot think too much of that awful day. Some profligate people pass their time on earth in dissipation and folly, forgetting that on that day they will have to give an account of all things done in the body, whether good or evil. On the other hand, others always bear in mind that they have to give an account of themselves on the judgment day, and have set their affections on things above, and not on things of the earth, always calling upon the name of the Lord and following His

blessed steps. Then, oh try, you who wish to live in Heaven with our Blessed Lord, to follow Christ's example, and then you may be sure you will live in Heaven in bliss and happiness; and recollect above all things that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."

In the autumn of 1845, Mr. Law accepted the living of Harborne, near Birmingham, and on the way back to school, after the Christmas holidays, Augustus spent a few days in London on a visit to his uncle, Lord Ellenborough, then first Lord of the Admiralty. This chance visit proved a turning point in his life. Lord Ellenborough was immensely taken with his nephew, and at once wrote to Mr. Law proposing that that "fine eldest boy" of his should be a sailor. Mr. Law heartily approved of the plan and laid it before Augustus, who in turn, gladly gave his consent, though he had strong leanings towards the Church as his profession. The conclusion of his letter, in answer to his father, is very characteristic: "Will you thank Lord Ellenborough for me," he writes, "for having given me such a jolly chance? Will you tell me how many guns the ship has got? Recollect I can't swim." He was at once appointed to H.M.S. *Carysfort*, bound for the Cape, and having bravely bid adieu to all his friends at home, started on his first voyage in March, 1846.

He had characteristically determined to devote his whole energies to being a good sailor, and soon found the life congenial to his tastes. Writing from the Cape, he says: "I have now been three months in Her Majesty's service, and I must say I like the Navy very much. I don't think there is anyone in the ship happier than me." His superiors as well as his companions soon formed a high opinion of him, saying "he promised to be an ornament to his profession." This voyage took him to Sydney, New Zealand, and Valparaiso, and it was not till November, 1847, that the *Carysfort* was homeward bound. "Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!" writes Augustus; "I am not going to write a long letter, for about three or four weeks after you get this letter I hope to see you. How jolly it will be when we anchor at Spit-