

**CARDINAL MANNING AS
PRESENTED IN HIS OWN
LETTERS AND NOTES**

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Cardinal Manning as presented in his own letters and notes by Stanley Roamer

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STANLEY ROAMER

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BY
STANLEY ROAMER.

BN

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INTRODUCTION.

IN a matter of controversy we very seldom get plain statements, and in a religious controversy, we may almost say never.

In the recently published 'Life of Cardinal Manning,' on the other hand, we have Letters, Diaries, Journals, and Autobiographical Notes, as to the authenticity of which there can be no dispute.

Mr. Purcell tells us in his preface (p. vi):

'All his Diaries, Journals, and Autobiographical Notes, in accordance with his wish and will, passed into my possession. I did not attempt to revise or reverse Cardinal Manning's directions. In his Diaries, Journals, and Notes he told the story of his own life, laid bare the workings of his heart; its trials and temptations, sometimes its secrets and sorrows. It was not for me by suppressions to amend or to blur his handiwork.'

Mr. Purcell is a Roman Catholic himself; was an

intimate friend of Cardinal Manning's, and went through with Cardinal Manning, during his lifetime, nearly all these Diaries, Journals, Letters, and Notes. Mr. Purcell has, since the Cardinal's death, had an opportunity of consulting many of the late Cardinal's personal friends, and has thus been enabled to throw additional light on many points.

We have almost wholly confined ourselves to Roman Catholic authors in dealing with any controversial matter ; but it must be borne in mind that in all strictures that may be passed on any opinions, motives, or events, that are related in the *Life*, we are not judging the man, but the ecclesiastical system that lends itself to the successful issue of such motives or opinions. Cardinal Manning's object in compiling this record of his life, and in causing it to be published during the lifetime of many alluded to in these Diaries, Journals, and Notes, may be apparent by the time we have reached the closing years of his career.

CHAPTER I.

IT must not be forgotten that, as Mr. Purcell tells us, numerous excisions have been made in the Diaries, and masses of letters have been destroyed, so that in these volumes we view the Cardinal as he wished to be seen.

Mr. Purcell is perfectly straightforward in his comments and criticisms on matters appearing in the letters or Diaries; but his conclusions are in some cases drawn from a strictly Roman Catholic point of view, and would not, therefore, appeal to those who do not hold the Roman Catholic faith.

There seems some doubt as to the date of the late Cardinal's birth. Mr. Purcell gives it as having taken place on July 15, 1807, but others, including the Cardinal himself in a recorded conversation, state the correct date to be July 15, 1808. The date of baptism, at least, is known beyond any doubt whatever, and that was May 25, 1809, and the delay is thus accounted for by Mr. Purcell: 'Mr. William Manning, in those days at the height of his prosperity, was not

a little prone to ostentation; and his ambition was not satisfied, apparently, unless he had a Bishop to baptize his children. The convenience of so important a personage had, of course, to be studied, and that may account for the delay.¹

As an illustration of this proneness to ostentation, Mr. Purcell gives a note to the following effect:

'W. Manning was in the habit of driving every morning from Totteridge to the City, a distance of eight miles, in a coach and four.'²

We may compare this with Manning's own account of his father in the House of Commons. It will afford a good instance of Manning's peculiar way of viewing things.

'But he was too refined, modest and sensitive to make a display, or to overdo anything. He was in danger of underdoing what he did from fear of display.'³

We shall frequently find this 'sensitiveness' applied to Manning's own character, but we must leave our readers to judge of its appropriateness.

In due course Manning went to Harrow School, and of that period Bishop Oxenden gives the following anecdote:

'There was even in those early days a little self-assertion in his character. On one occasion he was invited to dinner at Mr. Cunningham's, the Vicar of

¹ Vol. i., p. 3.

² Vol. i., p. 3, note.

³ Vol. i., p. 8.

the parish. On his return at night, one of his friends questioned him as to whom he had met, whether he had enjoyed his evening, and especially as to what part he had taken in the general conversation. To these inquiries he answered that he had spent the evening pleasantly enough, but that he had said little, and, indeed, had been almost silent, for there were two or three superior persons present; and he added, "You know that my motto is 'Aut Cæsar aut nullus.' I therefore held my tongue and listened."¹

Manning proceeded to Oxford, and Mr. Purcell tells us that "On March 12, 1829, an undergraduate, young in years if not in audacity, rose to speak for the first time at the Union at Oxford. . . . He rose, as the veteran orator without a blush once confessed, in fear and trembling to speak his first speech."²

The comment on this and the accompanying anecdote shows one great characteristic of the man throughout his life: "After this event, in a life destined to be so eventful and so full of surprises, it was noted by his contemporaries that Manning ever wore a look of self-consciousness; he seemed to fancy, as he walked through the halls and corridors, or sat in the common-room, that every eye regarded him either with admiration or in envy. It was said in jest in those days, that Manning was self-conscious even in his nightcap."³

At times Mr. Purcell's conclusions as to his character

¹ Vol. i., p. 27.

² Vol. i., p. 29.

³ Vol. i., p. 30.