

Beauchamp came in and said she was afraid she could not cook anything for us as there was so much cooking going on in the kitchen for the tenants' dinners. However, she promised us some bread, butter, cheese, beer and boiled eggs. While these things were being got ready we amused ourselves by looking out of the window at the people in the green courtyard below. A tent or rather an awning had been reared against the wall of the Lady Chapel. The wind flapped the canvas sides and strained at the ropes. The cloth was then spread on the tables. No viands had yet appeared but a savoury reek pervaded the place and the tantalised tenants walked about lashing their tails, growling and snuffing the scent of food hungrily like Welsh wolves.

For our part, we consumed eighteen eggs between us and a proportionate amount of bread, cheese, butter and beer.'

A Visit to Capel-y-ffin

Friday 2nd September 1870. At 1045 started across the fields to walk to Capel-y-ffin. I came in sight of the little Capel-y-ffin church squatting like a stout grey owl among its seven great black yews. I hastened on and in front of the Chapel House farm there was the sunny-haired girl washing at a tub as usual by the brookside, the girl with the blue eyes, not the blue of the sky but the blue of the sea. 'Is Father Ignatius here?' I asked. 'Yes, at least, he was here this morning.' I asked a mason at work upon the building if Father Ignatius was there. 'There he is with his brother', said the mason. A black-robed and cowed monk was walking fast along the bottom of the field towards a barn with Clavering Lyne. Clavering came up to me but the monk walked on quickly without looking round. Clavering took me to his mother and father, who were sitting on a garden seat under a tree in an pretty little dingle. They had just arrived unexpectedly from Pontrilas having driven up the valley as I came down. It was curious, our meeting thus as it were by chance.

Mr and Mrs Lyne came up out of the dingle and Mrs Lyne brought up Father Ignatius and introduced us. He struck me as being a man of gentle simple kind manners, excitable and entirely possessed by the one idea. He always spoke to his father and mother as 'Papa' and 'Mamma' and called me 'Father'. His head and brow are very fine, the forehead beautifully rounded and highly imaginative. The face is a very saintly one and the eyes extremely beautiful, earnest and expressive, a dark soft brown. When excited, they seem absolutely to flame. He wears the Greek or early British

tonsure all round the temples, leaving the hair of the crown untouched. His manner gives you the impression of great earnestness and single-mindedness . . . Father Ignatius wore the black Benedictine habit with the two loose wings or pieces falling in front and behind, two violet tassels behind, the knotted scourge girdle, a silver cross on the breast and a brazen or golden cross hanging from the rosary of black beads under the left arm . . .

After luncheon we went up to the monastery again and Mr and Mrs Lyne, Clavering and I each laid a stone in the wall. We had to go up a ladder on to the scaffolding and hoarding. Each of us walled our stone for the benefit of the masons. I laid a stone at a particular request of Father Ignatius. The building that the masons are at work on now is the West cloister which is to be fitted up temporarily for the accommodation of the monks. This work was begun in March and ought to have been finished long ago. But there was no one to look after the workmen and they did as much or as little as they pleased. Father Ignatius thinks everyone is as good as himself and is perfectly unworldly, innocent and unsuspecting. He gave the contractor £500 and took no receipt from him. The consequence is that he has been imposed upon, cheated and robbed, right and left . . .

The Order of St Benedict, Father Ignatius says, is now worth about £60. He makes about £1,000 a year. The monks are supported entirely by his preaching. He gets on much better with the Low Church than with the High Church people, he says—best of all with the Dissenters who consider and call him a second Wesley. He allows that a man must be of a very rare and peculiar temperament to become and remain a monk. A monk, he says, must either be a philosopher or a 'holy fool'. He also allows that monastic life has a strong tendency to drive people mad. Out of 50 novices he could only reckon on making three monks. The rest would probably be failures. One in seven was a large percentage. . . .

When we had parted a little way and our roads had diverged he called out through the half screen of the hazel hedge, 'Father, will you remember us the next time you celebrate the Holy Communion?' 'Yes', I replied, 'I will'.

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BYD



JESUS — ONLY

PAX

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NEWSLETTER NO. 11 MAY 1983

THE past few years in the affairs of the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust have been a period of consolidation. Our Annual Pilgrimage is now an established event in the ecclesiastical calendar and the monastery church has been restored to the condition of a respectable and dignified ruin. What of the future? Ideas for improvements to the August celebrations and gifts to the preservation fund are always welcome. As a prelude to activities ahead it seems worthwhile to try to assess the standing of Ignatius in the Church to-day. I know that many readers of this

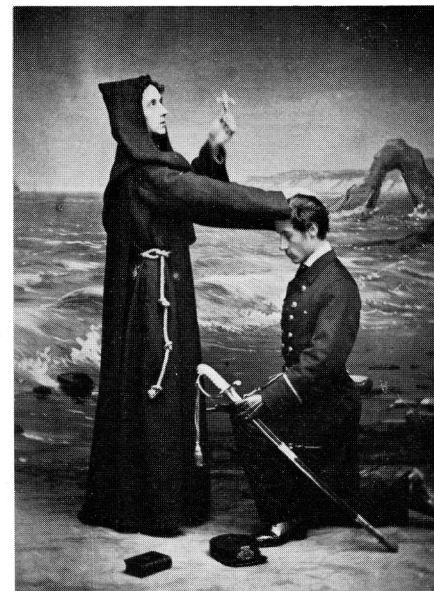
Newsletter, imbued with reverence for the monastic ideal, may feel it almost an impertinence to take a cool hard look at the achievements of the founder of Llanthony Monastery. None the less, if we are to widen our circle of friends, we must be prepared to welcome those whose affection for his memory falls short of outright devotion. My own place among the Trustees depends upon my being vicar of the parish in which the monastery stands. So I write as a sympathetic admirer of a devout Christian eccentric rather than from within the tradition usually associated with Ignatius.

'Father Ignatius has such a wonderful way of being all things to all men.' Thus did Sister Mary Agnes (Miss J. M. Povey) write of the man who exercised so magnetic an influence upon her turbulent and unhappy youth.

The trouble about being all things to all men is that detached observers may find it difficult to ascertain what one actually stands for. It is significant that Miss Povey entitled one of the chapters of her book '*Of What Religion is Father Ignatius?*'

A journalist on the staff of the *Brecon County Times* at the turn of the century provided an answer of sorts when he described Ignatius as 'an inconsistent compound of the mystic and the evangelical.' This is admirable as far as it goes, but one might wish to single out the words 'inconsistent' and 'mystic' for further consideration.

Ignatius was certainly not a mystic in the sense that S. Teresa or S. John of the Cross were mystics. Not for him were the dark night of the soul or the beatific vision. He



Fr Ignatius blessing his younger brother, Midshipman Augustus Lyne, in a studio at Valetta, Malta in 1866.

was always more attracted by the icing than by the cake and his understanding of mysticism was confined to the psychical phenomena allegedly associated with it. He believed that the revival of monasticism within the Church of England would not be authentic unless accompanied by the extraordinary happenings recorded in the lives of post-Tridentine continental saints. Hence the peculiar events so lovingly catalogued by the Baroness de Bertouch, culminating in the resurrection of Mr. Hope of Hay and the apparitions of the Virgin Mary.

Ignatius' inconsistency appears in his attempts to combine Evangelical and Catholic devotions. It may be that at a deeper level the two will one day be reconciled. But Ignatius was an old-fashioned individualist who never really understood Catholicism, despite his love of gloomy cloisters and gaudy altars. No instructed Catholic, however modest his intellectual faculties, could have spoken the words that Ignatius delivered in a sermon at Westminster Town Hall in 1885: 'When a man has sought Christ, and by a saving, living faith has received Christ in His fulness, as God's gift to him, then it is time for him to look about to see to which Church he should belong.' Sentiments like these have brought many an earnest zealot to a fiery end and no monastic habit can conceal the naked Protestantism of their author.

It is not for ecumenical subtlety that Ignatius is to be admired. He was disowned by Anglicans without the usual consolation of being embraced by Roman Catholics. Nor can he be credited with the restoration of monasticism to that branch of the Church from which Henry VIII had excised it. The religious vocation has indeed returned to the Church of England but this is due to calmer and more calculating brains than Ignatius possessed.

What, then, is the secret of the fascination that Ignatius undoubtedly continues to exert on great numbers of people of very diverse beliefs and backgrounds? Why do they trouble to attend an annual pilgrimage to a ruined

church on a remote hillside on a day when it usually rains? Why are books still written and television documentaries produced about this curious, irrational and not wholly agreeable cleric?

It has been suggested that Ignatius was a latter-day type of the 'holy fool', the simple-minded enthusiast who believes everything he is told and whose disasters are ultimately victories. This seems unlikely. I do not think that Ignatius was particularly holy, except in the conventional sense in which all monks and nuns are said to be unworldly. Nor do I believe him to have been such a fool as he sometimes chose to make out. As, for instance, when he insisted that the earth was flat.

The continuing interest in Ignatius is partly a matter of nostalgia, a longing for the consolations of old-fashioned Catholicism. Yet this hardly applies to the young people who come to our pilgrimages. Often they are very intelligent young people who appear bored with contemporary expressions of Christian worship. It may be that the Church as we know it, with its obsessive concern for simplified liturgies, political involvement and bureaucratic structures, is itself becoming old-fashioned. What the Spirit may say to the churches in the twenty-first century cannot be anticipated, but the message is unlikely to be confined to episcopal congresses or boards of social responsibility. For this reason I welcome a loose-knit fellowship like ours. In keeping with the tradition of Ignatius our role may be a minor, even an eccentric one. Yet, so long as we are open to the future as well as mindful of the past, we have a contribution to make.

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One of our founder-member trustees, Revd F. H. Mountney, through whose interest and enthusiasm the idea of the Trust began, has, following service abroad, moved to Harleston, Norfolk. Fr Mountney now finds that due to distance and various commitments he will be unable to continue to be actively associated with

the work of the Trust. Reluctantly, he feels that he should resign. However, he will remain as an honorary member of the Trust and all those interested in our work will wish to join us in thanking him for all his interest and support since the days when he was Vicar of All Saints at Hereford.

At our last meeting in March of this year, Mr Malcolm Gould was invited to become a trustee and we are pleased to report that he has accepted. Mr Gould is Secretary of the Diocesan Chapter of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary and is organist and choirmaster at St Peter's, Blaenavon. He has also agreed to take up the duties of Master of Ceremonies at our future annual pilgrimages. In accepting this appointment he will be continuing the work so ably and efficiently carried out in the past by the Revd Hugh Allen. Mr Wilfred Davies deserves our gratitude for his unceasing labours as custodian of The Monastery and the abbey church. Mr Douglas Lyne continues to be an indefatigable archivist. Fr Brocard Sewell has written another splendid book, 'Like Black Swans—Some People and Themes' (Tabb House) that should be of great interest to our readers.

The Pilgrimage this year will be on Saturday, 20th August. The preacher will be the Revd Dr John I. Morgans, Provincial Moderator of the United Reformed Church (Province of Wales). The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 1130 am at St David's, Llanthony and the procession will leave Capel-y-ffin at 2.45 pm for Evensong at the Monastery Church. We look forward to seeing you all again.

At last year's Pilgrimage, we listened to an admirable address by the Venerable

SOME SELECTIONS

FROM THE DIARY OF THE REVD FRANCIS KILVERT

A Visit to Llanthony Priory

On Midsummer Day in 1870 Francis and his brother Edward set off to walk to Llanthony and back from Clyro. This expedition account is of a visit to Llanthony Priory, the impressive 12th Century ruin, four miles down the valley from Capel-y-ffin.

'When we entered the Priory precincts the

Owain Jones, Archdeacon of Brecon, in which he reminded us that a church is primarily a setting for the liturgy. The Archdeacon illustrated his theme with reference to three men intimately connected with Capel-y-ffin—Father Ignatius, Charles Buckeridge, who designed The Monastery, and Eric Gill. One other notable visitor to the Vale of Ewyas was the Revd Francis Kilvert and we end this edition of our Newsletter with a selection from his famous diary. Thank you all, on behalf of the Trustees, for your continuing support and generosity.

for the Trustees
IVOR DAVIES



Hay-making in the Abbot's Meadow circa 1880.

courtyard was swarming with people. Some were walking about, some sitting down under the penthouse on either side of the Abbey Tavern door, some standing in knots and groups talking. The kitchen too was buzzing and swarming like a hive. Beauchamp came forward and met us and we were shown into the upper long room. Here the servant girl Sarah told us that it was Mr Arnold Savage Landor's rent day. Mrs