

flesh, that the mysteriously hidden and beautiful name is the name of Jesus. 'A virgin has brought forth a king whose name is eternal' (Christmas Lauds, ant. 2) and it is with this holy name that the new year opens on the Feasts of the Circumcision and the Holy Name. It is as if, having been for so long concealed in the depths of the godhead, the presence of the Saviour who bears this beautiful name must be brought home to us by repeating this beloved name, this sweet name, Jesus. He it is whose brightness must fill the earth and every heart, being born again by grace in those who receive him. 'Stay with us, O Lord, and illumine us with thy light and when darkness of soul has been dispelled, fill the world with thy sweetness' (Office of the Holy Name, lauds hymn).



CAMPION'S MISSION

CHARLES SOMERVILLE, S.J.

WHEN Edmund Campion after long temporizing finally broke from the allurements of his humanist's life at Oxford and retired abroad, Cecil observed of him: 'It is a very great pity to see so notable a man leave his country, for he was one of the diamonds of England'. Four years earlier, in 1566, when Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford, her chief minister had applauded the eloquence and personal charm of the rising Fellow of St John's college. On that occasion Campion had delivered orations in the name of the university before Elizabeth, as thirteen years earlier, representing London schoolboys, he had spoken his address to Queen Mary. Approbation, popularity and honour continued to follow him: he was made proctor and public orator, the highest posts compatible with his standing in the university. Then he tore the net which Anglicanism was throwing round him, withdrew to Ireland, was hunted thence because he lived as a Catholic and took refuge in Douai, 1571.

William Allen, founder of the English College at Douai, is justly called the second father of the Catholic Church in England, for he foiled the policy of William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, to deprive the English people of their priests and their ancient faith. To Allen, in turn, it must have been a disappointment, when after only eighteen months at Douai—long enough however for Campion to claim its proto-martyr, Cuthbert Mayne, a pupil—his prized professor left him to join the Jesuits in Rome. At that time the Society of Jesus had not taken any part in the English mission. But Allen was large-hearted: he made no demur; perhaps he looked forward to the reward he gained nine years later when he induced the Jesuit authorities to send priests to England, and Campion, ordained in 1578, was assigned with Robert Persons to that mission.

On the day that the company left Rome, April 18th 1580, one of secretary Walsingham's agents forwarded all their names to his master in London. Besides the Jesuits, with the lay-worker Ralph Emerson, he named four old Queen Mary priests, three young priests from the English College, Ralph Sherwin, Luke Kirby and Edward Rishton, two lay-men, Thomas Bruscoe and John Pascal, as well as the two leaders, who had gone ahead, Dr Gradwell, the eighty-year-old bishop of St Asaph, and Dr Morton, penitentiary of St Peter's.

On their arrival at Rheims after a six weeks' journey, the party learnt to their dismay of a very different expedition set afoot and sponsored by the pope. This was the sending to Ireland of Dr Sanders as papal legate with troops and money 'to comfort and assist the earl of Desmond and others who had taken up arms in defence of their religion'. Persons, reporting this painful surprise, continues: 'We plainly foresaw that this would be laid against us and other priests, if we should be taken in England (as though we had been privy or partakers thereof, as in very truth we were not, nor ever heard or suspected until this day). But as we could not remedy the matter and as our consciences were clear, we resolved through evil report or good report to go on with the purely spiritual action we had in hand.'

Sailing from different ports, in various disguises, by ones and twos, the missionaries reached England. Persons passed as a soldier returning from the Low Countries and prepared for Campion's later arrival in London. 'Mr Edmunds, a jewel

merchant', crossed to Dover, was detained on suspicion but was soon allowed to proceed. Arriving at the Thames Hythe he was recognized from Persons' description by one of George Gilbert's associates who stepped at once to the boat's side: 'Mr Edmunds, give me your hand; I stay here for you to lead you to your friends'. Off they went to a house in Chancery Lane, where Gilbert clothed the priest like a gentleman and furnished him with a horse. The house was that of the chief pursuivant.

Only the heroic co-operation of chivalrous lay-men made the mission of the priests possible. For expenses, for safe lodging, for guidance in travel, for introductions, George Gilbert's association of young Catholic gentry made itself responsible. Danger lurked everywhere. To consort with Campion soon became particularly dangerous. His so-called *Brag* or *Challenge*, while it aroused enthusiasm among Catholics, intensified the Government's search for its author. He wrote it in half an hour, at sudden call, when he and Persons were already saddled, about to leave London for the country. Mr Thomas Pounce, deputed by other Catholics, arrived to beg the Jesuits to set down the purpose of their mission on paper so that this might be produced in the event of their capture and imprisonment when 'the heretics might pretend, as is their custom, that they had recanted'. In a letter to his Father General, Campion summarizes these contents; 'I professed myself to be a priest of the Society, that I returned to enlarge the Catholic faith, to teach the gospel, to minister the sacraments, humbly asking audience of the queen and nobility of the realm and proffering disputes to the adversaries'. Pounce received the paper unsealed, later read it, was thrilled by its eloquence, and gave copies to some Catholics. Two copies soon fell into the hands of the council. In the letter mentioned above Campion writes: 'That error of spreading abroad hath much advanced the cause', but adds: 'At the very writing hereof, the persecution rages most cruelly. The house where I am is sad; no other talk but of death, prison or spoil of their friends; nevertheless they proceed with courage.'

During a single exciting year Campion ranged through the English counties, passing swiftly from one Catholic household to another; a stay of one night was usual; to stay longer courted danger. His first foray, lasting three months, took him into Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. After it he wrote to

the Jesuit Father General: 'I ride about some piece of the country every day. The harvest is wonderful great. On horseback I meditate my sermon; when I come to the house I polish it. Then I talk with such as come to me or hear their confession. In the morning after mass I preach: they hear with exceeding greediness, and very often they receive the sacrament. . . . I cannot long escape the hands of the heretics; the enemies have so many eyes, so many tongues, so many scouts, so many crafts. I am in apparel to myself very ridiculous. I often change it and my name also.'

Proclamation after proclamation was issued by the government against harbouring the Jesuits. Spies and pursuivants sought the author of the *Brag*. Everywhere he went 'he heard it noised abroad that Campion was taken'. Nevertheless, in November, he made rendezvous at Uxbridge with Persons who despatched him further afield into Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire. Burleigh's later investigations discovered many of the houses he stayed at—with dire consequences for his hosts. In Lancashire he was saved by a quick-witted servant maid: on a sudden appearance of pursuivants she pushed him into a muddy pond—an effectual disguise. Again people were greedy to hear his sermons. In snatched leisure he composed his *Decem Rationes* for the printing press which Persons had established, so that Catholics should not remain gagged, unable to reply to the publications of adversaries. Sent to Persons at Easter, 1581, checked in London for the accuracy of references, and seen through the press at Stonor Park by Campion himself, the work was printed and most of the four hundred copies were secretly distributed in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, for the commencement on June 27th.

Ten Reasons for the confidence with which Edmund Campion offered his adversaries to dispute on behalf of the faith set before the famous men of our Universities was the title. In his preface he says he had written, not published, a challenge to disputation; this had been taken 'atrociously', as if he had spoken from conceit. It had been answered, not with 'We accept your challenge; the Queen allows it; come', but with cries of 'Jesuit, sedition, arrogance, traitor'. He sees then that the only platform he will be allowed is the gallows: hence he gives the ten heads of his intended argument; a syllabus as it were of the lectures he was not allowed to deliver, to show that it was not his own strength, but the inherent strength of his cause, which gave him courage to

stand one against all. In a cause like this he may be killed, he cannot be conquered. After the exposition of his ten topics—the evidence of scripture, the Fathers, the councils, of Church history, etc.—he concludes with an appeal to Elizabeth to associate herself with her ancestors and the heroes of Christendom—all Catholics. 'The day shall come, Elizabeth, that will show thee clearly who loved thee best, the Society of Jesus or the brood of Luther.'

The eloquent style, the confident arguments, the dramatic method of dispersal, the fame of the author, the outwitting of the government by the secret printing, all combined to make friends exultant and enemies angry. The latter gained speedy satisfaction. Within three weeks the author was taken at Lyford Grange in Berkshire. On Saturday, July 22nd 1581, he was led with derision through London (a paper stuck in his hat reading 'Campion, the Seditious Jesuit'), and lodged in the Tower.

Now, for the next four months of his imprisonment, the priest must remember the words he had written to the Jesuit novices: 'Whenever we look into the mirror (of Christ's example) we see clearly that the temptation of no pleasure, the fear of no pain, should pluck us from the arms of such a master'. After four days in Little Ease he was secretly taken to Leicester House. The Queen herself was there. She, with the earls of Leicester and Bedford, received him with all honour and courtesy, told him they found no fault with him except that he was a papist—'Which', he replied, 'is my greatest glory'—and offered him his life, his liberty, riches and honours if he would renounce his religion and become a protestant. Refusing the bribe, he was returned to the Tower. Five days later Leicester and Burleigh signed the warrant to put him to the torture. On July 31st he was racked. Largely by their own measures the lords of the council had made Campion the most talked-of man in the country; their purpose now was to discredit his character and lessen his *prestige*. It was proclaimed from all the London pulpits that Campion was about to recant at Paul's Cross. The event belied that rumour.

Burleigh had a more successful stratagem. He poured out order upon order to county sheriffs and officials to arrest one Catholic gentleman after another, who, so each order alleged, by Campion's own confession had entertained him in their houses. The trick succeeded at first. Consternation fell on the Catholics; even Protestants condemned such treachery. Mr Thomas Pounce,

impetuous as ever, bribed a keeper to deliver a note of reproach to the prisoner who wrote in answer that 'he had discovered no things of secret, nor would he, come rack, come rope'. It was said that he had admitted being present at certain houses when he saw the government already possessed sure knowledge of the fact, and for this frailty he asked pardon of the Catholics. Among these the suspicion that Campion's pretended confessions were forgeries became conviction when the government repeatedly refused to confront him with those he was said to have accused, and after they heard his repudiation of any betrayal of his brethren at his public disputation in the Tower. This debate was arranged to diminish Campion's intellectual reputation. On September 1st, after a second racking, he was summoned to dispute in theology against the deans of Windsor and of St Paul's. The council, deriving no satisfaction from the results, now adopted the course of slandering his patriotism. A third time he was racked, and more cruelly than ever, to extract some sort of confession that he had plotted against the queen. It was all in vain.

The council having failed to implicate Campion in any real conspiracy, it remained still possible to suborn false witness to prove him to have engaged in an imaginary one. Campion was the man in whose behalf the policy was invented—a policy that made many later Catholic martyrs. The Council forged a plot, and in accordance with their forgery drew up an indictment to the effect that Allen, Morton, Persons and Campion had made conspiracy to kill the queen, stir up rebellion, and procure foreign invasion of England. As an afterthought were added the names of all the other priests they happened to have in prison; in the margin of the paper of indictment the thirteen names were inserted: 'James Bosgrave, William, Filby, Thomas Ford, Thomas Cottam, Lawrence Richardson, John Collyton, Ralph Sherwin, Luke Kirby, Robert Johnson, Edward Rushton, Alexander Briant, Henry Orton, a civilian and—Short'.

Arraigned in mid-November, all pleaded 'not guilty', Sherwin adding: 'The plain reason of our standing here is our religion, not treason'. On November 20th in Westminster Hall Campion was the chief spokesman for all the prisoners at a trial in which, says Hallam in his *Constitutional History*, 'The prosecution was as unfairly conducted and supported by so slender evidence, as any,

perhaps, that can be found in our books'. The compliant jury gave its verdict of 'guilty'.

Lord Chief Justice: Campion and the rest, what can you say that you should not die?

Campion: It was not our death that ever we feared. But we knew that we were not lords of our own lives, and therefore, for want of answer would not be guilty of our own deaths. The only thing we now have to say is, that if our religion do make us traitors, we are worthy to be condemned; but otherwise are and have been as true subjects as ever the queen had. In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors—all the ancient priests, bishops and kings—all that was once the glory of England, the island of saints, and the most devoted child of the see of Peter. For what have we taught, however you may qualify it with the odious name of treason, that they did not uniformly teach? To be condemned with these old lights—not of England only but of the world—by their degenerate descendants, is both gladness and glory to us. God lives; posterity will live; their judgment is not so liable to corruption as that of those who are now going to sentence us to death.

The sentence was passed.

On December 1st 1581, Campion, Sherwin and Briant came forth from the Tower to be dragged to Tyburn and there hanged, drawn and quartered. Looking cheerfully around on the vast crowd assembled, Campion saluted them: 'God save you, gentlemen! God bless you and make you all good Catholics.' To effect that had been his mission, and for that also he died.



ST AMBROSE, A CONTEMPLATIVE

By PAX

I CAN never quite forgive St Jerome for being so cutting about St Ambrose's Latin. It seems to my ignorant mind that his Latin is only the shell of the kernel of the good nut within. Take at random, the homily for the sixth Sunday after Pentecost, almost at once, one finds this: 'The food of heavenly grace is