

BLACKFRIARS

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EDITORIAL

ON July the 27th, 1799, 'Master John Jones of Llanarth, near Monmouth', entered the Dominican school, founded at Bornhem in Flanders by Cardinal Howard, O.P., and then but recently removed to Carshalton in Surrey. Four years later he was joined by his brother, Philip. John Jones was heir to the estates of Llanarth, Treowen, and Penllwyn, and in 1828 succeeded to the headship of the senior branch of the house of Herbert (to which name his successors were to revert fifty years later). He married Lady Harriet Plunkett, daughter of the eighth Earl of Fingall, and died at Llanarth in 1848. His family had remained constant to the Catholic Faith through the centuries, and Llanarth itself has known no other religion.

In January of this year, through the signal generosity of John Jones's great-grand-daughter, the Honourable Mrs Walter Roch, Llanarth passed into the possession of the Dominican Order. This number of BLACKFRIARS is intended in some small measure to acknowledge that event. It is devoted to Wales and to Welsh Catholicism: two loyalties that have been singly served by the Herberts of Llanarth and not least by their present representative. Part of the apostolic work that the Dominicans are undertaking at Llanarth is the direction of a junior school for boys, a school that has an unbroken descent from the one that welcomed a small boy from Llanarth a

hundred and fifty years ago. It is here, in a historic house, set in the ancient kingdom of Gwent, that the Order of Preachers resumes its work for Wales and for Christian Education.

A Welsh proverb says: *Tyf yr hyn sydd o'r hyn a fu*. 'What is grows from what was'. Certainly no one considering Wales today can ignore the deep springs of her history. They alone make intelligible the strong traditions that remain; they too are the best interpretation of much that is sadly awry. The appeal to history is not a romantic nostalgia for happier, simpler days. It is the realistic and essential means for an understanding of a society that is in dissolution. The formative years of Welsh history need to be understood anew. They can never be called back, but their power demands acknowledgment. The Archbishop of Cardiff, writing of the monastic element in Welsh Catholic life, shows plainly how a distortion in historical understanding can breed radical misjudgments which persist for generations concerning the essential nature of the Church. Again, Dr Barrett Davies, in his study of Welsh hagiology, appeals for a return to a sane and scholarly examination of the sources. This recognition of the primacy of historical truth is, we hope, the unitive principle of all that is written here. Mr Charles Edwards's paper on the sixth century of Welsh Catholicism in shadow, no less than Mr Saunders Lewis's interpretation of the nonconformist theory of education, and Mr Wynne's analysis of the present situation, apply this basic, and we may say essentially Thomist, criterion to varying times, changing circumstances—for all alike are subject to the same necessity.

Asgre lan diogel ei pherchen. 'Untroubled is the possessor of a pure conscience'. The motto of the Herberts of Llanarth has its relevance still. Catholic Faith alone, we believe, can give back to Wales the spiritual and moral unity she desperately needs in evil days. But its possessors need a faith that is rooted, and made living, in charity. The conviction of the single truth that illuminates all the years of the past; which, too, alone brings meaning and release to the present: such a conviction can leave no room for arrogance. We must know before we can judge; we must judge before we can act. Such, then, is the purpose of this number of BLACKFRIARS, appearing as it does on the feast of St David whose legacy to his followers was precisely that of faith and the joy that springs from charity.

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