

## THE CATHOLIC RESISTANCE IN WALES: 1568-1678

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IN 1575 a Welsh priest in Rome wrote down a plan which he had cherished in his long years of exile, since the time when the death of Mary Tudor had extinguished his hopes of becoming Bishop of Bangor. He imagined the galleys of the Papal fleet coming to anchor at Menai, and disembarking an army led by Catholic exiles. The mountain passes from Harlech to Conway were to be blocked by Welsh Catholic sympathizers, and when sufficient English Catholics had made their way into this bridgehead, he proposed a breakout into the Midlands to rescue Mary Queen of Scots and place her on the English throne.

Dr Morys of Clynnog, the author of this scheme, made Wales his landing place for three reasons: her potentialities for resistance, her separate language and history, and her fidelity to the Catholic faith. All these points are made, from the opposite side, by Morys Clynnog's supplanter in the Bishopric of Bangor, the Protestant Nicholas Robinson. 'I have found', he wrote in 1567, 'since I came to this country images and altars standing in churches undefaced, lewd and indecent vigils and watches observed, much pilgrimage-going, many candles set up to the honour of saints, some relics yet carried about, and all the country full of beads and knots.' Fr Robert Persons, S.J., likewise turned his attention to Wales at the start of his famous missionary journey with Blessed Edmund Campion in 1580 as a region where priests would be welcome and would do great work for the Catholic cause.

Our enquiry leads us to consider the way in which the Catholic Church adapted her mission to the Welsh nation in the unprecedented circumstances of the Elizabethan persecution. First we must study the part played by the seminary priests from Douai in North Wales. At the very beginnings of the Douai seminary we find associated with Cardinal Allen a Welsh priest from Anglesey, Dr Owen Lewis, like Morys Clynnog, an Oxford graduate and an exile. From 1566 to 1572 Lewis held the chair of Canon Law at the University of Douai, and, said Allen, *in hoc seminario inchoando summus et suasor et adjutor exstitit*. The presence of these

Oxford men from North Wales at Douai undoubtedly attracted to the seminary young graduates from their own country—*graduati Oxonienses ex antiquorum Brittonum natione*—and it has recently been established that Lewis Barlow, the first Douai priest to pioneer the English mission, came from Wales. The high proportion of Welsh to English priests in the first years of Douai's missionary effort is worthy of notice. In the first four years 1574-1578, eleven out of the fifty-two priests sent on the mission came from Wales. For the rest of the century Welsh priests average about one in ten of Douai's output: thirteen from Llandaff, ten from St Asaph, seven from Bangor and three from St Davids. A survey of the achievements of six of these priests in North Wales is fortunately possible from documentary evidence.

Fr Robert Gwyn, of Bodfel in Llyn, was taken overseas by Robert Owen of Plas Du in 1571. At the seminary of Douai, left without a Welsh compatriot to talk to, he occupied the winter nights by writing long letters—treatises, by their length—to Wales. Robert Gwyn was not at all sure that the 'veterans', as he politely termed Morys Clynnog and Gruffydd Robert, were to be relied on in their optimistic views of the religious situation in Wales. (He was writing in 1574—the year before Dr Morys's invasion-fantasy was composed.) Many were hesitating, he said, between the two religions. Something more than a Welsh catechism (Dr Morys's *Athravaeth Gristnogawl*) was needed. Hence his fervent sermons in letter form. Robert Gwyn was not content to stay in exile and compose a Welsh grammar: in 1576 he returned to North Wales, a priest, and therefore subject to the penal laws.

Soon Fr Robert Gwyn may be traced saying Mass in Llyn, at Plas Du, the house of Thomas Owen. This squire is known to have harboured six priests and was the leader of a Catholic group of 'above four score persons'. Was it from Plas Du, one speculates, that Fr Gwyn's devoted women drove the Bishop of Bangor in terror-stricken flight in July 1576? Thomas Owen's brother Robert was a priest in France; his other brother, Hugh, was the outstanding Welsh layman of his generation among the exiles, high in the confidence of Allen and Persons, and greatly respected by the Spaniards. Thomas Owen is said to have supported Hugh by sending him part of the tithes of Aberdaron. Mr Emyr Gwynne

Jones has published an account of the troubles which Thomas Owen incurred through fidelity to his ancestral religion, which enables us to fix this Mass centre in the very south of Caernarvonshire and its links with others in Bromfield, the Creuddyn peninsula, and the region around Wrexham.

At Plas Newydd in Chirkland lived the Edwardes family, the owners of the lands of Valle Crucis abbey. The first John Edwardes made his house a Catholic centre at the very beginning of the Douai mission. Imprisoned several times, he broke under the strain and made a spectacular apostasy at the fifth trial of the martyr Blessed Richard Gwyn. Two of his nephews went to Douai, and Francis, the priest, similarly broke down on the scaffold at Chichester in 1588. John Edwardes, however, was instrumental in assisting two most important heroes of the Catholic resistance—the future Jesuit Provincial, Fr Robert Jones, and the proto-martyr of Wales, Blessed Richard Gwyn.

This lovable family man combined the risky occupation of teaching in the Wrexham district with the far more dangerous task of acting as agent for the Douai priests, which led to his capture in Wrexham in 1580. Here we must pass over his place in Welsh literature, and the details of his eight public trials—surely a government demonstration against the Catholic revival—and concentrate on his relations with the seminary priests. One of the early Douai men, Fr John Griffith, is mentioned as working in Llyn as well as in the Chirk area. Another appears when Richard Gwyn was tortured to make him give evidence to condemn Fr John Bennett, and one of the martyr's last acts was to distribute mementos to fifteen priests of his acquaintance. This allows us to estimate the strength of the revival which the seminary priests were producing in North Wales by 1584.

The simplicity of Richard Gwyn's life and his robust Welsh humour are again to be found in his fellow-sufferer Fr John Bennett. He went to Douai from Bryn Canellan in Flintshire in 1578, one of the first results of the activity of the Douai pioneers, and, returning in 1580, was caught two years later outside Sir Thomas Mostyn's house at Gloddaeth. He was racked at Ludlow and banished in 1585. In exile he joined the Jesuits, and within five years was back, travelling 'Wales all over, and that for the most part on foot', for thirty-five years more. He covered most of the modern diocese of Menevia, and left his traces as far apart

as Holywell and Slebech in Pembrokeshire, but perhaps his greatest service to the Catholic history of Wales was the preservation of a unique series of narratives: the accounts of his own trial and that of Blessed Richard Gwyn, and the trial of the Venerable William Davies.

Another early Douai priest was Fr Edward Hughes, who came on the mission in 1578. He stayed with John Edwardes of Chirkland and said Mass and baptized in the neighbourhood. He was in various London prisons from 1595 to 1603, when he was exiled, but returned the same year. Fr Hughes continued his work even in the Clink, organizing the journey overseas of seminary entrants from Wales and the Marches. Fr Bennett, for example, having converted John Morgan (the future martyr), sent him to Fr Hughes in the Clink and the latter arranged his journey to Douai.

Another Douai priest was arrested at Holyhead in 1592 with four boys whom he was sending to the new seminary at Valladolid. This was Fr William Davies who had come back from Douai seven years before. It has recently been shown by Mr D. M. Rogers that he was connected with the first book to be printed in Wales. That this distinction should 'belong to a group of Catholic outlaws' is, to say the least, unexpected. The leader of the group was Robert Pugh, the squire of Penrhyn Creuddyn, whose house now entertains holiday-makers near Llandudno. The book, *Y Drych Cristianogawl*, was printed at Rhiwledyn between 1586 and April 1587, in a cave which was large enough to accommodate the press and the altar where Fr Davies—'the star of his country'—said Mass.

These six instances show that, between the return of Fr Robert Gwyn in 1576 and the martyrdom of Venerable William Davies at Beaumaris in 1593, the priests from Douai exercised an effective apostolate in North Wales: a modern apostolate—witness the printing press—sustained by a strong-willed laity and producing the vocations to the priesthood which were necessary for the faith to survive. Up to the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, forty-six students from North Wales had entered the seminaries at Douai, Rome and Valladolid, of whom thirty-four were ordained and thirty can be traced on the mission. Here are the makings of a strong Catholic minority, but how effective was the Douai mission over the wider field of all North Wales? The great landowners—the Bulkeleys in Anglesey, the Wynnes

in Caernarvonshire, the Salusburies in Denbighshire—had achieved, in Archbishop Mathew's felicitous phrase, that 'gradual slipping from the moorings of Catholic practice' which the judicial murder of Thomas Salusbury the heir of Llewenni, after the Babington 'Plot', had doubtless hastened. The lesser gentry put up a better fight. The second John Edwardes of Plas Newydd was a staunch Catholic and married to Dorothy Shireburn of Stonyhurst, and their son too was a recusant until his death in 1646. Robert Pugh of Penrhyn Creuddyn, who had been High Sheriff and M.P. for Denbighshire, had to take refuge, as we have seen, in a cave at Rhiwledyn in 1586, and is found lying up with Cadwallader Wynn at Voelas near Bettws y Coed in the winter of 1603. His descendants include Jesuit priests and a Benedictine oblate and doctor, who wrote a poem in praise of his grandfather in 1676. The wary outlook of the professional men can be deduced from the diary of the lawyer Robert Parry of Eriviatt in Denbighshire. He notes baldly the execution of priests in England as they occur: his guard is only penetrated twice:

'1584 xi Octobris. Ric Whyte executed at Wrexham for his consciens.

1593. 27 day of Julye. Will' Day preest was martired in Anglesey.'

Yet Robert Parry's son Fulk became a Jesuit, and the Catholicism of his parents is clearly stated—where it was safe to do so—in the register of the seminary of Valladolid. As Professor Dodd puts it: 'while the great majority conformed at least occasionally, many, perhaps most of them, did so with some sort of mental reservation, hoping for a change either in the Queen's lifetime or at least after she had gone. And the change they looked for would of course be in the direction of the old order.' There was a resistant core among the womenfolk—the two Throgmorton girls who had married little hill squires, Pennants, Mostyns, Salusburies of Llewenni, even the wife of Sir John Conway of Bodrhyddan, appear in the recusant lists. In 1609, thirty-one out of the forty-four recusants of Bodfari were women. Mr Emyr Gwynne Jones has counted twelve hundred recusants convicted in Flintshire between 1581 and 1624, and in the latter year their fines paid into the Exchequer totalled £18,360. Here we have the real defenders of the faith: and we note the price they had to pay. A remarkable document in the British Museum preserves

an impression of the popular attitude to religion in North Wales: the crowds of barefooted pilgrims summoned to a ruined chapel by the 'pencars' or minstrels at the behest of 'some old gentlewoman'; the Sunday meetings to listen to the ancient songs and the music of the harp, whilst the sharp-eyed men look keenly across the mountain slopes and boast of the fastnesses of Wales: everybody over thirty years of age professes and maintains 'the absurdest points of popishe heresie, according to which knowledge . . . the greatest number of them frame their lives.'

When we try to assess the contribution to Wales of the Roman seminary, a very different prospect is revealed. I do not know of a single priest ordained in the English College in Rome who was back on the mission in North Wales in the reign of Elizabeth. The chief reason for this startling contrast with Douai's missionary effort would seem to be the conduct of Owen Lewis, whom we left in 1575 with the reputation of being Allen's right-hand man at Douai. His ecclesiastical promotion had been rapid: by 1578 he was a high official in the Papal Law Courts, and in favour with the Inquisition Cardinals—a coming man. Allen entrusted him with the preliminaries of the new Roman foundation, and this became to Owen Lewis another upward step in his career. To ensure his control of the new seminary, he made Rector his old Oxford colleague Dr Morys Clynnog, and thus 'touched off' the well-known quarrel of English and Welsh students in 1579. Anglo-Welsh rows were in the University tradition which so many of the seminarists shared; they were not unknown in Douai, but none of them had such fatal consequences as this. For the unforeseen intervention of Pope Gregory XIII ended Owen Lewis's plans for using the English College as a stepping-stone to his ultimate objective, the leadership of the Catholic exiles after Allen's death. To get him away from Rome in 1579 the Pope appointed him to the household of St Charles Borromeo in Milan, and there he took up those perilous contacts with English government agents aspiring to penetrate the citadel of the Catholic resistance. The death of St Charles in 1584 allowed him to return to Rome and foment the disturbances which broke out in the English College in 1585. He was again given an appointment away from Rome—the bishopric of Cassano in Calabria in 1588—but when Allen died in 1594 he

returned to Rome and became the storm-centre of the vastly more serious disturbances in the English College in 1595. These 'stirs' flowered monstrously into the seventeenth-century conflict between Catholics themselves in England, which, more than any other reason, ensured the ultimate failure of the Catholic cause. They are a part of the wider background against which the failure of the faith to maintain itself in Wales must be viewed.

From 1568 to 1642 over one hundred and nineteen Welsh students went to the seminaries. With them were fifty-eight Herefordshire men, many of them Welsh, and forty-one from the rest of the Marches, making a total of two hundred and eighteen from Wales and the March. Douai lists sixty-four Welsh students, Rome twenty-eight, Valladolid twenty, and Lisbon seven. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, all told, fifty-three were ordained priests and approximately forty-six can be traced on the mission. The original impetus was not maintained: eleven students from Bangor went to Douai in Elizabeth's reign; only two are recorded in the period 1603-42; the St Asaph totals fall from twenty to six in the same period, and Llandaff's figures are sixteen and four. The fact that the Rome figures show a slight increase does not outweigh the general decline. It is impossible here to go into a statistical consideration of the evidence, valuable though such an enquiry would be. In human terms the seminary registers and allied documents provide us with some revealing information about Catholicism in Wales. The students show the great variety of the priestly vocation: they come from all classes—the sons of gentry like Charles Wynne of Bodfel or Humphrey Turberville of Penllyn, the steward of Bodeon's son John Hughes, the sons of lawyers, schoolmasters, merchants, yeomen, farm labourers. Here is the London druggist's assistant, the Fellow of an Oxford College, the widower come to try his vocation with his son. They come from staunchly Catholic families—the son of the martyr Richard Gwyn, the nephew of the martyr William Davies, entered Douai together on the same day. There are others whose family is divided by religion, there are many converts from Protestantism; sure proof, these, that given a fair chance the Catholic faith would revive. Most of them had their Latinity from the grammar schools, several went on to the Universities, others to the Inns of Court. It seems that the grammar school was the bottleneck which restricted entry



to the seminaries, and the fewness of such schools in Wales thinned the stream of applicants.

There is a conscious pride in the students' account of their origins: Robert Owen in 1570 is '*nobile Britannorum antiquorum prosapia oriundus*'. William Gwynne—a convert of Fr John Gerard—wrote in 1601 '*me vocari (si tamen velimus sequi antiquorum Britonum usum) Gulielmum Howel Lewis Gwyn, vel si hodiernum Gulielmum Gwyn*'.

The Welsh language was on occasion heard in the seminaries: John Bennett made a Welsh speech to King Philip II at Valladolid in 1592, and there was a Welsh ode put on the notice-board at Douai for the President's feast in 1653. The Benedictine monk from Abergavenny, Dom Augustine Baker, used to write in Welsh such notes as he did not want his companions at Cambrai to read. There is even a record of a student of Douai complaining that there were so many Welshmen in the seminary that it was risky to make a remark about Welsh Catholics, for fear that they would take offence. It is quite clear, as we shall see later on, that accounts of prejudice against Welsh students in Rome are untrue: here it is enough to note that Fr Persons himself chose a Welsh priest to train the choir of the English College in 1601; that a Welsh Jesuit lectured to students from all over Europe in the philosophy classes of what is now the Gregorian University, and that a Welshman, Fr William Morgan, S.J., was Rector of the English College from 1683 to 1686.

When we turn our attention to South Wales and the March it is at once obvious that much more study is needed before we can reach conclusions as firm as those attained in North Wales. There is, for example, a most baffling problem about the facts of the Catholic resistance in the diocese of St Davids. Here only nine students can be found in the seminaries, and apart from Breconshire very little is definitely known. A recently published paper on the Barlows of Slebech indicates that there was more Catholic life in the diocese than might be suspected. Fortunately, the materials available for a study of recusancy in the dioceses of Llandaff and Hereford are much more ample.

In Llandaff, for example, we can discern the work of priests even before the seminary men returned. Three or four Marian priests refused to conform to the Elizabethan settlement, and continued to say Mass. It was a Marian priest in Abergavenny



who taught Fr David Baker, O.S.B., to sing at the age of four, in 1579. In Hereford we find a remarkable man, Dr William Ely. He had been President of St John's College, Oxford, in its Catholic prime. Ejected for his religion, he went abroad, got himself ordained, and, returning to his native countryside, worked as a priest for almost fifty years. Here we have a pre-Douai priest at the very start of the Catholic resistance in Herefordshire and the Welsh border. Through Dr Ely the great relic of that countryside, the arm of St Thomas of Hereford, passed into the care of the Welsh Jesuits and finally to its present home at Stonyhurst.

The priests from Douai who came from the diocese of Llandaff number thirteen in Elizabeth's reign, and twelve of them can be traced on the mission. The first outstanding man was Fr James Powell, who was arrested at Usk in 1587 and imprisoned in Wisbech. This group of priests had an unusually large proportion of bad characters, whose place in our Catholic history still needs to be established, and the account, in Fr Baker's autobiography, of the religious situation in Abergavenny supports the view that certain areas in the diocese were poorly supplied with priests.

One of the most important secular priests, and the first priest from the English College, Rome, to return to the Welsh mission-field, was Fr Morgan Clynnog, the nephew of Dr Morys Clynnog of 1579 fame. Morgan Clynnog was on the Welsh mission for at least thirty-seven years; his activities extended from Abergavenny to Llandeilo Fawr in Carmarthenshire, where the Mass centre he established continued into the eighteenth century. He can be traced baptizing, reconciling, sending students to Douai and Valladolid, organizing the distribution of Catholic books from his home with the Turbervilles of Penllyn in Glamorgan. He was an Assistant to the Archpriest by 1600, and he probably represents the last example of effective ecclesiastical administration by the secular clergy on the spot until the eighteenth century.

The outstanding South Wales laymen, as in North Wales, are to be found along the border, where the fatter lands supported wealthier men than could be found in the bare hills. Mr F. H. Pugh has established the pre-eminent position among them of Edward Morgan of Llantarnam. His father, William Morgan, had kept a (possibly Marian) priest in the house he built from the remains of the Cistercian abbey, and when Edward succeeded

him in 1582 he attained the highest positions in Monmouthshire. He was left undisturbed in the practice of his religion until 1605, when he was convicted of recusancy with sixty-one other residents of Llantarnam, and the drain upon his finances began. From 1606 until his death at the age of eighty-five in 1633, Edward Morgan paid the full recusancy fine of £260 p.a., and a further £1,000 to be relieved of the Oath of Allegiance. He paid in all the enormous sum of £7,760, and certainly lived up to his device, 'He who suffers, prevails', though it is also true that he was able to find £110 p.a.—almost half his recusancy fine—from the revenues of impropriated livings of the Established Church. Edward's son, William Morgan, married Lady Frances Somerset of Raglan, and was the patron of Fr Robert Jones, S.J.

To the wealthy Morgans of Llantarnam we must add, in the early seventeenth century, the even wealthier convert, Henry, Marquis of Worcester (d. 1646) at Raglan Castle. This 'plain man, especially in his apparel . . . and above all a person of great and sincere religion' was the mainstay of Catholicism—and the Royalist cause—in Monmouthshire. In that county, secure in the protection of the greatest nobleman, Catholics gathered in great numbers. There are, for example, one thousand one hundred and ninety on the recusant lists up to 1615 and the volumes of the Catholic Record Society describe the fortunes of the missions there up to the nineteenth century.

Under such patronage the Welsh Jesuit Mission was founded and maintained. No religious order in Wales has been so strangely treated by historians, Catholics included, and it is regrettable that T. P. Ellis's study of the Jesuits in Wales was unpublished at his death. In fact, as we have seen, Fr Persons had turned his attention to Wales in 1580, and this concern was maintained by Fr Garnet, who asked the General, Aquaviva, for Welsh Jesuits in 1589. By 1590, as we know, Fr John Bennett was back at work in North Wales, and by 1595 Fr Robert Jones was at work in the south. Fr Jones was probably a pupil of Blessed Richard Gwyn, and certainly a protégé of John Edwardes I of Chirkland, and a friend of St Robert Bellarmine, under whom he had lectured in the Roman College. Within ten years of his arrival in Wales he had set up an organization composed of Catholic gentry of the Marches, secular priests and Jesuits, which endured until the eighteenth century. He found a home with the Morgans of

Llantarnam, who provided the money to maintain two Jesuit priests in North Wales and two in South Wales. The core of the resistance in this region was the Darren valley near Monmouth, on the border of Herefordshire, where that remarkable Glamorganshire Catholic, William Griffith of Llanvithin, had already gone to live at the Cwm. Fr Jones became Superior of the whole Jesuit mission in England and Wales in 1609, and when he laid down his office in 1613 the strength of the Society in this country had risen through his efforts to fifty-seven. His successor wrote of him: 'His career as a missionary had mostly been spent among the Britons, the ancient inhabitants of this island, in Wales, a mountainous and not very fertile part of the country. Here he led a life full of toil and peril, amongst a people which still clings to the old religion.'

In the successors of Fr Robert Jones there is noticeable a strong North-Walian influence on the Catholicism of South Wales and the March. It has already been evident in the mission of Fr Morgan Clynnog in Glamorganshire, and can also be noted in the Raglan circle of the Marquis of Worcester, which included his steward, Hugh Owen of Bodeon in Anglesey, and his chaplain and later a convert to Catholicism, Thomas Bayly, the son of a Bishop of Bangor.

Fr John Salusbury, S.J., 'yellow-headed, sanguine, of short stature', provides a link with the martyr Fr William Davies. Kidnapped from Rûg, his home in Merioneth, by an Irish earl, he was sought out by William Robins, one of the four boys taken at Holyhead with Fr Davies, and by him taken to Valladolid. He joined the Jesuits after he had returned on the mission as a secular priest, preached in English and Welsh, and published a Welsh catechism in 1618. He was the moving spirit in the establishment of the separate Welsh Jesuit mission at the Cwm in 1621, under the patronage of St Francis Xavier, and was its first Rector.

Another secular priest from Flint who joined the Society while on the mission was Fr Thomas Pennant of Conway, ordained in the English College in Rome. He was confessor to Lady Frances Morgan and was on the Welsh mission from 1615 to 1638. Two Caernarvonshire converts who became Rectors in their turn were Fr Charles Browne (a Gwynn of Bodfel), and a native of Arfon, Fr Humphrey Evans.

It is important to note that the 'College' of St Francis Xavier (which included Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset) embraced all the Welsh-born Jesuits in the Society for a long period of years. In numbers it often exceeded the Lancashire college, and remained among the top four until the disaster of the Oates Plot. All told, there were one hundred and twenty-nine Jesuits associated with the Welsh mission until the suppression of the Society. Sixty-seven of these worked in Wales, and a further forty-nine members of the Society who were born in Wales worked outside it, including missionaries in the American colonies. Much more research is needed to determine the extent of the Jesuit mission in Wales itself, but enough is already known to show that the Jesuit contribution to the Catholic life of Wales comprises a surprisingly large, though neglected, effort. In the twenty years before the Civil War there were at least five, and later eight, Welsh Jesuits at work in their native land. Fr John Salusbury was succeeded as Rector, after a short interval, by Fr Charles Browne in 1628. He was a Gwynn of Bodfel, a convert, ordained in Rome and at first a secular priest. He joined the Society in 1620, and came on the Welsh mission in 1623. By 1625 Fr Salusbury had begun a Catholic grammar school in some quiet and at present undetected spot on the borders of Monmouthshire and Breconshire. Two Welsh Jesuit priests taught Latin and Greek there; one of them another North Walian, Fr Thomas Jeffreys of Llechwedd Isaf, south of Conway, who made a translation into Welsh of the *Imitation of Christ*. The school seems to have been closed during the Civil War, but Fr Jeffreys revived it in 1645.

Fr Charles Browne therefore was responsible for the maintenance of this hitherto unrecorded Welsh grammar school; he used the legacy of his uncle, Hugh Owen of Plas Du, to provide two scholarships to Rome and St Omer; and about 1638 he set up a hostel at Ghent for the sons of Welsh gentry who came to receive a Catholic education beyond the seas. The first boarding school for Catholic boys had been set up—after several earlier efforts—at St Omer in 1593. The Welsh 'convictus' at Ghent seems to have been planned on similar lines—the boys attending a Jesuit school in Ghent daily. The General, Vitelleschi, supported Fr Browne's project, but difficulties in Flanders seem to have arisen, and after long negotiations the General withdrew the Jesuit supervision of the establishment

in 1642. The boarding house was for several years under the supervision of a secular priest, Francis Lewis. Fr Lewis had been converted at Chirk by reading Catholic books loaned to him by John Edwardes III. He died at Ghent in 1641. Nevertheless, Welsh boys continued to go to school in Ghent, and ten can be traced up to 1652.

It may also be noted that, apart from Rhosier Smyth's Welsh Catechism, the only devotional books in Welsh by Catholic authors in the seventeenth century are all connected with the Society of Jesus: Fr Salusbury's catechism *Eglurhad Helaeth-lawn*, printed at St Omer in 1618; Fr John Hughes's prayer-book *Allwedd Paradwys*, published at Liège in 1670, and his edition of his father's translation, made near Raglan, of the *imitatio*—*Dilyniad Crist*, published in London in 1684.

The greatest tribute to the efficiency of the Jesuit mission in Wales—separated since 1672 into two jurisdictions, at the Cwm and Holywell—is the hostility of the Oates plot organizers in 1678. Three of the Jesuits did not survive the rigours of the priest-hunt—Fr Humphrey Evans in the North, aged eighty-two, and Frs Richard and Walter Price in South Wales. Robert Pugh, an ex-Jesuit of the Penrhyn family, died in Newgate, Fr Aylworth in Holland. Two Jesuits were martyred: Fr Philip Evans in Cardiff, and Fr David Lewis at Usk. Yet the shattered missions were re-started, and at the suppression of the Society nearly a century later there were still over a dozen Jesuits with their headquarters in Wales. It is no disparagement to the Benedictine order—which owes its modern English organization almost entirely to Welsh monks—to point out that its impact in Wales itself was of the slightest. I can trace only one Welsh-speaking Benedictine at work in Wales; though five other monks worked in the Marches, and eight Welsh-born Benedictines worked in England or abroad, besides the first five great Welshmen.<sup>1</sup>

1 Dom Leander Jones, of Llanfrynach, Brecks., the first President-General of the English Congregation.

Blessed John Roberts, of Trawsfynydd, Merioneths., the first Benedictine Martyr, from whom Downside.

Dom Bennet Jones, of Clynnog, Caerns., whence the Stanbrook nuns.

Dom Augustine Baker of Abergavenny, Mon., who secured the continuity of the Benedictine Order in England with the pre-reformation foundations.

Blessed Philip Powell, of Trallwng, Brecks., martyred at Tyburn in 1646.

(T. P. Ellis: *Welsh Benedictines of the Terror*.)

This study is a history of failure—but it is important not to let our modern knowledge of that failure darken our understanding of the course of the struggle, and lead us to anticipate the outcome. We have shown that, in Elizabethan Wales, a people whose Catholicism was interwoven with their national life were sustained in the defence of their faith by a steady missionary effort on the part of the Douai priests. That missionary effort reached its peak very soon—seven Welsh students in 1575, sixteen in 1579—and the decline which then set in is attributable in part to the defects in the character of Bishop Owen Lewis, and the disturbances which he fostered in the Rome seminary in particular, and throughout the Catholic body.

The supply of priests to Wales—the vital link in the preservation of the faith—grew less. Not more than five Welsh students entered the seminaries in any decade of the seventeenth century to 1642. The total Welsh entry for the sixteenth century (i.e. 1568 to 1603) is seventy-three; it drops to forty-six in the next half-century (up to 1642). The North Wales entries drop from forty-six to twenty-five, the South Wales figures from twenty-seven to twenty-one.

Another reason must be the particularly heavy incidence of the recusancy fines on the comparatively poor Welsh population. The Jesuit records and the Roman 'responsa' are frequent witnesses to the poverty of Welsh Catholics. Add to these causes the Puritan victory over Charles I and the disaster of the Oates Plot, and there need be no surprise that 'this dynamic and heroic epoch'—in Professor Dodd's penetrating phrase—should end in failure.

Yet where should the blame for that ultimate failure be laid? Dr Thomas Richards has made an exhaustive analysis of the religious census of 1676, which gave a total of 1,122 Catholics, 4,445 Dissenters and 155,656 Anglicans in Wales. He gives evidence to prove that the figure of 1,122 is a minimum one, and we know that the number of priests working in Wales, even after the Oates Plot, was over a score. At this point a comparison with Scotland is instructive. Only eleven priests were in the country in 1653 and the political situation was very unsettled. The first Catholic Bishop since the reformation was consecrated in Paris in 1695. Bishop Thomas Nicholson worked in Scotland from 1697 to 1718. He began a seminary in Morar; it was closed. He began again at Scalan—a lonely farmhouse in

Banffshire in 1716, and in spite of being burned down in the '45, the Scalan seminary went on producing Scots priests till 1776, when toleration was on the way.

Bishop Nicholson's Welsh colleague was Philip Ellis, O.S.B., who was made Vicar Apostolic of the Western District in 1688. He chose to go into exile with James II, and, like Owen Lewis, ended his days in an Italian diocese. The Western District—a geographical monstrosity including Wales and the West of England—was thus leaderless for twenty-seven years, from 1688 to 1715, when a Welsh Franciscan Vicar Apostolic took up residence in Monmouthshire. 'It goes without saying', notes Professor Birrell, 'that in such circumstances Wales and Cornwall had been virtually lost to the Mission long before the nineteenth century.' The loss of Wales, it will be noted, was due quite as much to the weakness of seventeenth-century Catholics as to the pressure of sixteenth-century Protestants.

#### A NOTE ON SOURCES

The Catholic sources drawn upon in this paper will be familiar to the historian; it is unlikely that readers outside Wales will know of the valuable work that has been produced by Welsh scholars—much of it in their own language—on the history of Welsh Catholicism. Fr J. Hughes's *Allwedd Paradwys, 1670*, was reissued in 1929 by the University Press Board, Cardiff, with an introduction by Canon John Fisher. The same publishers issued in 1931 Professor T. H. Parry-Williams's definitive edition of *Carolau Richard White*. Professor A. H. Dodd's *Studies in Stuart Wales*, Cardiff, 1952, contains much of interest to the general reader, and his papers in the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* and other learned journals may be traced in the forthcoming edition of the *Bibliography of the History of Wales*. Mr Emyr Gwynne Jones has produced, in *Cymru A'r Hen Ffydd*, Cardiff, 1951, a valuable synthesis in Welsh of the present state of recusant studies in Wales; he has also published papers on specific aspects of Welsh recusancy, such as *The Lleyrn Recusancy Case, 1578-81* (Trans. Cymmrodorion Soc., 1936), and *Catholic Recusancy in the counties of Denbigh, Flint and Montgomery, 1581-1625* (*ibid.*, 1945). The two last-mentioned scholars were also mainly responsible for the articles on Welsh martyrs and confessors in the Welsh Dictionary of national biography, *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig, 1953*, whose English translation is in the press. Mr W. Alun Mathias's *Rhai Sylwadau ar Robert Gwyn* is in *Llên Cymru*, III, ii, and there is a good study, in Welsh, of Fr John Salusbury, S.J., by Mr Geraint Bowen in *The National Library of Wales Journal*, VIII, 4, 1954. There are some scholarly studies as yet unprinted, among the theses for M.A. (Wales) in the libraries of the Welsh University Colleges; one of which is Mr F. H. Pugh's *Recusancy in the Diocese of Llandaff 1581-1612*. Recent Catholic studies in Welsh may be found in *Efrydiau Catholig*, and the important study of the first Welsh book to be printed in Wales by Mr D. M. Rogers, "'Popishe Thackwell'" and Early Catholic Printing in Wales', was published in *Biographical Studies*, vol. II, no. 1, 1953. (The Arundel Press, Bognor Regis.)