

**BACK TO ROME! BEING A
SERIES OF PRIVATE LETTERS,
ETC. ADDRESSED TO AN
ANGLICAN CLERGYMAN**

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Back to Rome! Being a series of private letters, etc. addressed to an Anglican clergyman by
Anonymous

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BEING A SERIES OF PRIVATE LETTERS, ET
ADDRESSED TO AN ANGLICAN
CLERGYMAN

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BY

“SCRUTATOR”

REGIS
BIPL. MAJ.
COLLEGE/

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✠ JOHN F. KAIN,
Abp. St Louis.

"The nature of man is thoroughly miserable without God. Some men are not conscious of the cause of this misery; this, however, does not prevent the fact of their being miserable. For the most part, they conceal the fact as well as possible from themselves, by occupying their minds with society, sport, frivolity of all kinds; or, if intellectually disposed, with science, art, literature, business, etc. This, however, is but to fill the starving belly with husks. I know from experience the intellectual distractions of scientific research, philosophical speculation, and artistic pleasures; but am also well aware that even when all are taken together and well sweetened to taste, in respect of consequent reputation, means, social position, etc., the whole concoction is but as high confectionary to a starving man. He may cheat himself for a time—especially if he be a strong man—into the belief that he is nourishing himself by denying his natural appetite; but soon finds he was made for some altogether different kind of food, even though of much less tastefulness as far as the palate is concerned.

"Some men, indeed, never acknowledge this articulately or distinctly even to themselves, yet always show it plainly enough to others. Take, e.g., 'that last infirmity of noble minds.' I suppose the most exalted

and least 'carnal' of worldly joys consists in the adequate recognition by the world of high achievements by ourselves. Yet it is notorious that,

*'It is by God decreed
Fame shall not satisfy the highest need.'*

"It has been my lot to know not a few of the famous men of our generation, and I have always observed that this is profoundly true. Like all other 'moral' satisfactions, this soon palls by custom, and as soon as one end of distinction is reached, another is pined for. There is no finality to rest in, while disease and death are always standing in the background. Custom may even blind men to their own misery, so far as not to make them realise what is wanting; yet the want is there.

"I take it, then, as unquestionably true that this whole negative side of the subject proves a vacuum in the soul of man which nothing can fill save faith in God."

*From "Thoughts on Religion," by the late
G. J. Romanes, M.A., F.R.S.*

BACK TO ROME !

FROM MY DIARY.

15th October 189—.

I met B— last night, and was amazed to see him in clericals, transformed into a clergyman of the Established Church. I had no idea that the event was so near, and I had certainly entertained a lingering hope that he would either reconsider the matter and abandon his intention of seeking ordination altogether, or that the Bishops would refuse to accept him. I could not imagine what had brought about this strange and sudden termination to our many discussions and controversies. It seemed but yesterday that he came to me at Oxford, and that he asked me to help him to clear his mind on the intricacies of religious thought. He seemed to be in despair about it all; did not know himself what he really believed. He had waded through volumes of High Church theology, had read Driver and Sayce, and the foreign "higher critics," and had sounded the depths of Schleiermacher and of Harnack. And apparently all without result! And, strange thought! he had got hold of the notion that

I was the only man in Oxford to help him—I, a Roman Catholic and an outsider! I was never more astonished in my life. I said to him: In what sense can I possibly hope to be of service to you? You know my theological position as a Catholic, and you reject it. You reject it because you do not grant my premises. And, outside the Catholic position, I can see no other logical and consistent system of Christian thought—none where reason is freely exercised, and the permanent claims of human nature are considered. My mind was made up on that point years ago. So why come to me? Why not consult some of the learned authorities of the university?

But he did not seem to see the matter from this point of view. He persisted in saying that the time and thought which I had given to the study of this, the most interesting of all subjects, qualified me to be of special help to him. "The very fact," he said, "that you are a Catholic, and that your judgment is not hampered by those innumerable considerations which custom and association are so apt to call into play with most of us, makes it possible for you to help me to clear my mind. You have studied the history of Protestantism, and the Anglican system, have written several things on the subject, and your own clearly-defined position enables you to speak freely. In fact, I would much rather talk to you than to any of these fellows here in Oxford.