

**THROUGH AN
ANGLICAN
SISTERHOOD TO ROME**

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Through an Anglican sisterhood to Rome by A. H. Bennett

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A. H. BENNETT

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Photo: F. Weston

SISTER SCHOLASTICA AL EWART, O.S.B., WHEN ABBESS
AT MALLING

THROUGH AN
ANGLICAN SISTERHOOD
TO ROME

BY

A. H. BENNETT

WITH A PREFACE BY

SR. SCHOLASTICA M. EWART, O.S.B.

ST. BRICK'S ABBEY, MILFORD-HAVEN

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE writer of this book, whom I have known for nearly a quarter of a century, has asked me to contribute the Preface, and it gives me very great pleasure to do so, for I was myself a member of the Community to which she for a time belonged. How well I remember my first glimpse of her on my return from a foreign house. In those early days, owing to lack of space, the novices sat crowded together in chapel at right angles to the professed, and my eye fell upon one of them, tall, young, bright-faced. When I asked later who she was, I was informed, "She is Sister A. M., partly American."

Of her life after profession I know little, as our spheres of work lay wide apart, but I can fully vouch for the

accuracy of her statements in regard to the Community itself. I saw a good deal of her again at the time she left, and I can witness again, how openly and honourably she acted. As she herself points out, the formula of profession then in use only made the vows binding so long as the sister remained in the Community; on leaving, anyone was perfectly free. In her case it was the only course open to her, for she certainly had no vocation, as her present career of social usefulness proves, and it is therefore with all the more pleasure that I have read her admirably fair and just account, so impartially setting forth the life of a well-ordered Anglican Community. Personally I can add, from my own intimate knowledge and experience, that the training given there was the best that any Sisterhood in the Church of England affords, and that, with the necessary limitations, the teaching was Catholic. I think therefore this book will have a peculiar interest for Catholics, to whom I find that naturally such life is

practically unknown, and I feel sure they will be led to say, as I have myself said during the past few months, "If they are so excellent as Anglicans, what would they be as Catholics, with all the immense graces which only the Catholic Church can give?"

I next came into contact with Miss Bennett on the eve of my departure to Malling Abbey, of which I was to become Abbess. As she has mentioned, she paid us frequent visits there, and I greatly wanted at one time to have her as Guest Mistress, but this was impossible, as she found the climate, a very trying one, did not suit her. We were always delighted to welcome her when she came, and it is now my great joy to think that she there consolidated her ideas of becoming a Catholic, and, like others, gained an impetus towards the final step of submission.

With regard to the latter part of her book, I hesitated long before allowing any portion of our *Annals* to find a place in public print, but so many warnings were

given me by Anglican friends at the time of our conversion that we should be "dispersed, swamped by Catholic religious," &c., that I feel it might help others if they realise that "Do not change anything" has, above all else, been impressed upon me by those in authority.

My hope and prayer is that many other Communities, especially the one to which I belonged for so many years, may be emboldened to take their courage in their hands, and leaving behind them the vexed question, "Ecclesia Anglicana, for what does she stand?" may find themselves safely folded in the Catholic Church, which alone stands for authority.

SR. SCHOLASTICA M. EWART, O.S.B.

S. BRIDE'S ABBEY,
MILFORD HAVEN,
Octave of St. Scholastica, 1914.