

**A PROTESTANT
CONVERTED TO
CATHOLICITY BY HER
BIBLE AND PRAYER-BOOK**

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MRS. PITTARD.

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE little book which is now reprinted has no pretence to literary merit. It is the record of an experience which, happily, is not uncommon: that of a soul which, by the grace of God, has been "called from darkness into His most marvellous light". Such records, if simple and straightforward, always possess an interest quite irrespective of the style or diction in which they are conveyed, and often influence those who read them more powerfully than finished argument or logical demonstration. That this has been the case with Mrs. Pittar's narrative there is abundant evidence. It has gone through several editions in England and Ireland, and has been reprinted in America; a French translation, with a preface by Mgr. Mermillod, was published in 1860. The aspects of Protestantism have greatly changed since the book first appeared in 1847; the attractions of the Catholic Church remain the same; and the marks of truth which appeared so plain to Mrs. Pittar are equally visible to all who have eyes to see them.

It was in no vainglorious spirit that the author, before her death, made provision for this reprint. She knew that the little work had been blest to others, and she was anxious that it should remain after her decease to bear the testimony which she

had given during her life. The Catholic Truth Society appeared to those who were entrusted with the carrying out of her instructions to be the most suitable medium through which this new issue could be circulated; and it is in accordance with their request that the work is now published by that Society.

No attempt has been made to modernize the style, to supply what may appear to be deficiencies in argument, or to modify the presentment of Protestantism in accordance with its more recent external aspects. The narrative is reprinted almost exactly as it stood; but of the autobiographical introduction a summary is given which, although but brief, contains more information about Mrs. Pittar and her influence than her own account could give.

The gift of a Bible at the age of about eleven, and the memory of a father whom she had never known, but had been taught to revere, gave a serious tone to Fanny Waring's character at an early age. The loss of youthful friends confirmed her in the impression that the next world alone was worth living for; and the evangelical circles in which she was brought up gave a more serious tone to a character naturally religious. When she was about sixteen, the family removed from Scotland to England, taking up their residence at Brixton, which was then near London, not forming, as now, a part of it. The High Church movement was beginning to spread, and the ceremony of Confirmation was invested with an external pomp which had hitherto been foreign to it. By her side at the ceremony was a young and beautiful

friend, who died suddenly a few days after. "Thus it was," she says, "that, once again, the still small voice of God knocked at the door of my heart, and urged upon me the necessity of an immediate and effectual preparation to meet that change which awaits us all at death. . . . My soul became confirmed and imbued with a deep religious feeling, unusual, as far as my experience went, amongst young Protestants of my age, since it seemed to influence every action of my life and every thought of my mind."

Her mother had married again. Fanny's stepfather, a man of high character, had been a widower; and an attachment sprang up between his son and his stepdaughter, which ended in their marriage in November, 1834.

Mr. Pittar at this period shared the religious views of his wife. "Previous to our marriage," she says, "we neither of us ever sought or cared for other amusement than such as we found in going after celebrated preachers, a certain class of reading in which the literature of the day had but a small part, and such family and friendly intercourse as our immediate circle afforded us;" and the earlier years of their married life, which were passed at Brixton, were spent in the same quiet fashion. Mr. Pittar had begun his studies for the bar, but ultimately devoted himself to mercantile pursuits. Some four years after their marriage, during which time two sons had been born to them, it became necessary for him to go to India, and his wife accompanied him.

Before the birth of her first child in 1837, Mrs. Pittar felt a strong impulse to devote it, should it be a boy, to the service of God. "Daily," she says,

"I offered my child to God, begging that He would bless him from his birth, and anoint him as a chosen minister for His own service." Her prayer was granted, though in a way which she could not then have foreseen; for both her sons became priests of the Society of Jesus.

On arriving at Calcutta, Mrs. Pittar found herself thrown into frivolous society, and observed with pain that her husband's religious tone became greatly relaxed. The want of spirituality then manifest among the members of the various Protestant missionary bodies, and the dissensions between them, afforded him a pretext for the abandonment of the religious observances to which he had previously been attached; nor were his wife's remonstrances and arguments sufficient to re-establish him in them. This led to unhappiness on both sides, and at last it was agreed that the matter should not be discussed between them. "If," said Mr. Pittar, "it will make you more contented, the moment you can prove your religion to be the only true one, from that moment I hold myself bound to outdo you in fervour and devotion. Let this, then, be our contract: that, if you are right, you obtain for me what I have less power than ever to obtain for myself; and you know you ought to be able to obtain this from your God, as you believe He alone is able to change the heart of man."

The mental struggle which took place in Mrs. Pittar's mind at this time seriously affected her health, and she was therefore obliged to return home with her little girl, who had been born during her sojourn in India. She took up her residence with her parents in Dublin, little think-