SERMONS PREACHED IN ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE CHAPEL ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

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Sermons preached in St. Edmund's College Chapel on various occasions by Various

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VARIOUS

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SERMONS

PREACHED IN ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE CHAPEL ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE MOST REV. FRANCIS BOURNE,
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY

EDWIN BURTON

VICE-PRESIDENT

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EDITORIAL NOTE

THE aim and scope of this collection is set forth in the Introduction which His Grace the Archbishop has, with such kindness, found time to write.

It only remains here to make due acknowledgments to all who have put their manuscripts or their copyright at the service of this little book, and to express our regret that diligent search and wide inquiry have failed to discover any sermons preached by some, whose names, though ever in honour amongst us, will not be found in these pages.

Special recognition is also due to two of the students, Henry Warner and John Page, who have devoted much patient labour to the transcription and collation of the various sermons.

E. B.

ST. EDMUND'S, Sept. 1904.

INTRODUCTION

THE history of a school is in many ways like the life-story of a man. A school begins in weakness and obscurity; it must pass through many perils; its very existence will be, at least momentarily, in danger. Even when it has attained full growth, its strength will not always be maintained in the same degree. There will be moments of crisis, and periods of vicissitude. For many years it may have uninterrupted and growing success; then for a time it ceases to attract attention, and its existence is forgotten save by those whose affection and devotion are intimately bound up with its continuance. The resemblance of a school to a human life may be so complete as to find a termination to its career in a complete disappearance from all human activity. Schools, greater than any which we now possess, have done their work, and are now no more.

When we consider the history of a Catholic school, we may fairly seek the centre of all its usefulness in the Chapel where, not once a day, but many times, all, both teachers and taught, are gathered together before the throne of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Not indeed that all the activity of the life of the school is concentrated there, but because therein all that is best and truest

and strongest in that activity finds its perennial source. We shall not, then, go far astray if we regard the history of the College Chapel as enshrining within itself a very true and accurate summary of the life of the school as a whole.

St. Edmund's College holds a large place in the history of the restoration of the Catholic Church in England. As far as the south of England is concerned, that place is quite unique, because for seventy years the great majority of the secular clergy in the south owed to St. Edmund's their whole clerical formation. It has been on this account a very wise inspiration to gather together the words spoken in the College Chapel on various memorable occasions during the already long, and by no means unchequered, history of the College. To the alumni these words will appeal with special force, recalling to them the story of the past, and bringing home to them, we trust, the need of constant devotion to the cause of their Alma Mater, so that her work and her renown in the future may not only equal but surpass all that she has so gloriously achieved in the last hundred years. But these pages will be of interest even to those who, though not in any way linked to the College by memories of boyhood, are concerned about those things which have made and now make for the wellbeing of the Catholic Church in England. All will be glad to know what sort of teaching was given in the College Chapel to those who were looking forward to a speedy entrance into the Master's Vineyard. The words of a great Bishop spoken before his Brethren, all of whom have now passed

to their rest, will be read anew and give forth a fresh significance when so many minds are occupied in considering how best to fit our students for the changing aspects of the ministry for which they are preparing. The centenary of the College, eleven years ago, recalled the past, and awakened many hopes and aspirations which it is well to remember, now that they are nearer to their realisation. We are all the better for knowing how those who claimed our veneration and affection while on earth, won that claim by a character formed amid the influences which the College Chapel ever exercises upon those who will accept its lessons. And throughout this book, from the beginning to the end, there is one prevailing thought, that of St. Edmund himself, whose name is ever recurring on these pages, and whose virtues form the subject of so many of the discourses which are collected herein. One lesson stands forth predominant and paramount-that the Edmundian spirit, if it be true and worth the name. must be none other than the spirit of St. Edmund . himself, and that we have no right to call ourselves by that name, unless we be honestly striving to imitate the love of God and Church, the generosity, the unselfishness, the patient energy, the love of learning, the steadfastness, and the humility which are ever associated with our Patron's name.

The lesson comes very opportunely at this moment when St. Edmund's College is about to take up again the full work for which, at the cost of so many sacrifices, our forefathers brought it into being. As in the whole period of its existence, the College will give to those who desire to enter the ecclesiastical state, all that they need for the general training of their mind and character, while it will still welcome among its scholars those who, though not called to the priestly ministry, are yet desirous of receiving that education which such a school, with great ecclesiastical traditions, is eminently qualified to give. But now again St. Edmund, by the means of the College dedicated to him, and filled, we trust and hope, ever more fully with his spirit, will teach the sacred sciences which were peculiarly his own. He must show us how on the one hand we are to cling to those old traditions which are the solid foundations of every work built up by God; and how, on the other hand, we are to read the signs of the times, and learn in what way we are to prepare for the due accomplishment of the mission entrusted to the ministers of God's Church here, in the twentieth century, in England. These sermons, collected in loving devotion to St. Edmund and the College, teach us a portion of the history of the past. May they stimulate all to renewed effort in the future, and may the future be blessed by St. Edmund even more abundantly than that first century of the existence of the College which has just closed.

> ♣ FRANCIS, Archbishop of Westminster.

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