

# CARDINAL MANNING

BY WILFRID MEYNELL

From *The London Observer*

MR. LESLIE'S book has come at last to fulfil all reasonable and therefore high expectations regarding it. Both in its subject, and in the time of its appearing, it lies under very palpable disadvantages. To begin with, a Cardinal flutters a red robe in the face of John Bull; and if, in addition to a man's adherence to an alien Church, there is his own break with the Church of his birth, he must encounter the very natural disaffection of those whom he has forsaken. A biographer, moreover, coming thirty years after the death of Manning, has to reckon with Purcell's already familiar *Life*—that bold act of biographical brigandage. Admittedly Purcell's book made for a candor till then much missed in ecclesiastical biography; but in that reaction against 'edification,' in that excited quest for quarrels and little-nesses, Purcell was led to a neglect of his other and incumbent obligations. There was no space left for the discovery of high and authentic motives when all the minor and hearsay ones had been meticulously explored—a process begun clumsily by Purcell and carried to artistic perfection by Strachey. The portrait painter who should devote his brush to the sitter's wart and should leave a hole where we look for a nose, would not really give us a portrait, or be excused for his default on the plea that noses are generally exaggerated in full-face photographs. In Manning's case, the result of this malformation by omission

was that his closest friends could not recognise him in what purported to be his official biography.

But Mr. Leslie's book is not at all that generally dull affair, a refutation. Here and there he has to note his predecessor's errors of fact; but his pages are a corrective mainly by means of the new matter on which he has been able, by the favour of Manning's representatives and friends, to lay capable hands. Gladstone grimly said that Purcell's biography left little for disclosure at the Last Day. What is certain is that Mr. Leslie shows us that it left a wonderful amount of worth-while matter for disclosure here and now. There is, for instance, the intimate correspondence between Manning and Gladstone himself, in Manning's Anglican days. In after years 'the two old friends were moved to emotion as each sat rereading their letters through a night of memories and sighs.' Gladstone called it 'a night among the tombs,' and Manning testified: 'God knows that when we parted I chose between Him and you.' The letters were then exchanged by the writers, and Manning's were falsely reported by Purcell to have been destroyed. 'Gladstone,' he says, 'was indignant on hearing from me of their fate, saying: "Had I dreamt that Manning would have destroyed those letters I would never have returned them to him."' There was even a dark suggestion that documents not creditable to Manning's consistency

he had reduced to ashes. But Mr. Leslie finds and prints them; and, in so doing, incidentally rebuts the statement of Gladstone that they breathed undisquieted content as to the Anglican position. Manning's correspondence, too, with his brother-in-law, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, is printed by Mr. Leslie, who gives also the Cardinal's memorandum about the Jesuits which, indeed, Purcell had before him, but from affectedly prudential motives forbore to print. Besides new and vital material in possession of the Oblates of St. Charles, accidentally or designedly withheld from Purcell, and amounting to as much again as that which he obtained, Mr. Leslie has been able to make lucky dips into the postbags of Cardinals Vaughan and Cullen, of Archbishops Wals and Ullathorne.

This dull recounting of contents ends, and the dullness ends too with the mention of the Manning letters to 'noble women not a few,' first among them Florence Nightingale. Hardly less than Joan of Arc, though with a difference, she discounts Coventry Patmore's dictum that woman must be undistinguished in battle; but not till now have we known of her own stress of soul, as revealed to Manning in a never-to-be-forgotten heart-cry. In 1848, he—then Archdeacon of Chichester—and she and Sidney Herbert, met in Rome, never dreaming that, in little more than five years, they would be historically bound together, Manning as the composer, and Sidney Herbert as the ordainer, of Florence Nightingale's mission in the Crimea. Meanwhile, before this great adventure brought ease to so many bodies and to her own restless spirit, she appealed to Manning, now a priest of Rome to find a place for her in a convent,

unconverted to the Roman Church though she must remain. The best available Church she admitted it to be; not, as Manning must exact, the best possible one:

'I dislike and despise the Church of England. She received me into her bosom, But what has she ever done for me? She never gave me work to do for her, nor training to do it if I found it for myself. You think it would be a sacrifice for me to join the Catholic Church, a temptation to remain where I am. If you knew what a home the Catholic Church would be to me! All I want I should find in her. All my difficulties would be removed. She would give me daily bread.'

Healer, heal thyself! But to Manning she revealed wounds, beyond her own or his power of healing, although she wrote in her anguish: 'My heart belongs as much to the Catholic Church as to that of England—oh, how much more!' She thought that the great theological fight had yet to be fought out at home: 'In Germany they know why they are Protestants. I never knew an Englishman who did; and, if he inquires, he becomes a Catholic.' Manning advised her to go to Ireland; and she went to Belfast, only to complain to him of 'that anomalous animal, an Irish Protestant, with infirmaries, poor-houses, all on the model of London'—instead of the model of St. Vincent de Paul. 'I am wearing out,' she wrote. 'I am afraid my heart is broken.' Then came the Crimea—a crime it might spell to Bright; but to Florence Nightingale it was a saving distraction.

Of Manning's marriage with one of 'the sylph-like Sargents' of Lavington there are no new revelations to compare with these of his nearly complete soul union with Miss Night-

ingale. After Mrs. Manning's early death, he had no thoughts, or at least no intentions, outside celibacy. Miss Byles, after the death of her father, the Judge, lived with her mother at Lavington on terms of close friendship with the Archdeacon. After Mary Byles had followed him to Rome, and had become the second wife of Coventry Patmore, somebody printed 'a whispered tradition' about a former foiled affection: 'I need not say,' wrote Manning in 1881, 'that there is not a shadow of truth in it. From the year 1838 my life has been as it is, and never for a moment has my decision wavered.' His letters to this lady, before and after her marriage, are still preserved in a house in Sussex, not far afield from Lavington; and one passage of an amazing uplinking with his own Rectory was actually written by him as a Roman Cardinal:

I often think that the time when I was seeking, and drawing near to the Divine Reality had in it more *human* support and solace than the present. I say *human*, because it was chiefly so. It was a religion 'in the fields at eventide,' and a church without warfare, and with the imaginary world of faith seen at a distance. Nevertheless, it was a good training, and a good school of Divine Truth. I never cease to bless God for the old daily service, and the steady reading of the Bible through and through. This has been my salvation.

Another friend, Mary Stanley, a sister of the Broad Churchman of Disraeli's (no dogma, no Dean) repartee went to the Crimea under Manning's auspices, and, also with him, on the more arduous spiritual journey to Rome. Aubrey de Vere, whose two or three perfect poems have been too long lost sight of in the mass of

their less inspired companions, was one of Manning's earliest men friends to be reconciled to the Church by him. They met in later years at the Athenaeum Club, where Manning renewed old Harrow and Balliol friendships, and formed new ones with Matthew Arnold and Browning and others. Manning's tastes in modern literature were not strongly developed. He read his Dante in preference to his Patmore. But Dickens' works, with their right human feeling, he defined perhaps to the scandal of his Seminarians, as 'a complete course of moral theology.' Generally he regarded books as readings of life, rather than as literature, and of course, he read them in relation to himself. When he had closed Lord Shaftesbury's *Life*: It 'makes me feel that *my* life has been wasted.' His censures were swift as his praises. Wilberforce's *Life* of his father the Bishop: 'The sin of Ham;' and Froude's *English in Ireland*: 'A crime against the Empire.' Ruskin he loved and Ruskin he read. That was nearly the last of his many friendships; they were old men when they came together, and Ruskin admits that he was 'fascinated.' A volume of Wordsworth accompanied Manning when he went on his train journeys to Newcastle or elsewhere to preach Teetotalism or the rights of parents to control the education of their children. Of Francis Thompson he became aware when an article on 'Darkest England' appeared in a magazine before the *Poems* were published, and when Stead wrote to ask who this Thompson was, because General Booth said that, had he such a pen at his service, he could convert England.

Such a biography as Mr. Leslie's *Manning* can but be skirted lightly by the reviewer. Not much more

than the titles of the chapters lie within his compass. 'A Captain of Harrow,' 'Oxford,' 'Life and Love at Lavington,' 'The Road to Rome,' 'The Wars of Westminster,' 'Ireland,' and 'Ireland Again,' 'The Coming of Democracy,' and 'Towards Evening.' But Manning the Precursor demands a passing mention. 'Were I not Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, I would wish to be a great demagogue,' he said frankly. The rights of Labor were his abiding concern. Working-men came in and out of his great barracklike house at Westminster. That certain condescension in foreigners, so well appraised by Lowell, had no counterpart in him here. He told the present writer that Leo XIII. had consulted him as to the wording of a famous Encyclical in which the word '*Proletariate*' had been used, and, at Manning's request, deleted. Private benevolence he applauded indeed; but he knew it would not suffice: 'And sure I am of this, that on him who out of his affluence giveth unwillingly the hand of equalising retribution will lie soon, but on him that giveth not it will fall to his annihilation.' That the right to work or the right to bread was the workman's just claim on the State, he put forward in a series of letters to *The Times*, to the harsh music of the laughter of the political economists. He could not separate the Christian from the politician—apparently 'that rare and hardest union that can be.' Once he said. 'If I were an Irish hodman, I should be a drunkard.' It was that appalling conviction that dwelt with him while he sat on the Commission on the Housing of the Poor, and when other people were only discussing the next to royal precedence the then Prince

of Wales accorded him. Heaven is our 'home,' God is our 'Father;' and, when he went to the East End and saw what it made of the human place and the human person—these Divine types—he was stirred to anger at this debasing of the currency of Heavenly speech. The Dock Strike took him to the Wade Arms—perhaps the only occasion of his sitting down in a public-house. Then he formulated what now we all know: 'It seems to me that until labor and skill are recognised as capital as truly as gold and silver, the primary and vital relations of the employer and the employed will never be understood.' His distrust of Germany and the predictions he based on it, read now, are almost uncanny in their divination.

Mr. Leslie has done his work exceeding well. At last we get glimpses of the Real Manning—the Manning whom Meredith greeted in that sonnet of soaring association beginning, 'I wakeful for the sky-lark voice in men;' the Manning whom another poet, Mrs. Hamilton King, had in mind when she wrote: 'Lovest thou Me? There is no doubt, O Lord, betwixt Thy saint and Thee.' Many men go to the making of a man; and not all of the crowd are proper company. If there was a man in Manning who was less than the worthiest, a partisan who had to fight others in the rough and tumble of causes; and to fight himself, as he freely says, lest he should be meaner than he would;—that is the man who has hitherto been put before us, but whose figure now recedes into the shades. Rather, I think, will it be said of him as it has already been said of another: 'He was so great a man, his faults are forgotten, if he had any.'

# THE REVIVAL OF THE HARP

BY EDWARD J. DENT

From *The Athenaeum*, March 26

(ENGLISH LITERARY WEEKLY)

WATTS depicted Hope as playing on a harp with one string, and the picture has a certain musical application, for the harp is an instrument which has always raised the hopes of musicians, and still, after endless disappointments, continues to raise them. It is the one instrument of the orchestra which appeals to the eye as well as to the ear. In the days of the Renaissance instruments of various kinds were often made by great painters and sculptors; some, indeed, bear inscriptions to the effect that they were intended to please both sight and hearing simultaneously. The harp is no longer decorated with carving and painting as in the days before the French Revolution, but it still catches the eye in a concert-room. It is the instrument of romanticism, and still perpetuates the architecture of romantic days. The double-action harp came in when Gothic had just become fashionable, and Gothic the design of the harp remains to this day. It was the right dress for its associations.

Associations have been the making and the ruin of the harp. It began to come into favor among musicians when Ossian had set them interested in Celtic bards, and no doubt it was this sudden general interest in harp-playing that set the Cousineaus and the Erards contriving improvements in its mechanism. The mechanism once perfected, the harp became, one might almost say, the mistress rather

than the servant of the Romantic movement. The period of its glory is the first half of the nineteenth century. It is curious to note the composers who made frequent use of the harp, and those who neglected it. On the one side are Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, on the other Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms. These latter three employed the harp, it is true, but only on rare occasions. It was clearly understood in the nineteenth century that it might be used in operas but not in symphonies. It was used in symphonic poems, but in strict circles such compositions were reckoned as belonging to the musical *demimonde*.

The present century has brought about a revival of interest in the harp. A number of works have been heard recently in which the harp is introduced into a chamber combination instead of the more obvious piano-forte. In the orchestra it is being handled with much more understanding of its possibilities than was customary fifty years ago. It is curious that in spite of this new movement there should be little or no modern solo music for the harp that is worth playing. A harp recital was given last week by Miss Nancy Morgan. Her programme probably represented the best contemporary harp music that was available, but Saint-Saens was the only name that stood for anything else besides harp music, and Saint-Saens's piece was