

BLACKFRIARS

Vol. XVIII

DECEMBER, 1937

No. 213

THE CARDINAL

ALL English Catholics will be rejoiced that His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster is to be raised to the Cardinalate in the forthcoming Consistory; for it is something greater than a personal honour, since he is the representative of English Catholicism in the Universal Church.

The unity of the Church has never implied a barren uniformity among nations. It is one of the miracles of Catholic life that the acceptance of a common rule and of a single Faith has only emphasized national traits and diversity of cultures; grace has strengthened nature, not destroyed it. It is something some than a coincidence that in our own time Irish, Scottish and Welsh nationalism have all found leaders in the only vitally international society upon earth. While looking back through the past of which we are ourselves the heirs we come to realise it as a unity. Ullathorne, Milner, Challoner, St. Thomas More, all are linked not merely by a common purpose but by the means through which that purpose was achieved. Their lifeworks were only phases in a continuous tradition marked by an indomitable loyalty to the Holy See and an ineradicable Englishry. It would be naive to assert that our own tradition is necessarily better than others. It would be disloyal to forget that it is our own. It is right that we should rejoice when it is to be once more represented, and so fitly represented, in the Sacred College.

Yet if English Catholicism has its continuity, this has been woven from many strands. Each of these in turn has been represented among the Cardinals of Westminster: the European outlook of the old merchant houses, the driving force of the Oxford converts, the Welsh Catholic squirearchy, the new amalgam of the towns. With Cardinal

BLACKFRIARS

Hinsley we shall have reached the Catholicism of the age-old country missions and the rocklike faith of the North. Born in Yorkshire, bred at Ushaw, Rector of the Venerabile, he stands for all that has been most vital in the preservation of our past. It has been given to him not only to present but to personify the old Catholicism.

He came to Westminster in a generation when the country missions were fading irrevocably. It may be his part to perpetuate their heritage in a new and alien world; just as Ullathorne gave to the priesthood of the industrialized Midlands the iron determination he had himself inherited. Necessarily the Cardinalate will increase his power and influence, and will have more than a national significance at a time when, through cultural accident and the prestige of its great dynasty, the See of Westminster has acquired the leadership of the Catholicism of the Empire.

There are, however, still more personal reasons why we rejoice in this honour done to Archbishop Hinsley. His rule has been marked by an open spontaneity, a devotion to Christ's poor, an incapacity for subterfuge, and the power and will to rouse Catholics to action. As Dominicans we have learnt to recognise that these are not qualities which necessarily lead to temporal advantage. But we know, too, that this is not happily a consideration which will affect an Archbishop whose life has for so long been governed by a realization of the meaning of his priesthood and the patient research for the truth.

BLACKFRIARS therefore offers its respectful felicitations to our new Cardinal in no merely ordinary or conventional sense, but rather with a profound sincerity as to a spiritual leader who has amply proved his right to the respect, the loyalty, the confidence and, we may add, the love of all those, and not least the Dominicans of the English Province, who look to him, under God, for guidance and paternal care.

Ad multos annos vivat!