



The Right Rev. the Bishop of Bristol.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.



HERE is a popular impression that in the making of a Bishop the man is entirely absorbed. That popular impression, however, receives its refutation in the case of the Bishop of Bristol, in whom, if I may here record a personal impression, the Bishop is dominated by the man. Dr. Browne's own reminiscences are, however, so much more interesting than any individual impressions can possibly be, that, having given this one, I proceed to record a most vividly interesting chat at the Palace of the See.

"One of my earliest recollections," said the Bishop in answer to my question, "is of the burning of York Minster. My father was a Proctor of the ecclesiastical court of York, and our house stood by the Minster, so close that the North West Tower would have fallen on to it. I was six and a half years old, and I remember distinctly being carried out in my night clothes wrapt up in a blanket, and that a burning ember fell on the blanket in which I was wrapt. My father and mother were at a concert when the news arrived that the Minster was on fire. They immediately left, and

on reaching the scene found a cordon of dragoons drawn up round the Minster yard. My mother was refused permission to go through to her house.

"But I have seven children inside," she said.

"I am sorry, but I can do nothing," replied the young officer to whom she spoke.

As I afterwards heard, she looked into his face, smiled, and then dived under his horse, coming up on the other side; and in that



BRISTOL CATHEDRAL.
Photo by Rev. W. Mann, Bristol.

way she got into the house and directed the arrangements for our removal.

Our house itself was an interesting one, for in the back part which we used as out-houses Guy Fawkes lived, his father being a notary public in York. Unfortunately, I had contracted to sell the house before I knew of this fact. I remember, when the playground of the York School was enlarged, the headmaster told me that the earliest conveyance was signed by Guido Fawkes, who was probably a schoolfellow of mine. The school itself, the Cathedral School of York, is much the oldest, with a continuous history, in the kingdom, and was in full working order in 690 A.D. It was founded exactly

fellow. The great influence in Cambridge at that time were the sermons of Harvey Goodwin, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle. He was a strong, vigorous man, with no nonsense about him, and he represented religion as a manly thing, so that he had a great following. At Cambridge I played cricket, and perhaps at my time of life I may be permitted to be proud of a rather unique experience in rowing. We were a small college, and there were only nine of us in the boat club, exactly enough to man the eight, and we were ninth on the river, and remained ninth the whole of one week, with the whole of the boat club in the boat.

At Cambridge I was, amongst other



THE BISHOP'S PALACE FROM THE GROUNDS.

on the public school principle, which it is generally thought dates back only to 700 years ago. Bishop Wilfrid, the founder, asked the people to send their sons to him, and he would teach them so that when their choice of work in life came, whether they were to serve God in the Ministry, or the King in Council, or the nation in arms, they would be found equally prepared. That is just the highest ideal of the public schools which it is always supposed William of Wyckham started.

At Cambridge, I was sent to the Yorkshire College, St. Catherine's, where I was in turn scholar and fellow, and am now an honorary

appointments, Proctor for six years, though not consecutively, a member of the Council of the Senate for eighteen years, and also of the General Board of Studies, and indeed from time to time of most of the syndicates or managing committees of the University, especially of the Fitz William Museum Syndicates.

In this connection I recalled to the Bishop two stories of himself in former days, and as he acknowledged their authenticity, I may here set them down. One day a fellow of one of the colleges was showing some Americans round the colleges, and they kept on saying, "Yes, we see the colleges, but

where is the University?" The guide gave the best answer he could, but he did not at all satisfy the curiosity of his guests. At last, when they went to University Library, they met the then Professor Browne coming out, and pointing to him their guide said, "That is the University."

On another occasion one of the well known touts who take strangers round had come to the end of his explanations, and was just receiving his tip as Professor Browne was passing. He turned to his victims and said, "Now I have shown you everything, and there is the gent that bosses the show."

a lamp-post, and bemoaning the degeneracy of the days. On the previous fifth of November the Master had been very much pleased by a hunt, in the same market-place, of a town boy who was blowing a horn. He bolted for first one outlet and then another of all the six from the market-place, but found each blocked by attendants placed there for the purpose; and at last, when he was caught in the open, to the great satisfaction of the Master, he squealed like a hare."

"What do you think was the most interesting event of the lighter side of your Proctorial duties?"



DR. BROWNE AT WORK IN HIS STUDY.

"As Proctor with the longest record, your Lordship must have some good stories to tell. Are you prepared to let me publish one or two?"

"I hardly think so. The whole result was, I believe, advantageous to the University. Things were much more orderly when I ceased to hold office. I remember that on the night of my last fifth of November the present Master of Jesus visited the market-place, the scene usually of great uproar. I am told that he went home and reported that he found the market-place tenanted by the Senior Proctor alone, wearing a very large pair of bands, leaning against

"It is difficult to choose among five or six. Perhaps this. I was summoned suddenly one night to the Town Hall, to save a conjuror from being wrecked by the undergraduates. I found the hall full, and made my way to the dais where the conjuror was. About two-thirds down the hall a cracker exploded, and with great difficulty I made my way through the men in that direction. The smoke had long disappeared before I got near the place, for the men were not at all anxious to make my passage easy. Eventually I went up to one of the hundreds of men present and asked him his name and college, which he very unwillingly gave me. I requested



THE HALL, LOOKING INTO THE DRAWING ROOM.

him to call on his tutor at ten o'clock next morning. I then went home and wrote a note to the tutor to say his pupil would call on him next morning, and I thought would have to confess to him that he had let off a cracker in the Town Hall. The man went to his tutor with an air of injured innocence, but, when led by the tutor to the desired point, said he did let the cracker off, but he could not conceive how the Proctor knew it."

"How did you find it out?"

"I observed, as I made my way down the room, that the eyes of all the men were on me, with one exception. One man alone looked at the conjuror; and I noticed that as I zigzagged in his direction he zigzagged in a direction opposite to mine. That was all I had to go upon. And I never let any one know how it was done, for the reputation of being able to find out anything is very useful to a Proctor."

"Just one more," I pleaded.

"Well, only one," replied the Bishop smiling.

"At one of our weekly meetings my colleagues reported that they had been annoyed by a horn being blown in the street, and somehow when they got to the place the man had always got to the other side and there blew the horn again. I turned out the next night at the hour named, and walked along the King's Parade. On the other side of the street, which was fairly crowded, the horn blew vigorously. I walked across, keeping an eye on the possibility of any one crossing the road.

I felt sure, though it was dark and many people were in the road, that no one crossed except in a very slanting direction; but almost immediately the horn blew nearly opposite on the other side. I then whispered to one of my attendants to walk quietly along that side and seize the man who blew the horn. Meanwhile, I walked demonstratively across to the other side,

to the place where the horn had last been blown. In a quarter of a minute the horn blew loudly on the side I had just left, but the blast came to an ignominious end as my attendant seized the boy by the shoulders. The fact was, of course, that there were two boys engaged in the horn blowing, one on each side. That was how we stopped it."

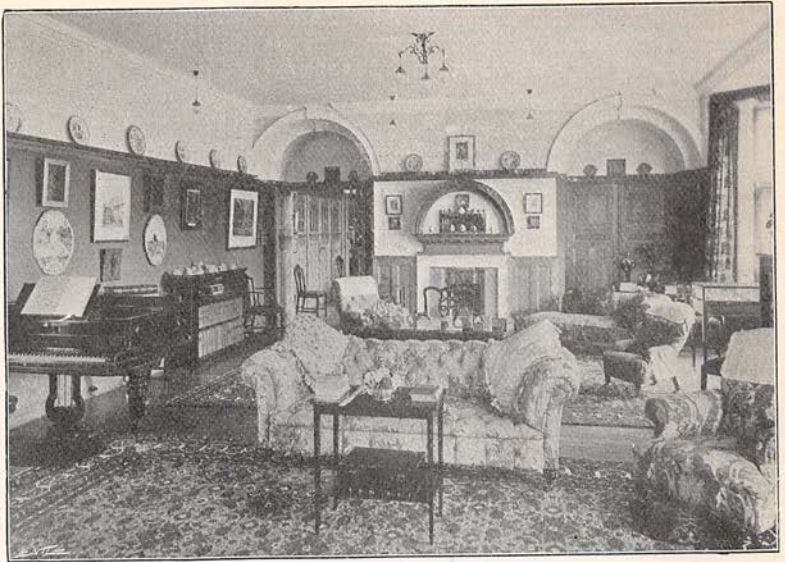
Then we came to the Bishop's life at Stepney, for every one will remember that before Dr. Browne went to Bristol he was Suffragan Bishop of Stepney.

"After I had been Canon for a short time," said the Bishop, "I was appointed secretary of the London Diocesan Home Mission by the kindness of Archdeacon Sinclair, of whose help to me in all kinds of ways it is impossible to speak too highly. In that capacity I had to visit all the numerous missions maintained by that body, many of them being in the West and North, and others in the East. Thus I acquired a wide knowledge of large parts of the diocese, and was thrown into some contact with the then Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. Temple, on that side of his work. Then Dr. Temple was good enough to make me one of his examining Chaplains. When Dr. Billing was obliged to resign the Bishopric of Bedford on account of ill health, the Bishop of London appointed me Suffragan in his place."

"What have you to say with regard to your work there?"

"I have to say with regard to that, and to my examining chaplaincy which then ceased, that by far the most delightful part of it all

was the intimacy with Dr. Temple which was the privilege of the office. For the rest the work has been rendered so illustrious by my successor, now, I am thankful to say, Bishop of London, that I feel unwilling to say much about my short and experimental tenure of the office. I think the thing which remains most on my mind is the confidential little talks men used to have with me on the top of



THE DRAWING ROOM LOOKING INTO THE HALL.

the night omnibuses from Liverpool Street to St. Paul's Churchyard, for in Amen Court is the house of the Canonry held by the Bishop of Stepney. All sorts of people would sidle up to the place where I was sitting, and say, 'Would you mind my asking you a question?' as a preliminary to our conversation. On one occasion I was landed at Amen Court by a hansom-cabman, and as I paid him his fare, he said, 'That's an uncommon nice young gentleman you've sent to take charge of the church in — Square. If you've a chance to put him to a bigger job he'll do it well.' I had the chance, and he does it well. There was no doubt," said the Bishop, "that the cabman's speech did, to a certain extent, influence me, for it proved that I had not been mistaken in my estimate of my man."

"In the matter of organization have you anything to say?"

"I have no doubt that, short as my time was, if I had been a more competent person, and not so very new to the kind of work, I might have done a good deal. One thing which was, I think, useful, and is likely to live was this: I found a considerable number of very elderly clergymen in charge of important parishes, not able to resign on a pension because the largest pension allowed by law was not sufficient for them to live on. I asked the East London Church Fund to let me have the disposal of a sufficient amount of income to provide the difference between the legal pension and the minimum amount

on which the elderly clergyman thought he could live for the rest of his life. I do not think I ever spent money subscribed by the public to greater advantage than that, and my successor carried on that part of the work with greatly increased success."

"Would you give me one example of the kind of case you mean?"

"One dear old gentleman said to me, 'There are only two of us, and we have just a little of our own; and I think if we could see our way to thirty shillings a week, we should do!' It was a very pathetic case, and it was great happiness to be able to get him such an addition to his very small legal pension as to enable him to retire."

"As the Canon in residence at the time of the Queen's visit to St. Paul's at the time of the Jubilee you had a great deal to do?"

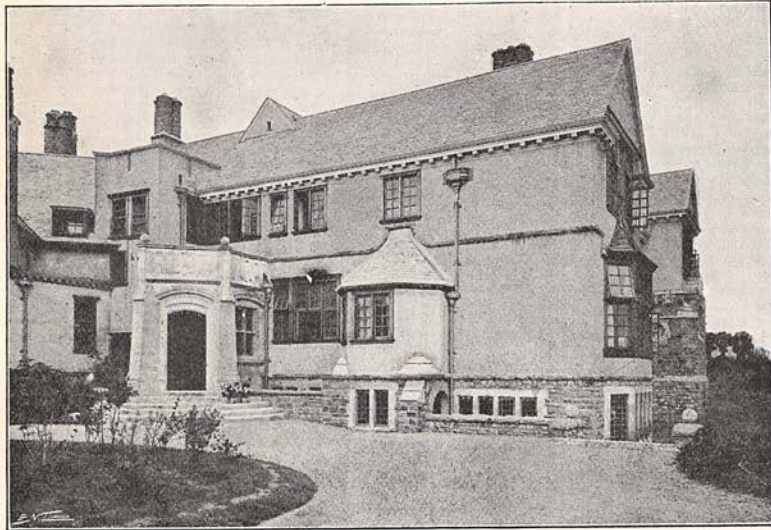
"We all worked together like brothers, naturally, but the Canon in residence has to do a great deal as such. I had the arranging of the thirty royal persons and their seats at the morning service on the Sunday before the Jubilee Day; and one pair of the Chippendale armchairs in my dining room are the chairs used by the Prince and Princess of Wales. I lent them for the occasion, and the silver plates on them record the fact. I can also show you the badge which Lord Londonderry gave to each member of the Committee, representing the various denominations, who arranged the inspection of ten thousand school children by the Queen the day after. I have written an account of

some of the most interesting episodes connected with the Jubilee, and I daresay at my death they may be thought worth publishing in a Magazine, but until my death I am afraid they may not see the light."

Then we naturally came to the subject of

of the special interests of your Lordship's life?"

"Well, though I don't do anything at all in that way now, one of my greatest interests used to be Alpine work. This was begun forty years ago, when my two sisters and I



ENTRANCE TO THE BISHOP'S PALACE.

Bristol, but the Bishop expressed great unwillingness to say anything at all about his work there, except that he had met from the first with "very much more kindness than he deserved," and he really hoped that men of all schools of thought were quietly coming together, to an extent which a few years ago might have been regarded as impossible; and that outside the members of his own communion he found great friendliness on the part of the leading adherents of the principal denominations. He is busy just now with details of the sub-division into four of the great rural deanery of Bristol, with the development of schemes for the instruction of young clergymen in the year of their diaconate, for lectures to the clergy in the first two years of their priesthood, and for prize essays open to all the clergy of the diocese. This year the work of the Bishop's Church Extension Commission in Bristol is showing fruit. Within nine months a large mission building and three churches, or portions of churches, have been dedicated or consecrated, providing about 2,000 additional places; and a large number of stipends for additional curates have also been provided.

"If you decline to enter into details about Bristol, will you tell me something

used to undertake adventures in the Jura and the Alps, and I paid our expenses by writing accounts of them. I remember on one occasion Mr. George Smith asked me if I had any objection to having my Alpine articles illustrated in the *Cornhill Magazine*, because a very clever young artist had just returned from Paris, and he wished to give him something to do. The clever young artist was the late

Mr. George Du Maurier. When Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. republished my articles in book form, under the title of *Off the Mill*, they decided, contrary to my opinion, that these illustrations would be out of date, and they were omitted.

"I did not make any great ascents, only just enough to qualify at the time for membership of the club—Mont Blanc, and things of that kind. In those days, however, they were a very different matter from what they are now. My chief exploration work with regard to ice was underground. I recall in this connection a somewhat unusual experience. When my book, *The Ice Caves of France and Switzerland*, was written, the publishers said they must have some illustrations of the underground ice and caves. I could not draw, but I said I could give them certain ideas from which their artists could no doubt work up what was necessary for the purpose of the illustrations. I accordingly sat down and drew as well as I could some of the things detailed in the text. You may judge of my surprise when proofs of the illustrations came down, and they were simply my own drawings etched. My surprise was not lessened when the publishers said they did admirably, and one reviewer went so far as to

say, in noticing the work, that the illustrations were particularly good. As an old reviewer myself, that phrase delighted me very much. I felt a professional joy in having taken in one of the craft."

In the ordinary way a man's house only reflects himself, so far as the decorations and furniture go, and even that not always. In the Bishop's case this is different, for the arrangement of the Palace, which has been built especially for him from the clever designs of Mr. W. D. Caröe, is according to his own ideas. The result is that the business part of the Palace is entirely cut off from the rest of the house, although it is in it, so that visitors in connection with the business of the See can reach the Bishop direct. His own room, with his robing room attached, and that of his chaplain, lead directly to the chapel, which is one of the most beautiful of the kind in England, and is unique in many respects, while

a door from the dwelling part of the house also allows the members of the family to reach it directly. In connection with the Bishop's room and chapel, but still cut off from the dwelling parts of the house, are the examination room, and quarters for candidates for ordination, who have their special entrance and apartments to which they may go without in any way coming in contact with the members of the household. Round the walls of the chapel there are twenty-four stalls, seven of them ornamented with the arms of the present and six previous Bishops. Most of the decorative work and all of the stalls are the gift of those by whom the Bishop is held in high esteem. A considerable portion of the cost of fitting the chapel has been defrayed by the Bishop himself, whose rule of the See has been already so popular that the prayer is universal that he may be spared for many years yet to administer the diocese.



THE BISHOP'S PALACE FROM THE FIELDS, SHOWING CHAPEL.

The Illustrations to this Article were specially photographed for THE SUNDAY STRAND by Frank Holmes, Bristol.