

FATHER HYACINTHE AND HIS WIFE.

ON the occasion of Father Hyacinthe Loyson's second visit to America in 1884, when he came for the purpose of laying before the American people his work of Catholic reform, a little pamphlet was prepared by his friends here giving some account of the life and work of himself and his wife. From this we gather a few of the most important facts concerning the lives of these truly remarkable people.

Father Hyacinthe was born at Orlean, France, in 1827, of a family distinguished on both sides for its piety. His father as Rector of the Academy of Pau held educational jurisdiction over a large part of France, and his mother came from a Savoy family of ancient nobility. When he was eighteen he was suddenly especially impressed with the words of a psalm heard in church, which have been the inspiration of his life-work: *ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum*—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The next year he entered the theological seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris and when twenty-four was ordained priest.

"He was named at once professor of theology and philosophy at the theological seminary at Avignon, then at Nantes, and afterwards canon of Troy and curate at the church of St. Sulpice, at Paris. Then little did he foresee that in a few years he was to be the famous preacher, attracting eager crowds of listeners at the great metropolitan cathedral. He soon found the life of the secular priest insufficient to satisfy his desire for a more devout and contemplative life, and when thirty-two years old (in 1859), the young priest entered the order of the barefooted Carmelite monks, and became afterwards the Abbot of Paris.... Père Hyacinthe soon became the most noted preacher of the Roman Catholic Church in France.... He was offered by the Emperor Napoleon III any vacant See in France, but then, as now, refused to be made bishop.

... During the five years from 1864 to 1868, Père Hyacinthe delivered his famous *conférences* at Notre Dame. . . . These discourses exhibited a conservatism [against the innovations which actually



PÈRE HYACINTHE LOYSON.

took place in 1870] which did not fail to receive the denunciation of ultramontaniam. The Vatican itself interfered, and the Pope

summoned the bold preacher to Rome in 1868. He was ordered to desist from speaking on any controversial point, and to confine himself exclusively to those subjects upon which all Roman Catholics were united in belief. He felt this restriction upon his preaching, and more and more became the object of distrust of the Ultramontane Party. He was again summoned to Rome for having spoken in too liberal terms at the Peace League, but the Pope received him with pleasant speech and sent him away with his blessing, for he was beloved by Pius IX."

His protest against the non-representation of the Greek and Anglican communions in the Council of the Vatican convoked in 1869, caused his immediate excommunication although he still maintained the friendliest relations with his order. His rupture with Rome was complete the next year when the papal infallibility was established and he joined the Old Catholics. A few years after, believing in the holiness of the sacrament of marriage, as well for the priest as laymen—on September 3, 1872, Father Hyacinthe sent a shock throughout the entire world by his marriage with Mrs. Emilie Meriman, of New York.

Mme. Loyson belongs to the old Puritan family of Butterfield, and her father was prominent in the educational development of the pioneer days of Ohio. She had an unusually ascetic temperament and at a very early age showed real literary ability. At eighteen she married Captain Meriman of Ohio and lived for several years in New York and Brooklyn. She felt restless and dissatisfied with Protestantism, and a year after her husband's death in 1867 united with the Roman Catholic Church. From the time of her visit to Rome in 1863 she had been greatly impressed by the ignorance of Roman women, and now set about founding a college for their higher education. In this she had the support of women of rank and influence in England and Russia; the Italian government offered her money; the City of Rome gave her the choice of a site; the Vatican expressed its approval, and she was offered financial aid and the title of countess if she would accept the Pope's patronage, but she courteously refused on the ground that as a citizen of the United States she was a republican and needed no title. However, her second marriage forced her to abandon the project.

"She has marked individuality, and has shown herself an extraordinary co-worker with her husband. She had, indeed, given much attention to theological reading and to the subject of Catholic reform before her marriage to Père Hyacinthe. . . . Not lingering here to speak of her intellectual, literary, and artistic talents, the reader

will be interested in the speech of Pius IX concerning her: 'She is a thousand times more dangerous than if she had remained a Protestant; she is an Old Catholic.'

During the year following their marriage, a son, Paul Hyacinthe Loyson, was born to Father Hyacinthe and his wife. This son is to-day one of the rising poets of France, and dramas that he has written have been performed on the stage with marked success.



MME. EMILIE HYACINTHE LOYSON.

Soon after his marriage, Father Hyacinthe was invited to Geneva where he successfully inaugurated the Old Catholic movement, but, when the state tried to make a cat's-paw of him, resigned and preached throughout Europe with immense success. In 1879, when the Republic had become firmly established, he opened an Old Catholic church in Paris, and services have been regularly main-

tained there ever since. The liturgy is in French, and clergymen from American and English churches often assist in officiating. He believes in the Episcopalian form of government and from the beginning of the movement asked for Episcopal oversight from the Anglican Church. By 1884 this Gallican church in Paris numbered over fourteen hundred members.

"Some of the difficulties against which Père Hyacinthe contended when preaching Catholic reform have been removed. . . . With a hostile government, an opposing press, but few friends, with the immense power of the Roman Church against him, and infidelity scoffing; with all this, it is not strange that Père Hyacinthe did not accomplish more—but that he stood! It was no small thing to contend boldly for these reforms: Repudiation of papal infallibility; claiming the right to have the Bible and the liturgy in the vernacular, and reading of the Bible by the laity; voluntary (instead of compulsory) confession; giving of the cup to the laity, and freedom of priest to marry."

As an orator, Father Hyacinthe has undeniably held equal rank with the foremost among living speakers, making a profound impression wherever he has preached his message of fraternity and goodwill. His voice and manner are especially pleasing, and his diction is perfect. To quote again from the above-mentioned pamphlet: "Guizot said that only two Frenchmen have spoken French in this century: Chateaubriand and Hyacinthe; and as to his character, he is loved by even those who differ with him. His modesty is real and his humility rare, and above all is his charity, which forbids him ever indulging in personalities—no invectives nor anathemas, only the loving gospel of Christ."

The noble and ambitious desire of Father Hyacinthe and Mme. Loyson is not only purification and unity within the Catholic Church, but brotherhood and mutual sympathetic appreciation among all monotheistic peoples, Jews, Moslems, and Christians.