

THE AYLESFORD REVIEW

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EDITORIAL

THE present number of THE AYLESFORD REVIEW is published to mark the re-dedication of the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin and St Simon Stock at Aylesford after the completion of its restoration. The celebrations will extend over the three days July 16th to 18th, beginning with the celebration of High Mass on the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16th) by the Prior-General of the Carmelite Order in the presence of most of the brethren from the Order's houses in England and Wales and many of the Fathers from all countries who will have been attending the General Chapter of the Order in Rome.

Those chiefly responsible for the recovery and restoration of this house of religion are entitled to say, though a proper reticence would forbid them to do so, *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice*; and we offer them our respectful congratulations. It is also fitting to record here the name of the gifted architect, the late Adrian Gilbert Scott, MC, whose vision of a great shrine for the worship of pilgrims has been brought to completion by his son Mr Anthony Scott, assisted by Mr Percy Kitchen, his devoted foreman, and a host of workers who would prefer to shelter under the anonymity that hides the church builders of former days. *Opera*

magazine now enjoys a high reputation among the literary periodicals of this country, and is subscribed to by a growing number of universities, especially in the United States. It is rather different from the usual run of periodicals published under religious auspices, and partly for that reason has a large non-Catholic readership. Along with the more specialised *Carmelus*, published by the Carmelite Institute in Rome, it helps to maintain the Order's reputation for learning and culture, and demonstrates that an ancient religious order can be genuinely 'involved' in the thought and aspirations of the contemporary world.

Such is the general pattern of life at Aylesford, which takes place against the unchanging background of the Divine Office and the traditional observances of monastic life.

In July of this year will take place the consecration of the altars of the new shrine and final rededication of this ancient house of religion. This will be a great occasion, with the Bishop of the diocese presiding. The celebrations will be spread over three days. On Friday July 16th, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, High Mass will be celebrated by the Prior General of the Order; on Saturday the 17th the Bishop of the diocese will hold an Ordination; and on Sunday the 18th, at the consecration of the altars, the preacher will be the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

This solemn triduum, which will be attended by many of the Carmelite Fathers from the General Chapter in Rome, and by a large number of secular clergy, will mark the completion of the restoration of Aylesford.

What of the future? This we cannot foresee. But nobody can fail to recognise in the return to the Carmelite Order of this hallowed spot, after its four hundred years in alien hands, the workings of the Providence of God and the powerful protection of the Blessed Virgin. This gives us a humble confidence that there is a great work for souls to be done here. 'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place I will give peace.' (Haggai, II, 9)

An Ancient Carmelite Church in Scotland

THE REVEREND JOHN RHODES

OF ALL THE MEDIEVAL CARMELITE HOUSES in Great Britain only one building remains which is in use for Christian worship. Most have disappeared altogether; some, such as Aylesford, have been rebuilt and reconsecrated on the old foundations; but at South Queensferry on the Firth of Forth the little Priory Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel still stands, shorn of its domestic buildings and without its nave, but otherwise looking much as it did when the friars first built it over five hundred years ago.

It was some time in the fourteenth century that the Carmelite Order settled in Queensferry. To the north of the church a line of rocks, stretching out into the waters of the Firth, shows traces of cutting to form a landing stage for ferryboats and other vessels. With their known association with fords and ferries, it seems certain that the friars were the ferrymen of Queensferry. Perhaps also they ran a hostel for travellers delayed by bad weather.

The first buildings were temporary—wooden shacks and pent-houses—but in 1441 James Dundas of Dundas, the local laird, gave a piece of land 'for the church of St Mary the Virgin and for the construction of certain buildings to be erected there in the form of a monastery.' Even more generously he gave the money for the buildings, only asking that prayers be said for the repose of the souls of himself, his wife, and his family (a request which to-day is once again respected and complied with).

Not much more than a hundred years later Scotland accepted the new Reformed religion and the Priory was closed; but the buildings were not destroyed. They were given back into the family of Dundas, which had originally built and endowed them. This, however, did not mean that the Priory Church continued in use as a house of God. On the contrary, it was desecrated by being put to various uses, such as a storehouse and a blacksmith's shop. Fortunately, the chancel and sanctuary were reserved as a burial chapel for members of the family and so saved from desecration. From time to time, when a burial took place, prayers

were said and the building regained briefly its position as a place of worship.

In 1889 a saintly Prelate of the Scots Episcopal Church, John Dowden, bishop of Edinburgh, took steps to recover the building for regular use as a house of God, where worship would be offered to him and his sacraments administered. The bishop's efforts were successful and since that date a priest has been in charge of the building, ministering to the needs of a small but faithful congregation, baptising, celebrating the Holy Mysteries, saying or singing the offices, according to the rites of the Scottish (Episcopal) Prayer Book.

The old building has been beautifully restored and refurnished. An altar stands in the Sanctuary beneath the old east window, its lovely frontals the work of Mrs Mary Ozanne, who has made vestments for the Archbishop of Canterbury. Matching the frontals are the priests' vestments, including a best white chasuble which incorporates older, embroidered panels of the crest of the Carmelite Order.

The south transept forms a spacious baptistery; its window, filled with painted glass in memory of an eighteenth century Countess of Bute, depicts the Assumption of Blessed Mary. The lower half shows her surrounded by the Apostles of our Lord; the upper half shows her being received into Heaven by her divine Son. In this part of the church also the Holy Sacrament is reserved in an ancient aumbry.

Probably the object in the Priory Church of most interest to readers of this Review is the painting of the Scapular Vision, which hangs on the north side of the chancel arch. This oil painting by Donald Gorrie, placed in the church in 1962, depicts St Simon Stock kneeling before our Lady of Mount Carmel, who places her hand in blessing on his scapular. She sits in a pavilion looking out across a strip of water which represents the Firth of Forth; and in the harbour on the further side is a little ferry-boat. This is a painting of the Scapular Vision with local associations, teaching us that the Blessed Virgin is our patron and holy Mother, wherever we may be, for we are all one in the service of her Son and in the fellowship of the Saints. The artist has emphasised this by including also in his painting St Margaret of Scotland, Patroness of the Royal Burgh of Queensferry, to which she gave her

name; St Margaret points to our Lady, the lesser saint directing our attention to the greater.

The painting forms a shrine of our Lady, being flanked by two wrought iron wall-candlesticks. Before it stands a vase of flowers, especially at the Patronal Festival on July 16th, when the whole church is filled with roses, emblem of the Mystic Rose who bore for us the Blessed Jesus, Saviour of the world. Those who worship in the Priory Church at South Queensferry to-day are not Carmelites, but (like all Anglicans) they honour and revere the Holy Mother of God for her supreme virtues of obedience, humility, and love. At the Patronal Festival a special hymn is sung for the offertory at the Eucharist, ending with these words:

Carmelites, who built this Priory
marked for us a path to tread;
Grant that we may ever follow
Where their holy steps have led.

All the year round, but most of all in the summer, many come from all over the world to this Priory Church and shrine of our Lady. They are invited to regard their visit as a pilgrimage and to pray, in this holy place, for the reunion of Christ's Holy Church.

The Literary Criticism of T. S. Eliot: its source and tenets

BRENNAN HILL, *O.Carm.*

T. S. ELIOT's literary criticism, with its characteristic ideal of 'elucidation of art and the correction of taste', stands as a manifesto for a new era of critical thought. It laid the axe to the root of a type of nineteenth century criticism, which judged literature by a vague 'inner voice' and which uttered encomiums about authors, and platitudes about the 'appreciation' of literature. It gave impetus to a 'new criticism', which, though it would divide