

CHAPTER V.

THE ORDER OF CORPORATE REUNION.

Origin of Order of Corporate Reunion shrouded in mystery—Its first "Pastoral"—It professes "loyalty" to the Pope—Prays for the Pope in its secret Synod—Its Bishops secretly consecrated by foreign Bishops—Who were they?—"Bishop" Lee and "Bishop" Mossman—"Bishop" Mossman professes belief in the Pope's Infallibility—Birth of the Order rejoices the Romanists—Its proceedings discussed by the Society of the Holy Cross—Some secret documents—Eight hundred Church of England clergy secretly ordained by a Bishop of the Order.

THE Order of Corporate Reunion is even more secret and mysterious than the Society of the Holy Cross, and what is more serious, it is more unblushingly Popish, going to the length of acknowledging the Pope as the lawful Head of the whole visible Church on earth. It does not, however, advocate individual secession to Rome, but acts on the lines which the late Rev. Dr. Littledale laid down for the Ritualists many years since. That gentleman, in a lecture on "Secession to Rome," which he delivered at Ipswich and Norwich, referring to those who had already seceded to Rome, remarked:—

"They go (over to Rome) to get something which they cannot get, do not get, or what often comes to the same thing, think they cannot get, in the English Church. When once they have got this notion fairly into their heads, all the No-Popery tracts and lectures in England will not keep them back. *The real cure is to give them here what they are going to look for*; and if they get *all* they want from us, you may be very sure few of them will take the trouble to go further. *Now, this is what the Tractarians, as they are called, are trying to do*, and it is for this that they are so heartily abused

every day of their lives by persons who do not understand what they want." ¹

Dr. Littledale contented himself with supplying the rank and file of the Ritualists, in the Church of England, with the Romish doctrines and ritual for which they craved. It is true that he wrote a well-known book, entitled *Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome*, but in that work he did not bring forward what he evidently considered the strongest argument to prevent people going over to Rome. He supplied *that* argument in the lecture just cited, and acted upon it in his *Priest's Prayer Book*, of which he was joint editor with the Rev. J. E. Vaux. In that book will be found a large collection of the most superstitious of Romish practices, together with most of the peculiar doctrines of the Church of Rome. But the Order of Corporate Reunion goes further than Dr. Littledale. It professes to supply not only Popish doctrines, but also Orders and Sacraments such as even the Church of Rome must admit to be valid, though she refuses to acknowledge those of the Church of England. It has Bishops secretly consecrated, and these are prepared to give conditional re-ordination to such of the clergy of the Church of England as may choose to submit to the process. It admits the laity of both sexes to its ranks, and these are, as a general rule—with possibly a few exceptions—conditionally re-baptized when they join the Order. These laymen and women being in the secret, no doubt know where to go to in order to receive valid Sacraments. It is stated that no one is admitted to the Order but *bonâ-fide* members of the Church of England. As a matter of fact several of its officials have seceded to Rome.

The actual origin of the Order of Corporate Reunion is shrouded in mystery. Its rulers made known to the public the existence of the Order during the summer of 1877, but it appears to have been organized, more or less

¹ *Defence of Church Principles*, "Secesasions to Rome," by the Rev. Dr. R. F. Littledale, p. 4.

imperfectly, about a year before that date, and even at that early period to have been known to a trusted few on the Continent, as well as at home.² It held a secret Synod, in London, on July 2nd, 1877, at which a "Pastoral" of the Rulers was approved, which had been previously drawn up. A copy of this document was subsequently written out, and taken abroad, where it was attested by a foreign Roman Catholic Notary, named "Adrian De Helte," to be a true copy, and as such signed by him on August 15th. The Pastoral was formally promulgated by being read on September 8th, in the presence of witnesses whose names have not been made public, on the steps at the west end of St. Paul's Cathedral, and in other places throughout the land.³ This Pastoral was also printed in the *Reunion Magazine*, an official periodical issued by the Order, but which was withdrawn from circulation about a year after its commencement. It is too lengthy a document to reprint here in full, and therefore I must confine myself to a few extracts. It commences thus:—

"In the Sacred Name of the Most Holy Undivided and Adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

"*Thomas*, by the favour of God, Rector of the Order of Corporate Reunion, and Pro-Provincial of Canterbury; *Joseph*, by the favour of God, Provincial of York, in the Kingdom of England; and *Laurence*, by the favour of God, Provincial of Caerleon, in the Principality of Wales, with the Provosts and Members of the Synod of the Order, to the Faithful in Christ Jesus, whom these Presents may concern; Health and Benediction in the Lord God everlasting."

The Pastoral proceeds to deplore "the evil state into which the National Church of England has been brought by departure from ancient principles and by recent events"; and it positively asserts, as "certain" that "all semblance of independent existence and corporate action has departed from the Established Church." A brief history of the Church of England to the present day is then given, in the

² *Reunion Magazine*, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

course of which it is affirmed that the Act of Submission of the Clergy, in the reign of Henry VIII., "is the root of all our existing evils and miseries." The reign of Edward VI., the Protestant King, is described as "a period of wild confusion," while that of the Romanist, Queen Mary, is referred to as one "of Catholic reaction." The glorious Revolution of 1688 comes in for a measure of abuse, and it is declared that after "the riot, blasphemy, and general wickedness of the Great Rebellion, the Revolution of 1688 was the beginning of yet more serious trouble for the Established Church." Coming down to our own day, it affirmed that "every vestige of distinct corporate entity has utterly disappeared from the Church." Against these and a host of other real or imaginary evils the Order of Corporate Reunion raises its protesting voice. It protests, in particular, "against the disuse of Chrism in Confirmation, and the inadequate form for the administration of that Sacrament now in use within the Church of England; as well as against the total abolition of the Apostolic practice of Anointing the Sick with Oil—by which every baptized person is curtailed in his spiritual privileges, and robbed at the hour of death of an important part of his rightful heritage. Many persons," continues the Pastoral, "have lamented the loss of this last-named Sacrament: We, by the favour of God, are now enabled to restore it."

Next, the Pastoral grumbles at the School Boards, and the existing relations of Church and State; and at last announces the remedy which the Order has provided for all the "evils" which trouble their minds. "We affirm," they triumphantly declare, "that in the Providence of God, the evil itself has opened the door to a remedy. For the Bishops of the Church of England, having yielded up all canonical authority and jurisdiction in the spiritual order, can neither interfere with, nor restrain, Us in Our work of *recovering from elsewhere* that which has been forfeited or lost—*securing three distinct and independent lines of a new Episcopal Succession,*

so as to labour corporately, and on no sandy foundation, for the healing of the breach which has been made."

Here is their grand remedy for everything. The Orders and Sacraments conferred in the Church of England are, in their opinion, open to grave and serious doubt; but now, "three distinct lines of a new Episcopal succession," have been secured by the Bishops of the Order of Corporate Reunion—though they carefully abstain from mentioning their source, or by whom they were conferred—who are thus able to remedy all defects in the Church of England, in the hope of eventually securing that Corporate Reunion with the rest of Christendom, which it is their "chief aim" to secure. Of course they think it necessary to make known the doctrinal basis on which the new Order is built.

"In thus associating ourselves together," says the Pastoral, "we solemnly take as the basis of this Our Order the Catholic Faith as defined by the Seven General Councils, acknowledged as such by the whole Church of the East and the West before the great and deplorable schism, and as commonly received in the Apostles' Creed, and the Creed of Nicaea, and the Creed of St. Athanasius. To all the sublime doctrines so laid down, We declare our unreserved adhesion, as well as to the principles of Church constitution and discipline, set forth and approved by the said Seven General Councils. Furthermore, until the whole Church shall speak on the subject, *We accept all those dogmatic statements set forth in common by the Council of Trent and the Synod of Bethlehem respectively, with regard to the doctrine of the Sacraments.* . . .

"Thanking Almighty God most humbly for the restoration of Brotherhoods, Sisterhoods, and Guilds, We solemnly affirm that the Monastic Life, duly regulated according to the laws of the Catholic Church, is a most salutary institution, in perfect harmony with the spirit of the Gospel; and is full of profit to those who, being carefully tried and examined, make full proof of their calling thereto. Our services will always be at the disposal of such—upon whom We invoke the Divine blessing."⁴

The thought which naturally suggests itself to a loyal Churchman on reading this Pastoral for the first time, is

⁴ *Reunion Magazine*, pp. 88-98.

one of astonishment, that men who thus doubt the validity of the Orders and Sacraments of the Church of England, should, notwithstanding, continue to act as her Ministers, or in any way remain within her communion as members of such a Church. How they reconcile their conduct with their Ordination vows is a puzzle hard, indeed, to unravel, except on a theory very little to their credit. When it becomes lawful to do evil that good may come, then, and not till then, can their conduct be justified. The real object of such a policy is, of course, to bring not only themselves, but the whole Church of England with them, back to the Pope—and this is what they mean by “*Corporate Reunion*,” as distinguished from *individual* secession. The same policy was set forth as far back as 1867, in the columns of the *Union Review*, by a Ritualist, in the form of a letter to a foreign Roman Catholic.

“With such a position,” wrote the Ritualist, “it is surely, I say, much better for us to remain working where we are—for what would become of England if we were to leave her Church? She would be simply lost to Catholicism, and won to Rationalism. . . . Depend upon it, it is only through the English Church itself that England can be Catholicised; . . . and so long as the Church of England remains what she is, to join you [Rome] in any but a corporate capacity would be, in our view, to sin against the truth.”⁵

The utter disloyalty of this secret Order of Corporate Reunion to the Church of England, and its real loyalty to the Pope of Rome, is more clearly revealed to us by a glimpse at its first Synod, afforded to us by no less a person than a high official in the Order itself, viz., “Laurentius, O.C.R., Provincial of Caerleon.” This official states that:—

“It is quite true that we [O.C.R.] do not assume an attitude of independence towards the Holy See. We frankly acknowledge that, in the Providence of God, *the Roman Pontiff is the first Bishop in the Church*, and, therefore, ITS VISIBLE HEAD ON EARTH. We do not

⁵ *Union Review*, Volume for 1867, p. 410.

believe that either the Emperor of Russia or the Queen of England is the head of the Church. As the Church must have some executive head, and as there is no other competitor, *we believe the Pope to be that head.* But he is more to us than this, for he is our Patriarch as well. *So that we admit his claim to the veneration and LOYALTY of all baptized men,* and in a special degree of all Western Christians, and in these capacities we prayed for him in our Constituent Synod.”⁶

Probably the authorities of the Order of Corporate Reunion think they can best show their “loyalty” to the Pope by acting a double part. Ordinary people, however, will think that they are traitors in the camp, and that the sooner they are drummed out of it the better.

There has been a good deal of conjecture as to the identity of the men whose names appear at the head of the Pastoral. Who are “Thomas,” Pro-Provincial of Canterbury; “Joseph,” Provincial of York; and “Laurence,” Provincial of Caerleon? We can only answer this question from indirect sources of information. The first guess at their identity appears to have been made by the Rev. W. Allen Whitworth, a Ritualistic clergyman opposed to the Order, who, in a long letter to the *Church Review*, December 28th, 1878, affirmed that the Rev. F. G. Lee, Vicar of All Saints’, Lambeth, was one of the three Bishops of the Order of Corporate Reunion; and he distinctly terms him “Bishop F. G. Lee”; and he refers to “the Roman, Greek, and Armenian Bishops who joined together, secretly to consecrate Dr. F. G. Lee and his colleagues.”⁷ A lay official of the Order of Corporate Reunion, a Mr. William Grant, who is referred to in the *Reunion Magazine* as “Registrar” of the Order, published in pamphlet form a reply to Mr. Whitworth’s attack.⁸ Mr. Grant denies many of Mr. Whitworth’s assertions, but he does *not* deny that Dr. Lee was a Bishop

⁶ *Reunion Magazine*, p. 242.

⁷ *Church Review*, December 28th, 1878, p. 623.

⁸ *Is the Order of Corporate Reunion Schismatical?* by William Grant. London: D. Nutt.

of the O. C. R., or that he and his colleagues were secretly consecrated Bishops by three "Roman, Greek, and Armenian Bishops." There can be no doubt that he would have denied these statements also had they been false, and as "Registrar" of the Order he must have been fully acquainted with the facts of the case. The next attempt to identify the three mysterious Bishops of the O. C. R. was made by the *Whitehall Review*, early in 1879. That paper published the following paragraph:—

"The three Anglican clerics who have obtained Episcopal consecration from the Dutch Jansenists, for the purpose of 'revalidating' the Orders of clergymen having doubts about their priesthood, are singularly modest in their signatures. The 'Rector Provincial, Canterbury' is '✠ Thomas,' the 'Provincial of Caerleon' is '✠ Laurence,' the 'Provincial of York' is '✠ Joseph.' Might I suggest that 'Thomas' sign for the future, '✠ Frederick George Lee'; Bishop 'Laurence,' '✠ Joseph Leycester Lyne'; and Bishop 'Joseph,' '✠ Thomas W. Mossman'! Perhaps Bishop 'Laurence' might prefer to call himself '✠ Ignatius'; if so, one would not object, as it would give a better idea of his real name."⁹

It is not a little remarkable that the *Whitehall Review* was certainly correct in at least two out of the three names which it identified, and, for anything I know to the contrary, may have been right as to the whole three of them. Dr. Lee, and the Rev. Thomas W. Mossman (now dead), for many years Rector of West Torrington, Lincolnshire, were certainly Bishops of the O. C. R., and I have never heard that the Rev. Joseph L. Lyne, *alias* "Father Ignatius," has denied the accusation of the *Whitehall Review*, though I have serious doubts as to his identity.

Seven years after the foundation of the Order, the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, in a leading article, remarked:—"Strange as it may seem, Dr. Lee and certain other clergy of the 'Establishment' are said to have been consecrated as Bishops by some mysterious triumvirate of an Eastern, a

⁹ Quoted in *Church Times*, March 14th, 1879, p. 163.

Latin, and an Anglican prelate, no one knows when, where, or by whom. It is certain that Dr. Lee has been challenged over and over again to say explicitly what is the fact, and has never done so. It is said that there is no doubt that he does exercise Episcopal functions, and has been seen in Episcopal vestures, of course of a more mediæval pattern than the 'Magpie' attire familiar to the House of Lords. It is said also to be beyond doubt that individuals have been re-baptized, re-confirmed, if not ordained by him or his supposed colleagues."¹⁰

The Rev. A. Jerome Matthews, a Roman Catholic priest, wrote to the *Trowbridge Chronicle*, of October 16th, 1886, a letter, in which he asserted that Dr. Lee was reputed to be "one of three Anglican clergymen who went in a vessel for a sea voyage in company with three foreign schismatical but real Bishops. That when in mid-ocean, the three clergymen were conditionally baptized, ordained Deacons and Priests, and then consecrated Bishops. That they went to mid-ocean to be in nobody's diocese, and that Dr. Lee does not deny the allegation."¹¹ In the same paper, in its issue for November 29th, 1886, another Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. W. F. Trailies, wrote that "the Order of Corporate Reunion is under Dr. Lee, who is undoubtedly a Bishop, which is more than can be said by anybody of his neighbour at Lambeth Palace."¹²

So much for Dr. Lee. As to the Rev. Thomas W. Mossman, that gentleman publicly acknowledged that he possessed Episcopal Orders, in a letter to the *English Churchman* :—

"I believe," he wrote, "that the Bishops of England ought to be elected by the Christian people of England, and that the election ought to be approved and confirmed by the Pope, as the *visible head* of God's Catholic Church here on earth. . . . *All I have ever claimed*

¹⁰ Quoted in the *English Churchman*, January 1st, 1885, p. 10.

¹¹ Quoted in Brinckman's *Controversial Methods of Romanism*, p. xvi.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

for myself is to be in what are termed Episcopal Orders, and even that not publicly."¹³

The advanced views held by these two "Bishops" concerning the Pope and Papal Infallibility, will no doubt surprise many of my readers. Dr. Lee has published a little volume of sermons, entitled *Order Out of Chaos*, from which I quote the following passage:—

"The government of the Catholic Church by Bishops, Primates, Metropolitans, and Patriarchs, with *One Visible Head*, is so exactly of that practical nature, that no wholly independent and isolated religious body can possibly partake either in its government or in the blessing of being rightly governed, so long as it remains independent. . . . The Visible Head of that One Christian Family, as Christendom has universally allowed, is the Bishop of the See of St. Peter. Unlike all other Bishops, he has no superior either in rank or jurisdiction. Now, when any part of a family, by misunderstanding and perverseness, becomes disobedient to, or out of harmony with, its Visible Head, weakness and confusion, as regards its oneness, are certain to supervene."¹⁴

In this book "Bishop" Lee reprints a letter, which he had addressed to the *Guardian*, in which he declares:—

"As I am personally challenged on this point, I hold, and have always held (mere rough contradictions have no effect on me) that the Pope is the Archbishop's [of Canterbury] direct spiritual superior both in rank and authority."¹⁵

He even expresses approval of the modern doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, which was not made an article of faith in the Church of Rome until December 8th, 1854. "It seems to many," Dr. Lee writes, "that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady is but the due and reasonable complement of the *Theotokos* of Ephesus."¹⁶

Since he wrote these last words, Dr. Lee has written a

¹³ *English Churchman*, March 5th, 1885, p. 110.

¹⁴ *Order Out of Chaos*, by Frederick George Lee, D.D., pp. 60-62. London, 1881.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

large volume to prove that the Immaculate Conception, as defined by Pius IX., ought to be believed by all Christians.

“Bishop” Mossman professed faith in the Pope’s personal Infallibility, as defined by the Vatican Council of 1870, and yet remained nominally in communion with the Church of England until his death, in 1885, when he was received into the Church of Rome by Cardinal Manning. Writing to the *Church Review*, in 1881, Mr. Mossman remarked :—

“I used to be as opposed to the doctrine of Papal Infallibility as it was possible for anyone to be. Deeper reflection has, however, convinced me that there is really nothing in it to which exception need be taken. Granting an administrative Head of the whole Catholic Church, granting a Primate of Christendom, by the same right even that the Archbishops of Canterbury profess to be Primates of the English Church—namely, ‘by Divine Providence,’ it is surely only reasonable to believe that, if this Head of the Universal Church were to teach *ex-cathedrá*, or authoritatively, anything pertaining to faith or morals, to the whole flock of God, of which he is the Chief Shepherd upon earth, he would most surely be guided by the Holy Ghost in such a way as not to teach Satan’s lie instead of the truth of God. This is the way in which I should feel disposed to understand the Vatican Decree. And so far from seeing anything inconsistent with reason, or history, or Holy Scripture, or the Catholic Faith, in that Decree, thus understood, it appears to me that natural piety itself, and a belief in God’s providential guidance of His Church, would lead us to accept it.”¹⁷

The birth of the Order of Corporate Reunion was hailed with delight by the Romanists of England and the continent. This, of course, was quite natural. They knew very well who would get the benefit of the labours of the O. C. R., and they were quite willing to encourage its growth, and to wait patiently for the harvest time to come. About two years after its birth a correspondent of the *Church Times* declared that Roman Catholics at home and abroad only ridiculed the Order of Corporate Reunion. Thereupon Mr. William Grant, who signed himself as “Registrar, O. C. R.,” wrote to that paper :—

¹⁷ *Church Review*, November 3rd, 1882, p. 531.

“In reply to one paragraph in the letter printed in your last issue from ‘H. A. B.,’ will you permit me to say that my own experience is diametrically opposed to that of your correspondent. In the place of ‘ridicule’ I have found respectful interest and good wishes. Personally, I have received, at the very least, over fifty letters of inquiry and ‘Godspeed’ from eminent Roman Catholic priests and members of Religious Orders, and well-known Roman Catholic laymen. I was lately shown a letter addressed by his Eminence Cardinal Manning to an Anglican layman, who had requested the Cardinal’s opinion of the O. C. R., in which his Eminence, whilst insisting on the fact that individual secession was the rule of his Church in England, utterly refused to condemn the aims and objects of the O. C. R., stating that every organization which tended to a restoration of unity was to be respected.”¹⁸

The *Civilita Cattolica*, the organ of the Jesuits, and published at Rome, in its issue for April 20th, 1878, printed a letter from its English correspondent on the O. C. R.

“The Order of Corporate Reunion,” he writes, “actively pursues its labours, and its officers have sent forth a Pastoral Letter containing an exposition of its views and ends. It is known that several Anglican ministers in connection with this Society have induced a Greek Bishop—whose name, however, it has not as yet been possible to ascertain—to ordain them under certain conditions, in order that the doubt to which Anglican Orders are subject may not be alleged as a reason for taking exception to the validity of their operations. The three leading officers of the Order have received Episcopal consecration from the same quarter—a quarter which, according to what is said, is of such a character as to completely exclude any question as to the validity of the Orders so conferred, when once the time shall come for submitting the matter for examination to the Holy See. So soon as a sufficient number of the Anglican clergy shall have in this way removed the difficulty which arises from their ordination, the Order hopes to be able to present its petition for Corporate Reunion with the Catholic Church, signed by a number of members so imposing as to render it impossible for the Holy See not to recognise the gravity and importance of the movement.”¹⁹

The schemes of the Order of Corporate Reunion did not

¹⁸ *Church Times*, August 22nd, 1879, p. 528.

¹⁹ Quoted in *Church Association Monthly Intelligencer*, Volume for 1878, p. 238.

receive the approval of the great majority of the Ritualistic party. It is ever the fate of the pioneers of ecclesiastical movements to receive a good deal of censure from the rank and file far away behind them. Yet it is generally found that where the pioneers of a religious movement stand at any particular year, the rank and file will be found standing a quarter of a century later on. Such has been the rule with the Ritualistic Movement since its birth in 1833. The Order of Corporate Reunion is at present the pioneer of the Ritualistic Movement, being much nearer to Rome than any of its predecessors. It has consequently come in for a great deal of criticism from the rank and file of the Ritualistic party. Even the secret Society of the Holy Cross has taken up arms against the Order of Corporate Reunion. At the monthly Chapters of the former of these Societies during the close of 1878, and in the early portion of 1879, and also at its September Synod, 1878, the action of the O. C. R. was again and again discussed by the brethren in their secret gatherings. The S. S. C. even appointed a Special Committee to examine the whole question, "Bishop" Thomas W. Mossman was at that time a member of the S. S. C., and in its secret conclaves fought valiantly for the Order of which he was a "Bishop." The "Bishop" even presented a "Report" of his own on the subject to the Society of the Holy Cross, some time during the year 1878, the most remarkable passage in which is the following:—

"The O. C. R. admits none but those who accept the whole Catholic Faith; and its work is to gather them together, and form them into one great spiritual Order: and then, when the time appointed comes, as most surely in God's Providence it will come, whoever lives to see it, we shall go with our thousands of faithful clergy and laity, and we shall say to the Patriarchs of the East and West, 'We all hold the Catholic Faith in its fulness and integrity, can you refuse to admit us to intercommunion?' *I have the best possible ground for believing that, whatever might be the action of the other Patriarchs, the Patriarch of the West [the Pope] would not look coldly on our plea,*

and would not only grant it, but would give besides every concession that could in reason be demanded." ²⁰

At the November, 1878, Chapter of the Society of the Holy Cross the "Report" of Brother Mossman was read to the brethren, but did not receive any approbation from them, for they passed the following motion unanimously:—"That although Br. Mossman's Report is printed and circulated amongst the brethren, the Society distinctly repudiates the opinions expressed in it." ²¹ At this Chapter the preliminary Report on the O. C. R. of the special Committee of the S. S. C. was read. There was attached to it, as an Appendix, several extracts from letters which the Committee had received from "Bishop" Mossman. In one of these letters he wrote:—

"I can only speak profitably of what I am able to testify of my own personal knowledge. The most important part of this is that a Consecration has undoubtedly taken place. I have been frequently asked what is meant by 'three distinct and independent lines of Episcopal Succession' in the First Pastoral of the Order of Corporate Reunion. Let me distinguish carefully between what I have been told and what I know. What I have been told is, that three Anglican clergymen have been consecrated Bishops from three distinct sources. That may be true, or it may be the reverse. What I know is, that one Anglican clergyman ²² has been consecrated a Bishop by a Catholic Bishop; and by a Catholic Bishop I mean one who is now at this present time, and who was when he performed the act of consecration, in full communion with either the See of Rome, the Patriarch of Constantinople, or the Archbishop of Canterbury. It will thus be seen that the Bishops of all so-called heretical or schismatical bodies are excluded *vi terminorum*. More than this I am pledged not to reveal at present. I know it will appear very strange to many that such a thing could have taken place. I am not sure that I should have been able to believe it myself, had not the documents which attest the consecration, signed and sealed by the consecrating Prelate himself, attested by witnesses, and other

²⁰ *Br. Mossman's Report on the Order of Corporate Reunion. Presented to S.S.C., p. 10.*

²¹ *S.S.C. November Chapter, 1878. Acta, p. 4.*

²² There can be no doubt that "Bishop" Mossman here referred to himself

corroborative evidence, been placed in my hands for examination in the most frank and unreserved manner possible."²³

It will thus be seen that the mystery which surrounds the identity of the Consecrating Bishops was not altogether removed by "Bishop" Mossman. He was evidently "pledged" not to make their names public. A great many guesses have, from time to time, been made as to who the Consecrating Bishops really were, but nothing certain has been made known to the public from that day to this. Since its foundation the Order of Corporate Reunion appears to have influenced for evil a considerable number of the Ritualistic clergy. In the November, 1881, issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, Dr. Lee wrote an article on "The Order of Corporate Reunion," in the course of which he asserted that "Already there are representatives of the O. C. R. in almost every English diocese" (p. 755). The *Roman Catholic Standard and Ransomer*, edited by a priest who was formerly an advanced Ritualistic clergyman, in its issue for November 22nd, 1894, p. 323, says:—"We have heard just lately that there are now *eight hundred* clergymen of the Church of England who have been *validly* ordained by Dr. Lee and his co-Bishops of the Order of Corporate Reunion. If so, Dr. Lee's dream of providing a body with which the Pope could deal seems likely to be realized."

²³ *S. S. C. Report of Committee on the Order of Corporate Reunion*, pp. 9, 10.