

mother-in-law to do the job. Round two goes to Benjamin.

But the very thought of round three makes me shudder. The local quack says that one old woman died in a fit of laughter. My wife says she can hear the whole sodality laughing in their meeting room across the road.

You see, my son-in-law, who drew the bird, forgot to take out the craw and the gall bladder. We couldn't cook Benjamin, and when we sat down to our Christmas dinner, we found that we couldn't eat Benjamin.

That bird did more harm after death than during life,—like Hitler.

## Churches In and Around Liverpool—6

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### ST. OSWALD'S, OLD SWAN

The establishing of a Catholic Church at Old Swan is associated with the name of Fr. Maddocks—the priest who carried off the fever-stricken Fr. Bernard O'Reilly and helped to save a bishop for the diocese.

Fr. Maddocks had been a curate at St. Nicholas's and we are told that the idea of a church at Old Swan arose from his sympathy for the Catholics who, at the time, had to walk from Old Swan to St. Nicholas's to Church—and back again.

How many lived at Old Swan—the name was originally the name of the inn at the corner of Broad Green Road—we are not told.

When St. Nicholas's was built in 1815, Clarence Street marked the outer ring of buildings, so far as the town was concerned. Moss-lake and the adjoining marsh spread across the level ground between the top of Brownlow Hill and Parliament Street—there being no Oxford Street or Bedford Street in those days.

In 1830 the Liverpool to Manchester railway was completed, but the Liverpool terminus was at Edge Hill. Between 1830 and 1836 (series of) tunnels were made, bringing the line to Lime Street. The Moss-lake area must have been drained about this time and we read of the laying out of Bedford Street, Abercromby Square, Oxford Street, Chatham Street and Falkner Square between 1800 and 1835.

There were glass works and rope works at Old Swan in early days, but the railway and the work on the tunnels must have brought many Catholic workers to the district.

A church being needed, Fr. Maddocks was prepared to do things in the grand manner. He looked to no less a person than Mr. Augustus Welby Pugin as his architect. Pugin was one of the remarkable figures of his period. A convert to Catholicism,

he had all the convert's enthusiasm for a new-found truth and a great desire to break down the prejudices of his fellow-countrymen and quondam co-religionists against the Catholic faith. To cover the land with Roman basilicas would not—in his opinion—help to soothe John Bull. He might consider Catholicism as a possible expression of truth, if the churches took a shape already familiar to his mind—the style of the English 13th century building. So Pugin became the apostle of English Gothic. It is one of the oddities of history that this exotic personality, in many ways so unlike an Englishman, should be so tender to English prejudice. His tall, slim figure had little to suggest the sturdiness of John Bull. The long cloak he loved to wear would have befitted a Continental desperado—his effervescent spirit was the opposite of Anglo-Saxon phlegm and his tendency to extremes of judgment were equally distant from the Englishman's supposed steadiness and moderation.

St. Oswald's was the first Pugin church in the district and the first Catholic Church in the North of England since the Reformation to be adorned with a steeple. The Relief Act of 1791, while allowing Catholics to have churches, provided they were registered, emphasised the graciousness of this toleration by forbidding both bells and steeples. So St. Oswald's is a link with the architecture of medieval Catholic England and at the same time marks a stage in the disappearance of the penal laws.

An old print shows the church standing in a wide country lane, with hedges and trees about it and in this setting the strength and elegance of the building is striking. One enters the precincts by a lych-gate, a reminder of the old Catholic custom which was part of the funeral ceremony. There the priest met the body of the dead parishioner. Between the outer