

The Laity a Measure of Practical Catholicity.

Instructed and Fearless Laymen Bulwark of Church.

At a meeting of the Knights of Columbus in Philadelphia lately, the Rev. J. L. Kirkin made the following address on "The Laity a Measure of Catholicity." A body of laymen chosen carefully for their faithful Christian lives, bound by sacred obligations and following the high ideal of a Catholic life, means a mighty bulwark for the Church.

"In all times the laity have been the measure of Catholicism," indeed. In the early Christian days the laity were truly the measure of Catholicism, for it was by the laity, in God's Grace, that the work of conversion was accomplished in the Roman Empire. The Popes, bishops and priests directed and counseled and instructed, and with the wisdom of the Holy Ghost guided the work of the Church; but there could be no public exposition of doctrine, no widespread apologetic literature. The lives of the faithful were the arguments of the Church. In every condition the Christian lived among the pagans from the household of the emperors to the lowest order of slaves.

Everywhere the purity, meekness, honesty and love of the Christians gave testimony. The pagan world saw those who had but lately been of themselves turn from all that had delighted them; saw their easy sensual lives reformed in virtue; saw the relinquishment of wealth and pleasure, the feeding of the poor, the love of enemies, the respect for authority, the millions of martyrs cheerfully enduring torture for Christ. And seeing these marvels, the pagan learned what the Christian religion was. Hereby and schism have succeeded because the laity have not known and loved their faith, and the defection of whole nations from the truth have shown the sad state of Catholicism amongst them. Luther's rebellion against the Church prospered mainly because the people of his nation were not instructed in their religion, and the easy indulgence of the new religion appealed to them who had been held in bonds they did not love because they did not understand. The yoke of Christ was heavy because they had not the knowledge that makes it light and sweet.

The religion of the English people was jugged with by those in high places for sixty years, and the people of "Our Lady's Dowry," drugged by the religious traditions of their land and bewildered by the changes they could not understand, did not appreciate the crime against them until they were robbed of their faith and England was Protestant. Their stubborn complacency could not be stirred into activity by the exhortations of the faithful clergy or the example of their martyrs, and because they did not know their religion they were cheated into heresy.

Exactly the same condition prevails in the so-called Catholic countries of to-day, where faith is considered a hereditary gift and the outward forms of religion appear to serve as substitute for sterling, intelligent religious service in the majority of the laity. The logical result of this half-hearted religious condition is the spread of infidelity, and the growth of vicious organizations and wholesale defections from the faith in the laity that is the measure of Catholicism. So we see in France, the Eldest Daughter of the Church, avowed atheists returned to the Chamber of Deputies, there to legislate against the faith of their supporters. The palpable explanation must be either the blinding to duty that comes from political preferment dispensed by the government, or else a wilful avoidance of the bounden duty of the faithful. In either case, and whatever be the cause, the conditions permitted with such amazing complacency argues a sad state of Catholicism of which the laity there are the measure.

In contrast to this condition, see the Catholicism of which the laity of Ireland are the measure. Take the sixty years before the famine and the years of the famine—all the penal times. Reduced to sordid poverty by the scientific legislation of hatred pursued by England; oppressed by cruel laws in their homes; their language, that golden bond of a country, forbidden; all education penalized; forbidden to avail themselves of their country's natural resources; their manufactures destroyed; their commerce scattered. Their religion banned, their priests hunted. Deprived of all the pomp and externals of worship so dear to their artistic nature. Hearing mass in the hollow of a cave, with watchers scattered over the mountain side to give the alarm. Dying of starvation on the roadside, their glazing eyes looking on the vans loaded with provisions for England that could be theirs if they deserted their religion. Yet the Irish remained faithful, hugging the precious jewel of their faith in jealous anxiety to their hearts and proving by their Christian family life, mutual charity, patience and highest morality that the laity are indeed the measure of Catholicism.

In our own land the condition that confronts the Church, demands that the laity, as the measure of Catholicism, be instructed, valiant and fearless in the profession and practice of their religion. Bishops and priests must direct, exhort and teach, but it will be the good example, the practical religious lives of the laity that will achieve the conversion of America. The American mind is eminently practical, and public proclamation of dogma that is contradicted by the lives of believers will never win assent.

Cardinal Pleads for "Chic"

The reception of Cardinal Mathieu recently by the Academie Française led M. Jules Claretie to write to Le Temps a few reminiscences of Cardinal Perraud, whose seat among the Immortals has fallen to Cardinal Mathieu. Cardinal Perraud was thin, ascetic looking, and, as his successor said in the oration he made, like a saint of the thirteenth century, one of those often seen on a stained glass window.

"I don't believe I ever saw him smile," M. Claretie writes. "It so happened that he often arrived at a meeting of the academy when the members were at work on the dictionary, and fate would have it that at that moment in many occasions certain words no longer used in society but often met with in Moliere were under discussion.

"But it did not trouble the Cardinal; he didn't seem even to hear. He was not heedless, but remote." "One morning he arrived at the institute with his hat full of confetti and his shoulders covered. He was quite unaware of it. He was busy with his thoughts.

"One day we had reached the letter

C, and the word 'chic' was being discussed.

"It's slang," said some. "Look it up in Littré," said others. 'You'll see that as a familiar term it has been in use a long time.'

"It means," said a learned member, 'a man who understands chicanery.'

"It's an artist's word. A picture may have chic."

"It comes from the German schick."

"Or rather, the Spanish chico." "So the discussion raged, until the point had almost been reached of treating it as a word of the boulevards and leaving it to slang dictionaries, when Cardinal Perraud broke in 'Allow me a word.'

"And with much humor and fancy quite unexpected he defended the word whose fate had almost been settled.

"Let me tell you why," he said. "When the centenary of the Normal School was being celebrated the pupils composed a little play for which they built a theatre. It so happened that I found myself obliged to cross the stage to get to my seat.

"When the scholars saw one who had been one of themselves and had become a Cardinal making his appearance on the boards, although only for a moment and by chance, their astonishment was great. Then they clapped their hands and began calling out 'Chic! Chic! Chic!' and I'm sure that a word current in the Normal School has a right to be quoted by the Academie Française."

"Thanks to this little speech the word took its place in the dictionary.

"It was the only time," adds M. Claretie, "that the Cardinal ever threw off his seriousness."

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Origin of the A.O.H.

As to the origin of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, claimed to be the most numerous and powerful organization of Irish Catholics in existence, a Glasgow paper (the Observer) says that the history of the movement goes back to 1665, when the Society of the "Defenders" was established in Co. Kildare, Ireland, by the famous Irish chief, Rory Oge O'More, and that it has had many names, including Rapparees, Ribbonmen and St. Patrick's Friendly Society.

Michael Davitt's account of the origin of the famous Order is somewhat different. He does not date it so far back. In his "Fall of Feudalism in Ireland," he places the "Defenders" in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and he says that they originated primarily in the incursion of laborers from bordering counties, after the great emigration of Protestant tenants from Ulster to the United States following the year 1760 to the end of the century. A Protestant organization called the Peep-o'-Day Boys resented this intrusion in attacks upon Catholic families, and the Defenders formed an opposing body of Catholic workers. Out of these rival combinations the more modern Orangemen and Ribbonmen were respectively evolved.

As to the introduction of the Order in America, Davitt says that the Ribbonmen carried their organization with them when in the great emigration they went with millions of their race to the United States and Canada. The Ancient Order of Hibernians was the trans-Atlantic offspring of the Ribbonism of Ireland. It has, however, long ceased to be a secret or oath-bound organization and has become mainly a benevolent society, its membership being strictly confined to Catholics in accord with the original aim of the parent body—the Defenders. Davitt adds that no association of Irish-American citizens rendered more loyal or pecuniary assistance to the Irish Land movement and to Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary Party than the Ancient Order.

In his "Literary History of Ireland" Dr. Douglas Hyde pays the Order a high compliment in reference to its donation of \$50,000 for the establishment of a Celtic chair in the Catholic University of Washington.

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"I guess that's what," she objected voice. "She expelled last year for less than that she's a crank! She'd take of Kitty Castleton—if it was but that blessed Kit I'd say a teacher's pet—but I think this is too much, so I guess as well kiss the school good-bye. In the meantime the objection conversation was locked in the principal's office.

"And now," Miss Shellhammer remarking with violent "I think you thoroughly understand that if you find it possible the rules I shall insist upon withdrawing your name from of pupils."

Miss Castleton intimated did. "I have put up with you," continued the principal. "But I have now reached the limit of my endurance. Do agree, Miss Castleton, if hapless victim, that you merits the severest punishment I can inflict upon you?"

Kitty glanced at the clock had been there since 2 o'clock it was now 2.40. At 4 she at a spread. Therefore, sentence of penitence was necessarily agreed that no punishment devised could fit the of her crime.

"I am deeply shocked and went on Miss Shellhammer you, whom I have forgiven misdeemeanors, to whom I have granted privileges denied other pupils, should have causelessly a disturbance. I have the discipline of my threatened by a crowd of girls entertain no higher ambition to enjoy themselves. At you Miss Castleton, and within a time from your graduation not less frivolity. A girl or pen is not a child. Now, he anything to say for yourself? It seemed to Kitty that the fiftieth time Miss Shellhammer asked this same question previous similar questions she made no reply, but she now her blue eyes to the principal with an appearance of the child-like innocence and candor. "Indeed, I am very, very sorry. I don't know who said my head, and—and I can't tell you the other girls' you understand that I truly don't you?" And the sweet altered a little.

Miss Shellhammer softened I shall not insist upon it. "Since you show a penitence, I shall abandon my intention of expelling you from our companions. The fact that near commencement time and rents probably expect you to appreciate my leniency to you?"

"I lacked but three minutes. Therefore no time was lost. "I can't tell you how nervous so much more than I do so much more than I dare. Indeed I will try to do it. You may go now," said the al, the merest suspicion of a being her thin lips. Showing of Kitty Castleton, as from else. Kitty was suffering gouloucy, thoughts, as body! Her girl friends said she a "holy circus" and the named her as a "mighty girl."

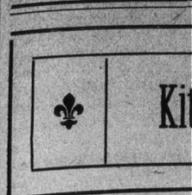
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By Ruth Kuster A group of girls were the hall talking excitedly get expelled sure this time ed one, sadly. "Shell a for any more nonsense. off every time till now, the worst yet, so I guess get bounced, and so will "Yes," replied another, "make her tell on us. She her there till Christmas if She could squeeze the truth sphinx, Shell could."