

THE KNOX QUATER-CENTENARY

SCOTCH CELEBRATIONS

A FAILURE

Father Power, S.J., takes the Field

Damaging Onslaught on

Knoxite Traditions

(Glasgow Observer, June 10)

The John Knox quater centenary celebration has proved an absolute failure when the population of Scotland is taken into account. Indeed, we would be pretty accurate in describing it as a series of miserable fizzes. There has been neither enthusiasm nor unanimity in the attempt made at the glorification of the so-called Reformer. The reason of this is obvious. The people—at any rate, those who take the trouble to read about Knox—know the manner of man he was, and how impossible he would be in any civilized country at the present time. Apologists for Knox's conduct have been all the rage lately. Excuses for his misdemeanors and crimes have constituted the bulk of the speeches delivered at the few celebrations held throughout the country. This fact that he made war against the Catholics of Scotland—a relentless and a bloody war—obliterates all his heinous offences in the estimation of his admirers.

Historical Truths

There is no need for speculation as to the character or permanent stability of a Church reared on such a rotten foundation. The evidence within the past few months amply shows that Presbyterianism is of the world, worldly: that it lacks in cohesive qualities and eschews the very principles of Christianity. That the Rev. Father Power, S.J., has done much to "knock the bottom" as it were out of the centenary celebrations of the Scottish "Reformer" there is not the least doubt. From his outdoor platform in Edinburgh he has been giving his auditory some plain, and to many, startling historical truths regarding certain incidents in Knox's career. No doubt, as Father Power points out, under the passing influence of the passionate spirit of a centenary celebration men are apt to forget that the subject of their thoughtless praise is still under trial on many grave counts, and on others still graver stands condemned by competent historical judges. In some cases the criminal indictment against him has been met by the verdict of "Not proven"—a very faint form of praise with no white-washing efficacy about it.

Grave Charges

Father Power specifies a list of charges vitally affecting (as he rightly says) the Christian character of a man whose only claim to the veneration of ecclesiastical Scotland is founded on the possession of attributes which prove him to be, as he so often declared himself, a messenger sent by the Most High to preach the pure Gospel of Christ to a nation in the darkness of idolatry. These charges include complicity in murder (murder by "accession," incitement, or approval), slander, treason, lying, etc. The eminent Jesuit was anxious that some doughty champion of Knox should make an effort to clear his character, but it was only recently that a writer ("Historicus") in an Edinburgh evening journal ventured to take exception to a leaflet issued by Father Power, and in the course of a lengthened letter, most of which was foreign to the points at issue, contends that evidence has not been produced to show that Knox was implicated in the murder of Rizzio.

Father Power's Reply

Father Power briefly replied and in the course of his letter he said he must require "Historicus" to stick to the one point of the "one bloodstain" of the leaflet, and to answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions: "Do I quote Knox correctly? Does he say that Rizzio, the victim of one of the most brutal murders in the annals of crime was justly punished? Does he call the act of murder 'just and most worthy of all praise'? Does Burton, without any bias against Knox, write of 'his thorough approval of the deed'? Is such proved approval worthy of a Christian preacher? Does it constitute a bloodstain on the character of a man who boasted of introducing the 'pure Gospel' to Scotland? With this emphatic approval of red-handed murder before our eyes are we justified as a Christian nation in paying national honor to the approver by a quater-centenary?" Father Power wished "Historicus" to bear in mind that he was bound to keep to the point of one Knox, one bloodstain and one centenary.

Knoxite Twaddle

This, one would have thought, a fair enough stipulation on the part of Father Power, but "Historicus" in his next letter works off a lot of twaddle, and gravely asserts that the questions asked do not touch the point under discussion. The correctness of the extracts or references (he says) has not been disputed; even Knox's approval of the deed after it was done has not been called in question. But what he disputes is that Knox was implicated in the murder, and he states there has been no "overwhelming historical evidence" produced to prove that he was. "Historicus" then challenges Father Power to bring evidence to incriminate Knox. "In a Court of Justice (he says) a case is not only stated, but proof must be led as to the guilt of the party. We have had the case against Knox stated as complicity in murder—and the proof led is not condemnatory." But Father Power was not permitted to reply to this letter, for the Editor of the newspaper intimated that "the correspondence must now cease"—a very unusual, not to say biased and unreasonable course to adopt.

Editorial Animus

But the animus of the Editor towards Father Power was shown in another way. In an editorial it was stated that "the Rev. M. Power, S.J., has cut rather a sorry figure in his crusade against the character of John Knox," and this notwithstanding the fact that he closed his columns against the Rev. gentleman. "His charges against Knox (the Editor says in his leaderette), alleging complicity in the murder of Rizzio, and even trying to blame him for the slaughter of Queen Mary, have been little short of disgraceful." Father Power very reasonably explains that if Knox did not take part in the murder of Rizzio he was a murderer in his heart for he lauded those who perpetrated the heinous crime, and patted them on the back for having committed the deed; and with regard to Queen Mary, her "slaughter" was brought about by Knox's enmity and plotting towards her. "But the wily Jesuit (says the author of the leaderette), instead of producing proofs from his well-filled armoury, asked the questioner to prove that John Knox was innocent. That is not the method of Courts of Justice." What is to hinder either the Editor of the paper or "Historicus" from gleaning all the information necessary? It is not likely that Father Power is going to supply them with material which is quite as free to them as to anybody else. Let them look for the information if they think they require it, but the idea that Father Power is going to supply every Tom, Dick and Harry with the result of his historical researches is perfectly ridiculous.

GLEANINGS FROM THE CATHOLIC TIMES

King Alfonso's Visit

"Punch" was happy in its cartoons indicating how times have changed. It represented the Ghost of Queen Elizabeth looking indignantly at Kings Edward and Alfonso fraternising. But considering even more recent events, the impression made by the visit is remarkable. The sympathy which went from England to America during the war with Spain aroused a feeling of bitterness amongst the Spaniards of which traces still remain in the Peninsula. The cordiality of King Alfonso's reception will wipe those traces of ill-will away. The young King by the magic of a kindly nature and boyish cheerfulness became all at once an immense favorite. He enjoyed everything, despite the unpropitious weather, and acted throughout in the most gracious spirit. His geniality toward Father Bampton and the Spanish students of Beaumont College was the outcome of a sunny, cordial disposition which continually won friends whilst his Majesty was in London. King Alfonso not only gave delight but felt it. He was manifestly charmed with his reception, and when he called it affectionate, in his graceful message of thanks he was not in the least exaggerating. Seeing that the trade between this country and Spain amounts to upwards of twenty millions sterling per annum, and that British capital to the extent of over that amount is invested in Spain, it is of importance upon commercial grounds alone that the relations between the two countries should be most friendly.

Pastors and Priests

On January 1st, 1904, there were in France 38,573 priests in receipt of stipends from the state. This number includes Bishops, Vicars-General, and Canons. But there were also, labouring for the Church though not receiving

pay from the State, 17,336 priests, amongst them Honorary Canons, chaplains, professors, in seminaries, etc. In some cases small allowances were made to certain of these priests from local or communal funds, for services rendered in hospitals, schools, and so forth. Our readers will now understand why the Abbe Gayraud's amendment in favour of the claims of these 17,000 unsalaried clergymen met with so pleasing an increase of sympathy from the deputies. It is impossible to ignore the fact that these men, some of them grown grey in the service of the Church, have a strong moral claim upon the consideration and generosity of a Government which is breaking up an agreement they found in force on taking Orders, and is impoverishing the Church on which they depend for support in manhood and old age. Surely the Republic might have helped these 17,000 priests who have served her interests in spiritual matters, even though not on the list of parish priests. As it is, they will be a heavy burden on the slender resources of the Bishops.

Allocating the Churches

The question of the ownership of the churches and presbyteries came up with Articles Ten and Eleven. It was soon evident that the Chamber viewed with dislike, perhaps with fear, the Government's proposal to demand a rental for the sacred edifices from the local associations of worship. M. Flandin, in an eloquent speech, pointed out the ties that bound the peasantry to the village church and bade the Deputies consider well before they resolved to commit an outrage on this sentiment. The elections are near at hand, and the Deputies did consider well. In spite of the Government's appeal, they refuse to confiscate the places of worship. Beaten on that Article, the Government introduced another, according to which the ecclesiastical buildings are declared State property, but the gratuitous use of them is granted to the local associations of worship. Thus the Catholic population of France will not be deprived of its edifices of religion nor be compelled to pay for the use of them. Unfortunately these articles do not cover the cases of the episcopal dwellings or the seminaries, the fate of which has still to be decided. We can only hope that the Chamber will continue to display its new spirit of fairness a little longer yet.

For some weeks men have been busy improving the race track on the Winnipeg Fair grounds, and those competent to judge state that it will be the finest half-mile track in the Dominion of Canada.



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ONE-SIDED MEN

Faculties must be exercised or they will not grow. Nature is too good an economist to allow us to keep any faculty or function which we do not employ. We can have just what we use, and that will constantly increase; everything else will be gradually taken away from us. Man becomes strong and powerful and broad just in proportion to the extent and healthfulness of the activity of his faculties; and it must not be one-sided, not an exercise of one or two faculties, or one set of faculties, or the man will topple over. Balance in life comes from the healthful exercise of all the faculties. One reason why we have so many one-sided men in this country is because they pursue one idea, exercise one side of their nature, and, of course, they cannot retain their balance. This is one of the curses of specialities. They are good things for the race, but death to the individual who pursues his speciality at the expense of the development of the all-round man.—Ex.

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