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The Witness

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FATHER MATHEW Anniversary Commemoration.

Recently the anniversary commemoration of the death of the Very Rev. Theobald Mathew, O.S.F.C., was celebrated in the Father Mathew Centenary Memorial Hall, Church street, Dublin. The speakers included the Very Rev. J. T. Murphy, president of Blackrock College, and Mr. John Dillon, M.P., and the Rev. Father Nicholas, O.S.F.C., president of the association, occupied the chair.

Prior to the lecture in the Memorial Hall, the magnificent new structure erected as a hall for the Catholic Boys' Brigade, founded by the Capuchin Fathers, was formally opened, amidst great enthusiasm, by the Rev. John Dillon, who is a grandchild of the great temperance reformer, Father Theobald Mathew.

The Rev. Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said, my dear friends, it is forty-five years to-day since the death of the apostle of temperance, Father Theobald Mathew, who gave himself up to the total abstinence movement, with all his heart, in the spirit of an Irish priest and patriot. The holy cause for which he lived and died suffered for a time, but here amongst his own people, his spirit is as green and his cause as promising now as in the days when he swayed the people himself.

The Very Rev. Father Murphy, president of Blackrock College, then delivered an interesting lecture, in the course of which he said the temperance movement was carried across the sea by the faithful followers of Father Mathew, and found its way to-day in the United States in the Catholic Temperance Organization of America, led by the greatest of our Irish race, such as Archbishop Cardinal Gibbons, and Archbishop Ryan, of Philadelphia, and others. Here, at home, thank God, the work of temperance had been once more secured by the effort of the various bodies and individuals, and it was now crystallized here in Dublin under the guidance of the Capuchin Fathers. But very much still remained to be done. Each time he passed by the statue of Father Mathew in O'Connell Street it struck him that it looked like the statue of one who was preaching in the wilderness, and he believed and asserted that there was never in his history a time when this temperance movement and organization was so necessary as it was at the present day, and that now or never was the time for them to unfurl on high and spread abroad the great banner of temperance.

Mr. John Dillon, who was received with applause, in the course of an eloquent speech, said nothing has impressed me more in the course of a wide and extended experience of our race than the havoc and ruin that has come to Irishmen through the curse of drink, and he pointed to America over and over again the men whom I have seen come to ruin were amongst the brightest, most gifted, most attractive, and the most kindly of our people—men who, in the insidious advance of this awful habit, crept upon them so silently, before they were under their guard, then too late to save themselves, had gone down in absolute despair and ruin, men at some time who, if they could have shaken themselves loose of this appalling curse, would have risen to the first rank in the communities amongst which they lived. Now, I am not a man who is disposed to exaggerate upon this question of temperance. I have heard the arguments upon this question. Some have said, "Your people can never be a free people until they are a sober nation." I have pointed out to them what is an unquestioned fact, that the Scotch and the English people consume vastly more drink than we do, and yet they are free nations and great nations. But while I say that it would be stupid and foolish to endeavor to minimize the extent of the evil amongst our race—and I believe the consequences of drink are more fatal to people of the Celtic race than to the Scotch and English—I remember that the fact is as I have stated it. I think the habit of drinking is more destructive to people like ours, and that a smaller quantity will madden an Irishman more than the people of the other countries. In fact my own observation leads me to the conviction—I mean my experience derived largely from Australia and other countries—that our Scotchman could drink three Irishmen under the table. Therefore, I speak from personal experience, and I say that, looking at it from the purely material point of view, that the work of Father Mathew is alive to-day not only here in Ireland, but in every quarter of the globe where ever Irishmen are scattered. When they talk about the work of Father Mathew having passed away, I say that if there was not one total abstinence society or one total ab-

because I am deeply convinced that it is beating the air so long as the British House of Commons is dominated and controlled by the great brewing interests of England, that you will get effective temperance legislation from England, and that if we ever do do anything by legislation that legislation must come from an Irish Parliament sitting in this city. My second reason is that I myself never believed that temperance measures brought forward by the advanced temperance people of England were on the right lines until recently, when they have changed their hands. In my judgment there is in England in the path of temperance legislation an insuperable barrier, since the law, most mistakenly, I believe, allowed the great breweries to be turned into limited liability companies, and allowed the tied House system to be spread all over the country. The whole electorate is in possession of breweries, public houses are tied and owned by great breweries, and the result is you have such a solid interest that I don't believe they ever will get temperance legislation spread in our time. I trust we shall be able before long to approach the solution of the question on this side of the water ourselves.

Let me say a few words upon the practical subject of this meeting to-night, and this attempt to apply a second remedy to the great evil of excessive drinking, and that is what I may describe as the moral remedy. The Fathers here to-night are not engaged in a political mission. This organization is entirely divorced from politics. It is an organization for advancing the cause of temperance in Ireland by moral means, and I believe that, under the present circumstances, this is really the promising road to travel. I believe that at present in Ireland this is the only course that will bring real fruit and real reward to the laborers that engage in it, and I believe that the present condition of Ireland lends itself to great effort, and that there has arisen, as far as we can judge, a widespread desire amongst many influential classes of the community for some great national movement in favor of temperance on the lines of Father Mathew's movement. Now, what are the methods proposed by the Capuchin Fathers? They are summed up in one word—"Organize." And I can say, with twenty years of political experience in Ireland, from experience I have had of our people in Ireland, that there is nothing so characteristic of the Irish race as the fact that if you want to achieve any great purpose, moral or political, in Ireland you must look to do it amongst all classes of our people, and have such opportunities as you can to meek after week of practicing temperance and a great many who do not, are often brought face to face with circumstances bearing upon this question, and nothing has horrified me more in the course of my political journeyings, which are pretty constant and widespread, in Ireland than to come back to some district which I have not visited for some ten or twenty years and there to find the wreck and ruin of many a gallant young fellow who in the earlier years had been ready, if need be, to sacrifice his life in the cause of his country—to find him a broken, hopelessly ruined old man. That has been my unhappy experience in hundreds of cases, and just as in Australia and America, so it is here at home, that very often it is the most promising and the brightest who have met their fate. So it has been borne in upon me, not dealing with the question from the same point of view with which you in this hall would deal with it, but dealing with it from a totally different standpoint—namely, of the interests of the National movement, of the politics in which I am engaged, it has been borne in upon me that the importance from that point of view of this question could hardly be rated too highly.

How great an assistance would it not be for those of us who are endeavoring to assert the liberation of Ireland if our people were made a more temperate people, and if they were taught the value of self-restraint? There are two methods by which temperance reformers have sought to promote that cause in all countries. One method is by legislation. I have been twenty years in Parliament, and although I have taken my little part in the matter in Parliament I have ever without very closely the whole course of temperance legislation in the House of Commons, and many years ago I came to the conclusion, which has been strengthened by several years' experience, which has passed over my head, that it is perfectly hopeless to get any effective and radical temperance legislation from the British House of Commons. The influence and the dominion of the brewers of England, and during my period in the House of Commons year by year the brewers of England have gained it influence—they are far more powerful now than they were twenty years ago—and I believe that from the British House of Commons we never will get effective temperance legislation. I myself have not voted more than once or twice in favor of any Temperance Bill—I never voted against any Temperance Bill—but I never voted for many of them, in the first place,

A COURAGEOUS GIRL.

"An Old Public School Scholar," writing to the "Sacred Heart Review," says:—
"I clip from a Western paper an account of a scene in the University of Chicago, where the professor, dealing last month with the subject of Reformation, so far forgot himself as to burst into a regular tirade against the Catholic Church. He met his match. To quote from the paper before me:—
"The pope's of that time were knaves, tricksters, hypocrites, who professed in their outward lives the direct opposite of their inner lives, who believed not the tenets of the Church of which they were the heads, indulgences, pardons for sins (they were bought and sold). Such, in effect, is the substance of this 'jaunty professor's' harangue. The scholars drank in this baneful poison, and thus were swallowed the germs of the grossest and most detestable bigotry and falsehood, in the very halls of a great American university! But such a monstrous and diabolical attack on Catholic

principles was not allowed to pass unchallenged. In the class was a sterling Catholic girl, who grew more and more indignant and Catholic as the lesson progressed. When the professor had almost exhausted his supply of lies and falsehood, she rose, in open class, in the full confidence in the strength of her position. 'What is the Catholic doctrine on indulgences?' was the simple but telling question she asked the professor. The class was thunderstruck. The professor dumbfounded. He could not answer the question, because he did not know the answer. She then proceeded to tell him that he had recommended to the class seven works, not one of which was Catholic. The professor afterwards apologized, saying it was a slip of the tongue. 'No, sir, it was not, and for the future be careful of what you say' was the girl's firm response. A few such fearless scholars in the halls of premeditated universities and schools would work untold good in the advancement of justice and truth. All hearts to such courageous souls that dare to stand up for the right."

POLAND'S CATHOLICITY.

Poland, as a land oppressed, crushed, divided up, persecuted and ruined, has frequently been compared to Ireland; and the comparison stands good in more than one phase of the respective situations of the two countries. An article entitled "Russia's Surprising Accusation Against Germany of Savage Despotism over the Poles," from the front of an "Ex-Attache," has been creating considerable comment in the American press. The writer gives a brief sketch of Polish history, telling how Poland became divided into three distinct Poland—one Russian, another Austrian, and a third German. As far as Austria is concerned very little interest is taken in this review of the situation, because Austria being a Catholic country, and the Poles being all as staunch Catholics, as a race, as were the Irish, there is no unrest, no internal struggle, no severe antagonisms in Austria. Poland, that it has been intensely different regarding Russian Poland, and now it would seem that Germany is attempting to pursue Russia's old policy towards the Poles—while, strangely to say, Russia and her press severely condemn Germany for the same.

It is clear that religion is at the bottom of all the trouble. One of Russia's aims, in Russifying Poland, was to substitute the Greek Church for the Roman Catholic, and to replace the Polish language by the Russian. Very naturally the Catholic clergy of Poland resented and resisted this interference with the faith of the people; hence the terrible persecution undergone by Poland since 1830. Now, Germany wants to do a similar work; to substitute Lutheranism for Catholicity, and to make German the official as well as obligatory language of Poland. This she cannot do, not because more clearly explained than in the closing paragraphs of the article before us. Of course, allowance must be made for the non-Catholic faith of the one who signs himself "Ex-Attache." We suppose him to be a Catholic, from the terms that he uses, such as designating the clergy of Rome as a "sect." But, as we said, after making allowance for his difference of faith, we must give him credit for all the truths that he reveals. We will simply reproduce these few paragraphs and leave to our readers the easy task of establishing a comparison between the persecution of Catholic Poland and that of Catholic Ireland. The writer, above referred to, says:—
"The Poles in Russia, in Germany and in Austria have always been fervent Roman Catholics. The clergy of that denomination were quick to appreciate the fact that the substitution of the Russian language for Polish constituted an important step toward the substitution of the Russian orthodox faith for the Roman Catholic Church; the conversion of the Catholic Poles to the national State Church of Russia being, indeed, an avowed feature of the scheme of Russifying Poland. Owing to this the Roman Catholic clergy of Poland have for the last seventy years formed the most active and successful opponents of the Russian policy in Poland, and being in much closer touch and more intimate communion with the peasantry than any Russian official, ever hope to be, have encouraged the masses to cling to their language, and to resist all attempts to Russianize them. They have impressed upon their mind that it was their spiritual welfare which was at stake, and that it was preferable to submit to the persecution entailed by the resistance to the Russian authorities than to imperil their salvation by making concessions, the object of which was to bring about their abandonment of the Church of Rome for the orthodox faith. Hundreds of Roman Catholic bishops and priests in Poland have been imprisoned and exiled to Siberia. But,

like their flock, they are ready to suffer martyrdom for their faith, and it is in this that, must be sought one of the chief sources of discontent in Russian Poland. For materially the lot of the Polish peasant, now an owner of his land, entitled to a share in the communal property, and a serf no longer, is 100 per cent. superior to what it was in the days of Poland's national independence and of the oppression of the working classes by the nobility.
"Russia is at the present moment following in the footsteps of Russia, and seeking to Germanize her Polish provinces, and to stamp out Polish nationalism. Identically the same methods are employed as on the Russian side of the border, and whereas the Roman Catholic Church is treated with the most distinguished consideration in the western portion of the German empire, it is subjected to every kind of restrictive measure in the eastern province of Posen, where, as in Russia, the army and in the various districts of Catholic clergy the principal obstacle to its programme for Germanizing the Poles. Catholic nobles are high in favor at the court of Berlin, and occupy the most eminent positions in the imperial household, in the government administration, but only Protestants are appointed to any office in German Poland, and everything is done to induce the rising generation to adopt the Lutheran faith, not on religious grounds, but for the purpose of emancipating it from the spiritual, and, incidentally, the political influence of the Roman Catholic clergy, which remains an obstacle to the Germanization of the people.
"As in Russia, the German officials of the lower class are often brutal in their methods, devoid of judgment and tact, and apt to regard disobedience to their behests as furnishing an excuse for the employment of measures of an altogether intolerable character. It is impossible to describe in any other language their conduct in Wreschen, where Catholic Polish children were flogged by their school teachers until they were crippled for life for declining to learn German prayers and hymns, the subsequent intervention in their behalf by their parents being visited upon the latter with terms of imprisonment on charges of inciting to disobedience of the authorities. One old woman, widowed and ailing, who was sent to prison for ten years on this account, exclaimed pathetically in reply to the inquiry of the court as to what she had to say for herself: 'All we ask is that our children should be taught religion in Polish, and not in German, so that we may at least have the satisfaction of being able to pray with them.'"
"It is only during the last few years that this programme of Germanizing the Poles has been enforced with such vigor and severity. Old Emperor William would never allow his marked predilection for the Poles, and the goodwill which he entertained for them being popularly ascribed to his romantic infatuation in early life for the lovely Princess Elise Radziwill, a Polish noblewoman whom he would have married even at the cost of his succession to the throne had it not been for his father's prohibition. During the first part of the present Emperor's reign the Polish aristocracy played a great role at the court of Berlin, especially the lovely Baroness Kosciuszki, whose alleged influence with the Kaiser constituted on one occasion the subject of a fierce public denunciation by the late Prince Bismarck. Shortly after this, however, she vanished from the court of Berlin, and Polish influence ceased to be a factor in imperial and official circles, and to-day the Kaiser is being held up by the Russian press to the obloquy of the civilized world as the oppressor of the Poles.
"Austria, being a Catholic power, has, of course, found no foes, but rather allies and friends among the Polish Roman Catholic clergy, and, thanks to this, has been enabled to accord to her Polish provinces a large amount of autonomy, as well as the permission to obtain the use of the Polish language in judicial and administrative matters. The result is that the Polish party in the Imperial Parliament at Vienna can always rely, and that the aristocracy, the clergy and the peasantry of Austrian Poland alike hail Francis Joseph, in Polish, as their King."

When you pray to God, ask great things of him.—St. Ambrose.
"Prayer has an effect marvellous and certain; it is that of elevating the soul; also in those Christians who have the habit of prayer, one finds a nobleness of heart, a dignity of character, and a general nobility in all they do, which one does not see in the children of the world.—Mgr. Landriot.
We must fear God; He is the Lord; we must love Him; He is our Father.—St. Anselm.
"They will be done on earth as it is in heaven." that is to say, not as it is done in hell, where it is accomplished by constraint and force; not as amongst men, where often it is done in ignorance or with murmuring; but as among the angels, who do it, with intelligence and love.—Ozannam.

BISHOP O'CONNELL

On the Lay Apostolate.

LACK OF CO-OPERATION.—The Rt. Rev. William H. O'Connell, D. D., Bishop of Portland, Me., addressed a large audience, members and friends of the Young Men's Catholic Association of Boston, on the evening of December 17, on "The Lay Apostolate." Some idea of the scope of his discourse may be gathered from the extracts appended.

Does it seem strange that at this late day we should need to tell the laity their most rudimentary duty to the Church in public life? Can it be possible that here where the Church has found such a flourishing field; where the manifestations of ardent faith among the people are second to no other in any part of the world, and where the generosity of the poor is a proverb to all who see what the simpler of God's children have accomplished, can it be possible that we still lament the lack of lay co-operation? Again I say it.

My words are not intended for the great mass of the faithful, what they have done the world knows, but it is still true that up to to-day, the Church feels the saddest lack of adequate co-operation from those best fitted, best equipped by their better financial, political, social and public condition to make her condition what it ought to be in the public life around us.

Again and again has this lack been made known by her ministers from the holy places. Again and again in trying circumstances has she called for valorous and chivalrous champions; again and again has she appealed to such men not to forget amid the ambitions and pleasures of life the mother, whose legitimate children they are—but in vain.

In the development of a parish, in its organization, of societies to protect and encourage Christian youth; in associations organized for the care of God's poor, they are most conspicuous by their absence; and they think that a chance thrown casually into the Church treasury ought to compensate for that which can never be otherwise supplemented, personal interest, personal enthusiasm, personal co-operation.

Far be it from me to deny that a chosen few of the most intelligent and best-positioned of our laymen and women too have striven for years to give the initiative to lay co-operation in Church work. We all know who they are and what their efforts have been; and they are so few that the honor due to them becomes all the greater, since there are but few to share it.
But their example, like the appeals from the sanctuary, seems not to have had the effect of contagion with their fellows which was naturally to be expected, and they have become like the priests themselves, oftentimes overburdened and but little appreciated.
What, therefore, is left to do to raise in the hearts of our laymen some little spark of the zeal which once enkindled will easily and naturally achieve miracles for God and His Church?
I can think of nothing better than to hold up to their eyes and to picture before their minds the example of those laymen of the past, who under the most difficult and delicate circumstances, far more so than those which confront the laymen of the present day—gave to the Church such a vision of faith and charity that even the unbeliever and the scoffer, touched to the heart, returned to the fold.
The very conversion of the Roman Empire under Constantine was due in great measure to the splendid example of laymen.
But fortunately we do not need to go so far back in history to find our models in the lay apostolate. In times nearer our own and more like our own in atmosphere and surroundings the devoted layman by his work and his word has added lustre to the name of religion.
A MODERN TYPE OF LAYMAN.—France, that truly great country, which with all its defects, nevertheless even in the darkest epochs of its history again and again proves her right to the title of "the eldest daughter of the Church," has given to the world not only the most magnificent examples of priestly missionaries, but also splendid ideals of the lay apostolate.
I chose especially Ozannam as the type of the modern layman because his life in all its phases is more closely allied in occupation and character with the life of the American layman. He never became, like Sir Thomas More, a great statesman; nor like O'Connell, a public leader of his people, nor yet like Windthorst, a diplomatist or elected representative in the House of Deputies. Ozannam, had he wished, might have become again and again a political leader, but he steadfastly declined the tempting honor, and led his life of a private citizen devoted to the interests of the Church rather in quiet ways than amid the turmoil of political strife.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE)