

FATHER WALTER ELLIOTT.

The Great Pantheist Missionary at Thorold To the Editor of The Catholic Register

Bin—Thorold and our good pastor Father Sullivan have both been honored. They have the special distinction of being the first in all Canada to give a mission to non-Catholics. To Protestants, Thorold both in her Catholic and non Catholic citizens, has of late enjoyed a rich treat, something that may never be enjoyed again.

We have had with us Father Elliott, a distinguished member of the religious order known as the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle, whose headquarters are in the city of New York. No doubt many of your readers are aware that Father Elliott has been for some time, and is still, engaged in giving missions to Catholics and to Protestants also. The former he of course meets in their churches, the latter in some public hall, but neither are denied the privilege of being present at both missions if they so choose.

He began his work on Sunday Sept 18th, in our beautiful church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, the pride and joy of its pastor Father Sullivan, and his people. Our church edifice is one that is the admiration of all who see it, and as Father Elliott himself remarked "it would do for New York."

Mission Mass at 5 a.m., with another Mass at 8 o'clock and Benediction in the Most Blessed Sacrament on the evening at 7:30 with a sermon or an instruction at each one of the three services. Such was the order of the Mission which terminated on Sunday, Sept 20th at High Mass, with the Great Benediction given by the Missionary. You will readily grasp the amount of labor Father Elliott undertakes, when I tell you that he heard all the confessions himself, and took part in all the ceremonies. But he did not seem to mind it. He is a man of fine physique, over six feet in height, of build in proportion and strong, with a deep powerful voice, which he knows well how to use. He is fair, with hair turning grey, blue eyes, and wears a full, short beard. Dressed in a plain black soutane, his only ornament his crucifix, which is constantly worn on his breast when giving his mission to Catholics.

In speaking, he always uses a platform—preferring it to the pulpit—and as he stands, a most picturesque figure, beneath a large, black draped with white, mission Cross, which towers six or eight feet above his head, he looks in fancy as our local paper put it "a veritable Peter the Hermit" preaching a crusade—a crusade against the follies, the vices, the sins of men, and calling them back to their true manhood, and to Christ their Redeemer. No attempt is made in the way of oratory, but you at once take it that the speaker is undoubtedly an orator of rare power, and one who wins you to himself and his cause whether you will or not. Is it his gentle candor and the deep sympathy he shows or the erring one that makes us like him? I think it is.

It is unnecessary for me to go into details about his mission to our Catholic people. You and your readers know what such is. Our mission was a great success, and a blessing to all who took part in it.

And now something about his mission to the non-Catholics, which of course is different to that given to Catholics. Hand bills had been well distributed through the town and vicinity stating that a Catholic priest, Rev. Walter Elliott of New York, would every evening for a week give a series of free lectures on living subjects, to the public generally, to all who might choose to come and hear him. It was also mentioned that a Question Box would be found at the entrance to the hall in which questions on moral and religious topics could be placed, and they would be answered.

On the opening, Monday night in the Oddfellows' hall promptly at 8 o'clock, Father Elliott made his appearance dressed in the garb of an ordinary every day citizen, and commenced with a few preliminary remarks. He stated who he was, and what he was and the work he was engaged in, and frankly said he would like to convert them all to be Roman Catholics, but added with a smile, he was a little afraid he would hardly succeed in doing so. The audience took this, very good naturedly. A hymn or some patriotic song such as the "Maple Leaf" and "Fair Canada" was first sung, followed by the reading of suitable texts of Scripture, then came the lecture, followed by another song, then the answering of the questions, then more music, then the announcements for the following evening, after which came his blessing, and all dispersed to come in stronger numbers the following night.

This was kept up steadily all one week, the hall being crowded on every occasion with all kinds of people, who paid the deepest attention, and showed the greatest respect to the speaker. When Sunday afternoon, the 27th came, and he gave his closing lecture "Why I am a Catholic" those who came ten minutes late could not get a seat, and when he finished and said good-bye, and spoke in kind words a beautiful tribute to English speaking Protestants the world over, instead of being tired of him, many were heard to say "I wish he would stay another

week." "I am sorry I missed some of the lectures." "We will be glad if this, or some back to Thorold again" and such like expressions. His first lecture was "The Divinity of Jesus Christ," the 2nd, "Can we get along with the Bible," the 3rd, "Intemperance, or Why I am a Total Abstainer," the 4th, "The Confessional, its Origin and Use," the 5th, "The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist," the 6th, "How Shall we commune with the Dead?" the 7th and last, "Why I am a Catholic."

All most interesting subjects and treated in a masterly manner. And then the questions that were asked—all kinds—no seasonal, even to "Why don't Priests dance?" which he read but did not reply to, and serious, even to the deepest intricacies of Predestination and Election, which he took up, and dealt with in such a way as to win the admiration of all present. But as he himself said at the close, taken all through, they were most interesting questions, which he was pleased to consider. He stated he received only two really flippant ones, which he would not read, as we did not know who they were.

He got questions about the Church, about Confession, about the Saints, about Prayers for the Dead, about the Pope, about the Priests, about the Nun—"Why don't they get married?"—in fact almost about everything concerning the Catholic Church and religion. They were answered patiently, kindly, fully, and I think satisfactorily.

That Father Elliott has made a lasting impression for good in our town among Catholics and Protestants I think cannot be questioned, and that he has sown good seed on good ground I verily believe, and it will produce good fruit. Is it not too bad that our church has not sufficient priests to see aside a large number for this special work as he is engaged in? But the time may come when she can do so, and much good will come from it.

The writer of these words has enjoyed many an intellectual and spiritual treat in his time, but none has he enjoyed so much, as the two weeks as spent as a Catholic (and as a Protestant) with that man among men, that master-mind among men; dear, gentle, kind Father Elliott.

D. B.

Thorold, Oct. 2nd, 1896.

THE CONCLUSION

Of Rev. Father Ryan's Speech in Tipperary—The Irish Primethood

The following is the conclusion from last week of Rev. Father Ryan's speech at the great meeting in Clonmel addressed by the Canadian delegates: He said the Irish in America gave no money freely and generously to the party, for they said to themselves these are the men our fellow-countrymen elect, and we feel sure they will deal justly, honorably, and honestly with the money (cheers). But what did he find was the fact, that the books were there audited, and any committee appointed by any party could go there and see them (loud cheers). Of course, no political party would print such accounts and publish them to the world (cheers). He knew the accounts were there and he was satisfied with them. (Cheers). Then it was said the leader having coerced the party the party coerced the country. Now, in his opinion, the Irish people, were an intelligent, and a free people, and they would never allow themselves to be coerced by any persons. (Cheers). Then he was told that in the case of the Castlbar Convention the people were coerced by the leader in order to force a candidate of his own on the constituency. He said he had interviewed the priests, and he interviewed the leading electors, and it was proved to his absolute satisfaction that the people were not coerced by the leader, but that if the leader did anything what he did was to protect the liberty of the constituency to elect its own representative. (Cheers). Now, of those who criticised the party he had asked, what was their alternative programme. Up to the present he had only heard suggestions as to difficulties, and according to the critics for their own programme. One person suggested to destroy all the parties. Well, a great American statesman had impressed upon the people the prohibition as to the danger of changing names concerning the party, but that was all the more true when there was no second horse to change with. (Cheers and laughter). There was a party in Ireland who wanted quiescence, who wanted no representation at all. Oh! God forbid that Ireland should ever adopt the policy. (Cheers). Then it was said that the priests were not with the people. That was not so. (Cheers). The priests of Ireland were always with the people of Ireland. They were with the people still, and with the help of God they would still be with the people (cheers). They from abroad did not expect political perfection in Ireland. They did not expect perfect unanimity. There were no men who felt and thought more on the question of the rights of minorities than the Irish in Canada. Minorities had the right to be heard, the right to argue, to influence by argument, and, if possible, to convert a minority to a majority, but minorities had no right to dictate any more than the majority had (cheers). Minorities had not the right to illuminate, as majorities had not (cheers). And if a majority had not the right to coerce those certainly a minority had not the right to coerce (loud cheers). They had a bitter experience in Ireland of minority rule. The people had the right to guide their able parish priest, a splendid representative of the priesthood of "blond cheeks). He said if the party proceeded with wisdom, prudence, and discretion, and exercise a spirit of cordiality, he was convinced, and on going home he

would tell his people that though things were disturbed at present still by the time the general election came round they would find all parties in Ireland united, the bishops, the priests, and the people. Thus united they would have the moral and material support of every Irishman in the world over, and the Irish race united at home and abroad would march on in one solid phalanx until that victory was secured by which they would have a native Parliament, a free people and a glorious future for Ireland (loud cheers).

Father Ryan does no more than express the conviction of every visiting delegate to Ireland. The gathering has been misrepresented from within and without, but its verdict will prevail over faction in the party and maintain the Home Rule movement at home and abroad in spite of those who would wreck it.

English Sovereigns and Ireland.

"Bystanler" (Prof. Goldwin Smith) writes in The Weekly Sun "Ireland has a grievance, sentimental it is true, but not less the serious, in the cold neglect with which she has been treated by the sovereigns of Great Britain. Between the reign of William III., who came as conqueror, and that of George IV., no British sovereign visited Ireland. That George IV. did visit Ireland and do something, though in a rather farcical way, to win the hearts of her people, is a bright incident in a history much in need of redeeming features. Her present Majesty, when she visited Ireland, was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and that her visits should be repeated from time to time has always been the earnest desire of her best advisers. Neglect of Ireland is a blot on this, as on previous reigns. The Irish are warm hearted, they attach themselves to persons more readily than to institutions; they are by nature monarchical. No one who knows them doubts that the effect of the royal presence among them would have been good. After the century which, through a series of unhappy centuries England had poured upon the Irish people, policy and justice alike require that every remark of respect which the Crown of Great Britain could pay them should be paid. Royal princes have recently tried to make up for the default, but now it is too late.

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