

# Public Spirit of The Catholic Laity.

Address Delivered by the Right Rev. Bishop Hedley, O.S.B., at Birmingham, on January 17.

SECOND PART—FROM LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC TIMES

Next, the Board. By the Board I mean any local public body in whose hands are to any extent the interests of the Catholic flock. On these Boards we want Catholics. We want men who can spare the time. We do not want a man to damage or neglect his own business; a Catholic can hardly help the cause better than by succeeding in business. But we want men who will strain their sinews a little to work both for themselves and the public Catholic good. We are not asking for spouters or swash-bucklers; but for conciliatory men who can be firm; men who will take their share in the general business of a Board and practically demonstrate the right of Catholics to equality of treatment by working as hard as their non-Catholic colleagues; men who will never fight merely for fighting's sake, but always prefer quiet arrangement and peaceful conciliation. I would not be understood to imply that a little hard hitting is not, at times, both needful and successful. A man has to let his public see that he is in earnest. But nothing demands greater discretion than the use of sharp words. Give me the Catholic member that is ever at his post, who is quiet but ready, who is dignified but knows how to say the word that is wanted, who suppresses his own personality, who strains his tongue from mere bitterness, and who carries his point without leaving his legacy of hostility and distrust which may cost his cause far more in the long run than they can win for at the moment.

Next comes the Club. The Club may be defined any association of Catholics with one another for distinctively Catholic purposes. In this description are included a wide range of bodies, from the Catholic Union of Great Britain to the drum and fife band of a collier's village. I am inclined to advocate strongly the formation of clubs or associations. First, the joining hands with another man is for many of us the first step in that self-suppression or self-sacrifice which is the essential form and soul of all work for Catholicism. Next, to get a man to associate himself with others is to give him a wide outlook, to quicken his perception, to stir him up to activity and emulation. The non-associate Catholic is like one of those shepherds on the borders who live for long periods of time without company but their sheep. The interests of the community concern them not. The merely negative advantages of a Club are many. You may have noticed how persistently the present Pope urges on Continental Catholics the formation of associations for workmen and others. The reason is clear. If a Catholic has not Catholic Clubs, he will find non-Catholic ones—and evil ones—such as ultra-liberal, socialism, irreligious, atheistic clubs. But, whether or no, it is of great profit to all of us to be recreated, helped, instructed, in a rational an unexceptional way, rather than to be left to drift to any sort of pleasure, any sort of companionship. For our young people, it is certain, that if you can only get them, on any pretence, to come round the church door—whether it be in a football or cricket club, a band, or a debating society—if you can get them into a reading room, or even a lilliard or smoking room of the right sort—you have a chance, an opportunity, which you never would have otherwise, of getting at them in matters more important. It is unnecessary to do more than to refer to the positive good work that a Catholic club or union may do in the work of registration, in elections, in the material advancement of the mission, in charitable relief, in carrying on homes and orphanages, and lending its organised labor to the many projects which a devoted pastor is always setting on foot. The Catholic club, whatever its direct, immediate, or ostensible object is indirectly the safeguard of the Faith. As it is, the Catholic club is generally promoted by the priest, almost single-handed.

Our better educated and learned laymen too often stand aloof. There are two principal reasons for this. The first has to do with a certain phase of politics—as to which I will only say that I recognize how thorny and troublesome it is, and trust that mutual good feeling will do more and more as time goes on to minimise dissension. The other is the essential nature of the club—which is that the members be more or less of the same social standing. But that difficulty is only a difficulty after all, and

not a fatal obstacle. What can be more worthy of a Catholic layman, whatever his culture or his position, than to study how to be useful without being offensively condescending, and how to mix with other men on the footing of a common Catholicism, and I will add of a common humanity? Depend upon it, the solution of one of our pressing social questions lies in this: that those who have more money, more education, more refinement, should find out how to talk to workmen, and how to use their own advantages for the sake of workmen without looking down on them. I say they should use their advantages; for it is comparatively easy to associate with anybody if you bring yourself to his level. But the point is to associate honestly and yet to elevate. When the dark waters of the Rhone enter the lake of Geneva it mingles with the blue waters of the lake and losing by degrees the earth which it has gathered from the soil passes out as bright and clear and blue as the great lake itself. So that which is best in a Catholic laity should transform and purify those who form that majority which has to do without this world's advantages, and should seek for the secret of equality—a secret which is to be found not in a low level of roughness and prejudice but in a raised condition of greater reasonableness and of higher aspirations. It would be impossible on this occasion to say one-hundredth part of what might be said of the Catholic layman in relation to the Press. But I do want to say this: the printing press is nearly the greatest power of the age. From the Press Catholicism suffers indefinitely more than even from bad and wicked laws. By the Press we must make our damage good—and more. As our Holy Father says, we must oppose writing by writing—scripta scripitis. But the problem at this day is, not to print, but to get ourselves read. Not to be read leads not only to failure, but to financial disaster—and to ward off this there is a great temptation to descend to undesirable methods of catching readers. This, then, is what I want to say—that hardly any layman deserves as well of his cause as he who uses intelligence or means to make Catholic books and periodicals pay. Now this points to combination: so we are once more brought back to the absolute need, in our laity, of those qualities of self-restraint, zeal and tact, which alone make combination possible. I will not touch on any practical or burning subjects. It may or may not be true that we want a strong Catholic daily paper, or that we should be the better of a really big solid syndicate, founded on business principles, for the publication and spread of Catholic books, or that more subscribers are required for the Catholic Truth Society. Such things, such enterprises, arise from circumstances, and cannot well be made part of a programme. But, big or little, our printing ventures must be the laity's interest, the laity's study, the laity's fostering, and any jealousy, inertness, or stupidity that checks our Catholic press must always be a deplorable misfortune to the Catholic body.

I have named as the last of my five heads the purse. But the purse would appear to be hardly a mere head; it is rather head, body, limbs, and everything. This is true; in a sense: You cannot help any good cause without spending money. Hence, as regards my subject to-night, it has come to be regarded in some quarters as the whole duty of a Catholic layman, and his proudest privilege, to be allowed to entrust money to the priest to spend. But this is an exaggerated, and indeed satirical view. For I will make bold to say that no priest in the country would maintain it for a moment. I would not like to deny that one or two of our cloth, here and there, may be bitten with it. But by far the greater majority, when they have a few years' experience throw it off. The truth is, although money well used will do a great deal indirectly for the Spiritual Kingdom, there are many most essential things that it cannot do. The seed of God's Kingdom is watered and fertilized, not by coin, but by personal devotedness. As a force of subduing the world to God money, unless it is the expression of the soul's true zeal is barren—and one has only to open one's eyes to see that it is. There are fine church buildings and endowments in this country, and for all the effect they have had they might be jungle-choked ruins in South Africa. There are, on the other hand, numberless examples

of self-sacrificing labor, begun on a small scale, continued from one generation to another, where flocks have grown and souls have been gathered to the harvest. We are, in my opinion all inclined to overlook this. The immediate possession of money brings oftentimes so much relief—it gives such a sense of well-being—it furnishes such well-sounding paragraphs to the papers that we forget the importance of other things. But the old story that a coin, unless it be hallowed and blessed, is apt to turn into a withered leaf in your coffers, points to a true moral. To a priest, nothing can be more lamentable and forlorn than that the good and monied men of his flock, although their subscriptions are fairly abundant, yet should be either out of the church, or indifferent to the parish work, or ignorant of Catholic things, or strangers to the interests, the glories, and the struggles of the Church throughout the great world at large. What he wants is that they should love their altar, should come about their pastor—should give the work of their hands and the wisdom of their heads—and that when they offer their gifts, it should be merely by a messenger, by a cheque, by the post, by the collector, but with the pains of personal service, with journeying, with enquiring with endurance, and with the bending of the knee before Him who alone can make them fruitful. Our Holy Father said, four years ago. "Catholicos laicos otiosos esse non permittimus." "I forbid the Catholic laity to be unemployed." (Letter to the Bishop of Tarragona, 10 Dec., 1894.) There were three things, he said, which religion wanted them to give: "Tempo, zelo, e Sostanze"—time, zeal, and substance. (To the Italians, 17th Feb., 1893.)

This is what he has been preaching and exhorting for twenty years. Two years ago, almost on this very day, he said that it seemed to him that there had been a reawakening of Christianity—a "risveglio di sensi cristiani." I would fain think there has. Wherever we look throughout Europe we seem to find evidences of a keener interest and more determined action on the part of the laity. Three years ago I happened to be present in Rome in the great Church of the Gesù at the interesting celebration of the silver jubilee of the society which is called Societa Primaria Degli Interessi Cattolici—the Primary Society for Promoting Catholic Interests. The Church was crowded, and Monsignor Radini Tedeschi delivered a most stirring and eloquent address. That society of Roman laymen dates its birth from immediately after the entrance of the Piedmontese into Rome. It is by no means the only society—I do not think it was even the first—which sprang up under the shadow of the Vatican with the object of preserving the Catholic life in Rome against secularism, infidelity, and vice. In confederation with it there exists at this present moment numerous clubs, unions, associations, leagues and works. I have never met with a better description of a Catholic union than is given in the "Invite," or invitation to join the Catholic Club of Rome. The object of that club is declared to be "to establish a centre around which Catholic Romans may gather for the purpose of reunion, of getting to know one another, of showing what they are, of understanding one another, of organising themselves, and of concerting measures for uniform action." ("All' effetto di riunersi, conoscerosi manifestarsi, intenderosi, regulari e concertuarsi sui modi di prosedere concordemente e uniformemente." And during all the years that have elapsed since Pius IX. became a prisoner to this day when Pope Leo, each Christmas, renews his protests, these good Roman laymen have worked at education, at the principal elections, at the sanctification of the Sunday, at first Communions and Catechisms, at the help of the poor, at economical kitchens, at public dormitories, at the recreation and amelioration, at centenarries, at Papal jubilees, and in every department of Catholic life. The Societa Primaria has affiliation with kindred objects all over Europe. I know there is one in Dublin. I am not sure whether there are any in England.

Still England, or rather the Catholic laity of the country—has not been utterly supine. If we look to London we find the Catholic Union—we find the Catholic Social Union—established by Cardinal Vaughan to enlist the personal service of the laity on behalf of the East-end of London; we find the Catholic Association; we see the laymen doing a part of the work needed for the support of Mill Hill Foreign Mission College, of the Catholic Truth Society, and of the Converts' aid Society. We find them willingly serving on Boards of Temporalities, on School Boards, on Poor Law and Industrial Schools. We find south of the Thames, the Catholic League of South London, a strong and active body, who are doing splendid work

in the important matter of registration, and who, at the polls of the Schools Board, have converted defeat into victory. We find also the young and generous efforts of Newman House in the establishment of clubs for boys and men, and as an example of effective club premises on a large scale would point to the new St. Georges Club, near St. George's Cathedral, established and supported by the joint efforts of the clergy, the League and Newman House. In the diocese of Liverpool, again, I happen to know that there are and have been laymen who are beyond all praise. I will venture to name Mr. Richard Yates, who died two years ago. Here we have a gentleman who for more than a quarter of a century devoted himself to Catholic work. A man of great ability, he was as unostentatious as he was able. I believe he was practically the founder and he was long the guiding spirit of the present Liverpool Catholic Reformatory Association, which manages the three reformatories of the ship Clarence, Birkdale farm, and May-place. As member of the Liverpool School Board he did better than fight, he managed; and he managed among other things to secure those advantages which the Liverpool Catholics have in the day industrial schools. He also gave the start to another excellent Liverpool institution, The Children's Protective Society for the emigrating of Catholic children who are in danger. He seems to have been one of those men who were never weary and who looked for no reward on earth. In Liverpool, again, we have boys' homes managed by laymen—homes that is where boys who are homeless and cannot earn enough to keep themselves, get lodging and food at moderate charge. There are members on the Liverpool School Board, who are excellent models of what a devoted Catholic layman should be—men who have been on the Board for years, regular attendants, influential by their abilities and sterling character, and never weary of work. Then I would point to the young men's societies of Liverpool, largely promoted by zealous laymen; I would point to the Catholic laymen on the Liverpool Select Vestry, who work splendidly for the poor; to the laymen who manage St. George's Industrial School and the Catholic Orphanages; to the work done by laymen for the League of the Cross; to the Liverpool registration society; to the Ladies' Guild of Church Workers, and, though last not least, to the noble army of collectors who Sunday by Sunday and week by week gather with much pains and self-denial the means by which in the diocese of Liverpool Catholic churches, schools, and presbyteries have become the envy of those who are worse off. It is needless to seek for further examples—and there are many in all the English dioceses of good and solid work carried on by the laity for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ.

Let me venture, in conclusion, to say one word of Birmingham. Between sixty and seventy years ago, before most of us were born, or at least before we could articulately express our views on the rights and duties of laymen, there was a "Catholic Magazine" written and published in Birmingham, and it is recorded in that magazine that London—even London—had shown itself jealous of the qualities of Birmingham Catholics notably as exhibited in that enterprise. Since that time, when, as I have said, Birmingham may be said

**The Miser.**  
Many a man with his whole soul immersed in business and money-getting is like the miser whose spring door shut and locked him in forever. Men work and slave and worry and get sick and broken down, forgetting all the time that health is worth more than gold, and that home is rather an enemy than a great door of disease springing to and shut them off from all the bright hopes they labored for. A sick man cannot be happy; he cannot accomplish the work he has to do in this world; he loses the very money he is striving for; his ambition defeats itself. Any man who discovers that his strength and energy are giving way has an unfulfilling means of regaining his physical health and stamina in the simple yet all-potent restorative power of that wonderful "Golden Medical Discovery" originated by Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y., the world-famous specialist in diseases of the nutritive organism.

Among the thousands who have consulted him by sick men cannot be shown in the following letter indicates the remarkable efficacy of his treatment: "In December 1897 my health began to fail. I tried many different kinds of medicines and the more I took the worse the disease grew. Finally in April when I was busy with the farm work my health got so bad that I could not hold out for one hour. My breath failed to obtain relief. I seemed to grow worse. My father received a book from Dr. Pierce in which I read of a case similar to mine, and decided to write to Dr. Pierce. He recommended me to take his 'Golden Medical Discovery.' After taking six bottles of this remedy I can recommend it as one of the best medicines to build up the system. I am now enjoying good health."

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IT IS THE BEST

to have shown the way to English Catholics, the laity of the town and district—as far as a comparative stranger may be allowed to pass an opinion—have shown themselves trustworthy, steady, and successful. I believe I may say it is especially in those very important matters which concern the administration of the Poor Law that their labors have borne fruit—and I have more than once heard Bishop Ullathorne—not, of course, speaking of the laity, exclusively—congratulate himself, not only on his success, but on the quiet, conciliatory, and business-like way in which it had been brought about. And now I hold in my hand the manual of rules and the personnel of the Birmingham Catholic Association. I find here thirteen large town parishes, each with its priest at its head, and its good and true men as officers and committee, and all banded together in one grand union which will be able to speak and to act with the whole weight of a great Catholic community behind it. Whilst excluding party politics, I find that its objects are briefly, registration, public Boards, public institutions in their connection with the poor and with the children, material help to the missions, and fellowship among all Catholics of the town. It is an association which cannot be used for any cause of Catholicism. It is an association which carries with it no menace anybody. You are not banded against your fellow-citizens, much less against the country at large. You are prepared to take advantage of your country's law—and, if necessary, to agitate constitutionally for the repeal of obnoxious laws. But you do not want to shirk one single civic duty, to throw off one single burden, or to encroach by a hair's breadth on the liberty of a single fellow-townsmen. Nay, your association will smooth the ruggedness of controversy and diminish the jarring of strife by forcing agitation into rational and lawful channels, and by curbing the rashness and the exuberances of individual champions. As concerns yourselves, the Catholics of Birmingham, it should reinforce and stimulate your Catholic thought, your Catholic views, your Catholic life. May it flourish! I venture to pronounce a good and prosperous augury over it to-night. I seem to foresee concord, unity, wisdom, victory. I have a vision of something like that old Homeric onslaught, "Shield to shield, helm to helm, man to man." (Iliad xiii., 331); and I pray long after we who meet to-night have been called away the spirit, if not the embodiment, of such a union may subsist in the brotherly feeling, the living faith, and the chivalrous devotion which will be the inheritance of the Catholics of Birmingham.

## SAXON AND LATIN COURTS.

Under this heading, Walter S. Logan, writing in the "Forum," says:—"Latin law is always codified. The Latin judge is ever following the strict language of the code, and dares not depart from it. In these modern times we Saxons of North America have experimented somewhat with codes, but usually to our sorrow. The common law of the English-speaking race has too much life and vigor in it to be bottled up.

"The Latin law is an artificial law. There is no law in a Latin country until somebody makes it. When made, it is a dead law with no inherent power of growth and development; and it is easily codified. The Saxon law was never made. It grew and developed, as order and institution were evolved by our Saxon ancestors, out of the wild freedom of the German forest. It is more alive and growing faster now than ever before. You may write what you know of it in a book, and call that book a code, and the legislature may enact it; but no press can print it so quickly, but that before it reaches the public there will be more law outside your code than in it. The Saxon Court draws its inspiration from a library of living precedents which it is ever modifying and to which it is ever adding. The Latin court looks only at its book of enactments, dead because there is no power to change or modify or adapt them to meet new conditions."

This view of the subject has been adopted by a multitude of lawyers and juriconsults, who seem to see no danger of chaos in the heaping up of one precedent on another, and the eternal mutation of the law. However, while we admit the many ad-

vantageous characteristics of Saxon—or English—jurisprudence, we cannot accept such a sweeping denunciation of the Latin, or French, and continental system. The real difference is this: The English system is the outcome of countless precedents, or anterior judgments, all which have been exposed to error, because all are subject to reversal, amendment, or nullification. The Latin system is based on principle, which changes not, but can be varied in its applicability, according to new circumstances and new conditions. In other words it is a matter of precedent against principle.

As the writer quoted truly says, the English law was never made; it sprang into existence fattered by the accident of circumstances, and it is subject to as many changes as men's minds are to mutability of judgment. What was law yesterday may no longer be the law of to-morrow. The citizen has nothing to guide him in his relations with society and with law. That which was right for him to do a year ago, has become wrong, and again right, and again wrong—may be fifty times—in the space of twelve months. Vainly may we attempt to apply one or another of the countless conflicting precedents to his case; the application may suit when he enters on a litigation, and have no relation at all to his case when he comes to the close of the legal contest.

On the other hand, the Latin law lays down a well digested and perfectly understood principle; the individual circumstances of a case may change, but the principle is the same. What is right, according to that principle under our code, was right under the code of Napoleon; it was right according to Pothiers, to Marcade, to Aubray and Rau, to Demolombe, to Troplong, or to any of the authorities on that special point. It was right under the Theodosian Code, it was right under the novels of Justinian; it was right when the Roman laws of the "Twelve Tables" were promulgated; it was right according to Ulpian and Paul; it is a principle, firmly established, upon which all can rely, and passing unchanged through centuries, and only different in its application because of the difference of circumstances surrounding each special case.

We humbly submit that we prefer to have a fixed principle whereon to base our action, than to face the uncertainty of law that a confusion of conflicting precedents turns into a matter of chance or haphazard.

### KRUGER SYMPATHY.

Here is a good story from "M. A. P."—"An Irish priest, who has lately returned from South Africa, after seventeen years' missionary experience, relates how, on one occasion, he was introduced to President Kruger. 'Ah! said Oom Paul, judging from the priest's pronunciation of Boer Dutch, you are an Englishman! 'Indeed I am not; I am an Irishman!' replied his reverence. Then give me your hand,' was the President's hearty response, 'for we are brothers in affliction!'

### The Orangeman's Idea of Tolerant.

A correspondent, writing to the Belfast News Letter sets himself to the task of proving that the Orangemen of Belfast are not in the least bit intolerant. He calls our attention to the significant fact that the Lord Mayor is a Jew, the Chairman of the Harbor Board is a Presbyterian, the Chairman of the Board of Guardians is a member of the Church of Ireland, and the Chairman of the Water Commissioners is a member of the Society of Friends. "Judged by these appointments," says our contemporary, "the citizens of Belfast are as tolerant and broad-minded as those of any city in the United Kingdom." But some how or other we do not find mention of any Catholic on the list. Nor is such mention to be found in a similar list in the records of the city. This surely is strange in a tolerant and broad-minded city, of which nearly a third of the population are Catholic.

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