

EPWORTH LEAGUE TOPICS

Epoch Makers in Church History

X. Ignatius Loyola

Founder of the Order of the Jesuits

TOPIC FOR FEBRUARY LITERARY MEETING.

Suitable Scripture Lesson, 1 Tim., 4.

FREDERICK E. MALOTT.

One year before Christopher Columbus planted the Spanish flag on the American continent, there was born in the castle of Loyola, at Guipuzcoa, Spain, one who was destined to make the religion of Spain a vigorous, missionary faith in the new worlds that were being opened up by discovery. This man was Ignatius Loyola. He was born in 1491. His knightly name was Don Inigo Lopez de Recalde. He was educated at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. Like all Spanish noblemen, he was trained for a military career. While defending the castle of Pamplona against the French, in 1521, he was wounded so severely that he was obliged to return home. While living in enforced retirement in the paternal castle at Loyola, he whiled away the tedious hours with reading. As no other books were available he read the legendary "Lives of the Saints." Hitherto he had fed his imagination on the voluptuous romances of chivalry. The religious romances with which he now entertained

Exercises." These spiritual exercises became his rule of life and later the rule of the famous Order which he founded. By the members of that Order his book was regarded as inspired.

A pilgrimage to Palestine and another period of study at Barcelona and Alcalá further prepared him for his life work. Like the mendicant monks of that day, he lived on alms while pursuing his studies. He maintained, too, their best traditions and devoted much time to caring for the sick. He was suspected by the Church authorities, however, of heretical teaching, and was sentenced to keep silence on all topics of theology for a period of four years. This led him to leave Spain and go to Paris. In Paris he soon became the centre of a circle of sympathetic spirits who were attracted to him by his personal magnetism and his ideal of life.

One of the men who came under the influence of Loyola at this time was Francis Xavier, afterwards the great Catholic missionary. On the 15th of August, 1534, Loyola, Xavier and five others met in the church of Montmartre, and formed an association which came to be known as the "Society of Jesus," or as we know them, "The Jesuits." In their zeal they went beyond all the existing monastic orders, and to the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience they added a vow of absolute obedience to the Pope of Rome. Their immediate purpose

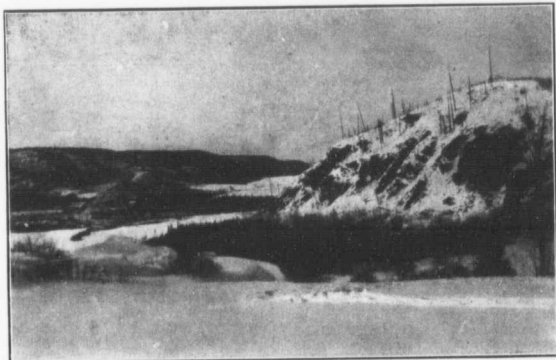
the life of the society he founded. For nine years he had worked to get recognition for his Order. For thirteen years he directed its activities as its general. At his death, in 1556, the Order had grown to such numbers that it was spread over thirteen provinces of Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany and France.

In the Order of the Jesuits the spirit of Spanish Catholicism came to a head and found its fullest expression. The fight of the Spaniards with the Moors during the Middle Ages had kept alive not only national, but also religious, enthusiasm. And just at the time Spain became a powerful absolute monarchy, Spanish Catholicism came forward, in the person of Ignatius Loyola, to restore the waning power of the Church of Rome and to endeavor to give her again absolute and unlimited authority in the realm of religion.

Loyola's object in organizing his society was to raise up for Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and for the Pope, His visible representative on earth, an army of absolutely devoted soldiers to overcome unbelief, not only among the heathen, but in the bosom of the Church itself, and, above all, to oppose the progress of the Protestant Reformation. Had it not been for the Jesuits Protestantism might have become the dominant faith of all Western Europe. Everywhere they went, but was winning wide acceptance; but with the coming of the "Spanish Priests," as the Jesuits were called, a marked change took place. The Jesuits saw that if Protestantism was to be defeated it must be defeated with its own weapons. Humanism, the "New Learning," had made common cause with Protestantism, to the advantage of both. The Jesuits shrewdly saw the move to make. They familiarized themselves with humanistic culture, and turned it to the service of the Church. Protestantism had begun to entrench itself in its schools, which were diffusing learning to all. The Jesuits promptly started schools, and they soon became the most famous teachers of the day. Even Protestants sent their sons to Jesuit schools, because of the superiority of the teaching. Protestantism had begun to encourage science. The Jesuits promptly devoted their resources to the promotion of a rival science. Protestantism had restored preaching to its proper place. The Jesuits studied the art of preaching, and gave to the peoples of Western Europe, in their own tongue, the teachings of Roman Catholicism, based upon their interpretation of Scripture. In a word, the Jesuits brought the whole strength of their intellectual and moral forces to bear upon their supreme object, the annihilation of Protestantism.

The Jesuits did not limit themselves, however, to the use of spiritual weapons. They found, ready to their hand, an engine of war more to their liking—the "Inquisition." This was an ecclesiastical tribunal, first outlined at the synod of Toulouse in 1229, and established by Pope Gregory IX after the conquest of the Albigenses in 1233. A committee of several respectable laymen and the parish priest was ordered to be set up in every parish to search for and bring heretics before the bishops. The bishops were soon replaced by "Inquisitors," specially appointed by the Pope. The power of imprisonment, torture and death (usually by burning) was entrusted to these inquisitors. The darkest page in the history of the Church of Rome is the record of this infamous institution. The Jesuits used it freely.

Another weapon used by this Order was political intrigue. This weapon they used freely also, and they use it to this day wherever they have a foothold in any land. To go into details in the history of this Order is impossible in the



IN THE WINTRY WILDS OF ALGOMA.

Amateur photograph. Negative by Rev. J. J. Coulter, Cookstown.

himself stirred the imagination of the young knight as potentially as did the secular tales. He rose from his sick bed with a burning desire to enter the service of the Church, and gave his life as chivalrously in her cause as he had in the cause of his country.

His first step was to go to the monastery of Montserrat for training. Here he hung up his knightly armor before the image of the Virgin, exchanged his gay, knightly dress for a mendicant's garb, and retired to a cave at Manresa, where he began the ascetic life of a monk.

He was a man of keen intellect and of some literary ability and the first fruit of his retirement from the world was the production of his famous book, "Spiritual

was to go to Jerusalem, and engage in missionary and hospital work among the Moslems. Failing that, they would place themselves unconditionally at the disposal of the Pope. It was nine years, however, before they received formal papal recognition. It would seem that the Pope was not sure that another Order would add to the strength of the Church. The zeal of these men was boundless and their purpose was steadfast. A few others had joined them, and on the 14th of March, 1543, Pope Paul III sanctioned the association, and gave it a charter under the name "Society of Jesus." Ignatius Loyola was unanimously elected the first General of the new Order. His history now merges into and is lost in

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