

TRUE PROFIT.

The Speculating Spider of Commerce

Denounced in a Masterful Sermon. The first two of the series of Advent sermons on "The Church and the Age," by Rev. Robert Kane, S. J., of Limerick, Ireland, have been received with such favorable comment that the Telegraph to-day publishes the third based on a text from St. Paul: "Grace be to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for you: being mindful of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity, and one of the enduring of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ: knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election; for our Gospel hath not been to you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost. For in every place your faith which is toward God is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves relate how you were converted to God from idols, to serve the living and true God." (Thees. c. 1. v. 2-9).

"Commerce," said Father Kane, "has gathered the people of the world into one market place. Barter has interwoven the different interests of the earth. The tide of trade, throbbing from shore to shore, with wave of weather or ebbing value, has brought about the nearness of nations. Thus, the gains of every climate and the fruits of every soil, the work of distant hands and the inventions of far-off minds, with profusion of every supply, wait at the door of each demand. Thus too, with the speed of electricity and with the force of steam, the faintest thrill of loss or gain vibrates through the whole sensitive system of man's commercial life. Now, as its strength is mightier and as its impulse is more pointed, so is its working more effective and its results more drastic. Civilization such as ours, with its tremendous power of action, with its marvelous concentration of energy, with its exact knowledge of Nature, with its masterful application of science, must do great work. Shall its work be to make or to mar, to build up or to destroy? Shall it work, like earthquake or avalanche, or shall it work like the water that is controlled by dykes, or like the steam that is guided by mind? Shall our civilization bring us curse or bear us blessing?"

"If the forces of our Age are loosened in reckless riot, to clash in a confusion of wasted energies, in a chaos of useless war, the result must be an equilibrium of ruin, mocked by the murderous motto of the brute, 'the survival of the fittest.' If the destinies of the nations are to swing to and fro according to the caprice of an agnostic, and therefore erratic Age, the result must be the cataclysm of commerce, a financial war unmitigated by moral principle, ending in the downfall of the just, and in the triumph of the most intellectual thief or of the strongest robber. But if the future of the world is to be the outcome of the energies of the Age, harmonized by divine truth, and directed by divine love, the result must be a success unparalleled in history."

"Hence, brethren, the Age has something to teach. It has also something to learn. From the Age we may learn industry. From the Church, not from the Age, honor. From the Age we may learn how to work. The forces of social life work with the pitiless precision of a machine and with the ruthless impartiality of gravitation. As atmospheric conditions kill the sick, so commercial energies cast aside the slothful. As physical laws condemn the weak, so economic laws pass sentence on the worthless. Both laws work in the main unto good. The winds that waft the sturdy ship to wreck; as the rain that makes the grass green beats to earth the unripened corn; as the sun that fills the fields with flowers nurtures weeds along the moor and pestilence in the town; so the circumstances of modern commerce that broaden out the thoroughfares of its cities, and build up the palaces of its kings, huddle into narrow lanes and teeming dens the pariahs of Progress; so the tendencies of trade that carry hidden prosperity to one shore drain its riches from the land they leave; so the times of fierce competition that bring plenty to the home of industry send starvation to the house of sloth."

Assuredly, if you do not keep pace with industry of the Age you will be trodden down and trampled on in the race for wealth. The huge pendulum of gold oscillates in the world, with intermittent and random swing, from wealth to want, from luxury to avarice, from reckless waste to ruthless plunder from the plethora of dives to the penury of Lazarus. How shall you mount with its movement yet avoid its backward stroke? You can not control its swing, but you can balance its power, if you obey the law it obeys, the fundamental law of work, the law of natural energy, action, the law of economic profit, industry. See, brethren, the world moves faster than in the old, quiet days. You can not keep out of its reach. You must either move along with it by rapid and resolute industry, or you will be seized, crushed, and cast aside by the machinery of the world."

"Understand, then, that sloth is not only a deadly sin, but that, in the whirl of the modern world, it is more and more likely to meet with sudden and unforeseen disaster. Understand, also, the greater stringency of that sacred duty which you owe to those you love. No poison passed furtively into the cup, no dagger thrust openly into the heart, no criminal hatred, no cruel revenge, has brought such woe, such sin, such death to happy homes as the love of parents who, through crim-

inal wastefulness or through cruel improvidence, have left their children beggars; their sons indolent, untrained for toil, to look for work they can not do; their daughters, accomplished, refined, tasteful, but absolutely useless, to starve in garrets or loiter in streets. O cruel, cruel mockery of love! O shameful sin! O crime against a child! Shall not their ghosts haunt your grave? At least prepare your children for the struggle that may come. Teach them the industry which will earn silver if it can not earn gold. Teach them the thrift which is careful to gather trifles unto plenty, and is watchful to prevent waste. Teach them to loathe the degradation of being useless—a mere cypher, an encumbrance, a drone, a blot upon the earth. Teach them to laugh to scorn that contemptible affection which thinks its fingers too dainty for work, or its rank too proud for toil. Teach them that no lady is as honorable as the humble Virgin Mary, no lord as noble as is the workman Christ."

"Learn well the lesson of the age. The nearness of the nations has brought the evil with its good. Commerce has now its cyclones; finance its tornadoes. You know not when or where the storm may burst. Did it burst here, is your home able to withstand the shock? Why is it that in this dear land we do not often find the carefulness of the Scot, nor the business sense of the Saxon, neither the enterprise of America nor the economy of France? Is it that our languid sun and weeping sky have lulled our mind to listlessness and cast a spell upon our energy? Is it that the soft air which rests upon our plains and the melancholy mists which cling about our mountains have unstrung the quick beatings of our hope and loosened the fibers of our resolution? Or is it that the chill winds of adversity which, during centuries of persecution, persistently nipped our every aspiration and ruthlessly blighted our every effort, have left our ambitions broken, our ideals faded, our energies hopelessly stunted?"

"It cannot be our climate; for our country has been great in other days. It cannot be in our character; for everywhere abroad the Celt is a success. May it not be that even when our emancipation from civil and religious serfdom has dispelled the gloom of penal days and swept off the stagnation of Protestant ascendancy, yet even when our sun is bright and our breezes bracing, there still remains lurking in social circles and clinging to aristocratic haunts a moral atmosphere, unhealthy unto poisoning and depressing unto despair, an atmosphere of abhorrence for the mere Catholic and contempt for the mere Celt? The influence of our more independent Age will soon and forever clear away those unwholesome vapors. When Ireland shall have become as thrifty and as prudent as she has been patient; as energetic and as enterprising as she has been Catholic, she must have an influence as vast as it shall be elevating upon the destinies of the earth."

"Wherefore 'Grace be to you and peace; mindful of the work of your faith and labor; knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election; for our Gospel has not been to you in word only, but in power also; for in every place, your faith, which is toward God, is gone forth.' Age after Age, like the billows of the ocean, shall rise and fall upon the everlasting shore, but upon the bosom of their tide may they bear unstained by sensual passion, unshattered by scientific pride, our Catholic Ireland pure as the plumage of the white sea bird, and soaring as the strength of its wings, to remind the nations that while the bitter waters of the world may dash to pieces ambitions built by human hands, they cannot hurt the life which only seeks its food upon the surface and turns its flight thence to the high heavens of the true and living God. Yet brethren, while you dream of the future, behold, before your thought, the majestic figure of the Church as she repeats, in stern warning, the inspired words of St. Paul, 'You were converted to God from idols.'"

"The wealth of the world has always had its sin of the worship of Mammon, its adoration of the idol Gold. But the closeness of commerce which to-day puts all the profits of the earth on the same vast stock exchange brings its own characteristic temptation gambling, its own characteristic crime. The human sacrifice of Mammon! I do not speak of those who breed, with noiseless cunning, the greed of the orphan or the widow's mite. I do not speak of those who rob with lawless violence, his purse from the traveller, or its treasure from the penury of Lazarus. Nor do I even speak of those who glide with figure into books, and by the ruin of a bank, leave families penniless in the street. But of those I speak who, spider-like, sit in their counting house, spinning out of their own sinful souls financial threads of subtle strength and invisible texture, spreading their soft silken web of shares or companies over every corner of the earth, guiding from their lurking place the rise and fall of their own artifice, watching and waiting until at last their victim, dazzled by the glitter of gold, dazed by a delirious hope, dashes blindly into the toils and is caught by the speculator, the spider of commerce. O many and many a woe has fallen upon cunning innocence at the hand of cunning crime; but misery such as this! The old man's savings swept away, the widow's pittance stolen, the young girl's safeguard of her virginhood snatched from her, comfort changed to starvation, a happy home to blackened ruin, joy to bitter remorse, energy to apathy, life

to despair, perhaps to suicide, and thus, not in one instance only, nor in one spot alone, but multitudes weeping with ceaseless tears, or groaning in tearless agony: a wail that is echoed from across the sea in a grief more bitter than its spray. Surely, surely, their blood must cry to Heaven with the vengeance of murdered men!"

"Brethren, you can not, thank God, be like the fiends of Mammon. Do not be their victim. The changed conditions of modern commerce raise many questions that perplex the brain and agitate the soul: questions I must not treat of nor even mention. They are, alas, full of bitterness, and they are foreign to my theme. One truth I do lay down: That the social and economic difficulties of the day cannot be solved by laws of industry alone, but by laws of honor."

"Industry has only a material balance; honor rules by appeal to higher things. Social science may weigh men's interests in its scales; it can not blend their souls into one sympathy. Its laws can only hold the hand; it can not command the heart. If it wrest money from the capitalist it leaves him callous and resentful. If it bestow high wage upon the worker, it leaves him ungrateful and unsatisfied. The first and fundamental remedy for the ills and evils of the Age is in the law of Christ, 'Love one another.' As there is no such thing as absolute ownership, but only a stewardship of God's gifts, so neither should there be the clash of interests, the war of classes, or the hatred of politics; but a brotherhood where the hands of fellow countrymen are clasped in kind forbearance and strogh support, because there is the warmth of Christian love within the heart."

"One short word yet. Are your judgments, even about spiritual profits, influenced by the material sin of the Age? Think! Do you esteem more highly the mercy which helps the body than the mercy which heals the soul? Hospitals, schools, almshouses, asylums; yes, that is all blessed work. But have you ever thought, the contemplatives, of what use are they? Use! Silent, in the gloom of the solemn chapel, or in the bare, chill cell, yet eloquent in a mute heroism of entreaty, the Carmelite nun prays. In her girlhood, forewearing the pride of beauty, and the pomp of wealth, the ambition of talent, and the hope of heart, she laid her life upon the altar of the sanctuary to atone for the sins of men. All through the monotonous hours of the monotonous years while her thin face grew pale for fasting, and her weak frame faint for watching, her prayer, illumined by the loveliness of her purity and kindled by the burning of her zeal, in fragrant faith and cleansing charity mounted like incense to the throne of God. That prayer is heard. When in distant wild, in the fever swamp or fetid jungle, with the scream of the vulture for his death-knell, and the howl of the wolf for his last good bye, the poor prodigal boy lies quivering in his death-agony, his mind darkened, his will powerless, his soul steeped in sin, the prayer of the Carmelite brings him salvation, and he sobbs forth his spirit in penitence to God. Or when in the dark and lonely streets of the city the woman of shame pauses for an instant as she heard the distant chapel bell and thought of her innocent childhood, the prayer of the Carmelite softened her prayer, and made her weep like Magdalen. Oh, where did the father learn the wisdom that taught him to shelter the home of his little ones? Oh, where did the widowed mother find the strength in her utter bereavement to bring up her boys to manly virtue and her girls to pure womanhood? Where? Oh, what would be the world be without the prayer and penance of our unknown saints? Should not fire from Heaven smite the giddy gilt of voluptuous Paris, or earthquake engulf the meagre greed of London, did not the sacred sound of midnight choir from Carthusian Church remind God that there are still angels upon earth: did not Cistercian silence blind pure lips, and fierce discipline or bleeding hairshirt of Trappist lacerate innocent shoulders in order to expiate the sins of their guilty brothers?"

"Brethren, understand the true profit of life. 'Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment?' What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his own soul? 'Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you.' When all the Ages shall have ended, when this small orb of earth shall have become, in the comic evolution of the spheres, fixed in ice or fused in fire, when you yourselves enjoy the treasure you shall have stored up in Heaven, where 'the rust doth not eat away, nor moth consume, nor thief break in and steal,' you will remember with deep thankfulness to God that while you lived your mortal life upon this tiny spot of space, within this narrow span of time, your hand was ever clenched in hard work or open in merciful gift, and that within your heart a hope was rooted which did not crumble with the world's dust nor melt with its gold, but, fostered by the understanding of your faith, was fruitful in the blessed charity of Christ."

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PEROSI.

The Great Modern Italian Composer.

Rome, Dec. 14.—We were walking down the Condotti, toward the Piazza di Spagna, one day last week, when my friend, who seems to know everybody in Rome, called my attention to a young cleric who was passing on the other side of the street. "Eccolo! There's Don Perosi, the greatest genius in Italy. The Holy Father received him this morning." I looked and thought my friend must be mistaken. The person he alluded to seemed little more than a boy. He might have been one of the thousands of ecclesiastical students of Rome. He had a youthful, studious face, a delicate frame, somewhat under the average size. He was the last man in the Via Condotti that afternoon that you would have taken for a world wide celebrity."

AN UNASSUMING GENIUS. But he really was Don Perosi, and he had been received that very morning by His Holiness. It was not his first interview. Ten years ago last May Giuseppe Perosi and his fifteen-year-old son formed part of a Ligurian pilgrimage. When their turn came to be presented to Leo XIII the boy on his knees presented the Pontiff with an album containing his earliest compositions: a salutation to St. Joseph, a motetto to St. Aloysius, an Ave Maria, an Ave Regina Colorum and an O Sacrum Convivium. His Holiness expressed his pleasure at the gift, and the boy's father took heart of grace to say: "I wish to ask Your Holiness for a special blessing for this boy in order that he may employ his art in well doing."

The Holy Father turned to Commendatore Dufour and asked: "Has this boy really a bent for music?" The Commendatore answered affirmatively. His Holiness turned to the little fellow with his kindly smile: "Bravo, may the Lord bless your father's intention—it is one of which we have great need to-day."

TAUGHT MUSIC WHEN A MERE BOY. Little Perosi broke into tears of emotion and went away with his blessing. From his father's tuition, he passed to the Academy of St. Cecilia in Rome. Thence he went to the great Benedictine Monastery of Montecassino, where he taught music to the students and was taught himself by Father Krug, and here his vocation to the priesthood became defined. He says himself that the year he spent at Montecassino was a year in paradise. Among his compositions of that year was a Pange Lingua, which he dedicated to Prof. Singerberg, who had it printed in the "St. Cecilia" review of San Francisco. This piece was executed at the closing of the World's Fair of Chicago. Three years ago Perosi became almost simultaneously a priest and organist of St. Mark's, Venice.

MUSIC WAS FOR HIM PRAYER, EDUCATION, LIGHT, TRUTH. For Don Perosi, music is prayer—may, it is everything, education, light, truth. Perhaps no musical genius of this, or any other century since Palestrina has had such a lofty, earnest idea of his art. He believes in a Christian sense in the legend of Orpheus; he believes that millions who have closed their hearts and their ears to the truth by the power of the Divine harmonies that lie under the words of the evangelists. It was this great idea that has prompted him to represent musically in twelve Oratorios the life of Our Lord as narrated in the Gospels.—Correspondence Freeman's Journal.

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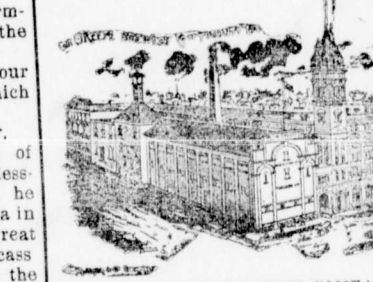
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MONDAY, 15th February next, will be the last day for receiving Petitions for Private Bills. MONDAY, 20th February next, will be the last day for introducing Private Bills. FRIDAY, 23rd March next, will be the last day for receiving Reports of Committees on Private Bills. CHARLES CLARKE, Clerk of Legislative Assembly. Toronto, 10th Jan., 1899. 1053-3

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