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AN HISTORICAL DRAMA.

A striking lecture by the Rev. Dr. John Talbot Smith.

God's Providence Towards Ireland—The Departure of Exiles, the First Act—Marvelous Prosperity of These Exiles Makes the Second Act.

Catholic Transcript, Hartford

The Rev. Dr. John Talbot Smith lectured to a large audience on St. Patrick's night. He spoke in substance as follows:

We live in a time which sees as in a drama the last acts of many a historic romance, whose beginning and long course through the centuries have brought doubt to simple hearts as to the providence of God. That providence is not always clear to us. In our hours of sorrow and despair we are apt to accuse God of neglecting us, and the injustice of the world. So often left apparently unpunished, seems to strengthen our charge. Yet we have only to look around us to see how foolish is our unfaith. The other day they discovered the bones of a martyr in one of the Roman catacombs, and bore them with solemn pomp, loving reverence, to the rich shrine prepared for them. Nearly sixteen centuries have passed since that martyr stood before his Emperor and received his sentence. What a change in the scene between yesterday and to-day. Then the Emperor on his throne, the center of the world's beauty and power, and the martyr was only a wretched criminal going to death; now the Emperor is forgotten, condemned, an outcast, and the martyr receives the applause of mankind, the altar where his name will be forever remembered, and the loving honors of the Christian millions. Who remembers Henry II. of England while St. Thomas a Becket lies at the foot of his altar in his own blood? Who recalls Henry VIII. except to curse the tyrant who slew the blessed Thomas More? Remembering these things, you will appreciate the description now to be given of the last act of a great drama in which a nation, apparently feeble, fought a nation apparently strong. It was a struggle of right against might, of the faith against the sword.

It is sixty years since the children of St. Patrick left the country of their race and set out in numbers for America. Their English rulers had made Ireland impossible for them, and they turned to America, the land open to all the exiles of the world. With joy the English rulers saw them going. Their departure promised to solve the Irish question for England. America is welcome to them, said the London Times. But America did not welcome them. A certain group of the American people feared the numbers of these unfortunates, feared their Catholic faith, and dreaded the influence which they might one day acquire in their adopted country. The first years were years of sorrow in America. The presence of the Irish was made a political issue, the Know-nothing party was formed to drive them out of the country, all positions of honor in commerce and in government were closed against them, their churches and convents were burned, and

their lives imperiled in the land which they had loved next to their own, and for which they were willing to die. The party of bigotry got much of its inspiration from England. We send you, said the English rulers, a race which we have cast out with joy, an ignorant, dirty, lazy, drunken, superstitious race. They have won these qualities, not from the fact that we made them the slaves of the landlords, robbed them of the fruits of the labors until it was not worth while to labor, deprived them of schools, and made life simply horrible, but from the superstitious faith which they have cultivated; they have been the slaves of the Pope and his priests for centuries, and have declined to accept the Protestant religion from us. This was the steady declaration of the English. The Irish were wretched and degraded because they had been faithful to Christ in the face of English persecution. It was a challenge to Christ.

The challenge was answered within a quarter of a century. The first thirty years were times of hard hips and peril, but they passed away, and the Irish in America were forgotten when the dread era of Civil War began. When the turmoil of that conflict had passed away and life resumed its routine, the keen rulers of England saw a wonderful scene. The highest positions in the gift of the American people had fallen to the lot of Irishmen and their children; in the commercial world the most eminent names were Eugene Kelly and William R. Grace; Charles O'Connor and James T. Brady were leaders of the New York bar; Francis Kernan was Senator and John Kelly was the political leader of New York; Archbishop Hughes had acted as the agent of the American government in Europe; and General Sheridan was at the head of the American army. When the same rulers looked about the world they found MacMahon president of France, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy premier of Australia, Darcy McGee powerful in Canada, and behind these men a host of lesser men whose influence could be felt in the whole English-speaking world. This was the answer of Christ to the impudent challenge of Protestant England. In thirty years the outcast Irish had proved themselves the equals of their critics and their enemies by winning the world's best prizes against overwhelming odds.

But the drama did not end here. Punishment, the punishment of divine justice came next. Proud of her great language which she had forced upon the Irish people she found the Irish in every colony as well as in the United States using it to batter down English influence; proud of her political prestige, England found it impossible to answer the blows dealt that prestige in various ways by the Irish exiles; proud of her great heresy, she saw the Irish revive and renew the hierarchies of the United States, western Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, and England itself. In the English-speaking world today the greatest power against the English heresy is the organization built up by the Irish and their children.

What a wonderful display of the power of Providence! At this moment the racial power and influence of the Irish is

greater outside than within Ireland. To what is this triumph of the weak over the strong to be attributed? To the devotion of the people to the religion of Christ. They were faithful to the Saviour, and he has given them their reward even in his world. They stood by their faith in spite of poverty and persecution, in the face of the world's ridicule, in the face of death; and he has placed at their command not only the riches of the earth, but a spiritual power which makes them leaders among races and nations.

THE FINISHING BLOW TO AMERICANISM

Delivered by the Rome Correspondent of the Chief Journalistic Representative of the Condemned School.

New York Freeman's Journal.

ABOUT THE PAPAL LETTER.

Last week your correspondent was so tired after finishing his Roman correspondence that he had no time to refer to or translate an important letter addressed by Mgr. Ireland to the Holy Father and published in the *Observatore Romano*. Since then Mgr. Keane and the Abbé Klein have also written. All three are unanimous in condemning and repudiating the doctrines condemned by His Holiness. The two distinguished American prelates solemnly protest that they have never held any of these opinions, and His Grace of St. Paul has declared that the American bishops will certainly condemn and repudiate them as one man. The Abbé Klein, who was the most prominently connected with the French edition of "The Life of Father Hecker," has furthermore declared that he will at once withdraw the book from circulation. Furthermore, Prof. Schell of Wurzburg, the prime promoter of Americanism in Germany, has laudably declared that he submits entirely to the judgment of the Holy See; that he will remodel his works in harmony with true Catholic teaching and that he will henceforth devote all his energy to the defense of the true faith. An interesting contrast to these declarations is furnished by an article in the *Signal of Paris*, written by the ex-Abbé Charbonnel. The wretched man fills a column and a half with sneers and jeers and snarls at those (especially the Abbé Klein) whose views have been condemned in the letter to Cardinal Gibbons.

AN AMAZING VARIETY OF INTERPRETATIONS.

Yesterday's American mail brought me an immense pile of newspapers containing comments on the important document. Comparing these with the Italian, German and French newspapers received during the last week, I find myself confronted with an amazing variety of interpretations. Much against my will, I am once more obliged to recur to the Italian—first, because some misguided persons (who are not Italians) persist in giving false news to this organ of private opinion, and, secondly, because this same false news is widely copied.

The Italian, then, which has been rampantly Americanistic all along, has the hardihood to assert that the Pope's letter admirably coincides with all it has published; that the best "inter-

pretation" of the document is Archbishop Ireland's letter in the *Osservatore*; that the framers of the Pontifical document were Cardinals Satolli and Mazzella; that these two princes of the Church were grievously mortified over the radical modifications made in their work by His Holiness and Cardinal Rampolla, who are both Americanists at heart; that the letter was sent to America after, not before, Mgr. Ireland's arrival in Rome; that His Grace of St. Paul has been informed "that he is in greater favor than ever at the Vatican." These eight statements are false—in fact, there is hardly a single assertion in the whole correspondence which is true.

In my last letter I explained in part the reasons which led His Holiness to address the document to the primate of the Church in America. The commentaries and interviews published in many American papers show me that the explanation was not quite full enough, and the published translation affords me an opportunity to expand it. Let me premise that what I am about to say now is not mere talk or imagination or guess work. What I write I know to be true.

A SATISFACTORY TRANSLATION.

Let me say, then, that the translation is in the main a very satisfactory one, but (omitting the translation of such phrases as "vivendi disciplina," which is inaccurate in some passages, and, strangely enough, accurate in others, and a few other more or less important details) it fails altogether to give the true sense of the Pontiff's thought in a part of one important paragraph:

In the Latin this runs: "Comperit tibi est, dilecte Fili noster, librum de vita Isaaci Thomae Hecker, eorum praesertim opera, qui aliena lingua edendum vel interpretandum susceperunt, controversias existasse non modicas ob invectas quasdam de ratione Christiane vivendi opiniones."

In the Italian version (which, let me point out, is official) the passage is as follows:

"Li è ben noto. Diletto Figlio Nostro, che il libro intorno alla vita di Isaacco Tommaso Hecker, per opera in specialità di coloro che lo tradussero in altra lingua o lo chiosarono, suscitò controversie non poche per taliene opinioni messe fuori intorno al vivere Cristiano."

And, finally, the English translation puts it this way:

"It is known to you, beloved son, that 'The Life of Isaac Thomas Hecker,' especially as interpreted and translated in a foreign language, has excited not a little controversy, because therein have been voiced certain opinions concerning the way of leading Christian life."

Now, the real sense of the passage is this:

"It is well known to you, beloved son, that the book on 'The Life of Isaac Thomas Hecker' has, especially through the work of those who have undertaken to publish it in a foreign tongue or to comment upon it, excited no little controversy, by reason of certain opinions advanced concerning the way of leading Christian life."

AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE.

The last version is not elegant (far from it), but in the light of the Latin and Italian texts, it is accurate, and that is the main

thing to be considered now. The difference between it and the published translation is sufficiently important in itself, but it becomes more important still, owing to the coloring it has given to the entire document. The English translation makes His Holiness put all the responsibility of the controversy on the French version of "The Life of Father Hecker" and the views of the religious life contained in it; whereas the Holy Father lays responsibility on all those who have given countenance and publicity to those views by promoting the publication of "The Life of Father Hecker" in French and by commenting on it in various ways.

THE ORIGINAL "LIFE OF FATHER HECKER" READ BY POPE LEO.

Now leaving this subject of responsibility, it is a very serious mistake to suppose that only the French "Life" is referred to in the Papal document. I note that an American clergyman has, in a manner, "excused" His Holiness for the condemnation of "The Life of Father Hecker" on the ground that the Pope, being a very busy man, has not time to examine the accuracy of a translation and just trusts to luck in dashing off a condemnation. This view of the matter is wildly grotesque, besides being grossly disrespectful. The supreme authority of the Church does not work on these offhand lines, and in the present case I am in a position to state that the English as well as the French edition has been subjected to the most careful examination and (this is the most important point) been found to be out of harmony with Catholic teaching. Indeed, nobody who reads the English work and the Papal letter together can fail to see that a number of propositions singled out for reproof in the latter are contained explicitly in the former, while the tone of the one is simply in violent contradiction with the tone of the other.

A FACT THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED.

Let me observe here that I am not now discussing what Father Hecker or his followers and admirers held or hold subjectively. That is another matter, and it is highly satisfactory to see with what unanimity everybody concerned repudiates and condemns all the propositions repudiated and condemned by His Holiness. But let us look objective facts squarely in the face and bow to their inexorable logic, no matter how much hurt we may be by them. It is a fact that "The Life of Father Hecker" in English as well as in French contains objectively teachings which are not in consonance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Readers of the Rome correspondence of The Freeman will remember that before the publication of the Papal document I asserted the existence also of a certain decree of the Index bearing on the question of Americanism. It might have seemed that this statement was verified by the publication of the decree condemning the works of Prof. Schell. This, however, is only partly true—that part of the decree to which I had particular reference has not yet seen the light. When or whether it will be published depends on circumstances. Only let me assert very positively that it exists.

ST. KILIAN MORE.