

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH.

Speech of the Hon. W. Bourke Cockran.

Hon. W. Bourke Cockran, Member of Congress from New York, delivered an address before the graduating class of Manhattan College, in which he comments upon the following striking passage from the recent letter of the Holy Father to the Episcopate of the United States:

"While industriously laboring for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls entrusted to your care, strive also to promote the welfare of your fellow-citizens, and to prove the earnestness of your love for your country, so that they who are entrusted with the administration of the Government, may clearly recognize how strong an influence for the support of public order, for the advancement of public prosperity is to be found in the Catholic Church."

These words of the Holy Father I have read to you to-night, not that they contain anything new, but because they refer to the ancient teachings of the Church, because they show to-day that singular simplicity of the mission assigned to her from the dawn of Christianity. Through all the years that have lapsed, through all the centuries that have gone by, the pathway of liberty was mapped out by the doctrine of Christianity. And the rules of social order, on which all free institutions must depend, are not the rules of Christian morality, toward which her teachings incline every day.

You are fresh from the study of the development and evolution of our modern civilization. You remember the method in which the Church first grappled with the rudest stage which history has ever known. You remember how she instituted the order of chivalry to soften the conditions of barbaric life. And as you recall the pages of her history, you will remember that the man who was a candidate for the honor of knighthood, spent the night before his investiture, in long vigils, within the walls of a church, kneeling beside his armor, resisting the approaches of sleep, and the pangs of hunger, triumphing over the weakness of the flesh, and, on the following day, when the white robe of innocence was wrapped around his shoulders, and the golden spurs were placed upon his heels, and his sword clasped upon his side, he took the obligation that he would maintain the truth, defend the weak, and exalt the dignity of women. Times have changed, and the conditions of men have changed. To me there is nothing so impressive in the ceremony to which we assist to-day, as the lesson which we can draw from it, that while the mission of the Church is always the same, and the obligations she imposes upon you are still the same as those which she imposed in the days of chivalry, in the feudal ages, yet, that she changes them to meet the new conditions of mankind, that every difficulty that besets society, she faces, and meets, and overcomes.

KNIGHTS OF THE MODERN CRUSADE.

You, young gentlemen, are the knights of this modern crusade. We thrust the sword no longer by your side, because the dangers that menace society, are no longer confined in any threat of hostile foe to bring to society immediate destruction, but we confer upon you here, to-day, these diplomas that ground you in the essential elements of Christian truth, that through all your lives you may withstand, and meet, and overcome, any heresy that may be leveled against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Conceive, for a moment the manner in which the Church to-day discharges the mission, which, in all ages, she has discharged! Conceive the benefits you have enjoyed, and from that deduce the lesson of the enormous

responsibilities that are imposed upon your shoulders. In this age we measure everything of value by its capacity to produce wealth. Here, in this diocese, three thousand men and women, who create wealth by tens of millions, with their own energy, have deliberately turned their backs upon all the walks of human ambition, and devoted all their days, their thoughts, and their energies to your equipment, and to the equipment of other young men, for the tests, and the struggles, and the difficulties of life.

You are the beneficiaries of that enormous force which exists nowhere except in the Catholic Church, which can exist nowhere except in the bosoms that are inspired by a love for that eternal truth, which is always found within the bounds of the Eternal Church.

How, then, are you to carry out this admonition of the Holy Father? What part are you to play in proving to the world the powerful influence which the Catholic Church can exercise in the maintenance of social order, and for the advancement of national prosperity? You can, in your daily lives, be true to the three purposes which animated the knights of old; maintain the truth; be loyal to the faith; profess your creed. Always steer your course through life by the chart which has been given you by your Alma Mater. Maintain the truth wherever you go. Where are we to find it? Where are we to look for it? We most certainly will find it in the doctrines and teachings of the Holy Catholic Church.

I have said that we are no longer in danger of invasion of an armed band of foemen. No longer do any try to take the cross from the steeple of our Church, to overturn altars, or to profane sanctuaries. But there are forces at work calculated to take the spirit of truth from your bosoms, and to overturn, in your mind, that reverence for the Christian faith to which, if you are to be successful, and creditable, and useful, in your day, you must ever remain loyal. You must maintain this truth.

THE DEMOCRACY OF THE CHURCH.

As I asked you, where are you to find this truth? How are you to look for it? If it ever be your fortune to visit Rome, to go down into the Catacombs, you will there be shown, in one of the narrow passages, the skeleton of a human body, the skeleton of a Christian, who was buried there in the second century. His bones remain there now nigh eighteen hundred years, and, as the Catholic looks upon him, he recognizes in that form, which once held a human soul, an acquaintance; for, from the day he could kiss a prayer, he has prayed for the repose of that soul, as he has prayed for the repose of all other souls of the faithful departed. There, looking round within the limits of the horizon, you see the wreck and the ruins of ancient splendor. Monarchs have fallen, and their memory has been forgotten; vast kingdoms and nations have sunk into oblivion, palaces have crumbled into dust, dynasties been overthrown; dust of centuries is piled upon the forum; institutions have perished; but the faith which bound man's soul to pray for the soul once joined to that skeleton, lives to-day, and, through all the years that have passed, the doctrines of your Church have remained true, and have pointed the road to the most perfect civilization.

It is the Truth that is eternal, the Truth that has withstood the destruction of all institutions, the Truth that is the Truth to-day, though I speak in the language that did not then exist. And the bond which binds you with all the civilization of two thousand years, is the faith you and I profess, is the basis of all civilization, from which all modern progress has come, the liberty of which we boast, the liberty which we cherish, the liberty

which is secure for the present and for the future.

What is it, but the recognition of certain rules which the Church has preached now for two thousand years, and is illustrating to you to-day? What are the fundamental doctrines of every institution, from a secular standpoint? Equality before the law; supremacy of the law itself, and the eligibility of every one to the highest office within the State. Is that a new doctrine, discovered on this soil for the first time? Are you, young gentlemen, beholden to the discovery of their continent, or to the adoption of our Constitution, for the discovery of these principles?

Why, for two thousand years the Church has preached and shown that all men were equal in the sight of God, that the law of God was the supreme law, and that every son of the Church was eligible to the priesthood, and to the highest offices. Talk to us of an apology necessary, or explanation that the Catholic Church is the true friend of liberty, and the true pillar of equality! Now, gentlemen, it is by loyalty to the Catholic Church, that you can become the best citizens that this Republic has ever known.

CATHOLIC ENTERPRISE.

When this continent was discovered, as the direct result of a fervent faith, entertained by the great navigator, Columbus, the old order was vanishing in Europe, and in Spain was to be found its last vestige. There was no feudalism left in France after Louis XIth. You know that it perished in England with the Wars of the Roses. And so the old civilization of blood, of rapine, of carnage, and of destruction had been accomplished. The manners of men had been modified and softened by the influence of the Christian Church, and then, in the Providence of God, by the direct intervention of Catholic activity, this glorious land was unfolded before the eyes of man, and built on the ruins of the ancient civilization. This modern commercial civilization of ours was founded upon Catholic enterprise, upon Catholic piety, upon the Catholic love of spreading the faith to regions then unknown to the civilized world. Through all that period of confusion, the Church was ever wielding the influence of peace. This civilization is not the civilization of destruction, but built upon destruction. The man who gains the highest award in this State of ours, is not the man clothed in glittering armor, nor is he the man who burns villages, or destroys human life, it is the man who invents some new method of cheapening labor, some new method of cheapening the cost of production, some new method of spreading the general prosperity of its fellow human beings. But that is essentially a development of that policy of peace which the Church always taught. Here we see again that civilization is essentially the product of Catholic faith and morality.

You, young gentlemen, going out into the world now, with the seal of the Church upon your brow, with certificates attesting your capacity to meet the difficulties of life, are to be the exponents of this Christian education, and, to a great extent, its value will be decided by the manner in which you bear yourselves. All men cannot achieve fame. The Holy Father says that it is our duty to so comport ourselves, that those who are entrusted with the administration of the Government, may clearly recognize how strong an influence to support the public order, and for the advancement of public prosperity, is to be found in the Catholic Church. They who control the Government? Who are they? Who are they who control the Government of these United States? The common people.

DUTY OF THE PEOPLE.

Every man who has reached the age of manhood, every person in pos-

session of his faculties, who can approach the ballot box, who is free from taint of crime, is one of the controlling influences over this Government of ours. Therefore, it is not necessary that life should be conspicuous, in order to have an influence upon those who control the Government. Every human life yields an influence all around it. Nothing is wasted in the economy of Nature. Not one single drop of rain that fell to-day has gone to waste. Every one has filled some part in the great economy of life, which is controlled by Providence. Every ray of light that escapes from the sun performs a mission upon this earth of ours. Every wind that blows around us is charged with some important function; and every human life performs its intended duty. And in a Republic like this, where all men govern, this very life is capable of exercising a wide influence upon the future of the nation. When, therefore, you are to control your lives, so as to convince those who control the Government, of the value of the Church, it means that you must so regulate your own daily life, that your neighbors can see it. In whatever walk you may exercise your faculties, whatever occupation you may pursue, they will recognize in you that industry, that love of truth, that devotion to honor, which should characterize every man who starts in life with the approval of the Church upon his brow.

That is the mission that lies before you, and be not deceived by those who assume that a disbelief in the truth of religion is an evidence of strength, or of intellect. There is no war between science and religion. No single law has ever been discovered, which, in any way, disapproves the doctrine of true religion. Science and religion go hand in hand as far as science can go; but when we come to that point, where human knowledge is exhausted, where the human eye is baffled by the darkness and gloom of doubt and ignorance, then religion lights the lamp and tells every one that the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.

While you are loyal to that faith which recognizes the value to the human race of all instruction, and all education, you will always be loyal to yourselves. You stand now upon the edge of an unknown sea; you cannot even tell the progress which you are making. You may not escape disaster, you may not escape difficulty, but if you are loyal to the chart which is given you by your Church, and by your College, you need never fear absolute shipwreck. You need never fear that anything you may do, while you are guided by conscience and faith, will be discreditable to yourselves, or injurious to your country. If you trim your lamps, if you guide your footsteps by the light which the Church sheds over your path, you may be assured that, every day of your lives, every act which you perform, everything which you do, will tend not only to your own benefit, but it will be of advantage and credit to your religion, to your Church, to your College, and of enduring benefit to your country, and to your fellow-men. (Great applause.)

Had La Grippe.—Mr. A. Nickerson, Farmer, Dutton, writes: "Last winter I had La Grippe and it left me with a severe pain in the small of my back and hip that used to catch me whenever I tried to climb a fence. This lasted for about two months when I bought a bottle of Dr. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL and used it both internally and externally, morning and evening, for three days, at the expiration of which time I was completely cured."

We have countless excuses for our own faults, yet we admit none for the shortcomings of others.—Cornellie.

If thou dar'st pass by thy neighbour here, he will lie in thy path when thou passeth over to the gate of heaven.

Though you have several saints as advocates, be particularly devout to St. Joseph; he is very powerful with God.