

FRANCISCAN ANNALS.

Rightly to understand the personality of a leader of men, you must recognise the distinctive characters of the men who crowd around him, and find in him a congenial soul and the voice of their own souls. For a leader of men is necessarily a many-sided character—a centre around which opposing forces gather in harmony; and every opposing force is a revelation of the manifold forces that make the leader.

The early companions of St. Francis were men of different moulds. Brother Bernard of Quintavalle had the docile self-abandon of St. Francis himself, without the Saint's power of self-determination; Brother Peter of Catania seems to have been a man of more deliberate temper—an excellent administrator of a small well-disciplined family; but most individual in mind and heart was Brother Giles of Assisi. He was the wisdom of the company; a man of deep thought and finely-toned moral fibre; deeply intent on the meaning of life; not in any sense an active leader, but such a man as gives strength to any company in which he is welcomed. His strong, full personality is one of the purest and deepest sources of Franciscan tradition.

There is, perhaps, no more charming chapter in the *Fiorelli* than that which describes the journey of Brother Giles as a pilgrim to the Holy Land: it is a chapter of history, to be carefully read by every student of early Franciscan life. Thus does it run: "Brother Giles, by permission of St. Francis, went to visit the Holy Sepulchre of Christ; and, being come to the port of Brindisi, he was obliged to tarry there many days, because there was no ship ready to sail. Brother Giles, desiring to live by his labour, got a vessel and filled it with water, and went round the city crying: 'Who wants water?' And for his labour he received bread and all things necessary for the bodily support of himself and his companion. Then he passed over the sea, and with great devotion visited the Sepulchre of Christ and other Holy Places. And as he returned he abode for some days in the city of Ancona; and, because he was accustomed to live by his labour, he made baskets of rushes and sold them, not for money, but for bread for himself and his companion; and he carried the dead to their burial for the same wages. But when even this failed him, then he begged at the table of Jesus Christ, asking alms from door to door. So with much labour and in much poverty, he returned to St. Mary of the Angels."

It is not easy in this decorous nineteenth century to realise the picture of a Franciscan Friar going about the town with a water-pail, or with a burden of baskets, earning his daily bread in the same fashion as an ordinary workman. And yet what Brother Giles did we may be sure was no uncommon thing among those early Friars Minor; nay, from certain incidents related in the chronicles we know that it was no unusual thing for the lay-brethren to work as common workmen on the lands of others; and in these historical facts we have a touching commentary upon that chapter of St. Francis's rule, relating to labour and the reception of alms. It was doubtless on the strength of those recorded facts that an Anglican Bishop very lately declared that the earliest Friars Minor were not mendicants, but were rather working men earning their bread in so far as they were able; but when they could not obtain wages, they were to seek alms from door to door. Still it is true that in this rule St. Francis did but describe the ordinary position of an independent workman of his time. The mediæval people knew little of our modern system of labour and wage; they were

accustomed to give and receive without thought of a just equivalent, as is the case in all imperfectly developed communities. It were a sad case for any ordinary man in the Middle Ages to have had to depend for livelihood solely upon his labour; such a thing were impossible in the existing state of society.

However, to the mediæval folk of St. Francis's day, the Friar Minor, who went about hawking his freshly drawn water or his baskets, would not make the same presentment as he would in the world of to-day. The Franciscan frock, then, was not strictly a "Religious" habit in the sight of the people; it was merely a sort of peasant dress; and the Friar would appear to the stranger no more singular than in these times does the countryman, clad in smock, who enters the town. It is true the dress of the Friars excited attention in some parts where it was altogether novel, as in Germany; but then the foreign tongue and southern cast of features, as well as the Umbrian garb, drew the crowds around them. And when these strange foreigners announced themselves as a band of penitential preachers, suspicion was aroused against them at once: for were not the penitential preachers who went about in sackcloth and rags all heretics—Waldenses and such-like? And so the Friars had to suffer for the sins of those who had gone before them.

Of course, once the Friars were recognised as Religious, their habit, immediately became an object of respect, and before very many years was an exclusively Religious dress. And as a man's coat (as every student of man well knows) is one of the great determining influences of his life, so as the Friars' habit became more and more a distinctively Religious dress, the Friars themselves became more conventional and conformed more to the manners of the traditional monastic life. For at first the Friars were in no sense recognised as Monks: their life was essentially Apostolic; nor did they claim the title or character of Monks. In this St. Francis differed fundamentally from St. Dominic, whose Order was an adaptation of the monastic life to missionary preaching; so that even to this day the Dominicans use the monastic rite and Breviary. But St. Francis did not at all profess to be a Monk; hence he was not obliged by law to adopt the monastic rite, and, in fact, did not adopt it. His Friars, who were clerics, simply recited the Psalmody of the secular clerics and used their rite in Mass and the Divine Office; and the lay-brothers joined in spirit with the Divine Psalmody; according to the manner of the time, reciting the *Pater Noster*: for every worthy Catholic in those days prayed at the canonical hours. Even in regard to fasting, St. Francis did not enjoin the traditional monastic fasts which began in September and lasted, with greater or less severity, until Easter; but he simply commanded his Friars to observe the two Lents and the Friday fast, then obligatory on all the Faithful; the Epiphany Lent he advised as of devotion to those Friars who desired to observe it: he only lengthened by a few days the Christmas Lent. So that in regard to external observances, the Friars Minor were in the same running as the ordinary Faithful; they were in no way monastic. Hence they were so frequently regarded with suspicion by the Monks at the time, who evidently were much puzzled to understand what sort of life these Friars professed; taking vows and living in Community, yet in no way bound to monastic enclosure and choir, or to monastic rules in general. As someone has remarked, the Friars carried the Religious life out of the cloister into the world, and for the first time it was discovered that a man could be a Religious and

yet not a Monk. It was a development of the idea of the Religious life—the radical character of which was hardly appreciated at the time; and is not always appreciated even now.

The unfolding of a Religious Order is one of the most instructive phenomena in Church history; therein do you see the idea of the Founder, permeating the various conditions of the life of the ages in which his Institute is cast: in each age does the great idea assume forms that are new, and cast off forms that are old. The ages never return, and it is futile waiting, waiting for their return. Yet it is only in the history of the ages that are gone that you learn the living truth of the ages that are to come. But it is well betimes to go behind the succession of ages and gaze upon the originating force—the Founders and their earliest disciples—in whom the idea first lived; who were less straitened by traditional usages and passing forms and exhibit the truth of their lives in fresh spontaneous movements of rebirth.

Anecdote of Father Burke.

Every one knows the late Father Burke was a ready wit, brimful of genuine Irish humor. From a mass of anecdotes we select the following as an illustration of his happy method of enforcing the truth. He was lecturing on "The Vitality of the Catholic Church."—"When Pius VII. was imprisoned, and the great Napoleon pursued his victorious career through Russia in his march on Moscow, there was a poor gardener in Ireland who worked for a Protestant gentleman. He was in the garden one morning when he was accosted by his employer thus:

"Well, Pat, you'll have to give up the Pope at last. He is gone; he'll never come back to Rome again!"

"Do you tell me so?" said Pat.

"Oh! it's a fact; you'll never see a Pope in Rome again!"

"Well," said the poor man, "I can't believe that!"

"I will lay you a wager it's a fact," replied the gentleman.

"I have no money," answered Pat, "but I have a little pig, and if you lay a five-pound note against the pig, I'll lay a wager that before the pig is big enough and fat enough to be killed the Pope will be back again in Rome."

"Napoleon fell like the Temple of Dagon when Samsor pulled the pillars from under it, and Pius VII. came back to Rome. Then the poor man went to his master and received the five pounds. But when he took the money home to his wife, she said: 'Oh, you had no business to keep the decent man's money. The bet wasn't a fair one; you knew before-hand how it would turn out.' So the man went back to restore the five pounds, saying to his master: 'It wasn't a fair bet; I was sure of the pig all the time.'"

Growing Old

As grapes sweeten when touched by frost and the forest leaves turn golden, so life should mellow and sweeten with age. Blest is the household whose family circle contains a grandfather or a grandmother who has grown old beautifully; whose mind and heart retain the activity and freshness of youth though the hand may be slow with its burden of years. Having walked this planet for two or more generations, they have acquired a knowledge of its affairs which should be considered invaluable, nor ought they to dream of slipping away before delivering their message to us. They have lived and loved, hoped and lost. They have fought the battles we must fight; they have crossed the rivers we must cross.

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FRIDAY, the 21st day of April next, will be the last day for introducing Private Bills.

THURSDAY, the 4th day of May next, will be the last day of receiving Reports of Committees on Private Bills.

CHARLES CLARKE,
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.
Toronto, 11th March, 1893. 12

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