

"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE"

Rev. Francis Clement Kelley in June Donahoe's.

The whole country knew that Thabor was a peculiar village and that chiefest among its oddities could be classed as the "godlessness" of the neighboring hamlets. But its peculiarities did not end there, though the strange form of worship prevailing in the village would have been enough to make it odd indeed. The Church of the Martyrs had been founded in Thabor, and in no other locality had flourished so well. Indeed, to day the tenets taught by old Ezra Bannell were making their last stand, and in Thabor were well entrenched for the final conflict. Besides its peculiar creed the village had its peculiar name, its peculiar streets, and last of all, its peculiar old character, Ezechiel Wood, bowed with his seventy years of service "for the Lord and the Church of the Martyrs."

If a stranger were to ask a pious Thaborite why Brother Ezechiel Wood had become so renowned in his native village, the chances were that a stony stare would inform him, with an eloquence above expression in words, that Thabor pitied his ignorance, but refused to remedy it. In truth Brother Ezechiel was a born leader. The hopes of the Church of the Martyrs were centred in him. He could pray longer and more fervently than the dominie himself. His sermons, when perchance the pulpit became vacant through the absence or illness of the only minister of the church, were models of enthusiastic appeal to sinners—though there was not a sinner in Thabor since everyone had been already at the "mercy seat" and, confessing to a change of heart, had been made a member of the only church. The old man's religion, too, was more practical than usually found, even in Thabor. The poor he knew well; but better still, they knew him. They could recognize him halting step on the threshold, his gray hairs at the door, and his rough grasp of hand in theirs when something usually passed from him to relieve the hungry and clothe the naked. But Ezechiel Wood was bigoted—logically bigoted, and that means a bigotry of the most unrelenting type. The Church of the Martyrs was "close communion." The dominie, in some of his flights of oratory, had often praised its splendid "isolation," and so nothing else in the religious line could live in Thabor. Methodists, Baptists, Dunkards, Lutherans, Presbyterians, had from time to time settled in the village, but it was not congenial, and they either left or became working members of the Martyrs. Thabor would have none of their religion, and Brother Ezechiel it was who kept the people from becoming "too liberal." Religiously, socially, politically, commercially, he dominated Thabor, and that was the end to all discussion.

Thabor was possessed of one line of railroad communicating with the profane world. At the depot the station master united in his person the duties of operator, baggage man, ticket agent, etc. Thabor could afford but one official there. In point of religion Brother Dadds, the agent, was beyond reproach. It had come to be understood in Thabor that the station master was, by virtue of his office, Vicar General of the Church of the Martyrs, subject only to the authority of Brother Ezechiel himself; for the dominie of course counted for naught.

It was with some feelings of indignation that the village learned one morning that Death had dared to smile Brother Dadds, and the station and Vicar General had become yacant together. The indignation was not at all diminished, only changed, as to object, when, that very evening, the big term of a new station master was at the desk, and in the frame of the ticket window appeared a broad, cheerful face from which answers to questions floated out in a brogue that experts would class as a pure Donagalesque. The new official was Irish. Circumstantial evidence seemed plain, but Thabor did not at once give way. There was a hope that the new resident might conform to the religious ways of the village. Irish he was, but Brother Wood had worked miracles of conversion before, and he might do it again. Besides, the man might not be a "Papist" after all, and if he were—Thabor shuddered to think of a possibility. His conduct on the coming Sunday would decide all. In the meantime Brother Ezechiel left him in no doubt as to the state of village sentiment, vouchsafing his information by more or less veiled hints, which the Irishman coolly ignored, for when Sunday came he sealed his doom when, attired in his best, he tramped five miles to the "Popish church" at Zion.

Then the storm broke; and around the stove at Brother Watt's general store the godly gathered to discuss the latest and most terrible happening in village affairs. Brother Watt himself "allowed" that Thabor "won't stand no Papist roun." We drew off the last "Piscopal" because he was too Papish and—

"Yaas!" Brother Thomas thought, "That's what we did. An' we drew the line on good Methodists and ain't a goin' to let no Irish in Thabor."

Brother Larrup's opinion was more cheerful: "The Railway Company'll settle him. We can just as well leave the bull thing to Brother Wood. He'll fix it with the Road."

Brother Ezechiel did his best. He wrote the president, the vice president, the general manager of the company. He interviewed the objectionable station master personally. He held indignation meetings with the section boss and his crew. He enlisted the

aid of Brother Mills, the editor, compositor and printer's angel (there were no devils in Thabor except the station master) of the Trumpet, so that week after week from the sanctum of the press there thundered forth: "We regret to say," "Popish Aggression," "The Scarlet Woman," etc., which were eagerly read and discussed, till the spark became a flame and all Thabor was in the blaze. But the Irishman stayed on.

He had no friends; but, happily for him, the State law compelled the hotel to take him in, so said the landlord—and Thabor believed and pitied him. But to cold looks and even frowns only a smile was returned. A "physical force party" soon sprang up, headed by Tom Tyler, the nearest approach to a scapegoat that Thabor could supply. The brethren said nothing when Tom expounded the ideas of himself and followers on the best means of getting rid of "Papists"; but one morning when the doughty leader appeared on the street with a pair of black eyes and his friends showed several recently made cuts and bruises, and down at the depot a smile more cheery than ever appeared on the broad face framed in the ticket window, without asking questions, Thabor knew that the "physical force party" had been dissolved.

The Deborah Circle of the Church of the Martyrs had not been inactive. Several resolutions of encouragement for Brother Ezechiel in his "fight for the Lord" had been passed. Sister Watt had prayed long and earnestly. Sister Strong had given many tracts to the station master. They were accepted with the same smile and—never heard of again. Then more prayers were offered—and longer, but Sunday after Sunday a big Irishman turned his back on Thabor and its religion to tramp his weary way to the "Chapel" at Zion.

In the heart of the trouble came the rumors of war. Then the outbreak, and Thabor's religious zeal almost received a set back in the excitement of the hour. Young Hank Wood enlisted at once and left for the front with five more young men of the village. Then followed long days of anxious waiting, during which the War News bulletins were regularly posted up in the station telegraph office; and Thabor forgot its bigotry long enough to read them. No letter came to Brother Ezechiel from Hank. The old man read the bulletins every day, but spoke no word to the man who so faithfully prepared them. Months passed and then a letter came from Ezechiel's son. He had been sick of fever, but was better now, and with his regiment in Cuba. He had been nursed back to life by some woman whom he called "angels." He described their strange dresses, their hanging beads, their crosses—and old Ezechiel groaned for his boy. In a few days the battle would come, Hank said—and it did.

Brother Ezechiel heard the news of the fight at El Caney from Brother Watt. The bulletins were already posted at the depot. Brother Watt remarked in an embarrassed way, "I just couldn't tell him more." In a just dominie Ezechiel went to read for himself. Men touched their hats to him with unusual respect as he passed along; but he did not notice it, for the vision of a blue eyed boy, laughing at his knee, all he had to cheer him since Auntie died, was before him, and he was calling, "Hank! Hank!" in his heart as if he had lost him.

There was a crowd at the board, but they parted to let him through. The news was of a victory. How slowly he read the headings. He hated to hurry now, and besides, his old eyes were not as good as formerly. They were dimmer than ever to day. At last he came to the end where was placed the list of

THE DEAD!

First in the column he read:

KILLED IN ACTION, HENRY WOOD, Co. K, 14th INF.

Brother Ezechiel wondered why he read that line over and over again before he broke down. Then between him and the fatal sheet rose the vision again. The vision of the blue eyed boy with a halo of golden hair, who was smiling at him, tossing his curls in the joy of his play. In his ears Brother Ezechiel heard "Daddy! Daddy!" as of yore, and on his old lips he felt the soft press of a child's sweet caress. He put out his arms and the golden hair was matted with blood. Brother Ezechiel's heart opened in a great sob. Yes! he was a patriot, but—he never before knew what it meant—and what it cost.

Back of the old man the sob found an echo. Someone else was in sorrow and Ezechiel Wood knew that he had a brother in his misery. He turned. Through the ticket window he saw the blue uniform of the station master. His cap was thrown aside and his face buried in his hands. Brother Ezechiel looked around inquiringly till some one pointed to the list. Next his own boy's name the old man read:

KILLED IN ACTION, CHAS. O'BRIEN, Co. K, 14th INF.

Someone nodded toward the ticket window and said: "His son!"

The station master did not hear the drop of his office open, but he did feel a trembling hand laid on his shoulder. Then the hand dropped into his own and a hot tear fell upon their clasp. The bigotry of Thabor that day began to die.

Kindness is perhaps the easiest way of doing good, and the safest: a friendly look, a hearty greeting, an unforgotten interest in the pursuits and success of our companions. We must be able to forget ourselves before we can expect to have a place in the hearts of others.—Jowett.

"O YE OF LITTLE FAITH!"

A sower sowed his seed, with doubts and fears, "I dare not hope," he said, "for fruitful ears." Poor hath the harvest been in other years. Yet ere the August moon had waxed old, Fair stood his fields, a waving sea of gold: He reapeth a thousandfold!

In the dark place one dropt a kindly word: "So weak my voice," he sighed, "perchance none heard. Or, if they did, no answering impulse stirred." Yet in an hour his fortunes were at stake: One put a life in peril for his sake, Because that word he spake!

"Little have I to give, O Lord," one cried, "A wayward heart that oft hath Thee denied; Condidst Thou with such a gift be satisfied?" Yet when the soul had ceased its mournful plaint, God took the love that seemed so poor and faint, And from it made a saint!

—Christian Burke.

A BEAUTIFUL FATHER.

"Tell your mother you've been very good boys to-day," said a school teacher to two little new scholars.

"Oh," replied Tommy, "we haven't any mother."

"Who takes care of you?" she asked.

"Father does. We've got a beautiful father. You ought to see him."

"Who takes care of you when he is at work?"

"He takes all the care before he goes off in the morning, and after he comes back at night. He's a house-painter; but there isn't very much work this winter, so he is doing laboring till spring comes. He leaves us a warm breakfast when he goes off; and we have bread and milk for dinner, and a good supper when he comes home."

"Then he tells us stories, and plays on the fife, and cuts out beautiful things with his jack-knife. You ought to see our father and our home, they are both so beautiful!"

Before long, the teacher did see that home and that father. The room was a poor attic, graced with cheap pictures, autumn leaves and other little trifles that cost nothing. The father, who was preparing the evening meal for his motherless boys, was at first glance only a poor begrimed laborer; but before the stranger had been in the place ten minutes, the room became a palace and the man a magician.

His children had no idea they were poor, nor were they so with such a hero as this to fight their battles for them. This man, whose grateful spirit lighted up the otherwise dark life of his children, was preaching to all about him more effectively than was any man in priestly robe and costly temple.

He was a man of patience and submission to God's will, showing how to make home happy under the most favorable circumstances. He was rearing his boys to be high minded citizens, to put their shoulders to the wheel, and not be burdens to society in the days that are coming. He was, as his children had said, "a beautiful father" in the highest sense of the word.—Weekly Bouquet.

OBSERVATION.

For the Catholic Record.

We often think our lives dull and colorless, and yet they say in the most uneventful existence there is some tragedy or comedy. Imagination, in a certain sense, has a great deal to do with our happiness. A person with a bright, vivid imagination generally possesses a hopeful spirit; he sees things in many lights; nothing escapes his observation. One person may gaze night after night at a coal fire, for instance, and see merely the live coals, another will distinguish towers, cities, and even faces.

We may very easily cultivate the habit of observation. And how much enjoyment is unconsciously extracted from incidents, often trifling in themselves!

It is impossible to take up one of Dickens's novels without instantly perceiving how strong was the man's faculty for noticing little odds and ends which hundreds of people would leave unmarked. But then he was a genius—undoubtedly, yet, had not his quick insight something to do with his interesting delineation of character? We are all acquainted with the chief personages in his best books, and only the mention of one of their names immediately suggests that individual's particular weakness or strong point.

Mark Tapley will always be remembered as "trying to be jolly," but never discovering a circumstance sufficiently depressing in which to fully enjoy himself. Mr. Jarndyce always expected the wind to blow in a different direction when he feared his fellow-creatures whom he had befriended, were about to thank him. And again "I'll never desert Mrs. Micawber," at once brings a smile to our face as we see before us this strange character. Of course Dickens's exaggerates, but then he only portrayed types. We all have our little oddities, and could we see them excited by other individuals for our own benefit, how utterly ridiculous would many of us feel.

It is this keen sense of observation that makes great men so interesting. What a wonderful talent Dickens must have been! It was not his brilliant education by any means; it was more his ready reading and appreciation of characters, possibly commonplace, which makes him the splendid storyteller.

It is the will to do—the wish to take enjoyment—that might enable us to put some color into, not only our own, but

other lives. How many humorous incidents are overlooked, when by a little quickness we could grasp many funny episodes and in passing them around brighten numberless faces. Of course much depends on the manner in which a story is narrated. Some are almost lacking in the sense of humor; yet often a dull person places an entirely different construction on a story he hears, and in repeating as he understands it, creates fresh mirth—at his own expense to be sure, but then a good natured person does not mind very much being laughed at now and again.—Vere Mack.

AN AGNOSTIC.

Last week a witness in a Philadelphia will case was asked: "Do you believe in a God?" He answered: "I neither believe nor disbelieve." He was asked: "Do you believe in a future state of punishment and reward?" He answered: "I neither believe nor disbelieve. I know nothing about it." Thereupon his competency as a witness was objected to on the ground that under the law a witness, to be competent, must believe in a Supreme Being. Then the attorney who called the witness to the stand, asserted that "in these days few intelligent men would be apt to say that they are positive in their belief. They would be more likely to say that they believed because they didn't know."

This assertion expresses the sentiment of the great majority of the people in this country; and that majority is constantly on the increase. It is unreasonable to expect any other result, as long as religion shall be divorced from education; as long as the Christian sects shall continue yielding tenet after tenet to the attacks of liberalism and higher (?) criticism. The ridiculous elective scheme of education, whereby the student entering college chooses what studies he shall pursue, has been adapted to their Churches by the sectarians, who no longer demand adherence hard and fast to a whole and definite creed.

The prodigals, who have left the Church of the Father, offer their hushes of corn to the membership, saying: "Here is your spiritual food, but you need not swallow all of it. You may nibble here and there to suit yourselves." And they nibble—and starve; and some happily come to themselves, and go back to the Father, Who hath compassion upon them.—Catholic Telegraph.

STATESMAN AND Nun.

By MAGDALEN ROCK.

I.

Slowly the organ played a march, That sad grand march in "Saul." As through the cathedral's marbled arch Came the funeral cortege all; And the noblest in the land were near Where the dead statesman lay, And a nation wept for that great career Above his lifeless clay.

He had served his country well and long, And she gave him a love as true As that which made him ever strong For her to dare and do. And now in that minister's time-worn walls Brave men with bated breath List to the praise which his life recalls And which follows him in death.

And the poet's pen and orator's tongue Paid tribute to his fame, And in far-off lands his praise was sung Amid the crowd's acclaim; And his name was heard in the rich man's hall And in the peasant's home, Where his memory was as loved by all As our ocean's foam.

II.

They laid her to sleep in a narrow bed Outside their convent walls, Where the earliest primrose lifts its head, And the morning sunlight falls. In the plain black robes she loved so well She went to her early rest, And her lips a smile as sweet, they tell, As the lilies on her breast.

Thy busy world we'll never hear her name, Not of the souls she won, Before her great grace from sin and shame, And to serve one's land is surely sweet, And its people's praise is sweet, But to save a soul from the flames of hell Is work for an angel meet.

His name shall lead in the unborn years To deeds of high empire, And a nation's love with a people's tears, Shall hush his immortalize. She brought her works in her fair, white hand.

To lay before God's throne, Where a host of ministering angels stand— Works done for him alone.

THE PROGRESS OF CATHOLIC IDEAS.

The symposium of the Church Review with regard to the revival of Catholic ideas in England is a remarkable sign of the times. Protestantism may be a strong force yet amongst the English people, but there can scarcely be a doubt that it is a waning force. On its side are those who are ignorant or half instructed. They have had the old Protestant traditions poured into their ears in childhood, or they have read in school books of the wickedness of Rome. What they learned in their early days they cling to tenaciously and they imagine that Anglicans who show any inclination to reject the ancient Protestant fictions are unfaithful to Christianity. Many others there are who have absolutely abandoned such narrow views, who see that Christianity is something broader and greater than these sectarian supposes, and who have undertaken with zeal the work of restoring what the so-called Reformers destroyed. We should like them, of course, to accept the whole round of Catholic dogmas, but it is well that they come so far and so near us. Their tone is friendly and Catholics are, we feel sure, at all times ready to reciprocate kindness. Very noteworthy are the words of the D. ke of

Newcastle: "I believe that Catholicism will eventually triumph: Protestantism being mainly a religion of negation is doomed to failure. The ultimate struggle will be between Catholicism and infidelity." The Church Review has done well in letting the world see that the tendency of a good proportion of Anglicans to-day is most decidedly in the direction of the old faith.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of Prudence in our Doings.

We must not be easy in giving credit to every word or suggestion, but should carefully and leisurely weigh the matter according to God.

Alas! such is our weakness that we often more readily believe and speak of another that which is evil, than that which is good.

But perfect men do not easily give credit to every report; because they know man's weakness; which is very prone to evil and very subject to fall in words.

It is great wisdom not to be rash in our doings, nor to maintain too obstinately our own opinion.

It is also wisdom not to believe every man's word, nor presently to tell others the things which we have heard or believed.

Consult with a wise and conscientious man; and seek rather to be instructed by one that is better, than to follow thine own inventions.

A good life makes a man wise according to God, and expert in many things. The more humble a man is in himself and the more subject to God, the wiser will he be in all things, and the more at peace.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

We regret to say that some Catholics do not think it fashionable to make the sign of the Cross before and after meals. Those weaklings are to be pitied. The Cross will preach to mankind the infinite sufferings of Our Blessed Saviour for the sins of the world. It will preach to us the horror of sin. The Cross is the emblem of Christianity and the sign of salvation.

In the words of St. Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by Whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." The sign of the Cross follows from the cradle to the grave. At Baptism several crosses with Holy Oils are made on the infant child. We are confirmed with the sign of the Cross. We get absolution with the sign of the Cross. We receive Holy Communion with the sign of the Cross. When dying, all our senses are anointed with Holy Oils, in the name of the sign of the Cross. At Mount Calvary the Cross was the emblem of disgrace and infamy. At the day of General Judgment Our Lord will appear in His glory and majesty, surrounded by countless millions of Angels, and the Cross will be borne aloft in glory and triumph. Please God, on that day we shall rejoice and glory in the Cross of Redemption.—Sacerdes, in American Herald.

ON DUTY.

On a trolly car, the other day, a loafer insulted the conductor, says The Catholic Columbian. The latter's face flushed and his right hand clenched unconsciously. But he controlled himself, made no reply, and went back in silence to the platform.

A gentleman who witnessed the insult said to the conductor: "I admire you for not noticing him." The man replied "I certainly would have struck him if I had not been on duty."

On duty? Are we not all on duty, we Catholics, who are surrounded by sixty millions of non Catholics, watching us, persecuting us, quick to compare our lives with the teachings of our religion? If we give way to anger, if we fail to keep the precepts of the Church, if we give bad example, by drunkenness, or immorality or dishonesty, or untruthfulness, are they not scandalized? Is not their conversion put off? Have we not failed in our duty to them?

We are like a light on a mountain—seen of all men—and it behooves us so to conduct ourselves as to lead our neighbors to say: "The religion that results in such virtue, must be the religion of Christ." We are always on duty!

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