

A SOLDIER PRIEST.

REV. JAMES KENT STONE

On the Patriotism of the Catholic Church and the Catholic People.

On Memorial day, Father Fidelis (Rev. James Kent Stone) of the noble Order of Passionists, delivered an address before members of the Grand Army of the Republic in the Church of St. John the Baptist in Manyunk, a suburb of Philadelphia. Father Fidelis, as our readers know, was formerly a Protestant minister. He is now a zealous Catholic missionary. He is a Boston man and was a sionary. He is a Boston man and was a sionary. He is a Boston man and was a sionary.

"I may be pardoned for a word regarding the testimony that has been given by my own co-religionists to this sentiment of devotion to country. I will not attempt to make an apology for the behavior and attitude of the Catholic Church in its relations to our beloved country. I will not attempt to vindicate those who, in the late civil war, went forth from my beloved Catholic Church to lay down their lives for their country. I am not here to make an apology. Your presence shows no such apology is needed, yet that you have come here to the Catholic Church renders it necessary to dwell briefly on this all the more so because there has arisen on our country's horizon a little cloud. I do not consider it larger than a man's hand. It is a cloud of mystery and misrepresentation. Is it possible any man reading the record of the past, looking at the roll of Catholic heroes and the deeds accomplished by them, will with justice state that Roman Catholics and the Catholic Church have been lacking in devotion to our native land, that it is out of sympathy with American principles, those American principles of liberty and union on which our country is built? Let them point, if they can, to any crisis in the country's history from the Declaration of Independence to the present day, when Catholics have been wanting in patriotism or halted from lack of sympathy or selfishness from aiding in saving and perpetuating the nation's life.

"You, my comrades, as in my own experience, know what follows from such accusation or insinuation. The Catholic Church points to the roll of names which shine in our country's galaxy of bright titles. I point you out also, my brethren, those silent workers in the world, the sisters who give their lives for God's work among their fellow-men, generously, faithfully, uncomplainingly. We know what was done by the sisters of the Catholic Church during the civil war. Their time was devoted to attending the sick, to binding wounds, to comforting the dying. We know what an argument that was, and it brushed away the prejudices of many a one, and it the time should ever come when it would be necessary they would do so again. The Sisters of Charity, of Mercy, of St. Joseph, and the other beautiful bands of sweet workers, nameless and unknown, doing so much for humanity in our midst, proclaim to the world whether Catholics are loyal to the country or not.

"Search the nations. Catholics have seldom—aye, put it stronger, have never—been belittled in devotion to country. Who are the people? What is the little nation that has felt the depths of suffering more than any other in devotion to country? In rack, in devastation, in the sacrifice of its life's best blood, is it not a little isle beyond the sea—Catholic Ireland? In the heart of a true Irishman there is a love of his country, almost side by side with his love of God and faith, and do you suppose those who have come through the great persecution and who thus driven from their native land, have bither to the land of the free, or have proved disloyal to the cause of their adoption? They are not.

Look at the century past—above all, at the past thirty years—and you will find no more true American than the Irish citizens who have adopted this country as their own."

After reviewing some of the phases of the war and of the incidents and influences that led up to it, the eloquent orator touched lightly upon his own personal services for the sole purpose of accentuating his patriotic sentiments. He said: "Pardon me if, in the course of my remarks, I seem too egotistical; I do not mean it. This occasion stirs me to the depths of my heart and makes it difficult for me to speak, or, at least, to speak coherently. I had the honor to be your companion in the war for the Union. I was a soldier in the Second Massachusetts Infantry, afterward a line officer until the terrible battle of Gettysburg, which did more, in my opinion, than any other to decide the conflict. I saw my brother drop dead there, and was myself disabled. Since that day I have never had the opportunity of meeting my companions in arms. Then I was in the flush of early manhood, and had already devoted myself to the service of God. I returned from the service of my country to the service of my God, so deeply engaged, I have never had the opportunity of even greeting my comrades again. I am not even a member of the G.A.R.; I ought to be. I have the right to be; I must apologize that I never made the attempt to be enrolled. Surely my heart is with you today. I rejoice with you and I thank those who gave me an opportunity to meet you. You will excuse me for the lack of preparation, but I am engaged with the mission—Catholics know what that means—but I come with the preparation of my heart. Before parting, let me call upon you to be true to the legacy of devotion to country which is left us. Let not this occasion pass without applying its lessons.

"The first and most obvious lesson is that of high loyalty to the land we love. Loyalty should express itself not merely

in display, in rhetoric, in music and marching. These things are good. They are nature's expressions of the flowers of devotion, and show the feelings within. Do not effervesce in such expressions. Let us love it, our country, as they loved it; let us be willing to make sacrifices for its prosperity and best interests. Above all, Christian friends, let us remember that it is religion, true, pure, religious principle that is the corner stone of all true national prosperity. Without it there is no real safeguard for morality; without morality, no purity. The greatest nation that ever was, greater than ours is at present, was for centuries the mistress of the world. The great Roman Republic for lack of religious principles fell into decadence, the shameful decay of morality, until she dropped into a shapeless mass, with nothing left but the surging sea of barbarism. "Cherish, then, your religion, whatever form it may be; love it, be honest with it; be sincere in it. Of course, it would be a great happiness to me to see you all Catholics, but that would be an astonishing miracle. Be honest and sincere in devotion to your country and to your religion. I have always said I would give a great deal more for a good Protestant than a bad Catholic. The latter is a great argument against the Church which she disgraces. Be loyal to the grace God shall send you, then you will be doing in another way what they did who said in response to the inspiration of God: 'I will go forth, I will give my all, I will die if necessary, for my country.' That was their consideration. But peace has her victories as well as war; we have our fight, there are dangers to the Republic. Be awake to them, be unflinching. Let us look to it that the safeguards of morality, Christian purity and loyalty to high principles are preserved in this country."—Boston Republic.

Pastor Knipp, of water-cure fame, has just been keeping his 75th birthday. Among the recent guests undergoing the treatment at Woorishoten was Father Bonedici, O.S.B., formerly Prince Edmond Kuziwill; and a well-known member of the German Reichstag, now Prior of the Benedictine Monastery of Caezjaes, in Portugal.

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