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The True Witness

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VINDICATED BY HIS ENEMIES.

The following letter, addressed to the editor of the New York Times Saturday Review of Books, by Jean B. Sabate, a well known Hawaiian journalist, at present in New York, living at 128 West Twenty-ninth street, will be read by the admirers of Father Damien, the martyr priest of Molokai, with mingled feelings of gratitude and indignation. They will be grateful because it removes, even from the minds of his enemies, the slightest taint that clung to the memory of the saintly Damien by reason of the vile slander circulated by Rev. Dr. Hyde. Catholics and honest persons of every creed will thrill with indignation when they learn that the absolute and definite vindication of the apostle of the lepers has been delayed for sixteen years through "the almost criminal silence of the person or persons in possession of the facts."

My attention having been called to a paragraph in the queries department of the Times's Saturday Review of Books, in which the old charges against Father Damien, the martyr priest of Molokai, are revived, I hereby appeal to your sense of justice to print the following at your earliest convenience:

A MANLY AND GENEROUS DEFENCE OF THE APOSTLE OF THE LEPROSERS.

The whole controversy originated in the now famous letter of Rev. Dr. Hyde, to a brother clergyman, written about sixteen years ago. You will remember, if you think the matter over, that Dr. Hyde did say worse things of Father Damien than Robert Louis Stevenson ever permitted himself to say, and it was for this very reason that Stevenson wrote his manly and generous defence of the apostle of lepers. Dr. Hyde never went to the leper settlement, and never saw Father Damien.

Stevenson went to the leper settlement as a guest of the Hawaiian Government, remained there eight days, but, strangely enough, failed to hear a single word against his morality, even from the bitterest enemy. Stevenson as a Protestant went to Molokai in the hope of finding something against the priest, something which would tend to his discredit in the eyes of mankind; but after a rigid investigation on the ground returned with the conviction that Damien was a "man with all the grime of mankind, but a saint and a hero all the more for that." And Stevenson was right, as has lately been proven.

TESTIMONY FROM AN EYE WITNESS.

"The mysterious thing in the whole affair was the silence of Dr. Hyde's information. Notwithstanding your statement that 'the cult of the leper priest was largely among Protestants and non-Catholics,' the only assailants of Father Damien's memory have been Protestants. And while it is true that some Protestants in the United States, and England have generously come forward in his defence, his only champions in Hawaii have been members of his own Church. The writer has been for seven years a resident of Hawaii, has visited the leper settlement of Molokai as a newspaper man, and therefore knows whereof he speaks.

"At Honolulu the members of the Congregational Church—the church which was the first on the ground and had the best opportunities, but failed to utilize them—have been until a few weeks ago the bitterest enemies of Father Damien. Probably because he accomplished that which none of them dared to do. Dr. Hyde, Dr. Pond, Mrs. Caselle, Mr. Brigham were and have been the leaders in the long campaign of vilification and misrepresentation. The late Bishop Gulstan, Bishop Lambert, Father Clements and Father Wondelin (Damien's comrades and co-laborers), John A. Hughes, Thomas McTigue and Frank D. Creedon—these were the energetic and tireless defenders of the leper priest whenever his memory was assailed. And their performances have lately been rewarded.

POPE CLEMENT VIII. AND IRISH LIBERTY.

The letter, to which the following is an answer, recently was copied into the True Witness from The Tablet:

Sir,—Your correspondent, who signs himself "A Loyal Irish Catholic," accuses me of "gross misrepresentation of the teaching and acts of the Catholic Church." This is a serious charge, and one which, if true, would justify my expulsion from the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland. In justice, therefore, to me, I ask you to allow me to give to your readers the text of the Bull of Clement VIII. as published in the Abbe MacGeoghegan's "History of Ireland," which proves that I have not been guilty of misrepresentation and which I read at the Catholic Truth Conference. It is as follows:

Pope Clement VIII., to all and each of our venerable brethren, the archbishops, bishops and prelates; also to our dearly beloved sons the princes, counts, barons, and the people of Ireland; greeting, health and apostolic benediction. Having learned that, through the exhortations of the Roman Pontiffs our predecessors, and those of the Holy See, and ours, you have been encouraged to recover your freedom, and to defend and maintain it against the reformers, also that you have and are united to second and support with all your means, first, James Fitzgerald, of happy memory, who, as long as he hath lived, has made generous efforts to shake off the cruel yoke of slavery which the English who have deserted the Holy Roman Church, have imposed upon you; subsequently John Fitzgerald, cousin-german of the said James, and latterly our dear and illustrious son, Prince Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, Barga of Dungannon, and Captain-General of the Catholic army; that these generals and their troops, aided by the God of Armies, have performed many heroic deeds, in fighting valiantly against their enemies, and are determined to persevere in opposing them; in order, therefore, to secure your attachment and that of your Generals and of the said troops to this cause, it is our desire to bestow on you our spiritual favors, as our predecessors have done. Trusting to the merces of God and to the authority of His apostles Peter and Paul, we grant to each and every one of you, who follow the said General O'Neill, and his army for the defence of the Catholic Faith, aid, in provisions, arms, or other warlike stores, or assist him in any manner whatever, provided you have confessed your sins, and if possible received Holy Communion, the full remission of your sins; and likewise grant all the indulgences which the Roman Pontiffs have accustomed to bestow on those who fight against the Turks, for the recovery of the Holy Land.

LAST OF THE SEASON.

Last evening witnessed the close of another series of the Catholic sailors' concerts. The entertainment was in the hands of the Jas. McCready Co., and Mr. Smith, who was expected to act as president for the evening, being confined to his home by sickness, was replaced by Mr. P. C. McKenna, who acquitted himself most worthily. The programme was long, and called forth the presence of many a well-known and welcome performer. The parts taken by Misses Marion O'Rielly, Flossie Lynch, Walker and Ferguson, in their respective specialties, as well as those of Messrs. Danphy, Leroux, Lamoureux, Grimes and Cloutier, deserve special mention. This being the last regular entertainment of the season, the lady performers were all presented with bouquets as a souvenir of the occasion, and a flash light photo was taken by Mr. P. J. Gordon.

On the whole the evening was a delightful one and well calculated to assure the many Catholic sailors who frequent our port that here in Montreal there are friends ever ready to assist in making their stay amongst them both happy and attractive.

While we have just announced the last regular concert of the Catholic Sailors' Club for the season, yet we were informed by the chairman that on next Wednesday evening an entertainment would be given to Messrs. Mallon and Grimes, both seamen, and both favorites, in recognition of the special services which they have rendered to the Club during the season just closed, and we wish them every success with their well-earned tribute.

CUBAN POET DEAD.

Jose Maria de Heredia, the poet and member of the French Academy, is dead at Paris. He was born in Cuba in 1842. He was a son of Jose Maria de Heredia, who was considered the greatest of the Spanish-American poets.

A Cure for Fever and Ague—Farrar's Vegetable Pills are compounded for use in any climate, and they will be found to preserve their powers in any latitude. In fever and ague they act upon the secretions and neutralize the poison which has found its way into the blood. They correct the impurities which find entrance into the system through drinking water or food and if used as a preventive fever is avoided.

STRANGE MARRIAGE CASE.

The Penal Laws and Their Effect Upon Catholic Marriage.

The strange case of Swift v. Swift, the decision in which was given recently by the Irish Master of the Rolls, has resulted in a verdict for the defendant. The crucial point in the case was whether a marriage contracted in Austria between a Protestant and Catholic and solemnized by a Catholic priest was valid in Britain. The Master of the Rolls held it was. Perhaps the most interesting circumstance in the case was the glimpse afforded of the Penal Laws, on which the plaintiff relied to invalidate the Austrian marriage.

The remarks of the Master of the Rolls on the Penal Laws are worth republishing. He said in part:

The writ in the present action was issued on the 3rd of February, 1904. The first question that arose was obviously as to the marriage in Austria with the Baroness. The certificate that had been produced was conclusive proof that it was celebrated in the only way that would have been lawful in Austria, and the evidence of the two Austrian lawyers who had been examined, Dr. De Gries and Dr. Krenn, was that that certificate would be accepted in an Austrian court as evidence of a marriage legally concluded; that there was absolutely no machinery in Austria then and even at the present day by which a marriage legally celebrated between a Catholic and a non-Catholic could be dissolved; and that such a marriage could only be annulled on grounds that existed before marriage. The disability that was relied on by the plaintiff was created by the 19th George II., chapter 13, an Irish statute of the year 1745, which was in force in the year 1833. Its first section recited that the law then existing to prevent Popish priests from celebrating marriages had been found to be ineffectual. A previous statute had made it a hanging matter for the priests. The section then provided that after the 1st of May, 1746, any marriage celebrated by a Popish priest between a Papist and a person who had been or professed to be a Protestant within twelve months before the celebration, or between two Protestants, should be absolutely null and void to all intents and purposes, without any process, judgment, or sentence of law whatever. There could be no doubt that the Austrian marriage was celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest. But some restriction must be imposed on the language of this section. It contained no reference to the locality in which the marriage was celebrated; but it manifestly gave no power to avoid marriages between the subjects of foreign States over whom this country had no jurisdiction. It must receive a rational interpretation. No doubt if the priest had celebrated the marriage in Ireland he would have been within the enactment. But that was not the present case. The act was to prevent Popish priests from celebrating marriages but not to prevent Protestants and Catholics from contracting marriage. Such marriages had always been lawful in Ireland. Even the cruelty of the Irish native Parliament never dreamt of rendering them illegal per se. It had been stated that this Act was part of a code. That was quite true; but the code dealt exclusively with subjects of the King and with the celebration of marriages within the Kingdom of Ireland. The 12th George the 1st, passed in 1725, made the celebration of such marriages penal and a felony, but it did not annul them. It did not say that the marriages should be null and void; it made it penal on the part of the clergyman who celebrated them. From the code it was to be deduced that mixed marriages were discouraged and were rendered void after the 1st of May, 1746, if celebrated by a Popish priest; but that did not extend to marriages celebrated abroad. On the contrary, marriages celebrated abroad had been always perfectly good and valid if unimpeachable on some other ground. He was therefore of opinion that the marriage of the 3rd of February, 1833, was perfectly valid.

Pope's Envoy Honored in Japan.

Prince Fushima, representing the Emperor, gave a luncheon last week at the Shiba Palace, Tokio, to Bishop O'Connell, the special envoy of the Pope to Japan, Baron Katsura, the Prime Minister, was one of the guests.

TWO SCHOOLS.

I put my heart to school, / In the world where men grow wise, / "Go out," I said, "and learn the rule / Come back when you win the prize." / My heart came back again, / "And where is the prize?" I cried, / "The rule was false, and the prize was pain, / And the teacher's name was Pride." / I put my heart to school, / In the woods where wild birds sing, / In the fields where flowers spring, / Where brooks run cool and clear. / "Go out," I said, "you are only a fool, / But perhaps they can teach you here." / "And why do you stay so long, / My heart, and where do you roam?" / The answer came with a laugh and a song, / "I find this school is home." / —Henry Van Dyke.

ACTOR BECOMES A TRAPPIST.

Otero Nelsonetti, an Italian actor of acknowledged ability, has entered the Trappist order at Gethsemani, Ky. From the glitter and applause of the Roman and Florentine theatres Nelsonetti went to Oberammergau seven years ago to study for the character of the Saviour, in which role he eventually played. When the last Passion Play was given in 1900 he won the plaudits of the world.

