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C. M. B. A.

IN ALBANY AND VICINITY.

A History of Its Establishment in the Diocese—Story of a Postal Card—Splen-
did Growth of the Association in
Albany and Rensselaer Counties
During 1896—Its Promi-
nent Members.

(Continued from last week)

Following the organization of this branch came in quick succession the institution of branches 192, 200 and 201 in Troy, a city heretofore without a branch of the C. M. B. A., with a charter membership of twenty, twenty-five and thirty-two respectively. The institution of branch 202 in the neighboring parish of Green Island on the first Sunday of November added twenty-six more desirable members to the Association. This branch was organized by District Deputy Joseph Lucy, and instituted by Grand Secretary Cameron. It is composed of intelligent and energetic young men, and, as they have a good field to work in, it will undoubtedly become a strong branch. The thorough instruction given the officers in their respective duties by Grand Secretary Cameron will prove of inestimable value to them. The president of this new branch is James J. Hurley, a young man whose appearance indicates that he is one of those quiet, yet forceful characters who are always esteemed and who faithfully discharge such responsibilities as are intrusted to them. That he will prove a splendid president and a desirable acquisition to the C. M. B. A. is beyond question. The number of members brought into the association through the organization of these five branches will easily aggregate one hundred and sixty. All of them have been instituted in parishes where the C. M. B. A. was previously almost unknown, and where there will undoubtedly be a steady growth in the future.

In the meantime, the older branches have not been idle. Branch 57, in the village of East Albany, has initiated seven candidates and has now upwards of 150 members. The increase in the Albany branches has been much greater; branch 83 having gained sixteen members, branch 126, twenty-two; branch 153, eighteen; and branch 171 distancing all by a gain of about thirty.

The net gain to the association in the counties of Albany and Rensselaer for the year, after deducting for deaths, expulsions &c., will be two hundred and fifty members at least. This, in face of the fact that the Catholic Benevolent Legion and the C. R. & B. A. have contested the field and also secured a large number of members, is certainly encouraging to Catholics, who desire to see their co-religionists avail themselves of the benefits to be derived from membership in a good Catholic Association.

It is not an unusual thing for new associations to enjoy a large growth, but when, after a slow growth of fourteen years, an organization takes the strides that the C. M. B. A. has taken in this vicinity during 1896, it proves that that association must possess great strength and vitality.

The organization of a central council or advisory body of the C. M. B. A. in Albany has been attempted at various times during the past two years, but with rather poor success, the project was taken up again recently and successfully carried out. The first meeting was held on Sunday, November 15, and was quite well attended. At the meeting held Sunday, December 6, all the branches were well represented, a constitution was adopted and the central council established under circumstances which render its success certain. It is composed of men who will spare no effort to strengthen the association, and make it a power for good in this diocese. Among the projects which the council is now considering is the holding of a grand re-union of all the C. M. B. A. men in this section, and the publication of a directory containing the name, address and occupation of each member. Grand deputy John F. Ryan is president of the council; P. J. Cleary, the able and courteous secretary of branch 83, is secretary; and William F. Lange, who fills the same position in branch 190, is treasurer. Brother Lange, by the way, is an elocutionist of considerable ability. A valuable member of the council is brother William F. Murphy of Branch 83. He has always some good suggestions to make and his ideas are well expressed. Brothers Murphy, Cleary and Ryan have favored the establishment of the

council since the project was first discussed, and they may well feel gratified that it is finally organized.

In closing the sketch of the C. M. B. A. branches of Albany and vicinity, some references should be made to the brothers who have presided over their deliberations during the past year. There are other members also whose services to the association entitles them to recognition. Brother J. F. Nally retires from the presidency of branch 57, after having served two terms. He has made a good presiding officer, and is possessed of qualities which fit him for any position of like character, being capable, impartial and graceful speaker. District deputy Patrick J. Adams, whose gray hair and stalwart form are familiar to all delegates at grand council conventions, is a member of this branch, and a good worker for the association despite his years.

Hon. George T. Kelly, who has been re-elected president of branch 83, takes a commendable interest in the association, and even the numerous calls upon his time during the late campaign did not keep him away from the meetings of his branch. He served creditably in the last legislature, and was one of the few democrats returned to the assembly for 1897. His friends predict a bright future for him, another member of this branch who has done yeoman service for the C. M. B. A. is John J. Taaffe. A member of a large wholesale grocery firm of this city and its travelling representative, his business duties require him to visit many of the cities and villages of the diocese. An ardent advocate of Catholic societies, he is an enthusiastic expounder of the merits of the C. M. B. A., and has lost no opportunity to make them known to the Catholics of Northern and Eastern New York. He is an eloquent and fluent talker, and at C. M. B. A. gatherings, an address is always required of him. Other active workers of the C. M. B. A. who are connected with this branch are brothers William F. Murphy, P. J. Cleary, William Hussey, Judge John W. Walsh, formerly grand deputy, and our present grand spiritual adviser, Rev. Francis D. McGuire.

Branch 126 numbers among its members two brothers whose work for the association entitles them to the gratitude of all who belong to it. From the date of his initiation into branch 57, John F. Ryan has been one of the most zealous members of the C. M. B. A., in organizing branches, in attending meetings called for that purpose, in serving as secretary, president, delegate or grand deputy, he has given his time unparagonably and without recompense, save the consciousness of having labored for the benefit of his fellow Catholics. His appointment as grand deputy was a well merited recognition of his services. He retires from the presidency of branch 126—after having filled that position two terms—enjoying the respect and esteem of all its members. Brother Daniel Shiel was transferred to branch 126 some years ago. To him is due, as we have stated in the beginning of this article, the introduction of the C. M. B. A. into eastern New York. So long as the C. M. B. A. exists, this noble worker for its welfare should be gratefully remembered. The first member in this part of the State, his still heart and soul in the association and, during the fifteen years that he has been connected with it, he has missed only six meetings. Reverses of fortune have come to him during these years, but that fact has not lessened the esteem in which he is held by his brother members. No list of the heroes and pioneers of the C. M. B. A. would be complete without the name of Daniel Shiel.

Brother John McCormick has been re-elected to the presidency of branch 153. He has made a good president and deserves this mark of esteem. Some of the best members in the city belong to this branch, and their ambition is to make it one of the strongest in Albany.

Brother John O'Leary, under whose presidency branch 171 has distanced all the older branches in securing new members, is also re-elected. He is the youngest president in the city, and will probably be one of the youngest delegates attending the Syracuse convention. Among his fellow members he is deservedly popular.

Brother Peter Newman, Sr., will continue to preside over the meetings of branch 190. A better for the position could not be found. He takes the same interest in the young men who have joined his branch that a father would take in the welfare of his sons, and to the C. M. B. A. in this city he is proving a tower of strength.

His labors among the German Catholics have already brought many of that nationality into our association, and more will come in consequence in the future.

Brother William F. Quinn, who organized the first branch of the C. M. B. A. in Troy, No. 192, and is now its president. Brother Mathews, organizer and president of branch 300, president Devine of branch 201, and district deputy Joseph Lucy who organized branches 201 and 202, the latter being the Green Island branch, are all good representatives of the energetic, open-hearted people who have given to Troy the reputation which it enjoys for enterprise and hospitality.

T. H. D.

DIOCESE ENLARGED.

A PAPAL BRIEF RECEIVED BY BISHOP McQUAID

Four Counties Taken from the Diocese of Buffalo and Added to Rochester.

Rev. B. J. McQuaid has received official notice from Rome that the four Southern Tier counties of Chemung, Steuben, Tioga and Schuyler have been taken from the diocese of Buffalo and added to that of Rochester.

This change in the diocesan boundaries will make the two dioceses more compact in territory, and add to Rochester 18 parishes, 26 churches and 23 priests. The diocese will hereafter be composed of the twelve counties of Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Yates, Seneca, Cayuga, Wayne, Tompkins, Steuben, Chemung, Tioga and Schuyler, with 78 parishes, 125 churches and 110 priests. The diocese of Buffalo will retain the eight counties of Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauque.

Bishop McQuaid and Rev. Dr. E. J. Hanna went to Corning on Wednesday to confer with the priests of the new district on the details of the union of their respective territories. The bishop is preparing a pastoral to be read in the churches of the annexed district.

Lecture on Hard Times.

The second of a series of lectures under the auspices of the Catholic Literary was given last Monday evening by Rev. Father O'Hanlon in Floral hall, Cox building. The subject was "Hard Times."

The speaker reviewed the condition of the country under Presidents Harrison and Cleveland, spoke of the feeling of unrest under each, and in each case the desire for a change, clearly illustrating that the people blame the party in power, whether it be republican or democratic; he thought it owing to the personal character of Mr. Bryan that he received as many as six million votes. Neither the financial question nor the tariff in the opinion of the speaker, was responsible for the present hard times, and while conceding the right of every one to give a reason and suggest a remedy, he presented three reasons, viz.: Overproduction, extravagance and intemperance. As an illustration of over-production, caused by the introduction of machinery and other facilities, he cited the case of a local factory where some few years ago 700 girls were employed, while to-day more work is turned out by fifty girls, as these facilities were being extended to all industries it was driving men from factories and shops until we have in the west farms developed and immense crops raised for which there is not a sufficient market. To present a remedy for this would indeed be no easy task—but might be the subject of a paper by some member of the "Literary."

As to extravagance, the youth who earns ten dollars a week thinks he is entitled to ride a hundred bicycle, smoke expensive cigars and in other ways live like his more fortunate brother. No one should live up to his income, but should rather prepare for a rainy day—putting something aside in anticipation of such an event.

The evil of intemperance has grown to such an alarming extent that we now have statistics showing that one billion dollars is spent annually on drink. When we consider that this would nearly pay our national debt, we are forced to say, "This is indeed an evil."

After the lecture an informal reception was held, when Father O'Hanlon met many of his old friends. A short musical and literary programme also added pleasure to the evening.

SHINE PERPETUALLY

SEVEN CANDLES BURNING ALWAYS

As Tokens of Father Damsen's Vow During Chicago's Great Fire.

CHICAGO, Jan. 17.—Far up from the great doors of the Holy Family church, in the gloom which envelopes the massive edifice during all the long hours when priests are not chanting before the splendid altar, shine seven tiny lights like stars in a dark sky. Beside them and removed but a few steps, the red sanctuary lamp burns ever on before the main altar by day and by night, but it is not more faithful and unflinching in its lonely vigil than are the seven little lights which pierce the gloom at its right and shed a soft effulgence upon the mild and beautiful features of the Blessed Virgin sculptured there above them. For twenty-five years those lights have burned, nor has their radiance once been eclipsed in that quarter of a century. They burn before a statue of the Blessed Virgin to fulfill the vow of a holy man registered in heaven when black night and death lowered over Chicago. And though he has entered into the reward which is promised the black robed, patient men who do God's work through storm and stress, the lights are trimmed and burning to show to the world that his memory and that of his sacred vow are still hallowed heritages of the Jesuit fathers.

No churchman Chicago has known among those who toiled down among the people and who left the world better for their having blessed it by their presence a few years attained greater eminence in his line of work or was more widely known and venerated than Father Arnold Damsen of the Holy Family church. His name is a household word in the great parish which he built up on the West Side, and his death a few years ago occasioned a sorrow as profound as it was widespread among the people who had known him and loved him for his work. His labors as a missionary were heroic and unceasing, and he was recognized wherever his work was known as one of the greatest men the famous Jesuit order has produced.

A quarter of a century ago Father Damsen was pastor of the Holy Family church, but for a time he was engaged in carrying the light into dark places outside of the territory he had chosen for his own. He was in New York conducting a mission, which had been very successful. His oratory had brought around his pulpit thousands of penitents, and his exhortations had reclaimed them to the narrow road which the church marks out for the feet of the righteous. The other holy men connected with the mission were overjoyed at its success. They felt that their prayers had been answered, and their labors especially blessed, and they were greatly encouraged to go on with the work.

One Sunday night in particular Father Damsen was in the pulpit, and he seemed inspired to greater efforts than even he had before been capable of. His words flowed forth with burning eloquence and magnetic force into the hearts and minds of his auditors. All the attainments which characterized him as a Jesuit seemed to be embodied in his efforts as an exhorter, as a reclamer of those whose feet had strayed into devious and uncertain pathways. He called upon them to return to the light which was ever held out to the wanderers, and while he spoke a message came to some of the fathers which almost froze them with horror. Chicago was burning.

During a pause in the services Father Damsen heard the rumor. It was that fire was sweeping over this city from one end to the other, and that in all probability nothing would be spared. In a moment he thought of the great church he had built on Twelfth street at the cost of so much labor and time. He saw in his mind's eye the work of years swept away in a few hours, and nothing but a mass of ruins remaining to show where the great church had stood. He thought of his parishioners, with their homes in flames, fleeing before the fire for their lives. His great heart was torn with emotion during the few minutes before he reascended the pulpit. But when he did he continued his discourse as eloquently as though he knew nothing of the conflagration raging a thousand miles away. He followed along the lines of his sermon for more than an hour while thinking of the probable desolation among his people in Chicago. And when his discourse was finished and the great congregation had filed out of the church he prayed.

Kneeling before the altar he invoked divine aid, and succor for the stricken city and especially for the flock over which he had charge. He called upon the Blessed Virgin to intercede with him for help. And there in the darkness of the old church, alone with his great heart sorrow, he vowed, as did the crusaders of old, that if his prayer were answered, if his church were saved from destruction and the homes of his people escaped the fiery scourge which had descended upon Chicago he would ever more keep burning seven lights before the statue of the Blessed Virgin as an outward sign of the outpouring of thanks from his heart.

History tells how the great fire ravaged all that part of the city lying just outside the borders of the Holy Family parish; how it started on De Koven street in the northeast corner of the parish and spread east and north and south, carrying everything before it. The mighty church, for which that night Father Damsen prayed, to-day points to heaven the same steeple which on that fateful night glowed luridly in the flames so near at hand. It was saved from the fire and the wreck.

When Father Damsen returned to Chicago, overjoyed that his prayer had been answered, his first duty was to arrange the seven lights before the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He set out candles and tended them carefully, while those of the parishioners who knew the story joined with him in offering up thanks that they had been spared from the desolation which was all around them and given an opportunity to aid their less fortunate brothers. Years went by, and other lines of work came to the lowly hands of Father Damsen, but the lights burned steadily in the old place before the statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Since that time the lights have burned day and night. When death came to the gentle teacher who toiled so hard for man his task of love was undertaken by the other priests of the order, and the lights promise to shine perpetually as a memorial of the good father and his vow. And they are burning softly in the gloom of the old church to-day.

Some Notable Conversions.

The "Catholic Standard and Times" of Philadelphia, publishes a notable list of conversions to the Catholic faith. Among those mentioned are General Wingate, of St. Louis, Mo.; Governor Woodson, of Et. Joseph, Mo.; Judge Parker, of the United States Circuit Court; and the Rev. Ernest Silvester, of Iowa, Ill., a former minister of the German Lutheran denomination. Mr. Silvester announced his intention of entering some Catholic order preparatory to joining the priesthood. The list also contains the name of former Representative Ballamy Secor, of Wisconsin.

One of the most important conversions is that of the Rev. Nelson Ayres, who was ordained to the priesthood last week in St. Louis, Mo., by Archbishop James Cardinal Gibbons. Father Ayres was born in St. Louis, N. Y., in 1841, the son of Thomas Nelson Ayres, a well known brother. He was ordained as a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1864, by the Right Rev. Alexander C. Griswold, Bishop of Texas. His last assignment was in Bay street, Miss., where he conducted the Coast Mission of the Episcopal Church. It was while he was at Bay street, St. Louis, that he left the Episcopal ministry, about two years ago. His wife, who was Mrs. M. De May Morrison, died in 1887. They had five children, three of whom survive.

In July, at the shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii, the Marchioness, Countess di San Giorgio and her son were received into the Catholic faith by the Bishop of Sarnia, a short time ago having previously been Lutheran. Patrick Russell, Anglican vicar of Stephen, has resigned his living and united with the Roman communion. The living of St. Stephen is the gift of Kable College.

Another case reported from Ireland is that of the Rev. Dr. Thomas M. A., who with his wife and six children has given up his Anglican faith and become a communicant in the Catholic Church.

From Budapest, information has been received that Herr Heinrich Levy, the only Habesburger member of the House of Magnates, has become a Jew, and has been baptized in the Catholic Church.

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