

THE MOLLY MAGUIRES.

ARCHBISHOP WOOD'S LETTER OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

The letter of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Philadelphia, formally excommunicating the "Molly Maguires," otherwise known as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, reads thus :

James Frederick, by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Philadelphia.

To the venerable Clergy and the beloved People of the Laity. Greeting. Peace and Benediction.

For every one who doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be re-proved.—St. John, iii., 20.

It is a fact too well known to need any proof at this day that the Catholic Church, through the reverend head, the sovereign Pontiff, has again and again condemned and censured all secret societies, properly so-called, as dangerous to civil society and injurious to the interests of religion, that she has warned her children to beware of permitting themselves to be induced by the prospect of any real or imaginary advantage to enter such societies; that she has, by the threat of excommunication to be incurred *ipso facto*, striven to prevent their associating themselves with them, and that by the infliction of the severest ecclesiastical censures on those who have allowed themselves to be associated, she has endeavored to withdraw them from these influences, which, enlightened by the Spirit of God and the sad admonitions of past experience, she knows to be fatal to sound faith, Christian piety, and good morals. As we know from most reliable sources, and, indeed, of our own personal knowledge, that most insidious efforts have been made and are being made in many parts of our diocese, and probably throughout the whole country, to blind and deceive the faithful and to entangle them in the meshes and shackles of those unlawful and forbidden societies, it becomes our duty to call to the minds of our people the action of the Church in this matter; to warn them from any alliance with them, and earnestly to exhort any who may have violated the prohibition of the Church to leave these evil associations, and by a speedy and sincere penance to seek reconciliation with the Church. To say nothing about the Masons, Odd Fellows, Sons of Temperance, &c., about whose condemnation no doubt can exist, these societies are known as the National Brotherhood, lately condemned by the Bishops of Ireland, the Fenian Brotherhood, whose efforts to aggregate numbers to their association in this country are unscrupulous and unceasing, and the Mollie Maguires, otherwise the Ancient Order of Hibernians, or the Buckshots and various others whose spirit is equally objectionable and whose names seem to be selected rather to conceal than to indicate the object of their association. We admonish all our reverend clergy affectionately to instruct and warn their flocks, calling to their minds the spirit of docility and obedience which should animate them, and the holy alacrity with which they should labor to conform themselves in all things to the commands and desires of the Church, and to avoid, with the most scrupulous care, all that she disapproves and condemns; to place before them, on the one hand, the reward, blessings which will follow such a course, and, on the other hand, the true character of the extreme ecclesiastical censure which a contrary mode of action will precipitate upon them. Thus, by the united and harmonious action of Pastors and people, we shall neutralize the bad influences which misguided, mistaken, and perverse men attempt to force upon us, and preserve our faith unshaken, our piety active and vigorous, and our morals pure.

So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.—St. Matthew, v., 16.

And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.—Philippians, iv., 7.

JAMES FREDERICK,
Archbishop of Philadelphia.

Father O'Connor, of Mahanoy Plains, Penn., in the neighborhood of the latest Molly Maguire outrages, read the foregoing to his congregation on Sunday, and in the course of his remarks upon it said: "Heretofore it has been a matter of deep anxiety to myself and other priests to save our people from the danger of being inveigled into secret societies by wicked and designing men, and a great portion of the trouble is caused by weak men and weaker priests. In a great many instances when excommunication has been brought to bear against any society, the members of that society escape (or imagine so) the danger by changing the name; as if changing the name of an organization would make any change in the men of whom it is composed. Let me tell you that in this case a change of name will not make the slightest difference whatever. Molly Maguires, Hibernians, Buckshots, or whatever else they may choose to call themselves, they are excommunicated. Societies which at one time might have been worthy in their way can become degenerated by the admission of wicked men, who, gaining control, use them to further their own base ends. Sometimes when I think of the conduct of Irishmen I feel ashamed to think that I am one. A very short time ago the New-York papers gave an account of a man named Delaney, who killed a Captain. The fellow composed a rigmorole of a song, which was nothing but a boast of the murder he had committed, and still he was an Irishman and a Catholic. Look at the New-York and the Philadelphia papers, and note the number of murders committed by Irishmen. Why in New-York alone I feel certain that murder is done almost every day by the Irish, and you will also find that priests are oftener dispensing the consolation of religion upon the scaffold than the ministers of any other form of religion. Bad men are a terror anywhere, but now they are particularly so in the coal region. Beware of the Mollie Maguires. If you have a brother among them pray for his repentance, but have nothing further to do with him, and remember that he is cut off from the Church. What a record Irishmen are making for themselves here! These men I tell you, are the scum of their kind; they are not American citizens, but Irishmen, and a disgrace to the name and to their country. If such a state of affairs continues, how do you expect to bring up your children that they may make good citizens? I tell you again, do not show sympathy for these men, for they are cut off from all connections with the Church. Let them fight their own battles, for you have a conscience, and they have none. They are scum and a disgrace to us as Irishmen and American citizens."

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