

ST. FRANCIS AND FATHER MATHEW.

MR. DENNY LANE'S speech at the laying of the corner-stone of the Father Mathew Memorial Church at Cork on Tuesday, May 6, has been noted and eulogised as the most eloquent delivered on such an occasion for many a day in Ireland. The Bishop of the diocese, Most Rev. Doctor O'Callaghan, and a large number of the clergy and laity of the city and county were present. Mr. Lane spoke in support of a resolution congratulating the Capuchin Fathers on the event of the day. He said:—The resolution which you have heard has joined together in a triple bond three subjects—the Order of St. Francis, his faithful disciple, Theobald Mathew, and the architectural work which the latter commenced, and which it will be our privilege to finish. I will ask you to unroll the chart of the centuries, and to go back with me for 700 years, to the year 1190—say not long after the Norman invader set foot upon our shores. I will also ask you to carry your thoughts across sea and land to that Old Town of Assisium. Well, this day 700 years ago you might in the streets—streets even then old and decorated with the ruins of Pagan temples—you might have seen a handsome boy on whose brow only eight summers had shown as he played in the public places; this boy was Giovanni Bernardini. His father was a wealthy merchant, who had travelled much in France and who had brought back to Italy the early French tongue then beginning, like the other romance languages, to evolve itself from the more classical Latin. The boy, as we say, rapidly picked up this language from his father, and as he was a pet with his townsmen he got the pet-name of Francesco, or Franceschino, meaning "the little Frenchman." His old name of John was forgotten, and now, for the first time, we hear that name of Francis, which was borne by so many saints, and which so many a duke, a king, and an emperor was proud to assume, (applause.) The handsome boy grew up into a handsome young man, and became skilful in all the knightly exercises of the time. Remember, we are in the era of the Crusades, when the most popular of the saints were like St. George and St. Maurice—knights first and saints afterwards. Then were men inspired with that spirit of chivalry, which has been described by the greatest genius our country, perhaps our country, ever produced—"that chastity of honour which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity." The knight roamed through the world to succor the weak, to set the captive free, ready with strong sword to cleave the monsters and giants when he could find them, and wearing in his helmet the colours of the fair lady to whom he had plighted his troth. The knight was essentially a mounted soldier—the Roman "eques," and the "chevalier" of later times implied a horseman. When we think of a knight of old we always picture to ourselves an armoured warrior in the saddle, and such was the young Francis. To such a "cavalier" his horse was his most valuable chattel—his almost essential possession, and yet we hear that this young Francis sold the very horse that bore him, his companion amid the clash of spears, and for what? Listen and think of it. He sold him that he might give the price to a poor priest who was struggling to repair his ruined chapel, just as the Friars Minor, his disciples, are to-day striving to do, complete this consecrated spot where we are assembled (applause). Seven centuries have passed away, and history repeats itself. When Francis became a saint he did not cease to be a knight. He still wandered in quest of adventure to right or wrong, to succour the distressed, to set his lance in rest against the monsters of cruelty and sin. He, too, selected his lady, and wore her colours in his cap. But the lady-love he had chosen was one whom he called "his lady poverty"; and in the pictorial history of St. Francis no subject is more frequently portrayed than that of St. Francis embracing poverty; no fair maiden robed in silk and decked with pearls and gold, but a woman, poor and old, ragged and emaciated, wearing no pearls except the tears that trembled in her eyelids, no ornament save that silver coronal that age had plaited on her brow (applause). What was the spiritual and moral work which St. Francis wrought it is for others to tell, but I may refer to one material work with which the spirit of St. Francis and St. Dominic was the inspiring element. We must remember that when Francis founded the Order of the Friars Minor the world was on the threshold of the thirteenth century. The classical architecture had passed away. Beautiful of its kind it was, but it was cold, severe, almost mathematical, and somewhat monotonous. The Greeks had not got beyond the straight lintel which they imposed on the architecture of their colonnades. The Romans invented the circular arch, and the Romanesque architects wonderfully developed this style, adding to it more light and shade, more variety, more of the complexity of nature. But it remained for this great thirteenth century, if not exactly to invent, to develop that wonderful product of human art, the architecture of the pointed arch, contemptuously called Gothic, although the Goths had passed out of the history of Europe centuries before it was invented. The name was untrue as the slight was undeserved. Perhaps the earliest example in Italy still stands at Assisium, constructed probably under the eye of Francis or his immediate successors. The historian of architecture has said that from the time of Pharaoh, not in the age of Phidias, not in Imperial Rome did architecture show such a marvellous development as in the glorious period of the thirteenth century. The age of faith, of Francis and of Dominic, has left its records in stone, never since excelled, perhaps never equalled. The era of the Crusades has left imperishable monuments of its faith throughout Western Europe, and the work in which we are now engaged is, by its style, a lineal descendant of the art of the thirteenth century. Dynasties and kingdoms have passed away. Life is short, but art is strong. I have sat in a French cathedral of the thirteenth century as the warm rays of the sunset still streamed through the western windows, and waited until the rosy tints had faded into gray; I have watched until the lighted tapers cast their feeble gleam through the gloom of the groined arches, and waited again until the silver moonlight filtered through traceried windows of the eastern apse, and I have thought could any other architecture have so elevated the thoughts above the earth, could the stubborn stone have been molded into plastic forms of greater

beauty than those which I saw in the mellowed light that faded from gloom to silver. Many of you, no doubt, saw that beautiful picture, by a French artist, which represents the dying St. Francis borne on a litter by his monks that he may once more lay his eyes on his beloved Assisium. He was then but forty-four years old.

Theobald Mathew, although previously engaged in many other good works, was 48 years old before he began his greatest task—a proof that one may never be too old to enter on a great enterprise. To that great crusade he brought the same knightly spirit as St. Francis. As a knighterrant he went forth to a world larger than St. Francis dreamt of in his day; neither Columbus nor Vasco de Gama had spread their sails across the deep. He went forth to help the oppressed, to liberate the captive of his own vices, to spread his shield over the defenceless, with his sword to smite a monster worse than mediæval romance ever dreamed of, to scatter the foul offspring if unrestrained self-indulgence. He, too, selected his lady love, and from the Choir of the Virtues he chose that lady—Temperance, to whom he had plighted his troth. As in the mystical marriage of St. Katherine, he placed the ring on her finger, binding them together until death did them part—"part" I was about to say, but I should have said unite until death bound them in a closer, a stricter, an indissoluble, an eternal union. (Applause.) I have endeavoured to weave together the three thoughts which the resolution has suggested to me—St. Francis, Theobald Mathew, and this building, consecrated first to God and then dedicated to the memory of two great men—one the Apostle of the thirteenth and the other the Apostle of the nineteenth century. That same lofty spirit which elevates the minds of men above things earthly, found its expression in an architecture which raised the vaulted arch and the traceried window and noble towers of the mediæval cathedral. That spirit which denied itself in order that it might give to God's house and God's poor—let us hope that it is not yet extinct amongst us. Indeed, when I think what my poor country has done even within my own time in erecting churches and schools and convents and refuges for the poor, I feel we are not without a little of that noble prodigality which inspired those bygone ages. I look into those ages, my mind swims back against the stream of time, and I see in the street of Assisi a poor priest who begs for aid to restore his ruined chapel; beside him a rich and selfish chafferer, who denies him, but straightway up rides a gallant knight whose purse is empty. He springs from his saddle, and sells his well tried steed to the man of ducats and pours the price into the lap of the poor mendicant priest. Which of these two will you imitate—the miser with his ducats or the cavalier without his steed? It is for you to decide. I think I may decide for you. I have been reminded that I stand beneath a window which was erected to commemorate Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator of his country, who struck off from the limbs of the Irish people the last fetters of the penal laws. At the opposite end of the church we are completing a memorial to another liberator who emancipated our people from a worse bondage, and bent as under the links of a chain that rusted into their very hearts. (Applause.) I do not doubt that Irishmen will do what Irishmen have done before, and that every day we shall see, like a tree stretching up towards the skies, this memorial growing heavenward dedicated to God under the invocation of St. Francis and in loving memory of Theobald Mathew. (Applause.)

THE WILD GEESSE, A LAMENT FOR THE IRISH JACOBITES.

(Written for the *Pilot*.)

I HAVE heard the curlew crying
By a lonely moor and mere;
And the sea-gull's shriek at the gloaming
Is a lonely sound in the air.
And I've heard the brown thrush mourning
For her children stolen away,
But its O'er for the homeless Wild Geese
Who cried ere the dawn of day!

For the curlew out on the moorland
Hath five fine eggs in the nest;
And the thrush will get her a new love
And sing her song with the best.
As the swallow flies to the summer
Will the gull return to the sea;
And the spring will follow the winter,
The rose will open to the bee.

But never again my Wild Geese
Will fly to the empty nest,
And its ill to be roaming, roaming
With the homesick heart in the breast,
Oh, long in the land of the stranger
They'll pine for the land far away!
But, day of Aughrim, my sorrow
'Twas you was the bitter day!

KATHARINE TYNAN.

"What does the money raised by the Irish National League accomplish?" This question is often asked, and we find the following clear and striking answer in the *Detroit Evening News*, a paper that has shown exceptional intelligence in treating the Irish question:—
"The funds which the Irish League has been receiving have paid forty Members of Parliament a living salary and thus kept at the service of the Irish cause men whose resources were insufficient to warrant their free dedication of the time necessary for Parliamentary work. The League has supported the evicted tenants, and made it possible for oppressed tenants to set themselves up on other estates. It was the League's money that built the town of New Tipperary and left Smith-Barry, proprietor of the old town, without a tenant on his estate."