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The Prole and the Prelate

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The Prole and the Prelate

The chapter opens with a discussion of the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 in which questions regarding the social order, class, equity, and like matters arise. The coincidental arrival in Indianapolis of Denis Kearney and the new bishop of the diocese, Francis Silas Chatard, on 17 August 1878, extends the discussion and the role that the Catholic Church and its laity would and should play. Kearney, an immigrant Irishman, at the time was notorious as an agitator for the working class, while the Chatard was a scion of a prominent Baltimore family. The contrast in their biographies and in the reception in the city each received in the next few days illustrates the alternatives at stake. What each thought the laity owed the hierarchy as well as their convictions about the social order were miles apart. Chatard's family and educational history is discussed, especially the influence that a papal representative to the United States in the 1850s, Gaetano Bedini, had on his thinking. The attention given to the Irish is justified on the ground that during the Gilded Age and later, their numbers led to the habit of conflating "Irish" with "Catholic," ordinarily to the benefit of neither. Their prominence in the trade union movement and in the secret societies working for Ireland's independence (to be taken up in the next chapter), and the problems they caused Chatard, are other reasons.

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The central question Catholicism faced in nineteenth century United States, itself the product of a democratic revolution, was how to demonstrate that the Church, while ceding nothing of its belief in its unique possession of truth, was not an intolerable element beholden to an alien potentate, but reliably patriotic and therefore valuable? Its answer was to show itself as a conservative presence, a force for social stability influential with the very class--the working class--otherwise tempted to political and economic radicalism. Europe's working class was being lost to religion; for the American Church to lose its immigrant parishioners would be to lose all real influence and condemn it to insignificance. At the same time, exerting a measure of control over the working class would be crucial to Church's acceptance in the United States. For that the laity must be patriotic, shun sedition, and obedient to the civil and religious authorities. As we'll see, these would be the watchwords of the hierarchy.

In the spring and summer of 1877, with the nation in the fourth year of an economic depression that began with the financial Panic of '73, the giant eastern railroads—the Baltimore and Ohio, the New York Central, the Pennsylvania, the Erie—twice conspired to cut wages by ten percent; many regional carriers, like the Indianapolis and St. Louis and the Vandalia railroads, followed suit. The result was the greatest explosion of labor unrest in the history of the United States. Forced to a miserable level of existence and incensed by the lordly arrogance of railroad officials, in mid-July railroad workers, first at Martinsburg, West Virginia, then Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and points west erupted in a spontaneous uprising that threatened to become an all-or-nothing struggle. Pittsburgh saw the most violence: when militiamen fired on a crowd killing forty, it so inflamed the situation that 39 buildings were torched and 104 locomotives and 1,245 freight cars destroyed. Reading and Philadelphia experienced similar violence, as did Chicago, Baltimore, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Before the Great Railroad Strike had run its course, 100,000 workers in fourteen states were out on strike, property losses mounted to over \$5 million, with a hundred dead and a thousand imprisoned. Federal troops were sent to major cities, states called out their national guard, and armed volunteer militias and “legions” mustered to restore the peace or prevent riot from breaking out anew. In all, half of the nation's 75,000 miles of freight lines were at a standstill.¹

Saturday, 21 July, the strike reached Indiana at Richmond and Ft. Wayne on Sunday. On Monday Indianapolis firemen and brakemen struck the Vandalia, followed by the men of the Indianapolis and St. Louis, the Jefferson, Madison, and Indianapolis, and the Panhandle railroads. Press and telegraph accounts of the disorder and death elsewhere added to the atmosphere of fear and dread. It was Indianapolis' great good fortune that its union workers were determined to quash any hint of violence, leading Mayor John Caven to deputize 200 railroad strikers to protect railroad property. Wearing white ribbons, “quiet, “polite,” “disciplined,” they had the situation at Union Depot in hand: Mail trains were not interfered with, but under the “iron rule” passenger and freight cars, guarded by conductors and porters,

¹ Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence*, (Indianapolis, 1959), 180, 300; Philip Taft and Philip Ross, “American Labor Violence,” in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, *A Report . . . on the Causes and Prevention of Violence . . .* (New York, 1969), 269.

were shunted to sidings.² The strike's effect on business was serious: the city's wholesale merchants were hard hit; at the Board of Trade no market in futures existed since no one could quote realistic prices; in the absence of hogs Kingan's meatpacking company shut down; with lumber in short supply at the Belt Railway under construction 25 carpenters were laid off; the stove works closed for lack of coal and iron; the city's water works and a number of mills—wood, flour, paper—also threatened to close. Breweries could not ship their product leaving 250 drays "with nothing to transport."³

Although Indianapolis railroad union men never deviated from their abstention from force and violence, the city's movers and shakers divided between those sympathetic to the workers' plight who supported the mayor's effort to meliorate the dispute, and other establishment figures, among them Federal Judge Walter Q. Gresham and future president Benjamin Harrison, who were for gathering a military force to break the embargo on the movement of freight and passenger trains and overawe any persons tempted to engage in riot. In support of the "Greshamites," on Tuesday evening, the second day of the strike, the Indianapolis News, believing that the "communistic elements may require curbing," favored firing on crowds, there being no such thing as "an innocent bystander."⁴ In fact, later that day the army signal corpsman on duty could telegraph Washington: "Strikers orderly, no indication of violence." Nonetheless, Judge Gresham's call next day for a committee of public safety to form a militia led by experienced military officers was successful, as more than a hundred men representing the professions, every branch of business, leading law and manufacture firms, and "scores of young men [of] well-known families" volunteered.⁵ By the end of the week, the city held five companies of federal troops (853 men), Lew Wallace's "Montgomery County Guards" (72), various companies under the command of Benjamin Harrison and other notables, and the "Indiana Legion," a militia of 750, all marching and counter-marching in the streets. With police, sheriff officers, and deputized strikers added to the number, the armed forces for law and order in Indianapolis reached an estimated 5,000.⁶ In a city of 67,000, perhaps one in four adult males were actively responsible for protecting property and available to put down riot.

In the days' ahead the Democratic Sentinel proved sympathetic to labor, the Republican Journal became more and more hostile to the strikers, while the independent News never equivocated in its desire to have force brought to bear to end the work stoppage. When the strike ended a week later, the Indiana Central Catholic, self-described as "sustained and read almost exclusively by Irish Catholics," in a rebuke of the railroad owners drew the lesson that the "aggregation of great wealth in the hands of individuals [is] inimical to republics." The solution was not an "intolerable" dictation by labor of the terms of employment, but through taxation to strike at the great fortunes. At the "point where wealth becomes excessive, taxation

² Journal, 24 July; Sentinel, 24, 25 July; News, 24 July 1877. On the 25th the unions agreed to release passenger trains. News, 26 July 1877.

³ Journal, 25-28 1877; Sentinel, 25 July; Gerald G. Eggert, Railroad Labor Disputes, the Beginnings of Federal Strike Policy (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967), 12, 14.

⁴ News, 24 July 1877.

⁵ Journal, 26 July 1877.

⁶ Jacob Piatt Dunn, History of Greater Indianapolis (Chicago, 1910), 403.

ought to become excessive for no country prospers by” individuals in possession “of enormous wealth.” The editor warned that that revolution would come to America if workingmen fared “no better than European labor.”⁷ In Indianapolis at least, during Great Railroad Strike the attachment to law and order held.

A year later, 17 August 1878, two men of very different backgrounds with very different messages for very much the same audience arrived at the Union Station in Indianapolis. Detraining from Cincinnati at 6:00 p.m. was Irish-born Denis Kearney, age 31--drayman, labor agitator, and president and moving force behind the Workingman’s Party of California (WPC). Having gone to sea as a cabin boy at age eleven, Kearney rose to chief mate of a clipper ship before settling in San Francisco in 1868 to pursue his opportunities on land. He married, in 1870, bought a draying business, in 1872, and by 1876 had become an American citizen and a middling prosperous businessman and property owner. Kearney was in the midst of a coast-to-coast speaking tour designed to spark a political workingmen’s movement on a national scale. His targets were crooked politicians beholden to powerful economic interests—banking and the railroads. The economic effects of the “Long Depression,” 1873-1879, were aggravated in San Francisco by the explosive growth of Chinese coolie immigrants who were much resented by white laborers (and many businessmen). In contrast to peaceable Indianapolis in 1877, at San Francisco a mass meeting held in sympathy with the striking railroad workers degenerated into a three-day, spontaneous, anti-Chinese riot and arson. In the melee four died, fourteen were wounded, and a half-million dollars in property was lost. Far from joining the rampage, Kearney was one of thousands who joined a merchants’ militia—the “pick-handle brigade”—of the Committee of Public Safety that ended the violence, protected property, and restored order.⁸

The July riots and the hard times changed Kearney. Whether it was his stock market losses (which were considerable),⁹ or the contempt with which he and other draymen were treated when they sought redress from the city’s customhouse monopoly (all too representative of the malfeasance that generally obtained in the city), Kearney put his drays in charge of a brother and went into politics. He would “organize the oppressed laboring classes” to obtain “through the ballot a redress of wrongs which has afflicted the downtrodden laborer” and drive the “thieves and corrupt rascals from power.”¹⁰ He was soon a fixture at the Sand Lot (a large open meeting area across from San Francisco’s new city hall) where he agitated against the Chinese and other grievances. Kearney’s career as a tribune of the people was launched.

⁷ Indiana Central Catholic, 14 September 1877; 11 August 1877.

⁸ Shumsky, Workingmen’s Party of California, 13 ff., 59.

⁹ This was the view of James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, 431.

¹⁰ Shumsky, Workingmen’s Party, 148.

Arriving at the depot at 6:40 p.m. from Terre Haute came the new bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, Francis Silas Chatard, age 44. Of French descent, he was born at Baltimore, the “premier see” of American Catholicism, to a prominent family of French descent.¹¹ Having lost its Santo Domingo slave plantation in the uprising and revolution of 1793, the family had fled to Delaware in 1794 before settling in Baltimore three years later. Grandfather Pierre, medically trained at Toulouse, Montpellier, and Paris, became a distinguished physician and a corresponding member of the French Academy of Medicine. Silas’ father, Ferdinand, after study in Baltimore, Paris, London, and Edinburgh, also became a doctor. Having owned slaves proved no barrier to the family’s acceptance in Maryland, Catholics there being twice as likely as Protestants to do so.¹² Though late arrivals to Baltimore, the Chatards had readily found a place among the Carrolls, Darnelles, Shivers, and Brents—the city’s Catholic elite, the elite of the city.¹³

Upon graduating from Emmetsburg’s St. Mary College, June 1853, Silas followed his father and grandfather into medicine. As was common then, he began his studies in the office of a physician-practitioner. He attended lectures at the College of Maryland, lived as a student at the city’s infirmary, and spent a year as a resident physician at the city’s almshouse hospital, receiving his degree in 1856.¹⁴ Following a religious retreat, feeling called to the priesthood, in 1857 Baltimore Archbishop Francis P. Kenrick found him a place at Rome’s Urban College of the Propaganda of the Faith. Ordained in 1862 at St. John Lateran, he was appointed vice-rector of the American College that year, the premier seminary for the American clergy, and then rector, 1868-1878.¹⁵ He was awarded the Doctorate in Divinity (D.D.) in 1863. Never physically robust, Chatard was sent to the United States to recoup and raise funds for the college, where news of his selection as the fifth bishop of Vincennes reached him. Consecrated in Rome, 12 May 1878, he returned to the U.S. and was welcomed to Cincinnati in August by Archbishop John Baptist Purcell and Fr. August Bessonies, the administrator of the Vincennes Diocese. The following days saw Chatard enthroned at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral at Vincennes, travel to St. Mary-of-the-Woods for the profession of vows by the novices of the Sisters of Providence, then to Indianapolis and residence at

¹¹ The marriage of Eliza Anna Marean and Ferdinand E. Chatard produced eight children (four sons and four daughters—one, Juliana, entered the Daughters of Charity, August 1857, at age 24; During the Civil War she served as a nurse for the Army of Northern Virginia, a choice possibly reflective of a family preference for the slave owning South.

¹² Charles Carroll of Carrolton, signer of the Declaration of Independence, owned over 300 slaves. Spalding, The Premier See, 57.

¹³ Thomas W. Spalding, The Premier See: History of Baltimore Archdiocese, 7, 57, 532 n. The Chatards were on the city’s society visiting list, the “Blue Book,” among the Shivers and other elite families.

¹⁴ Indiana Catholic and Record, 13 September 1918, 1. For his medical background, see Alerding, 213, and Blanchard, 106.

¹⁵ For a succinct biography of Chatard, see Bernard Strange, Meinrad Historical Essays, 134; York, Role of St. Meinrad; Indiana Catholic and Record, 13 September 1918, 1.

St. John's on Georgia Street.¹⁶ With the antagonists, Kearney and Chatard—the prole and the prelate—in place, it remained to be seen what they would make of each other—and what Indianapolis would make of them.

On the hustings, Kearney, in “rough working-dress” with shirtsleeves rolled and speaking up to two hours and more, employed what has been called the “rhetoric of revolution.”¹⁷ All the cull of vituperation of a thesaurus--harangue, rant, invective, abuse, truculence, denunciation, language bordering on--even crossing over into incendiary speech, he used.¹⁸ He had begun in San Francisco by attacking the Chinese, invariably beginning and ending his speeches with the cry “The Chinese must go!” Hostility to them had spread outside California, even to Indianapolis where few Chinese lived: In 1880, for instance, the Indianapolis Western Citizen, its readership largely Irish Catholic, fully agreed with Kearney that the presence of Chinese itself pauperized white men--“A class that can live on rice and rats ought certainly be ostracized from decent society.”¹⁹

Something of the flavor of Kearney's performance comes through from the Chicago Tribune reporter who found in him a “a model stump orator.” “His long-range adjectives poured forth thick and fast, cutting the air like balls from a 10-ton howitzer [condemning] those ‘free trade, free rum, free love, God-forsaken, black-mailing, hatchet-faced cranks and profit mongering dudes, who know as much about the labor question as a hen does about heaven.’ ”²⁰ Kearney's central contention was the necessity of breaking the power of the “boodlers” and “monopolists.” What was needed was a new political party that would “elect none but competent workingmen and their friends to any office whatever. The rich have ruled us until they have ruined us.” “The republic must be preserved and only workingmen will do it.” And there'd be no more chamber of commerce “pick handle” brigades, for while the Workingman's Party of California (WPC) would not encourage “riot or outrage,” neither would it “repress, or put down, or arrest, or prosecute the hungry and impatient.”²¹

¹⁶ Rev. H. Alerding, A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes (Carlton & Hollenbeck: Indianapolis, Indiana, 1883), ch. XVIII. Bishop de Saint Palais had received permission in 1873 to take up residence in Indianapolis, but did not exercise it. The see remained “Vincennes” until March 1898, when it became “Indianapolis.” When the Evansville diocese was carved from Indianapolis, in November 1944, Indianapolis was raised to an archdiocese.

¹⁷ Henry George, 443.

¹⁸ Shumsky, WPC, 186.

¹⁹ Western Citizen, 29 March 1880, 4. See also 19 April 1880, 4, and 22 April 1882, 4, for other of the Citizen's anti-Chinese outbursts.

²⁰ Cited in the New York Times, 9 July 1883.

²¹ Alexander Saxton, The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California (University of California Press: Los Angeles, 1971), 118.

Newspaper readers couldn't be blamed if they lacked confidence in Kearney's promise not to encourage "riot or outrage," for he seemed to call on his hearers to do just that. In September 1877, Kearney was said to have urged all workingmen to get a musket; so armed, 20,000 of them could do what they wanted, even suggesting that a little selective hanging of the rich might be good thing. A few days later he observed that bullets were not wanting and if the Chinese were not driven off, San Francisco would become "another Moscow."²² In October he carried his philippic to the Nob Hill residences of the city's magnates—the Stanfords, Crocker, and Hopkins. There he was said to have told workers to arm themselves with "a musket and a hundred rounds of ammunition," for the "dignity of labor must be sustained, even if we have to kill every wretch that opposes it." "Judge Lynch," he cried, "is the judge wanted by the workingmen of California."²³

Then and later Kearney complained that reporters misrepresented his remarks, and he expressly denied that at Nob Hill he had "use[d] any such language imputed to me."²⁴ Whatever he said, a few days after that speech came the first of his several arrests for "language having a tendency to cause a breach of the peace."²⁵ Undeterred by jail or criticism, in January 1878 Kearney led 500 jobless men to City Hall to demand that they be given "work, bread, or a place in the county jail." Fearful city authorities soon mustered three National Guard units and passed an ordinance suppressing public assemblies of any sort wherever held. Not to be outdone, the state legislature passed a draconian gag law making it a felony to incite riot, with two years in prison and a fine up to \$5,000.²⁶

That San Francisco's newspapers distorted what Kearney said was supported by people well positioned to assess Kearney's oratory: In California, Henry George--single taxer, reformer, and author of the influential Progress and Poverty found him "a man of strict temperance in all except speech," and even there, "In all Kearney's wild declamation there has been no direct incitement to violence." "He has talked of wading through blood, hanging official thieves, burning the Chinese quarter, . . . [H]is rhetoric was always conditional, he always included an 'if.'" "If" something were not done, "then" bad things would happen. His statements were no "more violent or incendiary" than his critics.²⁷ The English diplomat,

²² Shumsky, WPC, 20. It was at this meeting that the Workingmen's Party of California, WPC, was organized, with Kearney elected treasurer; two weeks later he was president.

²³ Saxton, Indispensable Enemy, 118.

²⁴ James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, sec. ed. rev., vol. II (New York, 1889), 385-408.

²⁵ He spent five days in jail, but on this and subsequent occasions the charges were either dropped or he was not convicted Shumsky, Workingmen's Party of California, 186, 187; Dictionary of American Biography, 268, 269. His brother and two other WPC men were also arrested; Kearney counseled that the officers not be resisted and the arrests took place without incident, more evidence that the newspapers exaggerated Kearney's danger to the peace.

²⁶ John R. Commons, History of Labor, 257, 258. Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1878, New series, Vol. III (D. Appleton & Company: New York, 1889), 73.

²⁷ Henry George, "The Kearney Agitation in California," The Popular Science Monthly (August 1880), 433-453, 438, 440, 441. See also Kevin Jenks, "Denis Kearney and the Chinese Exclusion Acts," Social Contract, vol. 6, no. 3 (spring 1996). Jenks blamed the "unsupported allegations of careless writers." The solution to the question of what Kearney actually said

James Bryce, in a chapter of his study of the United States, The American Commonwealth, concurred.”²⁸ A later student of the period judged Kearney’s speeches “inflammatory at least, incendiary at most,” but agreed that they never called for direct action; in nearly every speech Kearney insisted that workers use the ballot, not the bullet.²⁹ No matter; that was not what his opponents wanted to believe.

While Kearney knew little, if anything, about Chatard, the bishop very likely knew a great deal about him. In the year the Californian had agitated for Chinese exclusion and attacked political corruption, reports of his extreme rhetoric had made him notorious. The perception that he was a dangerous, lower class demagogue would be enough to earn condemnation from a man like Chatard, but there was more: Kearney’s relationship to the Catholic Church was adversarial. An autodidact, he read Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, and like many another ambitious immigrant sought an education by attending self-improving societies—in his case, San Francisco’s Lyceum for Self Culture.³⁰ Although a cradle Catholic (one of his five brothers was a member of the Christian Brothers teacher order), his frequent speeches at the lyceum were remembered for the “bitter vulgarity of his attacks upon all forms of religion, especially that in which he had been reared, the Catholic, . . .”³¹ This led to confusion as to his religion, if any; the Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph at first assumed him a “Protestant and an Orangeman,” only to receive “information that Kearney and his family are Catholics.”³²

What would stand out in most in Chatard’s mind was that Kearney and his Workingman’s Party of California (WPC), as the leading orator-agitator in San Francisco, had drawn the displeasure of its archbishop, the Catalan-born, Joseph Sadoc Alemany. The archbishop understood that the great influx of

probably lies in recognizing that the press might well feature the incendiary parts and neglect or downplay the qualifying conditional “ifs.”

²⁸ “Kearneyism in California.” Bryce, American Commonwealth, 385-408. Bryce admitted that Kearney “never assailed the institution of property,” and to say that the Workingmen’s Party of California (WPC) had a “communistic character” was “mistaken.” “Kearney had no sordid personal ends to serve, and gained for himself nothing more solid than notoriety.” Responding to Bryce’s characterization of him, chapter xc in the first edition, “Kearneyism in California,” he denied that he had sympathized with the Great railroad Strike of 1877; he was opposed to strikes because in a republic “the ballot of a millionaire’s gardener or coachman cancels that of his master.” 879.

²⁹ Shumsky, WPC, 173, 177. ff. As we’ll see, Kearney used the same formula at Indianapolis.

³⁰ Kevin Jenks, “Denis Kearney and the Chinese Exclusion Acts,” Social Contract, vol. 6, no. 3 (spring 1996).

³¹ Ironically, they were remembered also for the “venom with which he abused the [feckless among the] working classes.” Henry George, “The Kearney Agitation in California,” The Popular Science Monthly (August 1880), 433-453, 438. Fink’s Biographical Directory of Labor Leaders lists Kearney as “Roman Catholic.” Meagher, Columbia Study of the Irish, 272. Kearney helped organized the WPC in 1877 and was president and editor of its organ, the “Open Letter.”

Chinese lowered wages and injured local workingmen (the majority Catholic and Irish), but in a series of pastorals in 1877 and 1878 Alemany reminded the laity of the storied distinction between liberty and license and the requirement to obey authority. Warning “all classes of society . . . to discountenance and frown down all seditious designs, and evil plotters,” he denounced the WPC and required all Catholics “to stay away from such seditious, anti-social and anti-Christian meetings.”³³ Well aware that he was the “seditious declaimer” Alemany had in mind, Kearney replied that his organization, manned by the working poor, was only “incidentally [a party] whose membership was largely Catholic,” and asserted that he “did not acknowledge the right of the Archbishop to interfere with the political sentiments of any person much less if that person is true to his country and his fellow men. As a Catholic I have openly rebelled against his assumption”³⁴

Lectures on the limits of clerical influence from laymen like Kearney was not the sort of thing the hierarchy had been trained to accept, let alone one formed by Rome and as imbued with *Romanita* as Francis Silas Chatard.³⁵ Chatard would have known of Kearney’s clash with Alemany and objected to him both as an agitator threatening social peace and, if not an apostate, an insolent layman of the lower class. And yet, as much as they differed in background, status and message, both were sufficiently distant from mainstream Protestant Indianapolis to qualify as outsiders. Moreover, their constituencies overlapped: Kearney’s the working class, after five years of depression putative tinder to his match; Chatard’s the 120 priests and 90,000 Catholics of his diocese, among them the many working class Irish and German immigrants of Indianapolis.³⁶ Their coincidental arrival in the city could not have been staged better.

Kearney’s national speaking tour had opened in Boston in early August 1878. Thousands packed Faneuil Hall with thousands more turned away. He did not disappoint: The Boston Globe testified that his speeches had to “be seen and heard to be appreciated”³⁷ We can’t be sure if Kearney used the conditional form—“if something is not done, *then* bad things would happen”—but among the incendiary

³² Catholic Telegraph, 15 August 1878, 4, 5.

³³ John B. McGloin, S.J., California’s First Archbishop: The Life of Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., 1814-1888 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 294, 295.

³⁴ R. A. Burchell, The San Francisco Irish (University of California Press: Berkeley, Cal., 1980), 148, 152, 153. Note that Kearney was still calling himself a Catholic.

³⁵ In the Oxford English Dictionary “romanita” is “the spirit or influence of the central Roman authorities” of the Catholic Church. O’Connell in Critics on Trial, 212, describes it as the sense that upholding Rome’s sway is the most important and delicious profession. In its spiritual and cultural achievement, its grandeur, Rome is forever, while the sciences come and go.

³⁶ [Indianapolis] Western Citizen: The Only Irish American and Catholic Newspaper in Indiana, 17 August 1878, 1.

³⁷ Cited in Andrew Gyoty, Closing the Gate: Politics and the Chinese Exclusion Acts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 112, 115.

sentiments reported were his stock references to “Judge Lynch” and the need to shoot politicians who break promises—statements in keeping with what Kearney had been quoted as saying in San Francisco the previous twelve months. Making his way westward, at Cincinnati, the stop before Indianapolis, the Cincinnati Gazette had Kearney saying that the Workingman’s Party of California must win, “even if it had to wade knee deep in blood and perish in battle.”³⁸ In a surprise Kearney and Archbishop John Baptist Purcell met, but it had not gone well. In a letter to his diocesan newspaper, the Catholic Telegraph (edited by his brother, Fr. Edward Purcell), the archbishop (a fellow Corkman, born at Mallow, Kearney at Oakmont), called the Californian “a foul-mouthed blackguard.”³⁹ At greater length, the Telegraph denominated Kearney a “gutter orator,” scored him for his “incoherent, socialistic ravings,” and reprinted the rich litany of insult that had appeared in the Boston Pilot, that city’s archdiocesan newspaper: “Kearney the Communist,” “foul and fetid blatherskite,” “blaspheming ruffian,” even the charge that Kearney made “personal uncleanness a point of pride.” In its own voice, the Telegraph named Kearney “the modern Thersites” (the low born, physically ugly Achaian of the Illiad, a braggart and shrill sedition monger abusive of his betters. For getting above himself, Odysseus gave poor Thersites a beating). An inspired reference (however wide of the mark), it caught perfectly the contempt in which Kearney’s adversaries held him.⁴⁰

In Indianapolis, the confrontation between the labor spokesman and the bishop proved wholly one-sided: Kearney alighted from his train on Saturday to a Union Station mobbed with people waiting to greet Chatard. His reception committee of socialists and local organizers missed him in the crush and so, accompanied by a reporter from the Indianapolis Sun, a Greenback paper, Kearney wandered over to a local hotel for his dinner, in marked contrast to other stops on his tour where he was met with “a cordial, often tumultuous reception.”⁴¹ Two hours later he appeared on schedule to speak from atop a dry goods box at the corner of Kentucky and Washington streets before a goodly crowd composed, according to the

³⁸ Cited in Andrew Gyoty, Closing the Gate: Politics and the Chinese Exclusion Act (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 112, 115.

³⁹ Catholic Telegraph, 8 August, 4; 15 August, 4, 5; 22 August, 6; 29 August 1878, 3, 4. The Indiana Columbian Catholic contributed “blasphemous communist,” 7 September 1878, 5. Or the Central Catholic??

⁴⁰ Catholic Telegraph, 15 August 1878, 5; The Iliad, Book two; Indianapolis News, August 17, 1878.

⁴¹ News, 19 August; Journal, 19 August 1878. Ernest S. Griffith, A History of American City Government, 1870-1900 (New York, 1974), 17. That Chinese immigration was restricted in 1882, owed a good deal to Kearney. Kevin Jenks, “Denis Kearney and the Chinese Exclusion Acts,” The Social Contract, vol. 6, No. 3 (spring 1996).

Sun, "of all classes from the bloated bondholders down to the one dollar per day, bread and water workingmen."⁴²

The new-minted Bishop of Vincennes's reception was quite different: joined *en train* by Vicar-general Bessonies,⁴³ Chatard was welcomed by Governor James D. Williams, Mayor John Caven, and a crowd of a thousand. A procession of the faithful, led by the presidents of the various Catholic societies, the clergy, and the Knights of Fr. Mathew (the Irish temperance society) saw the bishop to his residence at St. John's.⁴⁴ Speaking from the church steps, Chatard wasted no time in setting out his theme: Promising always to endeavor to cooperate with the "civil authorities," he averred that "the Catholic Church always teaches respect so as to make our people better citizens. . . ." [Since] all authority comes from Almighty God, . . . no one among our people that is not a good citizen can be a good Catholic." The Church teaches its followers "to despise all those persons who in these days engage in socialistic and communistic movements." Many persons with "pet theories" for social betterment "are really the enemies" of society and the Church "warns its followers to beware [of them] and enjoins them to stand by the constituted authorities."⁴⁵ That message--the Catholic Church as a bulwark of the existing social order--was identical to Alemany's and would be voiced by the hierarchy again and again in the decades to come.⁴⁶

Next day at the pontifical Mass at St. John's crowded with standees, Catholicism put its patriotism on display: The Stars and Stripes hanging at both sides of the sanctuary, with the papal tiara and escutcheon and still more flags decorating the walls, asserted what many Protestants denied, that Catholics, without repudiating Rome, were loyal Americans. Chatard took Romans, 10, v. 15 for his text, "And how shall they preach, unless they be sent?" Citing his credentials to teach through the pope's

⁴² Indianapolis Sun, August 24, 1878. The weekly Sun put Kearney's audience that Saturday night at a thousand, while the News, 19 August 1878, more hostile and the only major daily to mention the speech, estimated the crowd at only several hundred.

⁴³ Of interest is that when Chatard's predecessor, Maurice de St. Palais died, Purcell told the Indianapolis clergy that if they could unite on one candidate, that man might be made bishop. Although Fr. Bessonies was their unanimous choice, Chatard was named instead; rumor had it that Purcell favored a Fr. Albrinck of Cincinnati. Western Citizen, 17 August 1878, 1. Typical of Fr. Bessonies, there seems to have been no unhappiness on his part.

⁴⁴ Rose Angela Horan, S.P., The Story of Old St. John's (Indianapolis, 1971), 143. Support for temperance was another way the hierarchy made known its conservative credentials. When the Total Abstinence Catholic Union met in the city a bare eleven days after his arrival, Chatard celebrated the opening Mass and gave the sermon. Western Citizen, 31 August 1878, 1.

⁴⁵ Indiana Central Catholic, 24 August 1878. For remarks of the governor, mayor, and other dignitaries see Charles Blanchard, History of the Catholic Church in Indiana, Vol. 1 (Logansport, Indiana, 1898), 94-99.

⁴⁶ A backhanded example was Cardinal James Gibbons' appeal in 1918 to Charles A. Schwab, a Catholic and head of United States Steel Corporation, asking that the company donate land and fund a church on it: wrote Gibbons, "I do not have to urge that a Catholic church, especially in places made up of workingmen, is a tremendous power for conservatism, virtue and industry." Spalding, The Premier See, 287.

commission, "Let us bend every effort to preserve our faith, obey cheerfully our directors and rulers, who come in the name of Christ, because we know that all authority comes from on high."⁴⁷ As for social stability, in regard to the dangers inherent in trade unions (organized at the time as secret societies to protect their members from retaliation from employers), he admonished the faithful to satisfy their spiritual advisers in all they did, never "to do anything without their approval and cooperation."⁴⁸ As for radical agitators, "When you see a commotion going on, and people seek to put wrong ideas before you, don't listen to them; don't go to hear them talk." "Let them waste their words on air, and the air will blow them away before any harm is done."⁴⁹

The rest of the Chatard's day was more of the same. The afternoon parade in his honor at 4:00 p.m., a real show of strength, mustered an estimated 4,000 and stretched nearly a mile. The five parishes in the city together counted over fifty organized societies of all sorts--benevolent, rosary, music, altar, sodality, choir, temperance, schools, with the Ancient Order of Hibernians itself mounting six divisions.⁵⁰ Fr. Denis O'Donoghue, addressing Chatard and the people from a carriage at the bishop's residence at St. John's, reverted to the theme of Church-as-defender-of-civil order, asserting that European "statesmen and philosophers" were "beginning to recognize the great truth that the Catholic church is the strongest conservative element that human governments can find to rely upon." Equally, in the United States, "infidelity is overleaping the barriers that held it in check . . . and those who would escape the ravages are looking to the church as the only power to stay its progress."⁵¹ Chatard responded in kind.

Press coverage of the bishop's investiture was detailed and respectful. The sermon was "very impressive," reported the Journal. "For genuine merit and purity of style it has never been equaled . . . from that pulpit," ventured the Sentinel, and the "solemnity and grandeur" of the Mass the editor found deeply impressive. The bishop was "a gentlemen of exceeding fine presence and address," commented the News, the parade of Catholic societies "one of the finest ever witnessed in the city." That Chatard was an American as his father and grandfather before him, and that he was said to be "the best educated man

⁴⁷ Blanchard, Catholic Church in Indiana, vol 1, 98.

⁴⁸ Sentinel, 19 August 1878.

⁴⁹ Journal, August 18, 1878; Western Citizen, 24 August 1878, 1; Catholic Church in Indiana, 98, 99.

⁵⁰ Western Citizen, 15 February 1879, 6.

⁵¹ Blanchard, Catholic Church in Indiana, 98. 99. Horan, Old St. John's, 144. Only ordained in 1874, O'Donoghue's rise was exceptional: chancellor, 1878, vicar-general, 1899, auxiliary bishop of Indianapolis 1900, bishop of Louisville, 1910. For the crowd estimate, possibly exaggerated, see Western Citizen, 24 August 1878, 1.

in the Catholic Church in America . . . his coming presages good not only to his church but to the whole people."⁵²

Compared to Chatard's reception by press and public, Kearney's Sunday was far from a triumph. The organizers for his visit had planned their own parade through the city to Moores' Wood for a picnic and speechmaking on the grounds. But the Mass at St. John's in the morning competed with the workingmen's parade at 10:00 a.m., and the preparations for the Catholic parade at 4:00 p.m. subtracted from Kearney's speech at 2:00 p.m. The consequences for the Californian were dreary. Reflecting the hopes of the sponsors, the published order of the workingmen's march had listed as participants the bricklayer's union, the coopers, machinists and blacksmiths, "all" railroad workers, lumber workers, draymen, leather workers, printers, painters, cigar makers, bookbinders, Socialist Labor Party sections (both English- and German-speaking), as well as "unorganized labor." Numerous banners had been readied, among them "Production belongs to the Producer--the tools to the toilers"; "no masters--no slaves, no rich--no poor," and "liberty, equality, fraternity," the slogan of the French Revolution.⁵³ In the event, less than eighty people and not a single workingmen's union stepped off behind the "Red Flag" and the Capital City Band ("colored"). There were barely enough to carry the banners.⁵⁴ At the picnic grove about four hundred gathered, at least half "substantial" citizens driven by "curiosity"⁵⁵ to hear Kearney, Peter H. Clark, principal of Cincinnati's colored schools and nominee of the Workingmen's Party in 1877 for Ohio's superintendent of schools, and Socialist Labor Party leaders, Albert R. Parsons and Philip Van Patten of Chicago.

Kearney began his address by reading the fifth chapter of the epistle of James in which "wicked rich men [are] warned of God's judgment":

Go to now, ye rich men: weep and howl in your miseries, which shall come upon you. 2. Your riches are corrupted: and your garments are moth-eaten. 3. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. 4. Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5. You have feasted upon earth:

⁵²Journal; Sentinel; News, 19 August 1878. The Indianapolis Saturday Herald, 24 August 1878, did question the propriety of the civil authorities meeting the bishop at the depot on separation of church and state grounds.

⁵³ News, 17 August 1878.

⁵⁴ Journal, August 19, 1878.

⁵⁵ Journal, 19 August 1878.

and in riotousness you have nourished our hearts, in the day of slaughter. 6. You have condemned and put to death the Just One, and he resisted you not.⁵⁶

Jesus Christ, said Kearney, had been a tramp and a communist, had taught communism, and was therefore on the side of communists and tramps. The Savior, after all, had seen the necessity of driving the moneychangers from the temple. Condemning the major parties, he enjoined laboring men to "pool the issues" to achieve political success. Although the Indianapolis Sun reported him to have dealt "liberally in epithets and wholesale denunciations," to its credit it drew attention to Kearney's emphasis on the difference that the opportunity for workingmen to vote meant in the United States and his repudiation of the red flag--the "starry banner is all the flag the laborers in this country need."⁵⁷ The Sun also credited him with being "without doubt, earnest in his efforts for labor reform." Yet patriotic sentiments aside, the radical talk, the presence of the red flag, and the availability of beer led to numerous fights and scuffles.⁵⁸

A hostile press took every advantage of the debacle, if debacle it was. One report contrasted the neglect Kearney received with the warmth with which Chatard was met as demonstrating "that the blatant Communist from California can expect neither comfort nor countenance from the great body of the Catholic Church." Met on Sunday with "conspicuous contempt," his parade "number[ing] but sixty-eight by actual count," Kearney "could not help but feel the chill; he complained of fatigue, and his speech to a small crowd in the grove was brief and spiritless." "He is a failure as a sensationalist in this longitude, and ought to lose no time in returning to the open arms of the 'Frisco hoodlums."⁵⁹ The Democratic Sentinel thought the crowd's lack of deportment "disgraceful to the highest degree," nor did the editor detect any evidence of enthusiasm for speeches filled with the "usual amount of billingsgate" and "bold threats and nonsensical utterances." Quoting Mayor Caven who, after talking with Kearney, pronounced him "shallow." "[R]esidents," scoffed the Sentinel, didn't seem to be "interested in the Chinaman." It congratulated the Irish for their good sense in absenting themselves from the labor parade.⁶⁰ The News was blunter and more personal: Kearney, the "chuckleheaded communist of California," wearing a hat with a "greasy

⁵⁶ As an Irishman from Cork, Kearney may have used the Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible, used here, but whatever Bible he used, in this instance the Catholic and the King James versions are so close as to have made no difference to his hearers or to us. Kearney was in good company--much good it did him. A dozen years later Leo XIII also quoted from James, 4 in his noted encyclical on the condition of labor, *Rerum Novarum*. It's a popular passage with trade unionists and their sympathizers; for instance, Albert Parsons, one of the falsely accused men in the Haymarket Affair, 1886, used James, 5, 1-3, to conclude his autobiography.

⁵⁷ Indianapolis Sun, 24 August 1878.

⁵⁸ Sentinel, News, Journal, 19 August 1878; Indianapolis Sun, 24 August 1878.

⁵⁹ Unattributed contemporary newspaper item labeled "Bishop Chatard D.D., Kearney and the Bishop," [folder 4; item 4] [1878?] "CAV I ¾," University of Notre Dame Archives.

⁶⁰ Sentinel, 19 August 1878.

hatband," speaking with a "slight Milesian accent,"⁶¹ a "laboring man" without "callouses," was "laughed at" by the crowd. Albert R. Parsons, active in the railroad strike in Chicago the previous year (and one of the four men unjustly executed subsequent to the 1886 Haymarket affair) was the "shrieker from Chicago." As far as the News was concerned, Kearney was "not a force He has no ideas, no suggestions, no purpose."⁶²

In contrast to the antipathy to Kearney displayed in the secular press, the Indiana Central Catholic was mild. Its editorial, "Capital and Labor," did brand the man who sought to "antagonize the different elements of society" a "dangerous dishonest character" and an "enemy to the workingman." There could be no repeal of the laws of supply and demand and after all, "here the poorest man may become a capitalist." But Kearney was not mentioned by name and the editor went on to muse, "if only capital" would intervene to "get labor favorable legislation."⁶³ Surprisingly, the Indianapolis Western Citizen, "A Journal Published in the Interests of the Irish Race," did not mention Kearney nor the meeting in its 24 August issue, limiting itself to observing a week later that "Some of the Irish papers praise Denis Kearney, others condemn him. Great men will differ."⁶⁴

Whatever his merits as an orator, Denis Kearney, foreign-born, without formal education, sought to speak to the working class, to form its ideas, and to lead it. So did Chatard. Unlike the bishop, Kearney was of the working class and sought to "evangelize" none but that class. His analysis of existing social wrongs--given as radical an expression as he could muster--was not so distant from that of other reformers of the era. Yet as a layman and an associate of men deemed radicals and socialists--the most detested set of white men in the city--he was well nigh universally reviled in his stay in Indianapolis of less than three days. Whether "ghastly" or "sickly," to the "eight or ten local communists" who escorted Kearney to the train on Monday the meeting was denoted a failure. To that result the investiture of the bishop of Vincennes contributed greatly. Sensing--sharing--the widespread fear of social unrest, Chatard played to it. His reception in Indianapolis was tribute to an awareness on the part of mainline American society that the hierarchical Church, no friend to radicalism in the Old World, just might be a force for stability in the New.

⁶¹ "Milesian" after Milesius, legendary ancestor of the Irish people; as to Kearney's accent, a Californian source called it a "pronounced brogue." Jerome Hart, In Our Second Century: From an Editor's Notebook (San Francisco: The Pioneer Press, 1931), 64-75.

⁶² News, 19, 22 August 1878.

⁶³ Indiana Central Catholic, 24 August 1878, 4.

⁶⁴ Western Citizen, 31 August 1878, 8. The Citizen ("The only Irish-American and Catholic newspaper in Indiana") did carry a brief account of Kearney—his family, marriage, children. 3 August 1878, 7.

Kearney's political prominence proved short-lived; by summer 1880 he was back in the draying business, explaining, "I was poor, with a helpless family, and I went to work to provide for their comfort."⁶⁵ He not only provided, he prospered: Before the decade was out he was described in the publication, California's Men and Events, 1889, as a "prosperous speculator in wheat, sugar, and oil." He had built up his cartage business, owned an employment agency, and was invested in real estate. Ironically, he came to be on friendly terms with some of the "thieving millionaires" he had once condemned: Leland Stanford's wife counted him "an ardent, most devoted and loyal friend" of her husband; he knew Charles Crocker's son, and would drop into the Crocker Bank "to see his good friend Will."⁶⁶ When he died at Alameda, California, 24 April 1907, his three daughters—having been provided with education and "comfort," were abroad—one was in Paris, another Japan, and the third, a concert singer, was touring Europe. Denis Kearney, ambitious and energetic, was the very exemplar of "the American dream." In wanting to save the Republic, in his own way he was a conservative. Not a proletarian at all.

Given his family's social status and the Church's unhappy experience with the secular revolutions, that Bishop Chatard or any member of the hierarchy should be found among the chorus upholding civil order and social stability is no surprise. Providing particularity and nuance to such a stance was a Vatican-sponsored report on the condition of the American Church of the mid-1850s. Amazed at the growth of the Church in the United States and largely ignorant of conditions there, Rome dispatched Msgr. Gaetano Bedini to investigate and judge the wisdom of establishing a nunciature--a resident papal delegate for the United States.⁶⁷ From July 1853 to early February 1854, Bedini visited over 20 cities in the United States and Canada--every major city in the northeast, the west as far as Detroit, and south to Cincinnati and Louisville. His impressions were a mixed bag: He found the Protestants he met "courteous, respectable, middle class," more to his liking than the Catholics, and noted that rich non-Catholics frequently supported Catholic institutions financially.⁶⁸ Bedini himself was well received in Protestant households and by public officials, dining with President Franklin Pierce and an honored guest of the U. S. Senate. Yet he also charged many non-Catholics with having a "diabolical hatred" of the Church so that bishops routinely advised their priests to wear secular clothes to "avoid insults."⁶⁹ He thought German Catholicism endangered by the many "infidels" among them, a hostile German language press, and was himself

⁶⁵ Bryce, American Commonwealth, sec. ed., rev., 385-408.

⁶⁶ John R. Commons, History of Labor, 264; New York Times, 26 April 1907, 9.

⁶⁷ In general, the American bishops, feeling that Bedini was sent to investigate them, were reserved; liking their independence, a good many even ignored him. Bedini judged the establishment of a nunciature a necessity (it would protect Catholic interests and keep the bishops united to the Holy See), but inopportune; Rome waited until 1893 to do so.

⁶⁸ Connolly, 199.

⁶⁹ Connolly, 92.

harassed by German liberal '48ers and Italian nationalists who stalked him during his tour, which came as a shock.⁷⁰ On the other hand, Catholic bishops and clergy were usually respected and some laymen were rich "and of respectable rank"; for example, Baltimore counted "a considerable number of these. But this is an exception."⁷¹ Moreover, the public schools functioned as Protestant schools, and government jobs, political office, the diplomatic corps, and the legal profession were monopolized by Protestants. All in all, the United States "Catholicism is the religion of the poor."⁷² And when it came to poverty, the Irish were exhibit "A."

Bedini both praised and dispraised the Irish at length: There were the "dirty and often malodorous Catholic [Irish] underclass who perform the most menial work, live in abject poverty, and retain for the longest time the meanest and sometimes repellent appearance." Consequently, Protestants equated Catholicism with the Irish "who are all destined to be servants" holding the "most laborious and miserable jobs," "living poorly amid conditions," at times, of a "revolting aspect." And it had to be admitted, "the Irish in particular have the habit of drunkenness and laziness."⁷³ And yet, and yet--with "rare exceptions," they were "almost entirely Catholic" and when under the influence of a priest "as faithful to him as a martyr"⁷⁴ While not so well educated as others, the Irish cleric was unsurpassed in love for their people and submission to their bishop and to Rome. How much did U. S. Catholicism owe the Irish? "Everything! Everything! Without their piety, their zeal, without their learning, the most precious qualities which now shine especially in the more distinguished Bishops of the United States, the Catholic religion would not find . . . [such] growth and well-being"⁷⁵

What influence Bedini's report had on the young Chatard is conjectural, but it attracted great interest and remained the most extensive commentary on American Catholicism for more than a generation. It was widely discussed and would have been a must read for any American seminarian in Rome, such as Chatard. The two may even have met when Bedini visited Baltimore's St. Mary's College in July 1853; and

⁷⁰ Connolly, 199.

⁷¹ Connolly, 282.

⁷² Massimo Franco, Parallel Empires: The Vatican and the United States, Two Centuries of Alliance and Conflict, trans. Roland Flamini (Doubleday: New York, 2007), 8.

Bedini was the moving spirit for the founding of the North American College and Chatard, as its vice-rector and rector, 1863-1878, would have known him. For any American, Bedini's Report, the most extensive evaluation of Catholicism in the United States for more than a generation, would be a must read. And if Chatard, recently graduated from St. Mary's did not meet Bedini during the latter's visit to the college, his father may have been in the group of prominent Baltimore Catholics who did meet him in Washington. Certainly, Chatard's harshest criticisms of the American Church echo Bedini's, albeit lacking the latter's positive comments. Connolly, 199.

⁷³ Connolly, 208.

⁷⁴ Connolly, 207, 209, 240.

⁷⁵ Connolly, 250, 251.

if Chatard, newly graduated from St. Mary's, did not meet him then, his father was likely among the prominent Baltimore Catholics who saw Bedini there or in Washington. Moreover, in 1859 Bedini was the moving spirit in founding the American College in Rome; Chatard (then a student at Urban College), as an American, would have taken a close interest in the new institution's fortunes, and when Chatard was tapped as vice-rector in 1862, he and Bedini would have worked closely in the two years before the latter's death, September 1864.⁷⁶

At any rate, in 1876, Chatard could have been channeling Bedini's more caustic criticisms of America in a letter to Michael Corrigan (bishop of Newark and soon archbishop of New York). Praising the American Church as it existed in 1800 for what he imagined to have been, "the simplicity that distinguished [its] golden age" Now, at the centennial of the Declaration of Independence, "our clergy is too numerous, too heterogeneous, . . . too much indoctrinated in the ideas of today to be guided" by that earlier simplicity.⁷⁷ As for the laity, like Bedini (albeit lacking his positive comments), Chatard blamed the Irish for the transformation of the American Church from "a small, respected, genteel Catholicism within American society" to a crowd featuring "illiterate Irishmen in their shanties and saloons."⁷⁸

Chatard's idealization of the Church of the early republic wasn't entirely imaginary: Before 1800 and for some time after, Roman Catholicism in the U.S. was a small sect of about 35,000 people centered in Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Catholics in the pews, like the bishops themselves, were apt to be socially elite and converts usually cultivated people, often High Episcopalians. By the 1840s, 35,000 communicants had grown to 663,000, mostly Irish and German, and from one diocese to twenty-two. Seen as an inferior race, violent and savage, this great influx of the disputatious Irish frightened the "average Protestant American of the 1850s . . . trained from birth to hate Catholicism" anyway. Many did not even regard Catholics as Christians.⁷⁹ Ironically, it was precisely that the Irish was almost universally Catholic that offered Bedini grounds for optimism for the Church's eventual acceptance in America. Of the Irish who fetched up on American shores during and after Ireland's Great Famine, 1845-1850, most were desperately poor. The typical Irish laborer--unskilled, unmarried, and under 35—was perfectly fitted for the dangerous, transient work on the railroads and canals. Having little or nothing of the world's goods, they were inclined to "faction fights" between "Fardowners" (Connaughtmen from that province in the west of Ireland) and "Corkonians" of the south). Neither a matter of "recreational fighting" nor sectarian religious differences, wherever canals were dug or railroad tracks laid the factions functioned as protective job associations. The game was to drive the other from the job site and monopolize the available work. Headquartered in saloons, each faction organized branches at construction sites, recruited new

⁷⁶ Pursuing the Vatican's strategy of papal centralization of the Church, Pius IX bought the building on Via dell'Umilta (Humility Street), formerly a Visitation convent. Opened on 7 December 1859, it served as a residence for seminarians from United States designated by their bishops, for priests pursuing advanced studies in Rome, and as an Institute for continuing theological education.

⁷⁷ Curran, Corrigan, 19.

⁷⁸ Curran, Corrigan. 19.

immigrants, collected dues, employed secret handshakes and passwords—all practices inherited from secret societies in Ireland.⁸⁰ As for violence, an Indiana canal commissioner wrote Governor James Noble of their “deadly hatred toward each other” and the “merciless beatings” of their set-to’s.⁸¹ The hottest points of contention were along the Central Canal and the Madison and Indiana Railroad project near Vernon. In March 1837, a faction battle at the latter place left one dead and several wounded.

While Bedini and Chatard differed in some matters, most striking was their shared conviction that in America Catholicism was the necessary bulwark of social stability, a heaven-sent corrective to Protestantism’s fissiparous nature: A Protestant pastor (Bedini: “who seemed somewhat learned and tolerant”), frankly told Bedini that the lack of authority of his own church and other sects in dogmatic matters was the “reason for so many separations and wanderings” in Protestantism; “if one wants . . . authority in these matters,” the minister admitted, “he must look to the Catholic Church.” A “distinguished Senator” similarly “confessed” alarm that in “political matters” an “excessive liberty” would bring a day “when the Government itself . . . no longer know[ing] how to bridle and direct it, . . . will have to recognize that the only safe means rests in the Catholic Religion, which alone has the basis of true authority, indispensable for every Government; and what is more important, it alone can sustain and defend genuine liberty in every country.”⁸²

The indispensability of Catholicism for the achievement of social order was Chatard’s bedrock belief. As he observed in the American Catholic Quarterly Review, in 1894 (a year after a financial panic and ensuing depression), a concordat between church and state would not be necessary in the United States “where the church enjoys the fullest liberty It is far more likely that the state, in the possible troubles which may result from the unrestricted importation of the refuse of Europe, and extension of the right of suffragemay have to call on the church to keep her simple people from the delusions of socialisms abroad in the land, . . .”⁸³

In keeping with his prejudices, on his first day in the city Chatard intimated that he regarded Indianapolis as something of a hardship post. Drawing attention to his long residence in Rome--“a city . . . of the deepest interest to all classes of people throughout the civilized world offer[ing] the most abundant facilities to the scholar and theologian,” yet “notwithstanding all this I have cheerfully left my home in that city, where I have lived so many years, to come here and labor for the good of those who are

⁷⁹ Dolan, The Irish American, 60. See also Calvin Fletcher’s Diary; Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), 345.

⁸⁰ Jay M. Parry, “The Irish Wars: Laborer Feuds on Indiana Canals and Railroads in the 1830s (Indiana Magazine of History), vol. 109, no. 3, September 2013) 224-256.

⁸¹ Jay P. Dolan, The Irish Americans: A History (New York, 2008), 44. Parry, 227, **243, 247**; see also Gayle Thornbrough, ed., The Diary of Calvin Fletcher, Vol. 1: 1817-1838 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1972) 267.

⁸² James F. Connally, The Visit of Archbishop Gaetano Bedini to the USA, June 1853-February 1854 (Rome, 1960). 198. Connally suspects the statesman was Edward Everitt.

⁸³ Occasional Essays, 1894, 231.

committed to my care⁸⁴ Next morning before Mass, the dean of the clergy, Fr. August Bessonies, in an otherwise fulsome welcome⁸⁵ took exception to Chatard's implicit disparagement of the city and its citizens: Allowing that the local clergy, if not as "polished and so well used to etiquette as those among whom you have been living in the Eternal City," yet they were "disinterested" and "a credit to you and the church." As for the laity, if poor in goods, they were "rich in faith [and] obedient to their prelates and the priesthood, . . ."⁸⁶ Chatard responded that satisfied as he was that the laity "have been devout and zealous in the past it is no guarantee that they will continue so in the future unless they depend upon God and prayer." As for the clergy, he already knew "them to be full of zeal . . ."⁸⁷

If the social status of the laity had deteriorated over the course of the nineteenth century (given endemic complaints about the clergy, they were often no bargain either), the bishops of Gilded Age America remained in great part "well-educated men," "sophisticated, well traveled, multi-lingual, a substantial socio-economic cut above the generation of prelates who followed them who were much more likely to be the sons of workingmen."⁸⁸ What was said of Cincinnati's Archbishop John Baptist Purcell, that he was "Accustomed to the best society of the Old and New World,"⁸⁹ was true of Chatard. As a close neighbor and frequent visitor to the home of Benjamin Harrison on Delaware Street,⁹⁰ Chatard fit the pattern. According to the Indianapolis Western Citizen even his physiognomy bespoke aristocracy, "tall, erect with a large head well poised on broad shoulders, . . . a powerful frame, . . . clear, cheerful grayish brow[n] eyes looking out from behind a pair of spectacles, a high, full forehead, a small mouth, with a look of keen intelligence over his features, and the bearing of an educated gentlemen and you have Bishop Chatard."⁹¹ Another contemporary credited his "polish and refinement" to long residence in Rome and "his

⁸⁴ Western Citizen, 24 August 1878, 1. Although Blanchard, vol. I, 95, 96, quotes Chatard *in extenso*, he does so in a way that conceals Chatard's sense of hardship.

⁸⁵ He called Chatard "a very elegant and courtly gentlemen, a man of consummate administrative abilities," Blanchard?? [cite???] p 33, f.n. 132.

⁸⁶ Western Citizen, 24 August 1878, 1. Bessonies also included the description of Chatard that appeared in the newspaper Western Watchman. "a very elegant and courtly gentleman, a man of consummate administrative abilities, and a strict but considerate disciplinarian." Rev. H. Alerding, A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes (Carlton & Hollenbeck: Indianapolis, 1883), 218, 219. Alerding and Blanchard selectively quoted the remarks of Chatard and Bessonies; they included the flattery, but not the critical parts.

⁸⁷ Blanchard, History of Catholicity in Indiana, Vol. I, 97; Alerding, Diocese of Vincennes, 218, 219. At the door of the church before the Mass, 18 August, Bessonies formally relinquished his administrator's office.

⁸⁸ Morris, American Catholics, 15, notes that all of the post WW II cardinals were sons of workingmen, Morris, 116. ???

⁸⁹ Sr. Mary Agnes McCann, M.A., Archbishop Purcell and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America: Washington, D.C.1918), 99.

⁹⁰ Interview with Fr. Henry Seivers, S.J., biographer of Harrison, IC&R, 30 October 1952, 13.

⁹¹ Western Citizen, 24 August 1878, 1. A sketch of Chatard in the Western Citizen, 17 August 1878, 1, is consistent with a description given a week later, which may well have been based on the drawing. A similar photograph can be found in Blanchard, History of the Catholic Church, facing p. 93. See also the

fine traits" ("chivalrous nature and a true gentlemen"), "to his French lineage."⁹² His journals were filled with entries in French, Italian, and Latin, as well as the occasional Greek and even Hebrew; he spoke German, Italian, and French (despite his descent, he confessed his command of spoken French shaky). At Rome Chatard mingled "with the greatest men of his day"⁹³ and his travel diaries filled with high ecclesial political gossip. Together they detail a rich social calendar of visits and meals with the great and good of the Catholic families of Europe: Lord Playfair, the Duke of Norfolk, Lady Herbert, the Comtesse de Montalembert, Viconte de Meaux, Prince and Princess Altieri, as well as Borgheses, de Medicis, and Piombinos. The bishops' *ad limina* visits to Rome (Chatard went twice in the 1880s, thrice in the 1890s, and at least once more in 1909), always took on something of the aspect of a grand tour--London, Dublin, Paris, Cologne, Venice, Florence, Lausanne, as well as St.Moritz-Bad for the waters, mountains for the climb, and museums and churches for the paintings, sculptures, and architecture.⁹⁴

Chatard's decades in Rome as seminarian and rector did more than mark him with "polish and refinement." There "was his intense, ardent devotion and loyalty to the Holy See."⁹⁵ Wholly in character, was his rush to publish what must have been one of the earliest articles on "The First Oecumenical Council of the Vatican," September 1870. Similarly, as the forces of the Kingdom of Italy menaced Rome, Chatard's feelings led him to propose arming his seminarians to defend the pope at the Vatican. (Pius IX declined the offer, advising that they pray for him and carry on with their studies as best they could in such trying times.) As a champion of the pope's temporal power, Chatard's articles on that subject stretched

etching of Chatard in the front of Alerding's History of the Vincennes Diocese; and Robert Emmett Curran, S.J., Michael Augustine Corrigan and the Shaping of Conservative Catholicism in America, 1878-1902 (Arno Press: New York, 1978), 35.

⁹² Humbert P. Pagani, 200 Years of Catholicism in Indiana (a self-published pamphlet printed by the Indianapolis Times, 1934), 27. Pagani was the business manager of the diocesan paper from ca. 1910s to the 1930s.

⁹³ Blanchard, History of Catholicity, 107.

⁹⁴ Chatard papers, Box A-10 passim; Journals, 1857-1888. Steamships and railroads made possible regular *ad limina* trips to Rome, as they had made possible for the first time the large gatherings of bishops and priests from around the world--China, India, Africa, and the Americas, in 1862 and 1867. They fulfilled a need consistent with the worldwide presence of the Church. Chadwick, Popes, 1830-1914, 181 ff.

⁹⁵ Indiana Catholic and Record, 13 September 1918, 2, 4; In Meinrad Historical Essays, 163, Fr. Bernard Strange observed, "Perhaps the most conspicuous characteristic which marked [Chatard's]episcopacy was his loyalty to the Holy See." My colleague Professor James Divita saw a letter from a cardinal (Antonelli?) in the American College museum in 1962, the centenary of Chatard's rectorship. Chatard's reward was a large gold medal from the pope in 1870.

over decades.⁹⁶ In 1895, the 25th anniversary of the new Kingdom of Italy, in a letter read at all the Masses, Chatard was still calling for special prayers and collecting signatures to be sent to the Pope protesting the loss of the papal territories.⁹⁷ Wanting no daylight between himself and the Holy See, in prefaces to his collected lectures and essays he rendered all he had written to “the supreme and infallible authority of the Head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ on earth ready to correct any error into which I may have fallen.” Invoking the Virgin Mary’s intercession so that readers may more “ardently love the faith,” without which “it is impossible to please God’,” he submitted to the “judgment and correction, if need be, of Holy Mother Church.”⁹⁸ In Rome as one of the delegates preparing for the 1884 Baltimore Council, in a letter to Cincinnati Archbishop Joseph Elder, Chatard effusively praised the pope and the curia and later confessed delight that the Baltimore Council’s first decree was a “ringing affirmation” of papal infallibility.⁹⁹

As rector of the American College meant that Chatard was known equally to the American bishops and to Vatican officials, and not least to Pius IX with whom he would meet on college business, assist at Mass, and converse privately. As the American bishops’ agent, he was their go-between to the Vatican, for example, turning their communications to the Holy See into Latin.¹⁰⁰ When the United States withdrew its legate from Rome, in 1867, Chatard was put in charge of arranging audiences for visiting American dignitaries. In this way, on separate occasions he introduced Union generals Sherman, Sheridan, and Grant to Pius IX. He knew well both Fr. Isaac Hecker, founder of the Paulists, and Don Bosco, founder of the Salesian Order, received Catholic and non-Catholic royal visitors to Rome, and was in common intercourse with the Propagation de Fide (under whose authority the American College stood). Made a papal chamberlain in 1875, Chatard’s sermons drew large Roman audiences and he was “unusually popular amongst the English and American colony” and with the “blacks”--the pro-Papal, ultramontane party.¹⁰¹ He was said to have been the confidant of three Popes--Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X.

Back in America, the issues that Chatard will confront as bishop were secret societies (especially Irish ones), trade unions (in which the Irish played a prominent role), and the split among the hierarchy between “Americanists,” who reveled in the civil and religious freedoms of the Constitution and the

⁹⁶ The Catholic World. These six and eighteen others were gathered in his 1894 volume Occasional Essays; earlier he had gathered another volume of his essays into Christian Truths: Lectures, 1881.

⁹⁷ Catholic Record, 12 September 1895, 4. In 1884 Leo XIII ordered that prayers be said for the return of the papal states. Only in 1964 were the “Leonine prayers” abolished as liturgically inappropriate. It was left to John Paul I, in his very brief reign, to eliminate the triple crown, the final trappings of temporal power as bishop of Rome, head of the Church, and ruler of the papal states. Criterion, 13 October 1978, 4.

⁹⁸ Christian Truths Lectures: The Catholic Publication Society (New York, 1881); Occasional Essays, 1894.

⁹⁹ Curran, Corrigan, 110.

¹⁰⁰ Fogarty, Vatican and the American Hierarchy, 5.

¹⁰¹ McNamara, American College, 210, 211.

“Ultramontanes,” those who “looked across the mountain” to Rome and to the papacy. It is to these that we next turn.