

PROFILE

THE

Parish, Memphis. Thereafter he remained in Tennessee, where he was honored by his grateful contemporaries as "father of the orphans" and selfless caregiver among victims of the yellow fever epidemics.

Joseph Augustine Kelly, O.P.

The first of four volumes of Kelly's diary is devoted almost entirely to his trip home to Ireland; the second records part of his term as college president; the third, his years as head of St. Joseph Province. The fourth volume briefly covers many of his remaining years. The diaries, meant for his own remembering, are frank but discreet. Through them a human picture of the man emerges. Although most entries are brief

Kelly loved to travel; while in office he took full advantage of the opportunities to be on the move. When Giuseppe Larocca, O.P., Master General, visited the country in 1881, Kelly was amazed that he could complete a convent visitation in less than two days. For Kelly such a visit took at least two weeks, and often more. He was not content simply to meet with the brethren and examine the account books. In Washington his visitation included seeing the historic sites, museums and public buildings with side trips into Maryland and Virginia to meet old friends and the relatives of his fellow friars. Visitation at Sinsinawa involved stops at many river towns and trips as far as St. Paul. His participation in a general chapter in Rome in 1862 led to a tour of several countries of western Europe. These are recorded in great detail in the related Diary.

Clearly Joseph Kelly preferred the active life. Although he was a college president and seminary professor, he was less a scholar than an administrator. Although he read widely he confessed to the weakness for newspapers shared by his fellow Americans. "I find that giving so much attention to papers is rather a loss of time, and yet I have so strong a passion for devouring them that I cannot overcome it" (February 28). The Irish preacher Thomas Burke was convinced that American friars read nothing else.

What appears most characteristic about Joseph Kelly was a devotion to duty that led him to do what had to be done, although he was repeatedly given difficult assignments.

PAGES FROM THE DIARY OF
JOSEPH

Feb. 1

Last evening rode over with J. Crosson to his mother's and there passed a pleasant night. The old lady presented me with a pair of socks, the wool of which she spun and knitted herself, though eighty years of age. Rode to James Fink's, dined and enjoyed a few hours of social chat. Then returned home through a storm which now covers the ground.

Feb. 10

We received a newspaper edited and owned by P. Noon, Ebensburg Pa. A former student. V[?] Bennet, also an old student is now a member of the Iowa legislature. Thus St. Joseph's is beginning to be glorified in her children.

Feb. 11

Went from Somerset to Zanesville in a buggy with F. Edelen. Though cold we had rather a pleasant drive. Went to the depot with F Bokel in a carriage to meet Dr. Brownson and conduct him to the hotel. In the evening he lectured in Nerritt's hall to a large audience, for one hour, and three quarters. He is not an orator, but speaks like a philosopher, with calm and solid reasoning. His subject was: "Popular objections to the church." These objections he said were not at the present day scriptural, but social and worldly. Catholicity was objected to because hostile to civilization, because it restrains reason, investigation &c. He showed that reason is allowed full play; enquiry is allowed outside the church. . . . All were pleased with the lecture, and could have listened for longer time. It made an impression on the Protestants present.

Feb. 12

In Zanesville. Passed most of the morning with Dr. Brownson. He is quite large. Weighs probably 200 pounds, has a fine appearance; small piercing eyes, grey hair, grey whiskers and an imperial. He looks indeed as

Feb. 16

Listened with much pleasure to our boys practicing negro melodies; they do them in splendid style and will I am sure create a sensation by their performance. They have a banjo, bones, triangle, violin, &c. The songs are interspersed with conundrums, wit, &c

Feb. 28

Raining this morning, snowing all the evening. Preached today to a rather small Congregation; -- William came over this morning and gave me an apple saying it was for my sermon. There being seven [Friars] that preach, that duty devolves on each one but once in seven weeks.

March 1

Having written to Mrs. Beeson last week to send money to take her son home, as I designed to expell him, she reached here this evening. She came from St. Louis to intercede for him, and to beg that he may be forgiven. She pleads like a lawyer, and entreats as only a mother can for an erring son. Have been reading for the last three months from time to time Victor Cousin's history of Modern Philosophy. It is a very able and learned work, the language beautiful and eloquent, but it is in places so abstruse and profound, that I cannot fathom it He prefers modern to scholastic philosophy. Scholastic philosophy was fettered and tied down to religion; the modern is free and independent in all things.

March 2

I have yielded to the entreaties of Mrs. Beeson and consented to keep her son; tomorrow she starts home rejoicing.

April 1

All fools day. Enjoyed some hearty laughs at the pranks of the boys; some of them were rapping at my door before I got up, being sent on a wild goose chase, by their more wide-awake companions. . . .

April 2

There is much talk among ourselves right now about a college in Memphis; it is affirmed to be just the place, fine location, wealthy people, great facilities. The college could be built on some year's credit and would pay for itself at the appointed time. Must be built soon, or others will embrace the opening before us. . . . If St. Joseph's were out of debt, I should be in favor of closing the college, and the building could be used for our own brothers, establishing here one novitiate for the province.

April 4

The greatest and most general revival ever got up in this country is now being carried on. Preachers are daily holding forth in almost every town and hamlet from N. York to N. Orleans. Many so called conversions are reported, but no cases of restitution are recorded.

April 5

Some people are predicting the end of the world, on account of the religious revivals going on, the greatest it is said in the last hundred years, but their imagination runs away with their judgement. In N. York and other cities merchants close their stores for days to attend meetings, but the thing is rather overdone, many are making fools of themselves & sensible one's [sic] are disgusted.

April 6

This evening F. Lilly, Dunn, & Rochford and myself have just finished a two-hour game Resumed classes and studies today; boys nearly all back. . . Read two articles in Brownson's Review, for this quarter. One of Bishop Spaulding [Spalding] on mormonism and the poor, in which he reviews Mayhew's book on the poor of england. Shows that in London alone there are 30,000 who live in cellars in a state of sin and starvation. Proves english poor to be far more debased than the poor of france, spain, germany, &c.

April 7

Mr. Robinson of Cincinnati was here today; a fine portly looking man. Had a call from M. Scott and J. Crosson. . . . Finished reading Brownson's Review. It contains a Proco;008n 001 Tc -0.us

Georgetown College can advance in the English branches only in proportion as he advances in the classics; all are obliged to study Latin and Greek: boys juggled must

certain lameness of limbs, but those who