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## THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN BISHOP REGIS CANEVIN OF PITTSBURGH AND DR. LAWRENCE FLICK OF PHILADELPHIA

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**R**EGIS CANEVIN (1853-1927) and Lawrence Flick (1856-1938) were two of the most prominent leaders of the Roman Catholic community of Pennsylvania during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The former became bishop of Pittsburgh, while the latter, as a physician with a specialty in diseases of the lungs, helped to revolutionize the medical profession's ideas about tuberculosis and its treatment. Friends since youth, the two men maintained their early association as adults and carried on a correspondence that endured for more than forty years.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The Canevin-Flick correspondence which forms the basis for this article consists of ninety-six letters and telegrams, plus seasonal greeting cards of no historical importance. All items are part of the Flick Collection in the Department of Manuscripts and Archives of The Catholic University of America, except for two letters that are in the Flick Papers at the Library of the Philadelphia College of Physicians (LPCP). The letters are arranged in strict chronological order so that no identification number other than the date is required. There are forty-six items from Flick to Canevin and fifty from Canevin to Flick. Flick's manuscript diary contains references to additional letters which are no longer extant. The letters from Canevin, in the series of letters received, are all hand-written and signed. The letters from Flick to Canevin are extant in carbon or letterpress copies in typed form, unsigned, in a separate series of outgoing correspondence. The earliest letter from Canevin is dated Sept. 28, 1885. Flick's earliest to Canevin is Dec. 13, 1904, since it was only in that year that he began to keep copies of outgoing correspondence. All of Flick's letters are dated from Philadelphia, and all of Canevin's from

John Francis Regis Canevin was the youngest of the eight children of Thomas Canevin and Roseanna Larkin Canevin.<sup>2</sup> Both parents were Irish immigrants, having left Castle Dawson near Moneymore in County Derry in 1839. Except for two years spent in Ohio, the Canevin family lived in Pittsburgh until 1852. In that year they exchanged the industrial metropolis for the rural environment of Westmoreland County. There they became tenants on the farm owned by the Sisters of Mercy who conducted St. Xavier's Academy at Beatty, later known as Latrobe. The last of the Canevin offspring, John Francis Regis, was born at this farm on June 5, 1853. Little is known of his childhood which was spent in the shadow of the local religious and educational institutions. He acquired his elementary education at Boyd's schoolhouse near his home, but there is no information about the nature of his further studies until he entered St. Vincent College on February 21, 1872. He was then eighteen years old.

Lawrence Francis Flick sprang from a family with roots in Alsace and Bavaria.<sup>3</sup> His father, John Flick, migrated while a child with his parents in 1830 from Alstadt, an ancient town near Strasbourg. That region, Alsace, at the time formed part of the French state but its population was ethnically German. The Flicks settled first at Bald Eagle Furnace, near Tyrone, Pennsylvania, in present-day Blair County. After only a short stay there they purchased land near Loretto and established a permanent home. In 1840, John Flick married Elizabeth Sharbaugh (originally spelled Schabacher). She had left her native Bavaria at the age of eight, also in 1830, and accompanied her parents to a spot that ten years later became part of

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Pittsburgh, except for a few instances that are noted in the citations in the text; no place of origin will be indicated in the citations, therefore, other than for the exceptional cases. The author is happy to express his gratitude to Dr. Anthony Zito, archivist, Catholic University of America, for his assistance in using the collection and for permission to quote from it.

<sup>2</sup> Almost nothing has been written about Bishop Canevin other than articles in the contemporary press, especially *The Pittsburgh Catholic*, the Mar. 24, and Apr. 7, 1927, issues of which are useful. Personal information is almost totally lacking in Thomas F. Coakley's chapter, "Archbishop Canevin," in *Catholic Pittsburgh's One Hundred Years* (Chicago, 1943), 68-72. Brother Philip Hurley, O.S.B., assistant archivist at St. Vincent Archabbey and College Archives, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and the Reverend Edward T. McSweeney, archivist of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, have supplied data. The author gratefully acknowledges their kindness in replying to his inquiries.

<sup>3</sup> Flick's daughter, Ella M. E. Flick, wrote two biographies of her father, *Dr. Lawrence F. Flick 1856-1938* (n.p., 1940), and *Beloved Crusader, Lawrence F. Flick, Physician* (Philadelphia, 1944). See also Cecilia R. Flick, *Dr. Lawrence F. Flick As I Knew Him* (Philadelphia, 1956). Flick's anti-tuberculosis work is described in *The Strittmatter Award 1933 to Dr. Lawrence F. Flick, March 22, 1933* (Philadelphia, n.d.), and Esther Gaskins Price, *Pennsylvania Pioneers Against Tuberculosis* (New York, 1952).

the township of Carrolltown, Pennsylvania. Both the Flicks and the Sharbaughs had been attracted to Cambria County by its Catholic atmosphere and the fame of the missionary priest Demetrius Gallitzin.

For two years after their marriage, John and Elizabeth Flick resided in Loretto. Then they moved to the Sharbaugh home in Carrolltown to live with and care for Elizabeth's widowed father. Eventually they bought most of the Sharbaugh property themselves. Lawrence Francis, the ninth of twelve children in the family, was born on August 10, 1856. From childhood he was physically frail and intellectually precocious. He received his earliest education in subscription schools and then in the county and church schools of the area. Among his schoolmates was Isadore Strittmatter, who, like Flick, became a noted physician in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, having just turned thirteen, young Lawrence matriculated at St. Vincent College on September 3, 1869.

Undoubtedly the German character of St. Vincent College figured among its attractions for the Flick family. The college began its twenty-third year the fall when Lawrence enrolled. It functioned as an adjunct to the monastery established by Bavarian Benedictine monks at the place originally called Sportsman's Hall, a few miles north of Youngstown, Westmoreland County. The redoubtable Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., presided over the complex.<sup>4</sup> Its educational program resembled that of a German gymnasium, with a theological seminary for those students who felt called to the clerical life. It trained priests for its own order as well as for the Pittsburgh diocese. Two contemporary pupils, Francis X. Reuss and the Reverend Henry Ganss, wrote fond memoirs of student days at the college during the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>5</sup>

Lawrence Flick had attended St. Vincent College for two-and-a-half years before the arrival of Regis Canevin. Even though three years in age separated the two boys, they nevertheless became good friends. The small number of the student body and the constant daily intimacy of the boarding school made such close friendships routine rather than exceptional. But by the spring of 1874 a crisis developed in Flick's life. With only a few months remaining before the completion of his work for his degree, he became sick. From one of his own relatives, apparently, he had contracted tuberculosis, and it steadily

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<sup>4</sup> See Jerome Oetgen, *An American Abbot, Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., 1809-1887* (Latrobe, Pa., 1976).

<sup>5</sup> Francis X. Reuss, "Leaves from a Diary of '67-'69," *St. Vincent College Journal* 18-20 (1908-1911): *passim*; the unpublished Ganss manuscript is in the archives of the college.

sapped his energies. Doggedly he refused to leave school despite the concern of the authorities. Finally the headmaster enlisted Canevin's help, and together, through a ruse, they persuaded Flick to return home for a desperately needed rest. Years later Flick expressed his gratitude in simple words in one of his letters to Canevin: "You saved my life."<sup>6</sup> He never did earn his undergraduate degree.

For the next decade the two friends went their separate ways. Canevin completed his college course and then remained at St. Vincent as a theology student. On June 4, 1879, he was ordained a priest to serve the needs of the Catholic populace of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. For two years he was a curate in the parish of St. Mary's in Pittsburgh. In 1881, obviously as an indication of the high regard he had for Canevin, Bishop John Tuigg appointed the young priest to the staff of St. Paul's Cathedral in the same city. He remained there until 1886.

Lawrence Flick, meanwhile, endured considerable uncertainty about his future, but the illness that hampered him failed to curb his inquisitive spirit. Contemporary medical science had little to offer to tuberculosis patients. The relaxed home environment and good physical surroundings in Carrolltown, however, at least held the disease in abeyance. After desultory employment as a teacher and newspaper writer, Flick decided on medical studies. A young local physician, Michael A. Wesner, a recent graduate of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, encouraged him and helped him to secure admission there in September 1877. Two years later, Flick graduated as a doctor of medicine. Then he served the equivalent of an internship at Blockley, the Philadelphia charity hospital. Still bothered by poor health, he had to devote several years to curing himself. A tour of the far west, in 1881-1882, and an experimental diet apparently saved him. In the spring of 1883, he returned permanently to Philadelphia, this time to begin his long and fruitful medical career.

On September 28, 1885, Canevin from Pittsburgh wrote to Flick at the latter's home in Philadelphia. The occasion was Flick's marriage on May 26 of that year to Ella J. Stone of Philadelphia. Canevin learned the news four months later and immediately extended his felicitations. This is the earliest in the collection of their letters that has survived. The collection offers invaluable insights into the character and personality of the two men and documents many of their activities.

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<sup>6</sup> Flick to Canevin, May 12, 1912.

It is the human rather than the professional dimension of their lives that is illuminated in these letters. In them we see their masculine affection for each other, the breadth of their interests, their humility, tolerance, charity, intellectual concerns, ideals, and Christian faith. The disparity of their vocations imposed no barrier to communication because of their common educational background and their shared philosophy of life. Their frequent personal contacts freed their correspondence from elaborate explanation and trivia. As dear old friends they knew enough of each other's achievements so that these could be taken for granted; tacit esteem prevailed between them rather than loquacious flattery. When Dr. Flick received the University of Notre Dame's prestigious Laetare Medal award in 1920, Canevin's laconic telegram — "Congratulations. Laetare Medal worthily conferred" — matter-of-factly conveyed his sentiments, which he did not need to embellish later.<sup>7</sup> A certain reserve always marked their approach to each other. For example, in their correspondence only once did either of them use the other's Christian name. Canevin occasionally addressed his letters to "My dear Friend," but his usual form was "Dear Doctor." Flick, always sensitive to ecclesiastical dignity, wrote to his lifelong friend as "Dear Bishop," "Rt. Rev. and Dear Bishop," or "Most Rev. and Dear Archbishop."<sup>8</sup>

Pomposity, the natural concomitant of prelatic rank, found, however, no place in Canevin's bearing toward his comrade, nor did the churchman ever feel compelled to deliver a homily under the guise of a personal communication. Canevin's simplicity and humility, well exemplified in this letter written immediately after his episcopal consecration, never deserted him:

March 2, 1903

My dear Friend—

I am sorry you and Mrs. Flick could not be present at the consecration. It would have been a great pleasure to have had you among a few of my old St. Vincent friends who were there. Accept my thanks for your kind letter and the gift which accompanied it. Some day I hope to be able to visit you and let you and Mrs. Flick see that I am still the same Father Canevin, even though the Church

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7 Telegram, Canevin to Flick, Mar. 13, 1920.

8 None of Flick's letters to Canevin is extant prior to Canevin's becoming a bishop, so it is not possible to determine the form of address used before that time; one might hazard the guess that it was "Dear Father Canevin."

has given me another title. Wishing you and all who are dear to you God's blessing, I am, as ever,

Yours sincerely,  
Regis Canevin

Flick's letters, while not without warmth, tend to be concise, direct, and to the point. He was clearly a no-nonsense person with many pre-occupations that denied him the luxury of verbosity or sentimentalism.

The restraint which the two showed toward each other extended charitably into their comments about third parties. Such collections of private letters often transcend in historical importance the merits of the correspondents by virtue of the light they shed upon other individuals or events. Unfortunately, this is not really the case with the Flick-Canevin correspondence. Some extraneous information is given, of course, as are some character evaluations, but not as frequently as the historian would wish. The chief value of this collection lies in its exposition of the principals themselves.

Canevin's letter of 1885 brought his friend up to date on his own career since their last meeting three years earlier. The chief news that he had to report was the failure of his attempt to enter the Society of Jesus. In great confidence he had discussed this with his friend at their last meeting, but Rome had denied permission for his proposed transfer from the diocesan clergy into the Jesuit order. Here there is an interesting parallel between Canevin's career and that of Michael O'Connor, Pittsburgh's first Catholic bishop, who had also applied in vain for the same dispensation.<sup>9</sup> There is no indication of what attracted Canevin to the Jesuits; he obviously had felt that his talents and natural inclinations conformed more to the Jesuit life style than to that of a parish priest. Perhaps he had harbored thoughts of a teaching career in one of the network of Jesuit colleges — a very apt calling for a man of his temperament.<sup>10</sup>

Denied the opportunity to change his status, however, Canevin displayed no disappointment or rancor. His next letter, dated February 1, 1886, shows him quite reconciled and content with his work: "My life is full of consolation and joy," he wrote, "I will not venture to speak of the joys of a priest's life. Sorrows indeed there are, for he is chosen to be the representative of the Man of Sorrows.

<sup>9</sup> See Henry A. Szarnicki, *Michael O'Connor, First Catholic Bishop of Pittsburgh, 1843-1860* (Pittsburgh, 1975), 17-35.

<sup>10</sup> Coakley's laconic characterization of Canevin in *Catholic Pittsburgh's One Hundred Years*, 71, "He was a man of whom the City of Pittsburgh saw little," attests to a rather retiring, ascetic personality. The Flick-Canevin correspondence on the whole confirms this assessment.

But a peace and joy is also his. The deep peace of God, and a joy which nothing but his own infidelity to his Master can take from him." The spiritual intensity of the zealous young priest glows luminously in these early letters which open a window onto his soul.

Other experiences were soon given to him in new assignments. From 1886 to 1891, he was chaplain of St. Paul's Orphan Asylum, which involved him in a plethora of financial problems, and for part of this time he served also as chaplain to the Western Penitentiary and the State Reform School. For two years, 1891 to 1893, he held the post of chancellor of the diocese, which made him the right hand of Bishop Richard Phelan. The burden of work showed in his correspondence, which became more terse and less spiritual. From the asylum he wrote on January 13, 1891: "Do not think it was want of interest kept me from answering your letter sooner. It was work. I have been very busy. . . ." From the episcopal residence on Grant Street in Pittsburgh, where he resided after becoming chancellor, he wrote on September 18 of the same year: "Since I parted with you I have been busy day and night. Too busy for body, or soul's, welfare. It is not well for a man to be too occupied with the things of this world."

Perhaps because of his work with criminals and delinquents Canevin became involved in the temperance movement which was rapidly developing in the eastern states at the time of his letter dated September 8, 1887: "I am also somewhat of a prohibitionist — as a means to an end — the salvation of coming generations, and the lifting up of those whom the lawlessness of the liquor traffic has degraded. Intemperance seems to have paralyzed the mental and moral faculties of Catholics more than other peoples, and I am prepared to join hands with any body of men who are laboring to rid us of this dread disease which is destroying life and happiness on every side." For several decades he actively participated in this work, attended conventions, and lent his prestige to the national Catholic Total Abstinence Union by serving as its president from 1904 to 1907.<sup>11</sup> As bishop of Pittsburgh after 1904, he organized a temperance group, known as the Canevin Club, in his own city. Flick, however, declined to join him in the temperance crusade, either because of his German background or because he believed in the medicinal value of alcohol. Tactfully, Canevin never again broached the subject after his one

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<sup>11</sup> Sister Joan Bland, *Hibernian Crusade: The Story of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America* (Washington, 1951). See also Mrs. Anna M. Hodgett Smith, letter to the editor, *The Pittsburgh Catholic*, Apr. 28, 1927.

tentative gesture to enlist his friend's support.

Social problems in general do not figure in Canevin's correspondence. He seems to have been essentially conservative in outlook, not seeing such issues in a moral framework suitable for clerical intervention. Yet social action by Catholic laymen received his enthusiastic endorsement. Frederic Ozanam (1813-1853), one of the founders of Catholic social action in France, was the object of his admiration and a man whom he proposed as a model for his friend Flick: "I know of no other layman in these latter days, who so fully realizes my idea of a Christian gentleman as Frederic Ozanam," he wrote, shortly after having read Kathleen O'Meara's biography. "Read it at once and tell me what you think . . .," he urged, because it is "a book which brought you to my mind more than once."<sup>12</sup> He was referring to the vast labor that the Philadelphia physician was already deeply involved in on behalf of poor consumptives. Canevin fully appreciated his friend's work against tuberculosis. He cooperated with his publicity campaigns,<sup>13</sup> contributed funds,<sup>14</sup> and sent ill relatives and friends to Flick for diagnoses and care.<sup>15</sup>

Shared experiences at college had created the original bond between Flick and Canevin, and these ties continued to hold them together. Canevin in particular cultivated this association; he obviously had very fond memories of his college days. "Thank God," he wrote on February 1, 1886, "that we can both look back upon those days so fraught with our future fates, and find therein no memory to call a blush of shame to our face, and but few things to regret." On June 30 of that same year, Canevin delivered the commencement address at St. Vincent College, an event that he described with delight: "Just think of *me*, appearing before the venerable faculty and learned students of St. Vincent's to deliver a closing address."<sup>16</sup> *The Pittsburgh Catholic* printed his discourse in its issue of July 10, and he sent along a copy of the newspaper.

Canevin enjoyed keeping Flick informed about the activities of their fellow students in the Pittsburgh area, most of whom, he wrote, "are . . . doing fairly well in the contest of life. Some are even distinguishing themselves. . . ." <sup>17</sup> He often mentioned Dr. James A.

<sup>12</sup> Canevin to Flick, Feb. 1, 1886.

<sup>13</sup> Canevin to Flick, Mar. 24, 1910, in reply to Flick to Canevin, Mar. 22, 1910.

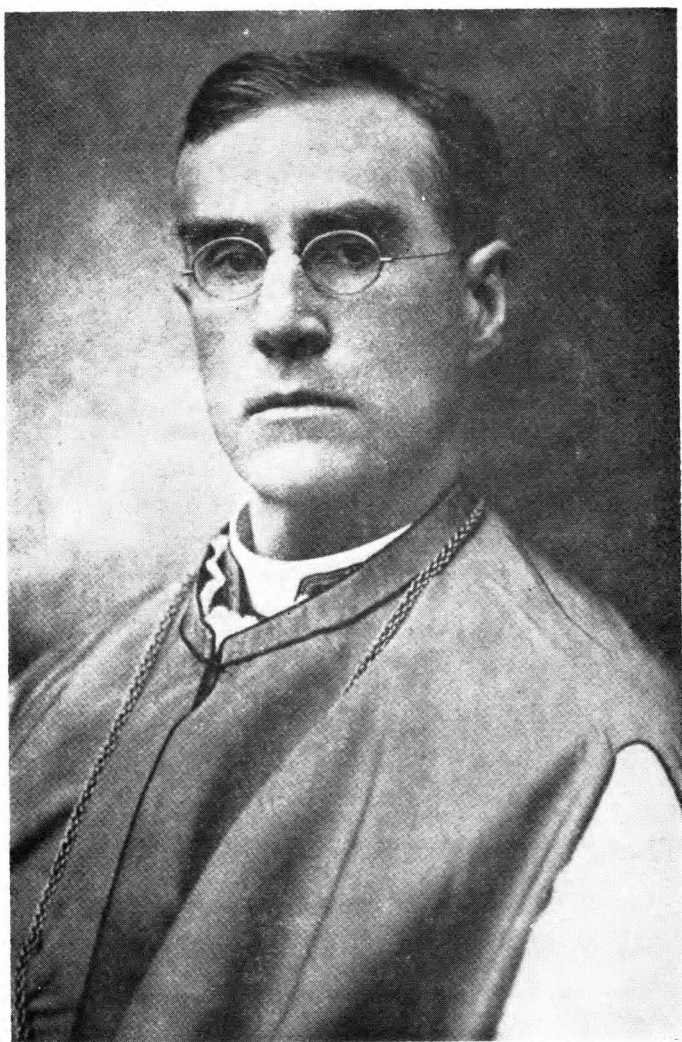
<sup>14</sup> Canevin to Flick, June 9, 1920; Flick to Canevin, June 10, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> Canevin to Flick, Dec. 12, 1904; Sept. 12, Dec. 29, 1908, LPCP.

<sup>16</sup> Canevin to Flick, July 6, 1886. The title of the talk was given as "Christian Education" in the newspaper account.

<sup>17</sup> Canevin to Flick, Sept. 28, 1885.





The Most Reverend J. F. Regis Canevin, 1853-1927



Dr. Lawrence F. Flick, 1856-1938

Oldshue (1858-1890), of whom he wrote, "Pittsburgh has no Catholic among our rising young men who is so valuable to religion and to Catholic society as our old friend," but whose premature death he recorded with sorrow.<sup>18</sup> Dr. J. C. McMullin (1851-1910), a native of Cambria County, was another whom Canevin singled out.<sup>19</sup>

From Canevin came the impulse for the formation of the St. Vincent College Alumni Association. In the college literary magazine he enumerated the goals he envisioned for the organization: "Its purposes are both intellectual and moral. They are intellectual in so far as it has for an object the patronage of learning, the advancement of its members in useful knowledge; moral, in so far as it implies the union of men devoted to the interests of religion, and joined together in brotherhood by ties of enduring friendship and cultivated manners."<sup>20</sup> Flick, ever a firm believer in joint action for useful ends, seconded his friend's proposal in an address that he delivered to the assembled alumni at the college on June 1, 1892, on the subject: "The Spirit of Catholicity in American Literature."<sup>21</sup> With similar strong intellectual inclinations, both men naturally envisioned an alumni group as essentially an extension into adulthood of the academic milieu from which it sprang.

Grandiose ideals such as these flourished only briefly in the alumni association. Flick, always very serious, inevitably became disillusioned. On May 12, 1912, he communicated his sentiments to the bishop: "Could you not stir this association into a more practical and useful course? The literature which the association gets out gives one the impression that those who manage it have only in mind a little frivolous enjoyment once a year. This literature repels me and I fear it may repel others. To my mind, the reason for the existence of an alumni association lies only in what it can do to further higher education and in such a program, I would be very glad to join with my fellow alumni." Canevin's ecclesiastical jurisdiction extended over Westmoreland County, but he wisely understood the limits of his authority, and so informed his correspondent: "I would be glad to steer the alumni of St. Vincent's out of the small pond in which they have been paddling around for some years, but my position obliges

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18 Canevin to Flick, Feb. 12, 1890; obituary notice for Dr. Oldshue in *The Pittsburgh Catholic*, Feb. 15, 1890.

19 Canevin to Flick, undated, marked "Answered March 24, 1910"; obituary notice for Dr. McMullin in *The Pittsburgh Catholic*, Mar. 17, 1910.

20 "The Objects of the Alumni Association," *St. Vincent College Journal* 1 (1891-1892): 123-30.

21 *St. Vincent College Journal* 2 (1892-1893): 5-12.

me to keep my hands off the rudder and not interfere with the pilot." <sup>22</sup> Their joint efforts at least secured a change in the pilot: Flick was elected vice-president of the association in June 1912, and then president for the two following years. Canevin called the organization back to noble purposes in an address at its annual reunion on June 13, 1913, and the next year Flick delivered something of a "pep talk" under the heading "Faith as an Element of Happiness." <sup>23</sup>

One of Flick's "practical and useful" goals during his term as president was to persuade the alumni to contribute to the construction of a swimming pool. "I am saddened," he explained to Canevin, "when I realize that nearly all of the bright men who were in my class and who became members of the [Benedictine] Order have died prematurely." <sup>24</sup> This high mortality he attributed in part to inadequate concern for the students' and monks' physical well-being. A regular swimming pool to replace the seasonal use of the nearby Loyalhanna Creek seemed to be a very sensible project to a physician-alumnus concerned with fostering what he called better "sanitation" at the institution. Alumni records show, however, that the bishop contributed \$500 during the academic year 1913-1914 — but towards the scholarship fund, not the swimming pool.

Historical studies always fascinated Flick; they were his chief nonprofessional interest. Among the Catholics of Philadelphia he became a major force in the evolution of their historical consciousness and in the foundation of institutions to promote its development. Shortly after the formation of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia in 1884, he became a member, and until the very end of his life he ardently devoted his spare energies to its progress. He held office almost every year; during 1893-1896 and again from 1913 to 1914 the society elected him its president. <sup>25</sup>

To his friends and acquaintances outside Philadelphia Flick turned for support in the three-fold activities of the historical society — its journal, library, and archives. He appealed to his college alumni, and of course he communicated his infectious enthusiasm to his clerical friend across the state. Canevin responded generously: "Whatever I can do for the Historical Society, I will consider it an honor to do,"

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<sup>22</sup> Canevin to Flick, May 15, 1912.

<sup>23</sup> J. F. Regis Canevin, "Lay Apostolate," *St. Vincent College Journal* 22 (1912-1913), 610-21, also published separately. Flick's talk was distributed in duplicated form only.

<sup>24</sup> Flick to Canevin, May 12, 1912.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond H. Schmandt, "Catholic Intellectual Life in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia: An Essay," in James F. Connelly, ed., *The History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1976), 614-15.

he wrote on January 13, 1891. Canevin clearly shared Flick's theory that the success of the society would redound to the advantage of the church by stimulating Catholic intellectual activity. His nostalgic temperament probably found inspiration also in Flick's articles in the society's journal, since these generally focused on Westmoreland and Cambria counties.<sup>26</sup>

Canevin supplied his friend with the names of Pittsburgh Catholics who might respond favorably to an invitation to enlist in the historical society, secured advertisements for its publication, contributed books and money, and investigated potential sources of documents for its archives.<sup>27</sup> At Flick's request he also sounded out the most prominent Catholic historian in Western Pennsylvania, the Reverend Andrew Arnold Lambing, pastor in Wilkensburg, about moving to Philadelphia to become the society's librarian.<sup>28</sup>

In 1896, Flick solicited funds to hire an archivist and send him to Rome to transcribe documents for publication in the society's journal, *Records*. Canevin, praising the plan as "splendid,"<sup>29</sup> contributed generously, as did Philadelphia's archbishop, Patrick J. Ryan. The Reverend Ferdinand Kittell, the history-minded pastor of St. Michael's Church in Loretto, accepted the position and sailed for Rome in late spring. After a propitious start, however, the scheme miscarried. In a report to the society, Kittell gave the impression that he was copying manuscripts surreptitiously. Flick and Archbishop Ryan became concerned. When Flick chided the archivist, Kittell, in high dudgeon, immediately cabled his resignation and imminent return home. Canevin heard rumors of the quarrel from Kittell's brother William, also a priest of the Pittsburgh diocese. "What is the trouble between the Historical Society and Father Kittell?" he inquired. The very next day he wrote to Flick again: "I fear the case is hopeless. Your letter has been misunderstood by Father Kittell and the only thing you can do is to let things take their course." A fortnight later, still hoping to salvage the situation, Canevin told his friend: "I have seen several letters from Father Kittell. They lead me to think that there has been some misunderstanding rather than any serious viola-

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<sup>26</sup> Flick's best piece of historical research is "The French Refugee Trappists in the United States," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 1 (1884-1886): 86-116. His other articles in the same journal include "Biographical Sketch of Rev. Peter Lemke, O.S.B., 1796-1882," 8 (1897): 129-92, and vignettes of other pioneer settlers of the two counties.

<sup>27</sup> Canevin to Flick, Jan. 13, Sept. 18, 1891, May 15, 1896, Dec. 17, 1919, June 30, 1897; Flick to Canevin, Oct. 21, 1916, Oct. 1, 1917.

<sup>28</sup> Canevin to Flick, Nov. 19, 1892, Mar. 16, 1893.

<sup>29</sup> Canevin to Flick, May 15, 1896.

tion of agreement and I am of the opinion that a few words of explanation from the Archbishop and the Society would persuade Father Kittell to withdraw his resignation. It will scarcely be possible to fill his place." Knowing Kittell personally through their association in the temperance movement, he could advise Flick, "Do not mind his ferocious letters. He writes savagely when aroused and slight provocation arouses him."<sup>30</sup> But it was too late. The ex-archivist returned to Loretto, and a promising plan of historical research ended in a debacle.

Canevin's participation, at a distance, in the work of the American Catholic Historical Society may have been responsible for his own sensitivity about the records of the Pittsburgh diocese. As chancellor, he wrote to Flick on November 19, 1892: "I am very busy with my diocesan records, etc. Another year and the work of restoration will be as complete as I can make it." Near the end of his episcopate, December 17, 1919, he described his activity more clearly: "I am making an effort to have our diocesan papers and records collected and arranged and the work has advanced sufficiently to enable me to appreciate the importance of the work which the Historical Society of Philadelphia is doing." After his retirement he remained occupied with the same task: "I am still busy in work relating to the diocesan records and archives . . .," he wrote on December 27, 1921. Perhaps, then, Bishop Canevin should be considered the founder of the Pittsburgh Diocesan Archives, but the inspiration came from his Philadelphia schoolmate.

Along with other literate men of his era, Flick firmly believed in the influence of the printed word, especially newspapers, as a force giving shape and direction to the moral standards of the American people. With no other form of mass media then in existence, his view may have had an element of truth to it, although his sweeping indictment recognized no degrees of guilt or merit: "The daily newspaper of to-day is in a decadent state," he wrote in the national weekly magazine *America*.<sup>31</sup> He argued that newspapers promoted evil by reporting evil. Logically, then, it followed that "A daily newspaper which would record what is beautiful, good, noble and edifying in the community would be a power for good." As a man of action, he decided to establish just such a publication: a daily paper professedly Catholic under the editorial direction of laymen and reflecting Catholic values in its presentation of the currents of American life and thought. Between 1913 and 1920, the Flick-Canevin correspondence reflects

<sup>30</sup> Canevin to Flick, Sept. 1, 2, 12, 1896.

<sup>31</sup> "A Catholic Daily Newspaper," *America* 12 (Nov. 14, 1914): 114-16.

the steady pace of the progress of this project and Bishop Canevin's response to it.

To publicize his scheme, Flick prepared brochures which he mailed to his acquaintances and to prominent Catholics all over the country. He was especially anxious to have the backing of the hierarchy, so that Bishop Canevin was doubly important to him. And the bishop of Pittsburgh responded loyally and enthusiastically: "To me it seems an inspiration of earnest faith and an undertaking that will bring a long wished for auxiliary to strengthen the forces of the Church missionary and militant in this country."<sup>32</sup> Canevin's support went beyond mere words. To finance his newspaper, Flick planned a stock company capitalized at two million dollars, so that his campaign was twofold: educational and promotional. The Pittsburgh bishop reacted with alacrity. "I have your letter," he wrote on December 15, 1913, "and the prospectus of the Morning Star Publishing Co. I shall be glad to subscribe for two or three shares of stock and interest others and secure some one to solicit subscriptions [to the stock offering]."

The project proved more difficult than its Philadelphia promoter or his Pittsburgh second had foreseen. Twelve months later Bishop Canevin explained his lack of success. It seems that a local group in Pittsburgh liked the idea so much that they had begun plans to operate their own daily Catholic paper. Also, the bishop added, some questioned the utility to the western city of a daily paper edited and published in Philadelphia.<sup>33</sup>

And so the project languished. Year after year Flick returned to his promotional effort, however, and year after year the bishop encouraged him, as, for example, in this passage from a letter dated July 3, 1916: "The Catholic daily must come in order to give the Church and the Catholic people the position that ought to be theirs in the making of the future of the United States," or this sentence from a letter of November 8, 1918: "I believe the Catholic daily is coming after the war. I do not think the present time opportune to make the effort to raise the money, but it is the time to prepare the minds of the people and to devise ways and means to make the Catholic daily an accomplished fact."

Flick's scheme sustained a blow in his own city when a new archbishop of Philadelphia, Dennis J. Dougherty, informed him on January 1, 1919, that he would withhold ecclesiastical approbation, and in effect ordered that the word "Catholic" not be used in the

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<sup>32</sup> Canevin to Flick, Dec. 31, 1913.

<sup>33</sup> Canevin to Flick, Dec. 22, 1914.

title of the projected newspaper. Then quite unexpectedly fortune seemed to change again. In September 1919, the American Catholic bishops met in their annual conference in Washington and established a temporary committee on "Press and Literature," and Bishop Canevin secured the chairmanship. In great secrecy he relayed this information to his correspondent and asked him to suggest names of men who might be suitable members of the committee.<sup>34</sup> He did not ask if Flick were interested in participating, nor did the latter propose himself. Perhaps Flick's age, he was now sixty-three, was the explanation. At any rate, Flick's response to Canevin's communication did not show the degree of élan that one might expect, but he did proffer the names of Anthony Hirst, J. Percy Keating, James M. Willcox, and Edward J. Galbally; the latter two were intimately involved in Flick's newspaper project.<sup>35</sup> However, nothing seems to have come of the committee. It is not mentioned again in the correspondence, and the last reference to the newspaper occurs in Canevin's letter to Flick on June 17, 1920: "I believe your hope will one day be realized in the United States. Some of us may not live to see that day; but it will come. Your work will not be in vain." He was sanguine to the end, but also realistic.

Books and pamphlets — their own compositions or others' — comprise another theme in the Canevin-Flick correspondence. Both men had deep but rather narrow intellectual interests. Both wrote prolifically, Flick throughout his life, Canevin in his later years.<sup>36</sup> Much of Flick's material, being professionally oriented, had no appeal to his clerical correspondent, but Canevin was happy to receive such productions as Flick's pamphlet on *Eugenics* (1913), which concerned medical ethics, and his book, *Development of Our Knowledge of Tuberculosis* (Philadelphia, 1925), which aimed at a semipopular audience.<sup>37</sup> For his part, Flick found the bishop's two studies on Catholic demography fascinating and commented favorably on several religious essays that Canevin mailed to him: *The Lay Apostolate*

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34 Canevin to Flick, Sept. 28, 1919.

35 Flick to Canevin, Sept. 30, 1919.

36 There is no bibliography of Flick's writings, although the Library of the Philadelphia College of Physicians has a nearly complete collection of his medical papers. The only attempt at a comprehensive listing of Bishop Canevin's writings is to be found in *The Guide to Catholic Literature 1888-1940* (Detroit, 1940), 165. Canevin published a number of anonymous and pseudonymous pamphlets for the Pittsburgh Catholic Truth Society and articles for *The Pittsburgh Catholic*.

37 Canevin to Flick, Apr. 6, 1913, Oct. 6, 1925.



(1913), *The Loyalty of Catholics* (1914), and *The Holy Mass* (1924).<sup>38</sup>

The bishop liked to send his friend copies of books that he himself found especially worthwhile. Mention has already been made of his mailing to Flick a copy of Kathleen O'Meara's *Frederic Ozanam, Professor at the Sorbonne, His Life and Work* (New York, 1878) as an example of his ideal of a Catholic layman.<sup>39</sup> "I know I will enjoy reading it very much" was Flick's understatement on January 17, 1919, of his pleasure in the gift of A. A. Lambing's *Foundation Stones of a Great Diocese* (Wilkinsburg, 1914), which dealt with the history of Catholicity in the Pittsburgh area. Canevin's Christmas gift in 1920 of an edition of the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) elicited Flick's reply on December 24, 1920: "I have always had a very big regard for everything that came from the pen of Pope Leo XIII. He truly was one of the great men of his age." The following year Canevin sent *The Christian Philosophy of Life* by Tilmann Pesch, S.J. (St. Louis, 1909), a work that he himself valued highly because, in his words, "I have used it at times as a guide in preparing sermons, and, at other times, as a book for spiritual reading and meditation. I hope . . . that you will find its contents as stimulating and as comforting as I have found them."<sup>40</sup> Flick was delighted, as he acknowledged on December 22, 1925, to receive Joseph J. Reilly's *Newman As a Man of Letters* (New York, 1925): "In as much as Newman has been one of my favorite writers, I enjoy the book all the more."

As might be expected, Flick was always genuinely solicitous about his friend's health. His frequent queries on this subject were more than mere routine pleasantries. Canevin never sustained any illness as serious as young Flick's bout with tuberculosis, yet neither was he ever particularly robust. His several minor crises of illness arose from overwork rather than from any serious organic disability. Poor health in the fall of 1893 caused him to resign his post as chancellor of the Pittsburgh diocese. His comment to Flick on December 27, 1893, is somewhat cryptic: "Your medicine had great virtue. I am in excellent condition today." The letter is dated from Atlantic City. Flick's "medicine" may simply have been advice to take

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<sup>38</sup> *An Examination Historical and Statistical in the Losses and Gains of the Catholic Church in the United States from 1790 to 1910* (Pittsburgh, 1912) and *Catholic Growth in the United States* (Pittsburgh, 1923), which is a revised version of the earlier pamphlet. See Flick to Canevin, May 12, 1912, Sept. 4, 1923, Apr. 17, 1913, May 9, 1914, Sept. 3, 1924.

<sup>39</sup> Canevin to Flick, Feb. 1, 1886.

<sup>40</sup> Canevin to Flick, Dec. 27, 1921.

a rest cure. Such was the message of a communication on July 18, 1906, in which, after expressing concern about rumors of the bishop's state of health and his being "sorely in need of a rest," Flick urged his friend to join him and his family for a vacation at the New Jersey shore. The bishop admitted his need of respite and, while insisting that he was already improving, accepted the invitation to the Flick cottage. At the last minute, however, he changed his plans and did not come; his excuse was the need to visit an unidentified sick friend in New Hampshire.<sup>41</sup>

On the first of October, 1914, Bishop Canevin suffered a severe fracture of his ankle from a fall into an excavation ditch as he walked from his residence to the cathedral for evening services. He spent over two months in a hospital. Flick, who had learned of the bishop's ordeal through newspaper reports, was relieved to hear from Canevin on December 22 that his recovery was proceeding well.

Inevitably, as the years advanced, fatigue and failing health became problems for both men, and their correspondence reflects the situation, but always in statements of fact, never of complaint. Several letters in the fall of 1918 reveal the physician's serious anxiety for the bishop's well-being during the dreadful influenza epidemic of that year. He sent his friend a prescription for a medicine that Flick used for his own patients and family. "I will feel much more comfortable," he wrote to Bishop Canevin on October 13, "if I know that you are doing something to protect yourself because I fear that if you get an attack of influenza it might be very difficult for you to go through with it. . . . I am confident that nothing except a long rest will restore you to a condition of resistance. . . ." The bishop imbibed the prescribed medicine, although with some reluctance, and was able to report on October 30 that it was effective amid the general havoc: "So far, I have escaped the influenza, though many of our priests are sick and several have died. It is very bad in Pittsburgh just now." Flick's answer reported on his family's welfare: "I am glad to say that in my own family all came through with mild attacks and we again are all well. My wife and all three of my daughters had the disease but are again up and about." The toll in Philadelphia, he reported, was approaching 4,000 deaths per week.<sup>42</sup>

Flick's often-repeated advice to his friend was rest, a suggestion that Bishop Canevin accepted during September 1919, when he again

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<sup>41</sup> Flick to Canevin, July 18, Aug. 1, 1906; Canevin to Flick, Aug. 1, 9, 1906.

<sup>42</sup> Flick to Canevin, Oct. 31, 1918.

shared a vacation with Flick at the Jersey shore. He hoped to rebuild his strength in preparation for two fatiguing sessions later in the month — a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Catholic University in Washington, followed immediately by the annual bishop's conference. Canevin confirmed the fact that the days of relaxation were "not spent in vain. . . . My health is improved since our vacation at Atlantic City for which I must thank you again." The physician himself benefited, as he informed his correspondent later.<sup>43</sup>

Canevin's letters never expressed any complaint; he simply stated that he was not as well as he would like to be. Actually, more often than not he informed his friend not that he was ill but that he was improving. Yet in the spring of 1920, Flick became quite agitated at the news he received from other contacts that his old friend, now in his sixty-eighth year, was ill again, and he urged the usual remedy: "It would seem to me that the safest thing to do would be to go to a hospital away from home for at least a long enough time to get built up a little and then perhaps to take a trip. I would like very much to be of service to you and I shall be glad to do anything you will permit me to do to help you. Write me and tell me what I can do." <sup>44</sup> In reply seven days later Canevin assured Flick that the situation had been exaggerated and that "my health is much better than you have been led to believe." Nevertheless, the bishop realized that he had reached the limits of his strength and he petitioned Rome to accept his resignation. The request was granted. On November 26, 1920, he surrendered his authority. To ease his stepping down, Rome bestowed on him on January 9, 1921, the honorary title of archbishop.

The decision to retire must have been judged eminently wise by Flick, for as the physician had always insisted, the lightening of his burden restored Canevin sufficiently that he was able to enjoy a productive retirement of light spiritual activity with energy left for literary pursuits. "I am very happy in the peace and solitude of my present position and life," he confided to Flick on December 27, 1921. The main subject of significance in the remaining correspondence is the writing that they both accomplished and the reading they enjoyed. As late as October 8, 1925, Flick was again urging a visit to Philadelphia: "I wish we could coax you to come on to see us some time. It probably would benefit your health, to say the least, if you could take a little trip away from home." But the trip did not materialize.

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<sup>43</sup> Canevin to Flick, Sept. 28, Dec. 17, 1919; Flick to Canevin, Sept. 30, 1919.

<sup>44</sup> Flick to Canevin, June 28, 1920.

Bishop Canevin died quietly on March 22, 1927. One of his nun nurses telegraphed the news to his Philadelphia friend on the same day. Flick outlived him by more than a decade, dying on July 7, 1938.