

## THE LEGION OF MARY . . . FOR MEN

The first legal men's praesidium of the Legion of Mary met in December, 1929, or rather two of them met. One had been carrying on unofficially on an experimental basis for three years before that. But it must not be supposed from this that "the Legion for Men" represented a new thought. No, it was part of the original idea; and though it took time to realise its fulness, nevertheless the germ was operative from the first moment. Let me explain the foregoing.

### HISTORY OF THE IDEA

With the exception of the priest and a layman, the first praesidium was composed of women, fifteen of them. But with a sureness of touch which was a fitting part of the strange confident gaze into the future which characterised that meeting, it was stipulated that the new society would not be for women alone but equally for men, and that men would be accepted at the appropriate moment. The belief was that they would come along soon. But therein those planners were mistaken; it was going to take time. But from the very first, in the membership of that solitary man and in the making of a certain rule, the principle of joint membership was asserted. The rule was to the effect that each branch should have a male member who would assist it in its work. In what way? Well, in the miscellaneous directions that a man can be useful in. Chiefly in view were such things as liaison with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and other agencies for relief and social benefit. This aspect of things was peremptorily in the minds of that original band by reason of the fact that the Legion was cutting itself off from that particular field of giving material relief.

That rule was acted upon, and each branch of the Legion which came into existence for a considerable time afterwards, provided itself with such a man, called the tribune, who was in fact given the status of an officer. In the later days of ordinary male membership, that officer-status was abolished as anomalous. Here and there one finds branches with tribunes, but nowadays there does not seem to be much purpose in the office. For why call single a man-legendary a tribune instead of just a legionary? So possibly in the future the tribune may go the way of all flesh, having justified his existence by maintaining the principle of male membership in those vital moulding years.

When the men came in, they came in with a vengeance. This was indeed surprising, for the Legion had by that time gained for itself the name of being a

