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VOL. XII., No. 21

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1904

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CHRONICLE OF AN OLD-TIMER

Memoirs of Dr. E. A. Theller, who was engaged in the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-8—The Beginning of the Rebellion in Lower Canada—Arrested by Col. Prince of Malden, and Taken to Toronto for Trial—Occurrences on the Way—An Interesting Narrative—Col. Prince and T. D. McGee—Bravery of the French-Canadians.

Chicago, April 30, 1904.

Editor Catholic Register:

One of the men engaged in the Canadian rebellion of 1837-8, was an Irishman named Theller—E. A. Theller—a peculiar and altogether unusual name for a son of the Emerald Isle. But that he was Irish I am certain, because I knew him personally in the city of Buffalo, in the year 1849, when and where he was practicing medicine. There is an impression on my mind that he was a native of Limerick. He received his education in some Lower Canada college, spoke French fluently, was a good talker and received a commission as a brigadier-general in "the Canadian Republican Army" from Mr. McKenzie. He was keeping a drug store at Detroit, Mich., when he enlisted for the war. He was not in person an Adonis, but was short and thick, and I should think awkward for an active and successful leader. He was made prisoner at Malden, taken to Toronto for trial, with a number of others, and there sentenced to be executed. The scenes that took place in Toronto at that time were very exciting. He pleaded that he was an American citizen, and Sir George Arthur hesitated to carry out the sentence of death by hanging, so himself and his friend Dodge were removed to the fortress at Quebec to await the decision of the Privy Council. In the meantime both made good their escape from the citadel one night, and with the aid of friends, reached Yankee land—Dodge with a broken leg and Theller with a lacerated back, as the hole he crawled through was too small for the size of his body. Theller and Dodge were noted characters in the newspapers of the time. They were arrested, however, and tried in the United States for a violation of the neutrality laws by an American court and acquitted. Subsequently Dr. Theller published two small volumes narrating his adventures as a Canadian patriot. They were dedicated "to Col. Richard M. Johnson, vice-president of the United States—the stern republican—the advocate of liberty—the patriot."

One of Theller's little volumes has come into my possession and I find it very interesting and worth making some extracts from, that will instruct, perhaps amuse, some of your readers; but he wrote well and forcibly. In 1837 the Parliament of Lower Canada refused to grant Lord Gosford, the British Governor, the means of carrying on the government by refusing to vote the supplies. The writer describes what followed: "Agitation became intense, meetings took place in every town, village and parish, and votes of thanks were offered to the majority of the House, who had remained firm in defence of the rights of the people. But a tyrannical government had long since determined to commit a double act of injustice, the disfranchisement of the French part of the population, and the restriction of the constitutional liberties of the Anglo-Saxons (as Lord Durham called them) who, blinded by their narrow prejudices against the first settlers in Canada, owing to their origin and their religion, did not perceive that they were assisting the British Government to circumscribe their own rights and to restrict their privileges. After having contributed by their clamors to the disfranchisement of the French-Canadians, they found themselves reduced to a state of slavery under a despotic ruler, with the painful conviction that the constitution promised them was a mere mockery. Various associations were then formed, among which the "Sons of Liberty" and the "Doric Club" were

the most conspicuous. The former was composed of zealous reformists, and the latter of the most virulent enemies of the French-Canadians. These bodies, who were destined to be the actors in the first trial of strength between the parties, were stationed in Montreal.

The imperial parliament authorized the seizure of the treasury of the province and distributed its contents among the officials, an act which made matters worse.

"The Sons of Liberty" goes on the writer, "having assembled to express their indignation at the conduct of the British Parliament, were attacked by the 'Doric Club' in the streets of Montreal, but after a long conflict they drove their enemies before them, and reaped the first laurels in the struggle of freemen against oppression in Canada. It is said no firearms were used on the occasion, but swords, axes, and other deadly weapons were seen in the hands of the Doric Club. None were killed, but many were severely wounded. The Sons of Liberty dispersing after the contest, the Doric Club and military who conducted them, reassembled, mobbing and destroying the printing office of the 'Vindicator' newspaper; and although this outrage was committed in open day, and in the presence of several magistrates, no notice was taken by the authorities."

It then became evident that a general conflict could not be long delayed. An immense meeting had taken place at St. Charles, on the river Chambly, where a liberty pole was erected, and a solemn engagement entered into by thousands to free their country from oppression, or perish in the attempt. Louis Joseph Papineau, in whose person the love, admiration and confidence of a whole people was concentrated, addressed the immense crowd of brave men before him, promising to guide them in the noble efforts in the sacred cause of freedom, and solemnly swearing to conquer or die at the head of the patriot phalanx now arrayed against tyranny and oppression. How far he accomplished that solemn vow will be made evident to the reader. On his head rested a fearful, awful responsibility. "St. Charles" was destined to witness the zenith of his glory, and the loss of his honor instead of the brave devoted leader, the Canadians found in him the psallinuous coward."

Theller's description of the journey of himself and fellow prisoners from Malden to Toronto is interesting. His particular aversion was Col. John Prince of Sandwich, with whom he was acquainted. This gentleman, like Sir Allen Napier McNab, played a prominent part in suppressing the rebellion, and was considered ungenerously severe. He had three men taken out one day and hanged. In his despatch to the Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, he said, "they deserved to be hanged and I hanged them accordingly," and "hanged them accordingly" became an oft quoted phrase afterwards in the Reform press. Old Theller often saw Col. Prince, and heard him speak when he was a member of the Legislative Council in Toronto. He was an Englishman, a lawyer and loved his glass and his joke. I met him in the saloon of the House once when I was accompanied by Mr. McGee. They were cordial towards each other, the rebel and the loyalist, for they both prided themselves on their oratorical powers. Of course he was a Tory. "McGee," said he, "they coincide that you are the best speaker in the House and I in the Assembly; what do you think?" "That may be," said McGee, looking down at Prince's newly polished boots, "but you outshine me."

To return to Theller's description of his journey as a prisoner in the direction of Toronto:

"After a tedious journey of five days (and I may say nights) on the road from Malden to London, through a country which, notwithstanding the season, and our forlorn situation, attracted our constant admiration by its singular beauty, we reached the apparently flourishing village of London, on the River Thames.

Our route had been for the most part on the shores of the lake, through unfrequented ways and along the valley of that stream. The wilderness had only been invaded here and there at long intervals, by the hand of cultivation. Yet the variety and beauty of the scenery lured our minds from dwelling on our condition. We occupied ourselves in picturing the contrast which a land so favored by nature would present in the hands of a population free, independent and enterprising, like our men. Our future presented no pleasing prospect. We cheered ourselves, however, with the hope that we might yet see the day when its colonial vassalage should give place to a free and independent state—when the swarm of petty officials who devoured the substance of the oppressed cultivator of the soil, would be swept away in the progress of republican institutions—and when the forests should become cultivated fields, whose fertility would reward the labor of the independent husbandman. Many a weary mile was soothed by reveries like these; and if we occasionally recurred too painfully to our situation, some new or striking feature of the landscape would direct our reflections and again lull us for a while into forgetfulness of our misery.

As far as we could judge, the inhabitants of the country and of the little villages where they crowded to see us pass, did not view us as enemies. Commiseration was marked upon their countenances; and often did we see the tears trickling down the cheeks of women, who could not refrain their feelings at the severity of our treatment by those whom they considered the "enemies and oppressors of their country." Many a pious prayer could we hear offered up for our deliverance; and curses, not loud but deep, on the brutality we experienced. "On our arrival in London we were taken to the jail, which was strongly

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guarded. From the numbers which crowded to the grated windows to catch a glimpse of those who were to be their fellows, we perceived that the prison was crowded. After being conducted into a portion of the building which we conjectured to be the court room, we were counted over and delivered up to the commandant of the place.

"The commitment of the board of magistrates of the Western district at Malden, was accompanied by a private letter from Col. Prince to Col. Askins (who had them in charge), in which I was honored with a particular notice. From the treatment I had already experienced from that being, the reader may conjecture that his remarks were not calculated to ameliorate my condition. We were marched down to the cells, which constituted the lower portion of the buildings, appropriated to the worst class of felons. After being unbound, I was taken out of the cell in which I had first been placed, that I might be separated from my friend, Brophy. This was indeed a severe trial of my fortitude. He was the only one with whom I could have a feeling in common. A gentleman of firm mind, cultivated intellect, and congenial sentiments, with his companionship and conversation, the tedium of long days and nights, shut from the light of heaven, would in some measure have been alleviated. It was one pang the more. I was thrust into a small cell with three others. This cell was about seven feet square, and in that narrow space were confined four human beings. The only ventilation was through a small diamond-shaped hole in the door, through which the scanty fare which the prison rules allowed, was handed to us. The only place for relieving the calls of nature was a corner of our cell, and for many days and nights together we endured the suffocating odor of its fetid exhalations. Day and night were undisturbed to us, except for a few moments of the afternoon, when the descending sun would cast a slanting ray through the grated window of the corridor, which formed the passage between the double range of cells; or when the jailer or assistant would come his rounds with a lighted candle, to distribute our daily bread. Occasionally as the prison became very crowded, and all were employed, the jailer's wife would take his place in supplying our wants, and hand our food through the hole in our door. True to the compassionate nature of her sex—the elevated trait of her character in all times, conditions and countries, she would leave me a piece of candle, and sometimes let me have a book to read, however the time for the most part, however, we were doomed to each other's faces, we strove by conversation to cheer each other, and mutually endeavored to sustain the sinking hopes and spirits of his fellows. Every day we expected to hear of an attack upon the place, and our consequent deliverance. One of the prisoners prided himself upon being an infallible exponent of the future. As the rest had but little else to do but dream, they kept him employed in their interpretation. One peculiarity of his system deserves mention. No matter what the subject of the dream, it always was auspicious, and a token of a speedy deliverance from captivity. What men desire they readily believe, and when I discovered the faith which some of them had in their dreams, I encouraged the delusion; and the good hopes which the interpreter excited, realized my expectations, kept them from sinking into despondency, and preserved their health."

"During our imprisonment we were visited by some of the officers of the 32nd regiment, who on their route to Malden, stopped a day or two at London. The first of them engaged in the affair at St. Etienne (in Lower Canada) one of them a fine looking veteran, in answer to my question, whether the Lower Canadians were cowards, as reported by the loyalists? 'Cowards,' said he, 'cowards! Sir, I have been in the Peninsular campaign, and seen

many sanguinary actions, but none I have ever witnessed compares with that of St. Etienne. The Canadians cowards!' repeated he, with indignation, 'they did not fight like men, they fought like tigers.' I then enquired of him whether Dr. Chenier, who I informed him had been a fellow student, had been in the action. 'He was, sir,' he replied; 'he died fighting like a brave man. He deserved a better fate than to be inhumanly mangled as he was by the cowardly militia, who skulked during the action, but when the danger was over, displayed their barbarity, in mutilating the corpses of those brave but deluded men, who thought they were doing right in fighting for what they considered the liberties of their country.'

The Theller narrative becomes more interesting as it proceeds, but I shall have to defer further quotations until my next.

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BRANCH 77, C.M.B.A. LINDSAY, ONT.

Lindsay, April 18, 1904.

The above branch held an open meeting in its beautiful hall to-night. There was a large attendance. The chair was acceptably occupied by the President, Bro. McGeough. The chief speakers of the evening were Bros. E. J. Hearn, Grand Deputy, of Toronto, and T. F. Callahan, President of Branch 15, Toronto. Bro. Callahan was the first speaker. He dealt with the advantages both fraternal and from an insurance standpoint derived from being a member of the C.M.B.A. Also of the fact that it is a Catholic Institution. He particularly addressed himself to the young men, pointing out to them the main fraternal benefit they would derive, the duty they owed their parents or others dependent upon them to insure for their protection and particularly that joining when young they would pay a lower rate of assessment all through life than they would after joining at a later age. He also spoke of the pleasure afforded him of having that opportunity of once more visiting the scene of his boyhood days, and of meeting again old friends, many of whom had been his school mates.

Bro. Hearn was heard for the first time in Lindsay. Throughout a forty minutes' speech he held his audience in close attention. He spoke of the history, objects and benefits of the Association, and with the subject of fraternal and insurance in such a clear, able and interesting manner that every person present was most favorably impressed. He explained the system on which the Order was built and conducted, proving that it was democratic and was governed by the members and for the members and stating that the qualifications for membership were that the applicants must be males, not under 18 or over 50 years of age, must be practical Catholics, be recommended by the Board of Trustees of their Branch, passed by the branch physician, approved by the grand physician and by the branch.

He then dealt with its history, showing that it became independent of the mother order in the U.S.A. in 1880, became a purely Canadian institution and was incorporated under the laws of Ontario and later by a special act of the Dominion Parliament. That in 1880 it had only 226 members which had increased at the present time, to about 18,000; that it has paid to the widows and orphans of deceased members over \$2,500,000; that it has a reserve fund of over \$140,000 safely invested and bearing interest and that its teaching and influence has been a great aid to the Church. He next took up the fraternal benefits provided by the Association which are "the improvement of the social, intellectual and moral condition of the members," "to educate them in integrity, sobriety and frugality," "to aid and care for them in sickness and distress," "and to find employment for them when necessary."

He explained and enlarged upon each one of these subjects to the great profit and pleasure of his audience.

Short addresses were also delivered by Bros. Very Rev. Archdeacon Casey, our parish priest; A. P. Devlin, D.C., crown attorney; Grand Deputy Gillogly, Chancellor J. J. McDonald, Ald. O'Reilly, John Rogers, Principal of the Separate School, Bernard Gough, merchant, Thomas Brady, merchant, and L. A. Primeaux, Financial Secretary.

Songs were rendered by Bros. Thos. Brady, Charles Podger and Grand Deputy Gillogly. A hearty vote of thanks was extended to Bros. Hearn and Callahan. Before the meeting dispersed eight applications for membership were received.

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dience and in a manner that only one of his ability and great experience in fraternal work could do. He then dwelt upon the advisability of taking life insurance and of how popular it has become of late years. He enumerated the insurance benefits of \$500, \$1,000, or \$2,000, given by the Association, and how that by reason of the lowness of rates charged even the poorest could insure in the C.M.B.A. He compared the protection afforded by insurance and by property to the great advantage of insurance inasmuch as insurance in the C.M.B.A. meant immediate protection when he became a member, whereas it took years, even in the case of the most thrifty, to accumulate an equal amount in property, and property was liable to deteriorate, but insurance did not, that the insurance was paid within 60 days after the death of the insured at a time when it was most needed and would afford immediate relief to the Widow and children or other beneficiaries. It was a white winged angel of love bringing a ray of sunshine into the bereaved home and keeping out the dark winged angel of woe and crime charged upon the other hand, property (if any) frequently took months and sometimes years, to realize upon and was often seriously affected by the state of the market and occasionally taken possession of by the mortgagee and the widow and family thus left unprotected; that without insurance protection those who were dependent upon the deceased were often thrown upon the cold charity of the world; children of tender years separated from a mother's care, affection and influence and the wholesome companionship of one another and alas, too often are exposed to the contagion from which they become criminals or indolents and help to fill our prisons and charitable institutions. In many instances he referred to the many homes that have been benefited by the \$2,500,000 already paid by this Association.

He compared the history of the fraternal insurance societies with that of old line companies by stating that of 136 of those societies in America in a period of 30 years only six had become defunct, whereas 40 old line companies had put up their shutters in the same period. He showed that in the societies fraternal and insurance went hand in hand, that if a member through sickness or distress was unable to pay his assessments his branch came to his relief, and where the distress was beyond the ability of the branch the whole membership of the association was appealed to on behalf of the members and his family. This is not the case with old line companies. Only dollars and cents are considered by them and if the premiums are not paid before the days of grace expire the insurance lapses. The societies are established for the mutual welfare of the members and their families, the companies for the stock holders only, the one idea they have in mind being the large dividend they receive. The C.M.B.A. gives insurance at actual cost plus the building up of a reasonable reserve to provide for emergencies in the future. The old liners for the same protection charge about double the rate of the C.M.B.A. The C.M.B.A. pays no large salaries, has no expensive office building, pays no dividends to stockholders and pays no commissions to agents, its members being its chief agents for getting in new members.

Mr. Hearn interspersed his remarks with some good stories by way of emphasis and concluded by making a strong appeal to those present who were not members, and particularly to the young men, to apply for membership at once.

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NEWFOUNDLAND'S ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY

By a recent rescript from Rome, the Island of Newfoundland has been erected into an Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, with St. John's, the capital of the Island, as the Metropolitan See, and the Vicariate of Bay St. George, erected into a Bishopric, and with the Diocese of Harbor Grace for the suffragan sees. His Lordship, Right Rev. Ronald McDonald, who has been Bishop of Harbor Grace for the past twenty-three years, being also the second oldest Bishop of Canada, and Newfoundland's early history stands as an object lesson to countries and cities treble her size in the spread of religion and education. Magnificent churches, beautiful educational establishments, for primary and higher education, well-equipped halls, etc., adorn the length and breadth of "The Island by the Sea," and the Metropolitan See, "A second Ireland," justly styled, "A glance at the pages of Newfoundland's early history would reveal the awful hardships, privations, and punishments, which the early Catholics of the Island had to suffer in the exercise of the practice of their religious duties. But bigotry, ignorance and prejudice die hard, and when once driven out, peace, knowledge and harmony take their places to shed their blessings all around. After the dark night of oppression comes the day of joy and freedom, and in good old Newfoundland at the present time the day-star of religious freedom shines as bright as the noon-day sun. To Ireland, whose Bishops and priests left home and Fatherland to plant the Cross of Christ in remote and barren Straths, facing the angry waves and the mighty winds, in order to bring the last consolations of religion to those rugged fisherfolk living in scattered parts of the Island, does Newfoundland owe an everlasting debt of gratitude. The names of the Irish Bishops and priests who raised monuments of religion and education there, is thrice honored, venerated and revered, and though they rest from their labors their good works and good name still remain. The Register heartily congratulates His Grace Archbishop Howley, who had been the first native Bishop appointed to St. John's, and now the first Archbishop, on his elevation to the Archiepiscopal See. His works are many and fruitful. His pen and voice are ever ready to promote and encourage any cause which will benefit the Island, and its inhabitants irrespective of creed or nationality. The remodeling and refitting of the great cathedral of St. John (the Baptist, the finishing of St. Patrick's Church, the building of an extra wing to St. Patrick's Hall for educational purposes, and the enlargement of Littledale Academy for the higher education of young ladies, these monuments will tell in part of His Grace's zeal for the cause of God and His Holy Church.

To His Lordship Right Rev. Neil McNeil, the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Bay St. George, West Coast, an earnest worker in the Lord's vineyard, we also extend our congratulations, as well as to the genial, learned and revered Bishop of Harbor Grace, Dr. McDonald, whose worth and merit were so well recognized by the Propaganda at Rome. To all we say: "Ad Multos Annos."

His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi is engaged conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation in the different parishes. Sunday last he visited three parishes—St. Elizabeth's, St. Henri's and St. Joseph's; Tuesday, St. Jean Baptiste, Thursday, St. Omegonde and St. Anthony's, confirming about six hundred in all. This week he will visit several more parishes.

Death of Mrs. N. D. Beck

From Edmonton, N.W.T., comes the sad news of the death of the wife of Mr. Nicholas Beck, K.C., of that city. Mrs. Beck, who was a Miss Lloyd, had been ailing for some time but a fatal termination was not expected. Sincere sympathy will be felt through the wide circle of friends of the family in Ontario. R.I.P.

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