

Our Illustrations.

BURNING OF THE ST. JAMES HOTEL, MONTREAL.

On Tuesday morning last, about one o'clock, flames were discovered on the fourth flat of the St. James Hotel, on Victoria Square, in a part of the building near the laundry. The alarm was at once given, and on the arrival of the firemen a hose was introduced up the building to attack the fire which was then consuming the staircase leading to the fifth flat, where were situated the sleeping-rooms of the female portion of the hotel staff. Unfortunately the hose was found to be too short, and by the time the defect had been remedied the flames had gained considerable headway. Here another contretemps occurred; the water was for some unaccountable reason suddenly turned off and the men found themselves powerless to stop the advance of the flames. While the staircase was being consumed, three of the servant girls, seeing their hope of escape by this means cut off turned to the windows and three of them threw themselves headlong on the sidewalk, where their fall was only partially broken by mattresses and other soft material. They were transported to the General Hospital where they lie in a very precarious state. Another girl named Matilde Sava, hung out from the window, with the points of her feet lightly resting against the wall, and notwithstanding the cries of those below to drop herself on the mattresses which had been spread beneath, remained in this perilous position for fully twenty minutes. Finally the firemen succeeded in reaching her and bringing her down amid rounds of cheers from the crowd. These scenes were enacted in the windows of the fifth flat facing Bonaventure Street. On the side facing the Square, a man jumped down to the pavement below, injuring himself fatally. Several others were injured in attempting to escape. Two gentlemen made ladders of quilts, but in each case the ladder broke and they fell to the ground. Another gentleman managed to climb from one window to another, but finally slipped and fell to the pavement. Notwithstanding the best efforts of the brigade they were unable to stay the progress of the flames, which entirely consumed the roof and the fourth and fifth stories. The fire was finally checked by flooding the other stories.

MARDI-GRAS IN NEW ORLEANS.

In no city in America, save New Orleans, is the systematic observance of Mardi-Gras, or Shrove Tuesday, kept up. The geniality of the climate and the peculiar disposition of the people combine to render the Carnival festivities particularly enjoyable, and especially to one who has passed most of his life in the North, where the cold winds and the ice and snow of winter would preclude any such outdoor observances.

It has usually been the custom for individuals, masked and disguised as their fancy might dictate, to promenade the principal streets during the day-time, but this year all were invited into a grand street pageant, under command of His Majesty "Rex," who represents an association of gentlemen, organized for the purpose of rendering the festivities more attractive. "Rex" is a despotic monarch, and all other forms of government were subordinated to him for the day alone. Accompanied by a numerous detachment of troops to the number of some thousand in all, infantry, cavalry and artillery, armed and uniformed in a fantastic manner, and followed by an innumerable throng of maskers on foot, on horseback and in carriages, the King marched through the principal streets, to the great delectation and amusement of his loyal subjects. The utmost good humour and license prevailed, and the day observances were said very much to resemble those of Rome and Venice. His Majesty signalized the close of his reign by a grand ball at the Exposition Building, which was crowded with the élite and beauty of the Crescent city and the country at large.

As soon as night fell "Rex" turned over his power to "Comus," who from time immemorial has been the monarch of Mardi-Gras night. The Mystick Krewes of Comus has long been a feature of New Orleans, and its ability is world-wide. It is also composed of a number of gentlemen unknown to the public, who annually represent by a street pageant some historical or allegorical subject. The displays are magnificent, and the costumes are all imported from Paris, where they are manufactured expressly for the purpose. The cost of each display is estimated at \$30,000, and I imagine that is rather under than over the mark. The Krewes appear on some by street suddenly, and without any warning, in a brilliantly lighted procession, and after parading as did "Rex," the principal streets, go to the Varieties Theatre, where a series of tableaux is presented, combining all the figures that have appeared in the procession. The parquette of the theatre is floored over, and the tableaux over, forms an immense platform, where dancing is kept up till an early hour in the morning.

The subject chosen for representation this year is the "Missing Links in Darwin's Origin of Species," and represented every sort of animal and vegetable life from the Sponge to the Gorilla, the lowest to the highest. Each figure, (there were about a hundred in all) was a perfect representation of the animal or plant intended to be shown and could be recognized at a glance. The pageant was brilliantly lighted up with lamps, and transparencies bearing all necessary information were carried by attendants. The illustration given is taken from Chartres street looking across Canal street to St. Charles. The banners seen hanging from the buildings are the Royal Standards of the King of the Carnival. The Statue in the foreground is the Clay Statue, one of the landmarks of New Orleans. All the public buildings are illuminated, and a crowd estimated at a hundred thousand throngs the streets. The display altogether is a most magnificent one, and will long be remembered by those who had the good fortune to witness it.

All the theatres are turned into ball-rooms for the night, and every public hall is engaged. All with the exception of the Mystick Krewes and that of Rex are masked, and mirth and revelry hold high carnival, till daylight is let in upon the revellers. Then comes the consciousness that the carnival is over and that for forty days and nights there must be an enforced abstinence from pleasure.

Take it all together the festivities of this year have been most pleasant. Many new features have been introduced, and of the tens of thousands of strangers who gathered together probably not one has left who has not during his stay been heartily pleased, and will carry away with him a joyous recollection of New Orleans and its Mardi-Gras.

On another page is given in full a poem published by the Mystick Krewes explanatory of the various characters who took part in the procession.

THE SESSION.

We reproduce under this head several sketches by our special artist at Ottawa illustrative of the formal opening of Parliament. No. II. (No. I of the series was given last week) shows the arrival of H. E. the Governor-General at the Grand Entrance of the Parliament Building; No. III the entrance of the Countess of Dufferin in the Senate Chamber, and the entrance of the Governor-General; and on the last page are several smaller sketches which we group as No. IV. In one of these latter Mr. Black Rod Kimber "the man of the black silk stockings, of the rod of equally sombre hue, of the silver buckles and other peculiar appointments"—a contemporary calls him—is seen inviting the attendance of the faithful Commons in the Senate Chamber. Another sketch shows the result of the invitation—the helter-skelter rush through the Library to the Senate Chamber.

THE SIBYLLA ERYTHRÆA.

This engraving may have a particular interest at the time of the Feast of the Annunciation, as it is maintained by some ancient writers that Erythræa predicted the Annunciation. It represents one of the Sibyls on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, of which there are five—Persica (Persia), Erythræa (The Red Sea), Delphica (Delos), Cumana (Cumæ) and Libyca (Libya), out of the ten mentioned by Varro, the historian, who lived above a century before Christ, and states that their names were derived from the locality of their habitations. The Sibyls are heathen prophetesses, who figure in the scheme of Christian iconography as having predicted the coming of Christ to the Gentiles, as the Prophets did to the Jews. The Christian community early concerned itself with speculations regarding the predictions of the Sibyls and their claims to respect. St. Jerome, Eusebius, St. Clement of Alexandria and St. Augustine, pronounced them to have been inspired by divine grace. In the fourth eclogue of Virgil there is a passage believed to have been suggested by a Sibylline tradition, that their power of foreseeing the advent of Christ is sought to be established. It is thus translated:—"The first age of the Cuman song now approaches: the great series of ages begins again; now returns the Virgin (Astræa), now return the Saturnian Kingdoms; now a new progeny is sent from high heaven. Be but propitious, chaste Lucina, to the boy at his birth, through whom the iron age will first cease, and the golden age dawn on the world." The belief of the Roman Catholic Church in the testimony of the Sibyl Tiburtina who informed the Emperor Augustus that a Hebrew child should be born who would be ruler over the immortal gods themselves, is shown by the well known hymn, said to have been composed by Pope Innocent III. at the close of the 13th century, beginning with the verse—

*Dies ire, dies illa,
Sicet secum in parvula,
Tota Dracul cum Sibylla.*

"It may be inferred," says one of the authors of the History of our Lord exemplified in works of art, "that this hymn, admitted into the liturgy of the Roman Church, gave sanction to the adoption of Sibyls into Christian Art. They are seen from this time accompanying the Prophets and Apostles in the Cyclical decorations of the Church—either environing the arch of the principal portal, or ornamenting the stalls in the choir, or imaged forth in the painted glass." Giotto's Campanile at Florence shows the Sibyls with Prophets and Patriarchs on its third tier; Ghiberti's bronze doors contain their graceful figures in the framework of the subjects; on the Holy House at Loretto, they stand in couples; and in some churches they have separate chapels to their honour. On the ceiling of the "Sistine Chapel" Michael Angelo has made the Prophets and the Sibyls to form a gigantic framework round the subjects of the creation, of which the Birth of Eve, as the type of the Nativity, is the intentional centre.

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THE LORE OF THE CALENDAR.

No. I.—THE ASSOCIATION.

The holding of anniversary days for festivity and rejoicing is by no means peculiar to revealed religion. It would appear a practice equally belonging to heathens of all ages, either for political or religious purposes, or for the purpose of celebrating triumphs over enemies, or of promoting both mental and bodily exercises among the people. The ancient world of Greece and Rome was notorious for its observance of days of festivity. In the history of the Athenians we are constantly hearing of the Artemisia, a feast in honour of their goddess Diana; the Dionysia, in honour of Bacchus; the Eleusinia, in honour of Ceres; and the Panathenæa, in honour of Minerva. While in ancient Rome the Matronalia, Cerealia, and Saturnalia are well-known to all classical readers. The Mohammedans also have their feast of victims, celebrated in the last month of their year; and their feast of Bairam, and others.

It would not be right to say, as some persons have said, that the fact of this universal prevalence of festival days among the heathen is an argument against its becoming a custom for Christians.

It may safely be said that this general prevalence of holy days, days of solemnity and rejoicing is to be derived from one common source. What do we find in Holy Writ? The annual feast of the Passover, in memory of the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt; the feast of the Pentecost, to commemorate the deliverance of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai; the feast of Trumpets, to commemorate the beginning of the year, and many others. The Holy Evangelists record that our blessed Lord, when on earth, sanctioned the use of these feasts by his presence, and at one of them, the Passover, he became our sacrifice and atonement for sin, first instituting a feast for Christians in its place, and then, by dying, becoming its fulfilment and antitype.

With us, in Christian churches, Easter Day takes the place of the Passover, and Whit Sunday the place of Pentecost. The memory of martyrs seems, in the Primitive Church, to have been a point of peculiar religious devotion. "The original of these days," says Bingham, "is at least as early as the time of Polycarp, who suffered about the year 168. Tertullian also speaks of these anniversary festivals. St. Cyprian and St. Chrysostom allude to them, and also to the fact that the Holy Eucharist was celebrated, and that alms and oblations were offered for the poor.

Enough has been said to show that there is the authority of

Scripture for the celebration of these holy days. The old Fathers of the Church, and the Bishops since the Reformation sanction the custom. St. Chrysostom beautifully says: "We are met on these holy festivals, not to praise, but to imitate; not to be hearers of the encomiums, but followers of their worthy actions. Therefore if any one would praise the martyrs, let him imitate the martyrs; if any one would give the champions of religion their just encomium, let him emulate their labours." The imaginative Jeremy Taylor, and the "judicious" Hooker, two of the most eminent divines of the Church of England, speak with no uncertain sound. The former says: "The memories of the Saints are precious to God, and therefore they ought also to be to us; and such persons who serve God by holy living, industrious preaching, and religious dying ought to have their names preserved in honour, and God be glorified in them, and their holy lives and doctrines published and imitated." The latter still more strongly says: "Touching these festival days which we now observe, their number being no way felt discommodious to the commonwealth, and their grounds such as hitherto have been showed, what remaineth but to keep them throughout all generations holy, severed by manifest notes of difference from other times, adorned with that which most may betoken true virtuous and celestial joy."

Both the Roman and the Anglican Churches have pronounced what these festivals or holy days shall be, and how they shall be observed.

Wheatly gives the following account of the retention of these days in our calendar:—"The reasons why the names of these saint's days and holy days were resumed into the calendar are various. Some of them being retained on account of our courts of justice, which usually make their returns on these days, or else upon the days before or after them, which are called in the writs Vigil, Fest, or Crast, as in *Vigil-Martin, Fest-Martin, Crast-Martin*, and the like. Others are probably kept for the sake of such tradesmen, handicraftsmen, and others, as are wont to celebrate the memory of their tutelar saints, as the Welshmen do of St. David; the Englishmen St. George; the Scotchmen St. Andrew; the Irishmen St. Patrick; the shoemakers St. Crispin. And again, churches being dedicated to some or other of these saints it has been the usual custom in such places to have wakes or fairs kept on those days, so that the people would probably be displeased, if either in this or the former case their favourite saint's name should be left out of the calendar. Besides, the histories which were writ before the Reformation do frequently speak of transactions happening upon such a holy-day, or about such a time without mentioning the month, relating one thing to be done at Lammastide—and another about Martin-Mas, or Michael-Mas, &c, so that were these names quite left out, we might be at a loss to know when several of these transactions happened."

Shakespeare takes advantage of the custom in his plays. Instance Romeo and Juliet, Act I. Sc. 3:

Nurse.—(Speaking of Juliet.)

"She is not fourteen. How long is it now

To Lammastide?"

Juliet Capulet.—A fortnight and odd days.

Nurse.—Even or odd, of all days in the year

Come Lammastide!—Ere at night, shall she be fourteen.

Susan and she.—God rest all Christian souls!

Were of an age.—Well, Susan is with Child; She was too good for me!

In the Merry Wives of Windsor, Act I. Sc. 1:

Slender.—You have not *The Book of Riddles* about you, have you?

Simple.—*Book of Riddles*? why did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake: upon Allhalloem is last, a fortnight after Michaelmas?

In Henry IV., Part I., Act II., Sc. 4:

Prince.—How old art thou, Francis?

Francis.—Let me see. About Michaelmas next I shall be—

Again, how common it is for people in every rank of life to refer past events to Lady-Day, Michaelmas, Christmas, Whitsuntide, or Easter-tide. And again, the Law and University Terms in England are Lent, Hilary, Easter, Trinity, and Michaelmas.

So much for these fixed and moveable feasts. The feast of the Annunciation always occurs on the 25th of March—commonly known in England as Lady-Day—it is in commemoration of the message of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, informing her that the Word of God had become flesh. It is held in the Roman Church as a great festival. Among the sermons of St. Augustine, who died in 430, are two regarding the festival of the Annunciation.

Bishop Hall, alluding to the Annunciation, says:—"It was no ordinary favour that the Virgin found in Heaven. No mortal creature was ever thus graced that HE should take part of her nature that was the GOD of nature; that HE, which made all things, should make HIS human body of hers, that her womb should yield that flesh which was personally united to the Godhead; that she should bear HIM that upholds the world."

In the calendar of the Anglican Church, (J. H. Parker, Oxford and London, 1851.) we are told that "in representation of the Annunciation, the Virgin Mary is shown kneeling, or seated at a table reading. The lily (her emblem) is usually placed between her and the Angel Gabriel, who holds in one hand a sceptre surmounted by a fleur-de-lis, on a lily stalk; generally a scroll is proceeding from his mouth with the words *Ave Maria gratia plena*; and sometimes the Holy Spirit, represented as a dove, is seen descending towards the Virgin."

In the work here quoted, there is a statement affording strong proof of the high veneration in which the Blessed Virgin was formerly held in England, as she still is, only in a much greater degree, in Roman Catholic countries; namely, that no fewer than two thousand one hundred churches were named in her sole honour, besides a hundred and two in which her name was associated with that of some other saint.

Some of these churches are the finest specimens of Gothic architecture in the world, and are noble monuments of the saintless devotion of merchants and tradesmen of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—of men who thought not of the "nicely calculated less or more," and considered no expenditure short of the utmost of their power sufficient offering in the cause of God;—a spirit, we may say in passing, which is not altogether extinct in England in our day, judging from the number of fine old parish churches and cathedrals which have been and are now being most carefully, faithfully, and thoroughly restored.