

## OUR OTTAWA LETTER

(By Our Own Correspondent.)

Ottawa, Jan. 28.

GROWING INTERESTING. — The political atmosphere is becoming more and more heavy with important events. Although the session is still five or six weeks distant, there is "a gathering of the clans" that indicates great preparations. Your correspondent has repeatedly dwelt upon the probability of a very long session, and the closer that event comes to us, the more clearly does it appear that these forecasts were well founded. As far as the various departments are concerned, it is certain that they are pushing forward their work, preparatory to a meeting of Parliament, with all possible haste. In fact, almost all of them are now ready.

A GLANCE AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS will show that the coming events cast their shadows before — at least their clouds of dust. In the Chamber, itself, there is sweeping and dusting in every corner; the seats of the members are covered with a good inch of grey dust swept down from the galleries; the Speaker's chair is removed "for repairs" which means new upholstery and a general varnishing. In the corridors the matting is being put down. In the immense vestibule, or main entrance, all is one chaotic mass of plaster, chips of marble, and such like. They are preparing the foundation for a magnificent new mosaic pavement. When completed, in a few weeks, it will be one of the most beautiful and artistic floors on the continent of America.

LITTLE STRAWS. — But, apart from these "signs of the times," there are other and more significant as well as more important movements on foot. The meeting of the Premiers of the various provinces, with their requests based upon the conclusions of their Quebec conference of some weeks ago, is a matter of no small moment. It is not possible, as yet, to give a detailed statement of the demands of the Local Governments, much less of the promises made by the Federal authorities; but we can safely conclude that the local Premiers are asking for increased subsidies for their respective provinces. An apparently well-founded rumor has it that they will ask for something in the vicinity of four million dollars additional per annum. This is a subject for discussion when the House meets, and one that will demand considerable attention.

Then there is the matter of the Alaskan boundary. It is now quite evident that, as far as Canadian interests were concerned, the entire matter was in the hands of the Premier. And he has stated, for publication, that the whole matter, in all its details, will go before the commission. It is needless, in this correspondence, to dwell upon the various comments, Canadian, British, and American, upon the appointment of this commission to take into consideration the entire treaty. The daily press is full of the matter, and it does not affect the Capital any more than every other section of the Dominion. Consequently I need say no more, at least for the present on the issue.

MORE GENERALS. — There is a strong rumor afloat here to the effect that when the Parliament meets a new portfolio will be added to those now in existence. If this be true, as there is every reason to suppose, the new minister will rule the Department of Mines. This department will have its source in the vast mining interests created by the Yukon developments. It is said by some that when Hon. Mr. Ross resigned the Lieutenant-Governorship of the Yukon, to take the chances of an election and a seat in the House of Commons, he did so with the understanding that he would become a member of the Cabinet. Consequently he would likely be given the new portfolio — if such is ever created. Whether this be the case or not, there can be no doubt that, with the vast mining interests of to-day, the Federal Government is badly in need of a special department to look after such an important industry.

IRISH CATHOLIC SENATOR. — Another question of moment is the filling of the vacancies in the Senate. We have noticed of late small parties from various sections of Ontario, coming to Ottawa, all with the purpose of pushing the claims of this one, or of that one, for the

Senate. In the case of the Irish Catholic vacancy there seems to be a considerable amount of wire-pulling going on. The names principally mentioned are Messrs. Peter Ryan, of Toronto; Coffey, of London; Cassidy, of Toronto; Coulon, of Thorold; and G. P. Magann, of Toronto. As far as your correspondent could glean, and he has had considerable opportunity of learning the workings of affairs in this connection, there is a good deal of difficulty in regard to the selection. Of course, we must not lose sight of the fact that a Liberal Government is in power, and that it will, very naturally, in the case of such an appointment look to the political antecedents of the candidates. The adherence to the Mowat Government seemed to be more the expression of a sentiment of gratitude for favors conferred upon the Catholic element, than any fixed political principle. Hence, it is that a Liberal Government, at Ottawa, finds it no easy matter to select from that province an Irish Catholic, in every sense qualified and acceptable, and with a complete record of adhesion to that party. In presence of these facts, we might safely conclude that Mr. Peter Ryan would be the most likely person to be selected as successor to the late Senator O'Donoghue. But Mr. Ryan holds the office of Registrar, under the Ontario Government. If your correspondent were asked to wager upon the result, he would find it difficult to do so; but he would be safe in saying that the race appears to be between Coffey and Magann. Both have been independent; the former has a newspaper, the latter has wealth and prestige in the commercial world. Were Mr. Ryan in the field there would be no question as to the result, but as matters now stand, unless there be a "black horse" somewhere in training, it would not be easy to form an opinion.

A REMINISCENCE. — A few days ago one of the old-timers was reminiscing a few friends of one of Sir John Macdonald's remarkable prophecies. He said you all remember the cartoons that were published many years ago when the North-West was first opened up for settlement. Sir John had gone over to England and there had, what has now become, his historical interview with Disraeli. He told the British Premier that in a few years the Americans would come in droves to take up lands in the North-West, and the statement struck Disraeli very forcibly. The Opposition papers of that day made the most of getting into of the circumstances, and Sir John's humbugging Disraeli was rehearsed in every form. The wits had a great time of it. Now, however, that the Americans are coming in by tens of thousands, people are convinced that "Old Tommorrow" as he was affectionately called, was right as usual. But said the man who was telling the story, "I am not so sure that the old chief was not a little afraid that too many United States were not a desirable addition as regards the political future of Canada."

## A Suggestion From Freemantle

At St. Patrick's Church, Freemantle, recently, seventy-six children attending the Catholic schools made their First Communion.

After Mass a breakfast was given them at the convent by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

## Ottawa Irishmen to Celebrate O'Connell's Birthday

An excellent idea and one which is likely to take a practical form is that of honoring the birthday of Ireland's greatest patriot and statesman — Daniel O'Connell — in Ottawa this year.

The matter has been discussed by Ottawa Irishmen, and it is probable that the Hibernians, Irish League and St. Patrick Society will shortly take the matter up. An effort will be made to have the national president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, James E. Dolan of Syracuse, in the city for the occasion; County Secretary W. G. Teale has already communicated with the national president, and he expressed a wish to visit Ottawa.

## Gleams of Light In Darkest Africa.

Among the countless Americans who visit Europe, there are comparatively few who think of extending their tour to the delightful regions of North Africa. And yet it is but a short trip from Marseilles or Nice by the boats of the Transatlantic Company; you close your eyes in your stateroom, tranquilly gazing along the "tideless summer sea," and open them next morning to a vision of an unknown land, so different in all its aspects from anything you have seen before, that you rub them and ask yourself: is this a dream? Am I sleeping or waking?

You land amid a motley crowd of gigantic negro porters, tall stately Arabs, with turbaned heads, Turks, Jews, Moors, and a large sprinkling of French soldiers. Bona is the landing place for the boats, and it presents a most attractive appearance. A broad street opens before you with colonnades on either side, under which are stores and cafes; overhead tall palms spread their glorious foliage which shields you from the sun without veiling the deep azure of the sky?

Mingled with the pleasure of exploring this beautiful land, comes the painful memory of the days when the Cross went down before the Crescent; and the faith which had flourished like a garden of roses was trampled, crushed under the hoofs of Moslem conquerors!

"In her streets, in her halls, desolation hath spoken. And while it is day yet, her sun hath gone down."

Gone down in a night of utter darkness, "pierced by no star." Think of seven hundred bishops who held sway in the African Church! Think of the desert solitaires! Think of the learned doctors, whose writings are still bulwarks of the faith! Think of the virgins, the martyrs, and while thinking, let us tremble at the inscrutable judgments of the Almighty!

Bona was founded in the fifth century, after the destruction of Hippo by Genseric, king of the Vandals. The great St. Augustine died during the siege of the city, over which he had held spiritual rule as priest and bishop for thirty-five years. The site of the buildings formed by the convent and the home are quite close to the church, and command a magnificent view. A wide plain stretches away to the sea, a plain brilliant with the gorgeous colors of tropical vegetation, beyond, in the dim distance, rises a cloud like a range of mountains. On returning you can take a different road and pass the orphan asylum, from which it takes its name: "Monte l'Orphelinat"; it is planted all the way with shade trees; caroubes, acacia, olives, and the lovely tamarisk with its graceful feathery foliage. In the city of Bona is the French cathedral, situated, as are all French churches in Paris, at the end of a boulevard. Here, however, besides the shrubs and flowers, we must admire the palm trees which are an unending delight to strangers.

From Bona to Tunis you go by train through a lovely country, plantations of olives border the road for miles, and the vines cling to every coin of vantage. The barberry fig with its bristly leaves grows here in such abundance that its tangled masses form woods, which remind you of Indian jungles. Here and there a family of wandering Arabs make a little clearing and pitch their tents, making charming pictures, as you get short glimpses of them passing.

Souk Ahras, (the ancient Tagarte) is on the way to Tunis. Here Saint Monica lived with her husband, Patricius; here St. Augustine was born; and after his education was finished he returned here and spent nine years. Of the old town nothing remains; a new one has sprung up on its ruins. The Catholic will see with pleasure the pretty church in the centre of the town; wherever the French gain a foothold, the Church is sure to be in evidence.

Although Tunis is in every respect an Oriental city, there is a French quarter which is thoroughly European. It is however, more interesting to the traveller, in search of novelty, to wander through the haunts of the many-sided natives, and stroll through the bazaars watching the shifting crowd in its many varieties. The Jews are here in great numbers, and have distinctive costume, as have all the different races. One rarely sees an Arab or Moslem woman on the street; when they do venture they are so closely veiled that one wonders how they can see. Jewesses go unveiled. No woman is seen at a window; there are no windows looking on the street in any

house. The front wall is a blank, pierced only by the door through which you enter. Every house has an inner court with a fountain in the centre and steps leading to the apartments above. The home life of a people is here; grouped around the fountain or sitting on the stairs they lounge and gossip. When the sun goes down the roof is the general resort; no man is allowed there. If it is necessary at any time that one should go to make repairs, he is obliged to shout, "Man on the roof," and at once every female disappears.

The dress of the women is very pretty and graceful; long flowing garments falling from the shoulder to the feet, with sashes of brilliant hues confining them at the waist; the head gear is most elaborate and the veil is always worn, only in the house it is allowed to fall in folds down the back. Bracelets, chains, gems and ornaments of every description glitter in barbaric splendor on those poor prisoners. They are not happy, however, they seem to feel their inferiority to Christian women, and hate the bondage in which they are kept. They have no religion, no intellectuality; they are only women, and to dye their finger tips with henna, to tattoo their hands and arms and master all the details of personal appearance is all that is expected of them.

The Jewesses have much more freedom of action than either Turkish or Arab women, but they are even less attractive on account of their corpulence.

There is no difficulty about getting introductions to native houses (for ladies) and the evenings on the roof are delightful, the views enchanting. One can see from a roof in Tunis the group of buildings crowning Cape Carthage, of which the cathedral of St. Louis is the centre.

As there is nothing especially attractive on the way from Tunis to Carthage it is just as well to go by train. We pass the summer palace of Cardinal Lavergne, and soon reach the spot where Carthage once stood. A white marble cross stands on the site of the amphitheatre, in memory of St. Perpetua and to remind the passers-by that the blood of martyrs once irrigated that soil. A little further on ragged shepherd boys tend flocks of miserable looking sheep and goats, which glean but scanty herbage among the stones.

The ruin of Carthage is an "oft told tale." "Carthage vivandant," is the motto to-day. We raise our eyes above the ruins and on the heights behold the noble buildings erected by the Apostle of Africa. The cathedral stands on the hill, where once stood the citadel and temple of Aesculapius; it is dedicated to St. Louis.

In 1270 the holy King, with an army of Crusaders, on their way to Palestine, all burning with zeal and the thirst of pious adventure, thought it would be a meritorious act, and a lasting service to the soldiers of the Cross, to root out and destroy the nest of pirates of which Tunis was the headquarters, and which constantly poured forth its venomous swarms, decimating, and in every way harassing the Christian armies. But it pleased the Most High to withhold success from His faithful servant. Disease broke out among the troops; many fell victims to its ravages. The King went among the sufferers, consoling, exhorting, soothing, until he too, was forced to succumb.

Feeling that his end approached, he called his sons and gave him many wise counsels; then, having with great fervor received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, without a murmur, rendered up his heroic soul. Looking back through the centuries, the sweet memory of St. Louis and his gallant followers is a link between the glory of the early Church and the missions of to-day. They came and went like Leonidas flashing through the darkness, but more powerful than those material bodies, leaving a trail of light that will never fade! — E. McAuliffe, in the Rosary Magazine.

## Talk to Subscribers

The Michigan Catholic has the record subscriber to a Catholic newspaper. We will not give the gentleman's name, but up to last week his subscription stood on our books as paid until 1900. This week we received from him payment for ten additional years' subscription, making him a paid up subscriber until 1909! If any of our contemporaries can beat this we are willing to let them crow.

## OUR NEXT STORY WILL BE

## "The Collegians"

No name in Irish history occupies a warmer corner in the hearts of the people than that of Gerald Griffin. His life so pure and simple, his manner so retiring, his genius so elevating, his patriotism so sincere, all tend to make him a popular idol. His writings have been the theme of the most brilliant orations, and many are the older amongst our fellow-citizens who remember the beautiful periods of D'Arcy McGee when dealing with the life and times of the great Irish poet and novelist. Some of the recent statistics published by the Hibernians of the larger cities inform us that there is now a revival in the demand for the works of Sir Walter Scott. If the novelist poet of Scotland evokes enthusiasm amongst his fellow-countrymen the world over, why should not the works of Griffin be again brought to the front, by the children of those whose fathers' ways he portrayed with such fidelity? There is a movement on foot to-day for the teaching of the old language of the Gael, and another for the promotion of the study of Irish history in our schools, what better supplement could there be than the study of Griffin where the actors in that history and the last of that line to speak the old language, are made to give in a life picture of the days and the doings that should never be forgotten. He who would realize Ireland a century ago must read Griffin. But beyond the historical wealth that is to be found in the books of that great and gifted writer there is the panoramic view of the customs and habits of the people, as well as of the scenes in which the plots are laid. We have been requested by one of our most gifted priests, a subscriber outside of our province, to do our share towards bringing about the much deserved revival, and it is our intention to present to the readers of the "True Witness" Griffin's great work the "Collegians." We commend it more specially to our young patrons who are in danger of never realizing all that is beautiful, heroic and thrilling in the glorious days when a people suffered every persecution and endowed every wrong for the love of faith and fatherland.

## The Little Orphans And Their Care.

How few of our Catholic people give a thought to the countless little children who are dependent on public bounty. The other day Mr. Thomas M. Mulry, president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, delivered an interesting address on "The Care of Dependent Children" in Brooklyn. Among other things he said:—

"It is conceded, without question, that there is no better protection for a child than the home into which it was born, if that happens to be a normal home. It is also acknowledged by all that after the natural home the next best thing is another good home, where the child will have that tender care so necessary to develop its character. In some sections of the country it is stated that such homes have been found for about all the dependent children. In a city like ours, however, where the population grows by leaps and bounds, where we are brought face to face continually with all sorts of conditions, and where there are probably from fifteen to twenty thousand dependent and delinquent children to be looked after, the possibility of ever reaching that system is rather remote.

"The placing out system, with its advantages and abuses, has been so

frequently dilated upon, and with which you are so familiar, that I will say but little. As conducted to-day it is much better than in the past, but the laws enacted in the different States restricting the work and placing it under conditions speak eloquently of the evil effects of such placing out.

"The younger the child the more desirable is the placing out, and the work done by the societies who take infants in charge, such as the Foundling Asylum, Joint Committee of the State Charities Aid Association, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Guild of the Infant Saviour and others of the kind, present the most encouraging and consoling aspect of the work.

"My experience has led me to believe that it is unwise to send boys, regardless of their wishes, to the country. A boy who has had a taste of city life will in most cases try to return, and it is better to place him in the city than to force him to go to the country. Regarding girls, it always seems to me that it is better to place them where they are within easy reach of the visitors, unless they are very young or the home be an exceptionally good one. No homes in the country for girls of 12 to 14 years, should be considered. The drudgery is sure to fall upon them in most cases, and the dangers are even greater than in the city. The boarding out idea is, to my mind, the least attractive of all methods of dealing with children. The great objections to this system, which makes it require more care than any other, are:

"First—The difficulty of finding people willing to take the children for a higher motive than mere money making.

"Second—The disadvantages the children are placed at in the schools.

"Third—The temptation to make drudges out of them.

"For several years past we have been obliged to go to Albany to oppose a bill granting to mothers the per capita allowance given to institutions. It was considered immoral, dangerous and impracticable. I agree with the verdict, but a careless boarding out system would create a sentiment which would force the passage of just such a bill.

"There is considerable agitation over the child labor question. The street gamins, the factory child and others are the subjects of great attention, and deservedly so. Laws are to be introduced for the purpose of supervising the conditions of the poor children of the city. It seems to me that we might also remember the waifs of the description I have just mentioned, and add to the laws a clause forbidding the placing of children under the age of 12 or 14, unless with a very near relative, this law to have no bearing on children placed out for adoption or indenture. In this way we would reach those who wilfully abuse children given in their charge.

## St. Patrick's Cadets First Muster.

The newly-organized St. Patrick's Cadets will make their first public appearance in the Monument National, on St. Lawrence street, on Monday, February 9th, when the members will present the thrilling drama "The Blind Spy" or the "Siege of Constantinople."

For the past three months the preliminary work of organization of the Cadets has been directed by Rev. Martin Callaghan, P.P., assisted by the Christian Brothers in charge of St. Patrick's School, and by the well known competent authority on military matters, Major Phillips. As a result, two companies of Cadets will muster at the coming entertainment, in attractive uniforms—No. 1, comprising young men of the parish, and No. 2, recruited from the pupils of St. Patrick's School.

Now that the Cadets have been organized our people in general and the members of St. Patrick's parish in particular, should give them such a rousing reception as to leave no doubt whatever in the minds of our spiritual guides and others responsible for the undertaking that their efforts are fully appreciated. Every Catholic family in Montreal should have its representative in the audience to greet the Irish boys of St. Patrick's parish when the curtain rises on the evening of February 9th.

The priests, it may be said, kept aloof from elections and county councils and it is wise for them to enter policy. If the policy involves

## Catholics and Education

(From the Catholic Times (Eng.))

Preliminary steps in the new Education Act, taken, and at the present all over the country the eyes who will have to carry out the intentions of the Legislature, equipped with the details of the work. In many places, as in Manchester, the provisions of the Act are revolutionary. The changes in the measure are revolutionary. It is needless to say that the members of council called upon to put the force feel somewhat bewildered by the old order disappears; the Boards pass away; the system is transformed; the schools and denominations are, so to speak, fused in a national scheme of education. It will be needed to make alterations and to lay down lines of success in the new Act. Both knowledge and skill are requisite and abseems to us, a spirit of To ensure such harmony of of all bodies entitled to ntion on the education c must be fairly met. There ever, a danger lest this n prove to be the case. Th with whom the appointme have been elected on issu than educational and inte eign to the purposes of to some extent determine of members of the educa mitted. This or that sect electorate may happen to dominant power in the co may claim undue represent the committees, to the ex others who should have an voice in directing educatio gress. In Liverpool the community was not treat when names were adopted City Council for a special tee to report upon the Ac tive members of the c not more than five or six ics, and Alderman Pure properly declared that if not a larger Catholic repr on the education committe was selected it would not confidence of the Catholics pool, who number a third population.

The importance of safe the rights of the Catholic in connection with the committee raises a grave for the Catholic body. As ops pointed out in their pe the House of Lords, the have hitherto been able to their views known through elected representatives. School Board elections the tive vote provided for the ation of minorities, and in district of England and V which there are any con number of Catholics they exerted their strength at t as to have ensured the prot their own interests. Natu Catholic vote for the Scho elections, and some of the table victories achieved dur contests have been due to forts and their legitimate Are the Catholic clergy in to have a distinct part in which closely concern educa educational interests of are now very largely under trol of the members of the committees elected by the or co-opted. The desire to the cause of education and satisfaction to all denot and classes of the people w hope, govern the selection committees, and careful will, it is to be presumed, to representations from managers. But it is safe ture that those who car through direct representati the councils will have the ests attended to more th than people who are not in tion to do this. It appea therefore that Catholics fresh and a strong incen to increase their representi councils, and that it may whether the clergy should the approval and encourag their bishops, devote to tions some of that unselfi which has been such a fact School Board contests. The priests, it may be sa kept aloof from elections and county councils and it is wise for them to enter policy. If the policy involv politics, the advantages