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THE MONTH OF MAY AND
OF MARY.

The institution of days or periods during which special consideration of some mystery of religion is recommended to the Christian is a wise practice of the Church, inasmuch as by this means all the chief truths which have an influence upon our salvation, or a relation to the work of our Redemption, are brought before us in succession. Meditation upon these truths must necessarily tend to impress them vividly upon our minds, and thus in succession during the year our attention is particularly called to some great mystery until the whole cycle is completed.

During the month of May the virtues and prerogatives of Mary the Mother of God afford us ample matter for reflection, whether we regard them as evidences of God's bounty, which should lead us to admire that infinite goodness which bestows favors gratuitously, or the bestowal of new gifts and graces in recompense for virtues which have been put into practice.

Under both of these respects there is an inexhaustible subject for our admiration in God's dealings with the Blessed Virgin, and much for which the whole human race has cause for never-ending gratitude. To that class of favors which was gratuitously conferred upon Mary the Mother of God, the Immaculate Conception of course belongs. It is of Catholic faith that from the first moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin was free from the contagion of sin to which all the rest of mankind were subjected on account of the fall of our first parents, "in whom all have sinned."

The Blessed Virgin was not freed from sin, after being partaker in the contagion, but by a special grace, and through the infinite efficacy of the Redemption which Christ came on earth to bring to man, she was absolutely freed from the stain of sin before she contracted it. She was, therefore, from her earliest infancy, pure as were our first parents before the fall, pure as the angels who, yielding not to the blandishments of Lucifer, retained their original innocence in which God created them.

This grace of the Immaculate Conception was needed in Mary in order to secure the absolute spotlessness of Christ Himself, and it was, of course, one of the graces conferred upon Mary gratuitously. Yet we may well say that it would not have been conferred if God in His Omnipotence had not known that Mary would put to good use this and all other graces which He might deign to confer upon her. In accordance with this view St. Ephrem, the learned and meditative Bishop of Sarag, says that so great is the sanctity of God made man, and so great the incompatibility between Him and sin, that if Mary had been to the smallest degree stained with its contagion He would have prepared for Himself another mother perfectly stainless. God for, saw, therefore, that Mary would put to good use the graces granted her.

These considerations serve to show us in what light the traditions of the Catholic Church have always regarded the sinlessness of Mary. She is sinless, not only because she received special graces from God, but also because, in the exercise of her free will, she co-operated with all the graces conferred upon her, and thus increased her store of sanctity and merited new favors from her Creator, without any stint or limit of which we can conceive.

The month of May has been selected by the Church as peculiarly suitable for cultivating devotion to the Blessed Virgin, because what happens in the spiritual order by the advent of Mary upon the earth has its analogy in the natural order each year when the month of May returns to gladden its aspect. The winter season clothes the world in a dreary garb which reminds us strongly of death. The crops have long been gathered from the fields, the very leaves of the trees have perished, and nothing remains to remind us that a few months ago the face of nature was covered with a glorious and

refreshing verdure which cheered our hearts as we gazed upon it. Even the grass, which grows spontaneously, has ceased to enliven our sight. But as May approaches a change is at once apparent. The grass appears first on one spot; then another bleak spot is covered with its mantle of green, the trees give forth their buds, and the leaves spring forth by degrees, until, when May is with us, the earth, which was lately so desolate and deathlike, has become a very garden of delights.

On the spiritual life of the world the advent of the Immaculate Mary has a similarly vivifying effect. It was the wickedness of mankind which brought on the general deluge for the punishment of the world; yet, at the period when Mary was conceived and born immaculate, the demoralization of mankind must have been almost, if not quite, as great as when God determined to destroy the human race because man's wickedness was intolerable. Not the heathens alone had forgotten God, but the very nations which God had selected to be the depositaries of His truth had so degenerated that they deserved the keenest reproaches which our Divine Saviour cast upon their leaders, as "wicked sepulchres," and "a generation of vipers." It is true that redemption from sin was not effected until our Lord suffered death upon the cross; but the graces enjoyed by Mary, who was to bear a prominent part in the work of Redemption, were the dawn of the new era; and her noble example could not but have borne its fruit even in that degenerate age. Of her it is recorded that she laid up in her heart all that was said of her Divine Child. Her example was, therefore, truly like the month of May in its renewing effects upon the spiritual life of the world.

Ernest Catholics should, during this month, endeavor to profit by the graces which will certainly be imparted to those who regard Mary as their mother, and who imitate her virtues, and especially her love for her Divine Son.

A DEATH WAIL.

The Rev. Dr. Caven, Principal of Knox College and prime mover and President of the Equal Rights Association, is out with a new manifesto in vindication of the policy of that organization from the severe criticisms with which it has been received by all who desire the peace and prosperity of our country. The document is in reality the death wail of the organization.

There is nothing which more clearly points out the preposterousness of the demands of the so-called Equal Rightists than the unanimity with which its leaders attack all the political parties in the country as if they were slaves of the Pope and the much-abused Jesuits; and Dr. Caven, like his colleagues in the existing agitation, does not hesitate to malign all parties to similar purpose if not quite so opprobriously as the Rev. Superintendent or ex-Bishop Carman of the Canadian Methodist Church. The Principal of Knox College says:

"We do not traduce the parties in saying that the Church of Rome has been zealously courted by both, and that, while both Conservatives and Reformers well know that Rome has her own ends to serve and cares nothing for their politics, they will stick at little which may help them, for the time, to secure the Catholic vote. There are, of course, among our public men, noble exceptions to this rule of subservience, but the parties as such are utterly weak whenever Rome is united in her demands."

Who are these politicians, both Provincial and Dominion, whom the Equal Rightists denounce so pertinaciously? They are those who, for twenty, thirty, or even forty years, have commanded the confidence of the Canadian public, and who, owing to their ability and honesty of purpose, have administered the affairs of the country for these lengthened periods, because they possessed the confidence of the great majority of the people. They may have erred sometimes, and undoubtedly they have erred, for they are human; but the great bulk of the people recognize and will continue to recognize that they have at heart the public weal; and when we behold the unusual sight of a practically unanimous vote in the Parliament of Canada, wherein a mere majority suffices to rule, it is morally certain that the measure so supported commends itself to the moral sense of the community as both equitable and wise.

In the Dominion Parliament, especially, every interest in Canada is pretty fairly represented. Catholics form in it a considerable element, but it cannot be said that they have any influence beyond what is due to them, for their representation falls far short of what their ratio to population would justly demand. Protestants constitute more than two-thirds of the House of Commons, yet it is mainly of the vote by which the Jesuit Estates Act was sustained that Principal Caven and his colleagues in the Equal Rights Association complain, that the two political parties vied with each other in subservience to Rome by acknowledging Quebec's right to pass that Act.

Surely all the honesty and statesmanship of the Canadian Parliament are not

concentrated in the thirteen who voted in the minority on that occasion, thirteen nobodies, for the most part, who never have been, and who probably never will be, considered by the people of Canada as their ablest and most upright representatives. They are remarkable chiefly for their virulent hostility to Catholics, who must, after all, be recognized as an important factor of the population of the country, even though they be but a minority. Evidences of this hostility to Catholics are to be seen in the foolish threatenings uttered by Mr. McCarthy in his speeches delivered before the Orangemen, and even in his speeches in Parliament on the two occasions when he especially made it his duty to malign a respectable body of Catholic priests and to sneer at the French Canadian population, who will not yield to him either in courage or ability. Mr. Charlton's no-Popery lectures delivered in various parts of the Province are additional evidence, if more were wanted, on the subject.

But Principal Caven abuses not only the leading politicians but also the two political parties of the Dominion, Reformers and Conservatives. This is running amuck with a vengeance, for the two parties constitute almost the whole population of the country.

Dr. Caven very needlessly alarms himself and endeavors to alarm the public lest there will be in the future some encroachments of "Romanists" upon the rights of Protestants. There have been no such encroachments in Quebec, where Catholics form the great majority of the people, so, surely, they need not be expected in the other Provinces wherein Protestants are so decidedly in the ascendant. In educational matters the most careful scrutiny has shown that Protestants are better off than they were treated with strict justice, and as to the Jesuit Estates Act, it is needless to prove again that it would be quite just for a Catholic Province to recompense the Jesuit Order and the Church for a gross injury which had been inflicted on them. But what was really done was to distribute \$100,000 for higher education, to Catholics and Protestants alike, in proportion to population. Never was a more senseless cry raised than the cry of Dr. Caven's Association, that this was a violation of Equal Rights which the Protestants of the Dominion should resent. It is not likely, then, that where Catholics form a small minority, as in Ontario, they will attempt to deprive Protestants of their natural rights. The violation of Equal Rights is, in fact, at this moment threatened by such ultra Protestants as would compel Catholics to help to educate their children, while they would be obliged to educate their own at their own expense.

There is one pleasant feature about Dr. Caven's manifesto, that is the virtual admission that the Equal Rights movement is really defunct. It is the chant of the dying swan. The President of the Association, besides acknowledging, as we have seen above, that the great parties in the country wish to see the end of the organization, says: "It is too soon to predict the fate of the Equal Rights movement." The reason he gives for this is that it still shows some signs of life. All this means that to all appearances the only prediction which can reasonably be made is that it will die soon, if it be not already virtually dead. Dr. Caven's final appeal for support is then made to the Protestants of the United States. He says: "We therefore count, in fighting this battle, upon the sympathy and moral support of our brethren south of the lakes."

Such an appeal would be quite unnecessary if there were a spark of vitality in the concern.

A MORMON PROBLEM.

While we Canadians are troubling ourselves about the influx of Mormons from Utah into the North-West, and fearing lest the four or five hundred followers of Brigham Young who have settled in that territory may form the nucleus of a polygamous population in Canada, and are legislating to prevent the threatened misfortune, we seem to have overlooked the fact that Mormonism is not confined to the neighborhood of Lee's Creek. The statistics presented at the general Conference of non-polygamous Mormons which met recently at Lamoni, Iowa, state that the Canadian membership of that branch of the "Latter Day Saints" amounts to 1,458, showing an increase of 183 during the past year.

The most of these are in the Western part of Ontario, London, Kent and Elgin Districts, wherein the membership reaches 1,276. The rest are found chiefly in Nova Scotia and Manitoba. It is reported that the progress of the sect is very satisfactory, but it will be anything but satisfactory to the people of Ontario to learn that this superstition has made among them such strides as to have increased nearly 13 per cent. in a single year. It is somewhat reassuring that we are told that these Mormons are non-polygamous, but it is still sad to think that a superstition so gross

should make progress at all in our midst.

It will be remarked that Mormonism has made its converts among the non-Catholics of Canada. Might not the opponents of religious education in the schools learn from this that there is a decided benefit to be derived from the teaching of religion in the school room, if it serves only to check the growth of such a system of belief and practice? Surely the fanatics who are seeking to destroy the Catholic schools would be better occupied if they were to devise rather the means of giving to their children more efficient religious teaching, for without such teaching the principles of morality itself cannot be efficiently inculcated. If they had at heart the interests of the country this would be their endeavor, instead of insanely driving out religion where it is now to be found.

ARCHBISHOP CLEARY'S CIRCULAR.

The Mail and its bevy of unscrupulous correspondents still keep harping on Archbishop Cleary's private circular to the priests of his diocese, on the necessity of supporting, by every means in their power, the existing Catholic Separate school system, as provided by law. What the Mail and its fanatical contributors have to do with interfering between a Catholic Bishop and his clergy, is a puzzle that human calculation may vainly try to solve. In a free country like this a Catholic Bishop ought to enjoy all the rights that a father is expected to exercise over his children, or a shepherd over his flock. If Archbishop Cleary went out of his way to attack the proceedings of a Methodist Conference, or to attempt legislating for the Protestant ministers or their adherents, reasons sufficient would appear for indignant protest on the part of the Protestant press and people. But when a Bishop, who has charge over a certain number of priests, and who is bound by every sacred duty to provide for the moral and religious training of the people entrusted to his vigilance and pastoral care, issues private circulars for the direction of those who have immediate charge of each particular flock or parish, it is the sublimity of audacity and presumption for any Protestant journal or Protestant person to raise a cry of alarm.

Archbishop Cleary's circular is nothing but a private and confidential instruction to the clergy of his diocese respecting the sacraments of the Church and the dispositions required in the recipient for their valid administration by the priest. This is a supreme duty imposed by his sacred office on every Bishop, which he dare not regard lightly, and his judgment is the rule of action.

The circular merely ordains what is to be the rule henceforth in the diocese of Kingston, and it is nothing else than what for many years has been the ecclesiastical law in every other diocese in this Province. Kingston diocese has at all times proved so faithful to the Church in regard of Catholic education of youth, that the Bishop saw no necessity for enacting the law of "reservation." The reasons for promulgating such now are the political strife in which educationists are engaged, and the temptations held out, or the false arguments used, to lure away Catholics from the path of parental duty. The Archbishop therefore enacts as follows:

If unhappily there be any Catholic ratepayers, "who in this hour of conflict between the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of Christ," deliberately choose to side with the enemy for the gradual destruction of Catholic education in this Province, I hereby charge you, as the pastor of the souls of your people and guardian of the rights of Jesus Christ and His Church, to call upon every ratepayer before the 1st of next March, and announce to him in my name and authority, as his bishop, that:

1. His action in this matter is "rebellion against the Church," and he comes under the anathema pronounced by the Son of God, "If any man will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

2nd. That I hereby reserve to myself alone, or, in my absence from my diocese, to the Administrator for the time being, all power of absolving such rebellious Catholics from his sins, unless he shall have signed a written declaration, or ordered it to be signed by his agent, that he heartily repents of having injured the Church and scandalized his neighbors by his withdrawal of his taxes from Catholic education, and shall have promised to become a supporter of the Separate school at the earliest opportunity. On receipt of this declaration in writing, any priest of my diocese may absolve him.

3rd. The reservation of faculties applies to the article of death as firmly as to any other. The rule that, "no case is reserved at the hour of death," signifies only that penitents who at that hour confess a reserved sin, and are heartily sorry for having committed it, and firmly resolve to avoid it in the future, and moreover, are willing to repair, in the manner prescribed by the Church, whatsoever scandal their evil action may have given, may be absolved by any priest without awaiting special faculties from the Bishop. But neither in life nor at death can a sinner be validly absolved without true contrition for his sins, and firm purpose of amendment, and reparation, as far as in him lies, of the injury done by him to individuals or to the Church or to Christian society.

There is nothing arbitrary or new in

this enactment, but an explicit declaration of the divine law of sacramental action, with special reference to a particular class of public sinners, to whom the law of God would be applicable, whether reserved by the Bishop or not, but whose case, by reason of its present importance, the Archbishop reserves to himself for judgment in each individual application for pardon.

The circular plainly sets forth the nature and gravity of the public sin reserved by him, viz: in the conflict between Satan and Christ. The bad Catholic has taken sides with the agents of Satan. His act is co-operation with the enemies of religion, for the gradual destruction of Catholic education in this Province, and constitutes nothing less than rebellion against the Church, whose right and paramount duty it is to "feed the lambs and feed the sheep." It is for the Church to imbue its children with intellectual and moral principles of truth and rectitude—to purify the minds and hearts of youth, and to elevate their aspirations and hopes by the constant inculcation of God's universal presence and power and holiness. The Catholic parent who refuses to be thus instructed, or to allow his children to be thus educated, is merely a rebel against her authority, and falls under the anathema pronounced by the Saviour: "If any man shall not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican."

The consequences of the public sinner's obduracy in his sinful disposition, even in the article of death, are detailed most carefully by the Archbishop for the guidance of his clergy. These, too, are but an enforcement of the common law of the Church, practiced throughout the ages, in regard of public sinners, who refuse to repent at death. The favors and graces placed by Jesus Christ at the disposal of His Church, amongst which are her sacrifices and suffrage for the souls of her departed children who have died in her peace are not to be disregarded, or vainly applied to those who die in the enemy's camp, resisting her and defying her authority, and boasting, perhaps in their last breath, that they prefer the praise of Caius's enemies to the prayers and consolations of His holy Church.

INTIMIDATION.

The men and journals that take a special delight in slandering Archbishop Cleary, and misrepresenting his motives, have raised the cry that His Grace's circular was issued with a view to intimidate and frighten the Catholics into signing the necessary declaration in regard to Separate schools, on or before the 1st of March. To show that this charge is an unfair one, we may state that the date of the circular was February 24th. It was then printed and carried by mail to the residence of every priest in the diocese. The circular could not possibly reach its destination, except in a few places, before the day fixed by law for the transmission of declaration to the clerk of the municipality. People were left free to act upon their judgment and in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience as Catholics and supporters of Christian education. His Grace's charge to his clergy is: "If, unhappily, there be any Catholic ratepayers who, in this hour of conflict between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ, choose to side with the enemy," etc. He thus assumes that every one has already given his name for one set of schools or the other, and he then directs the priest to call upon any Catholic who may have done the wrong thing, and admonish him of his duty to undo it if possible before the 1st of March.

We have heard, on the very best authority, that there has been no need of such admonition in the length and breadth of the Archdiocese of Kingston, except in two parishes; in one of which two individuals had acted badly, one of whom subsequently retracted his errors; whilst in the other some petty quarrelling amongst the Catholic ratepayers concerning the site of the school houses had led some of them to take the anti Catholic position some months prior to the Archbishop's circular, in order to spite the others, both parties being agreed on the principle of maintaining Catholic schools for their children.

But let us suppose that His Grace of Kingston had issued his instructions a whole month previous to the 1st March, where is the unreasonable or unrightful intimidation? No parent or legislator, no judge or teacher, will presume to say that all intimidation is unlawful or unjust. On the contrary, all and every one of them must admit that correction, restraint, holy fear and downright intimidation is at times wholesome and necessary for all. It is oftentimes forcibly asserted and exercised for the direction of erring minds, and the counterbalancing of pernicious influences. All recognize that "reverential fear is Wisdom's sponsor." The action of a Catholic leaguizing himself with the enemies of his Church, against her divine right and government, must be admitted by all, whether Catholic or Protestant, to be inconsistent

with his religious profession, and consequently a sin against conscience. By Catholics, however, it cannot be otherwise regarded than as an act of treason against Christ and His kingdom. If the civil power is justified in employing intimidation against Protestant ratepayers, should they refuse to pay their taxes to the support of Protestant schools, whether they like to do so or not, how can the Church be blamed for withholding her blessings and spiritual privileges from rebellious children who resist her authority and strive to divest her of her divine right of guardianship of her children's moral and intellectual training?

If a man professes to be a Catholic, let him abide by the Church's laws, or submit, as he must, to the judgment of her tribunals, or openly apostatize. He cannot be Catholic in name and anti-Catholic in practice. She cannot tolerate this. Christ has armed her with all sufficient power of self-protection against traitors from within and enemies from without, and against all the forces, visible and invisible, of the "Prince of Darkness" and the "Gates of Hell."

We cannot conclude without expressing our gratitude to Archbishop Cleary for his open, honest, clear and manly assertion of the Church's rights and of Catholic duty in this crisis, whereon depend the Christian education, and no doubt the soul's salvation probably of millions yet unborn.

THE BATTLE BEGUN.

The election is on. Mr. Meredith and Mr. Creighton have nailed their colors to the mast, and orange is the prevailing tint. The men who declare publicly that the Catholics of this country are the "common enemy" have no more reason for existence than Orangeism, whose sole aim and end is to uphold Protestant ascendancy. No doubt the Meredith Party will be aided by the fanatics of the Equal Rights chain gang, in the counties where the latter do not feel strong enough to bring out a man of their own. The Tories will make no end of stump speeches on the efforts of their representatives to cripple, if not smash up, the Separate school system in the session just held in Toronto. Mr. Creighton will be lauded to the skies for his adoption of the London programme and his fierce attacks on the French children who cannot speak English, and who must be left uneducated unless they have received the "gift of tongues." Mr. Meredith's invectives against the interference of priests or Bishops in the election of school trustees, or the choosing of school teachers, or the selection of text-books for Catholic schools, will be cited on every Orange platform, and, without doubt, all his bigoted motions of hostility to Catholics, which received the six months' hoist, will be paraded in print and on platform and serve as campaign literature for the next six weeks.

Mr. Clancy will also be appealing to his Orange supporters, on the score of the undisputed aid and encouragement he gave to the bigots in their rabid onslaught on the Catholic Separate schools. He will make it heard in every hole and corner, and in every township school-house where but one color, the orange, is seen, that he "withstood Hon. C. F. Fraser to the face," and taunted him in open Parliament with being the champion of Catholic rights, and the spokesman of the Hierarchy. It seems strange that such a course would be open to censure from a Catholic. Let us see how a Protestant member views Mr. Fraser's action. Mr. Balfour said: "Because Mr. Clancy had not spoken on behalf of the Roman Catholic minority, was that any reason why Mr. Fraser should not do so? Why should not Mr. Fraser speak on behalf of the minority? Were the Roman Catholics to have no voice in the Legislature, because Mr. Clancy declined to present their views on the questions now at issue? Where could they find a more eloquent or a more liberal advocate of the Roman Catholic minority of the Province than the Commissioner of Public Works?"

We are of opinion that Mr. Clancy made an irreparable mistake when he undertook to castigate Hon. C. F. Fraser for upholding Catholic rights and for acknowledging his respect and his loyalty to the teachings and guidance of the Church of his fathers. If Mr. Clancy were a sound Catholic, and not a party voting machine, he would have applauded every word uttered by Hon. C. F. Fraser on the Catholic school question. Instead, he allowed himself to be set up against Mr. Fraser, and taunted him for being too good a Catholic and too obedient a son of the Church, thus affording the country the sad spectacle of one Catholic roasting another on the spit. When a so-called Catholic allows himself in critical moments to be thus made a tool of, he willingly forfeits every claim to honorable consideration, and should never expect in the future to secure even one Catholic vote.

The Prussian laws against the Jesuits are still rigorously enforced, although they are allowed to retain their missions in the German colonies in Africa. On February 15, two Jesuits who had preached, or were going to preach, during a mission at Kisten, in the Province of Posen, were arrested by gendarmes and conveyed to the frontier.