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The Montreal Witness

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MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1897.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

A JUBILEE OF SORROW.

Remembering the Dead on the Banks of the St. Lawrence.

THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO DIED FOR IRELAND.

Grand Demonstration—Let a Mortuary Chapel be Built—Thousands in the Procession and Thousands Line the Route.

The Splendid Efforts of the Redemptorist Fathers Rewarded.

Never before in the history of the Irish Catholics of Montreal was there paid such a tribute to the hallowed dead as that witnessed on Sunday, when thousands poured across the canal to honor the grave of the dead who died for Ireland. It is true that these dead did not meet their fate front to front to the foe in battle for Ireland's rights. It is true that they surrendered their lives on stranger soil, but they, like the heroes who suffered death on English gibbets, were none the less martyrs to the cause of resistance against tyranny and foul oppression. In their native land they could not stay; starvation and persecution on the one hand with the offer of apostasy on the other. This was their prospect in the land of their birth, that land of sorrow whose children have so long wept in vain.

Self preservation compelled them to live, self respect compelled them to cast aside the offer of the proselytizer. There was one refuge—that of exile—and happy indeed was the Irish Catholic of the time who could seek even this unhappy alternative. Here on the soil of Canada, where policy had guaranteed to their faith the rights which common humanity should have given them in Ireland, this band of Irish men, women and children sought a home. They died martyrs to their religion and their love of freedom, and how are they remembered by their fellow-countrymen, who, happier than they, have lived to see the Irish Catholics of Canada an honored race and foremost in the ranks of leaders of men? And have the Irish of to-day given a thought to the memory of those whose bones rest on the bleak bank of the St. Lawrence? Have they given proof of any spirit to honor and keep green the memory of these unfortunate Irish people who met so unhappy a fate in order to preserve their faith immaculate and pure?

The question can answer itself. The huge stone which marks the resting place of the dead is nature's handiwork and the labor spent in placing it in position came from stranger hands and is in no sense an Irish monument for Irish men and women. It is to be hoped and we believe it to be a fact that the demonstration of last Sunday is but the commencement of a movement which will end in having a fitting memorial erected for the victims of 1847. To our mind a mortuary chapel where at stated intervals fitting prayers should be said for those who rest below would be the best form of commemoration. Shaft and pedestal are well enough in their way. They are pleasant to the eye and make the prospect ornamental, but in the mortuary chapel, kneeling in prayer, the soul of the living comes into touch with the soul of the dead, and instead of an empty monument of stone the worshipper feels the heartfelt beats of sympathy moving in his breast.

The rough granite stone bears on its face this inscription—
 To Preserve from desecration the remains of 6,000 immigrants who died from ship fever, A.D. 1847, THIS STONE IS ERECTED BY THE WORKMEN OF MESSRS. PETO BRASSY & BETTS, EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VICTORIA BRIDGE, A.D. 1859.
 This is all there is to mark the resting place of thousands. To the Reverend Fathers of the Redemptorist Order, who year in and year out have never faltered

in their work of keeping bright and clear the memory of the victims of the ship fever, is due the initiative of this grand movement which resulted in such a great demonstration as that of Sunday last.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians, and other Catholic Societies of the city vied with each other in their efforts to do honor to the occasion. His Grace Archbishop Brachei was present, officiating at the cemetery, and was assisted by Rev. Fathers Schellhaut and Smead, Bishop Michaud of Ogdensburg, Rev. Father Strubbe, Hon. Dr. Guerin, M. L. A., President of St. Patrick's Society, Mr. M. J. F. Quinn, M. P., Dr. Devlin, Hon. Judge Carran, Rev. Father Quinlan, Rev. Father O'Donnell, Rev. Father Donnelly, Rev. Father McCallen, Mr. Jos. P. Clarke, Mr. Alfred Perry, Mr. Arthur Jones, Hon. James McShane, Mr. F. B. McNamee, Ald. Kinsella, Ald. Cunningham, in fact all the prominent Irish Catholics of Montreal were present at the ceremony.

The turn out of the different national societies will not be forgotten. The following were represented in the procession—Ancient Order of Hibernians, Catholic Order of Foresters, Catholic Mutual Benefit Association, Young Men's Societies, Temperance Societies, Irish Benevolent Society, St. Patrick's Society. Along the route the flags were at half-mast, and on the corner of St. Patrick and Wellington streets hung the grand old Irish banner draped in black. All through the demonstration was one which did honor to the Irish Catholic race. There were fully five thousand men in the line of procession and four times that number of spectators lined the streets and listened to the speeches from the platform. It was indeed a solemn spectacle—the living Irish Catholics of Montreal greeting those who have gone before. St. Ann's choir, reinforced by the representatives of the various choirs of the Irish parishes, and under the leadership of Prof. P. J. Shea, sang the *Liberia* in a most impressive manner.

Rev. Father Strubbe's Address.
 Speaking from the front of the platform, Rev. Father Strubbe then reminded the gathering of the occasion which had drawn them together. He said that he had expected such well known Irish priests as Fathers Brown, McCauley and Quinn to address them; but circumstances made it impossible for them to be present. However, if they did not hear from an Irish tongue they heard from an Irish heart. He historically referred to the mournful history of the unfortunate immigrants who, fifty years ago, had left their home across the seas to find in a new country the livelihood which was denied to them in their own country, and the mournful fate which befell them in the land which they had looked forward to with feelings of hope. As they stood on the deck of the ship, and took a last fond look at the scenes of their childhood, many of their number were no doubt impressed with the sentiments expressed in the following lines:—

When I slumber in the gloom
 Of a nameless foreign tomb,
 By a distant Ocean's boom—
 Innisfail!

Around thy Emerald shore
 May the clasping sea adore
 And each wave in thunder roar—
 All hail!

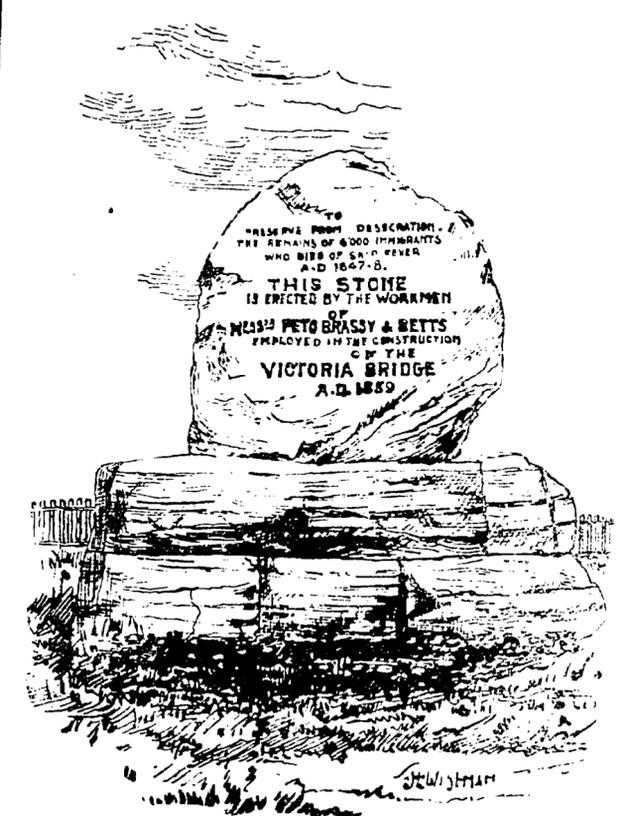
And when the final sigh
 Shall bear my soul on high,
 And on chainless wings I fly
 Thro' the blue—

Earth's latest thought shall be,
 As I soar above the sea,
 "Green Erin, dear, to thee
 "Adieu."

It was fifty years now that the victims had been buried in that sacred spot, and to-day they had come to say a prayer upon their graves and to pay a tribute of respect to their memory. The sacred ground in which their poor remains were laid was not a burial ground. It was a cemetery, a place of rest until that day that the departed should be summoned before the Judgment seat of Almighty God. It was God's acre, where the seed was kept for the harvest of eternity. The Rev. Father then spoke of the neglected state of the sacred spot, and expressed a hope that the utmost would be done by those of the faith to have the cemetery secured to the Catholic Church, in order that the sacred duty of prayer for the dead, so long neglected, might be fittingly performed. Rev. Fr. Cattelle, thinking what more he could do for the Parish, had taken care of the children by building schools, the Young Men by building the Hall for them, for the aged and poor people of the Parish by introducing the

Sisters of the Poor. There was another matter which aroused his sympathies and that was the victims of the ship fever. He established a Solemn Anniversary Service in June, which service is held every year in St. Ann's. He therefore asked them to take upon themselves as a pledge that they would work hand in hand, that if that spot could not be got back to the Catholic Church, at least that the bones of the departed might be taken to a more fitting place. He would ask them also to pray for the souls of the dead, and hoped that the various societies of the Church would give and ask for alms in order that masses might be said for the repose of their souls.

A service of prayer was then offered up, at which His Grace the Archbishop



officiated, and afterwards granted an indulgence of forty days to all present. His Grace also delivered a short address. Father Strubbe announced that Dr. Guerin, President of St. Patrick's Society, would say a few words. Dr. Guerin read the following letter of regret from the Rev. Father Brown, who was one of those present at the time of the terrible occurrences, when the unfortunate immigrants had been stricken down:

ST. HUGHES, Sept. 12, 1897,
REV. FATHER STRUBBE,
 Revd. Dear Father,—Many thanks for your kind invitation. Other engagements, from which I cannot escape, will prevent my going to Montreal next Sunday; I regret it indeed.
 Just fifty years ago I was at the "Sheds" myself, one of the sick emigrants, so many of whom had left Ireland, with heavy hearts, only to find a grave on the shore of the St. Lawrence.
 They had sailed away from the "Old Country" in search of a happier home. They found it sooner than they expected. I can testify to the strong faith and perfect resignation with which they went through the terrible ordeal of suffering and death.
 I am also a living witness and proof of the affectionate care and help tendered on that occasion, by the French Canadians, both clergy and people.
 If there were no other bond of union and friendship between Canadians of Irish and French descent, the remembrance of those days ought to be sufficient to unite them for ever.
 Once more I assure you that I am grateful for your invitation. In spirit I shall be with you on the 19th.
 Sincerely yours,
 GEO. BROWN, P.P.

Hon. Dr. Guerin Speaks.
 Dr. Guerin said words were needless on an occasion such as the present, for the green field beside them spoke its own tale of pathos deeper than words could describe. In joining together at a demonstration of this kind they had brought before their minds in the most striking manner the cost at which they had gained the position they occupied in the country here to-day. And if their forefathers and predecessors went through such suffering and died for the faith, they surely had established their position in the country in a very positive manner. It would be needless for him to speak about the suffering of those good people. They had died with resignation, and, although it might be well in case of doubt to say a prayer for the repose of their souls, he in his heart believed they died the death of martyrs. And there was no doubt he thought that in a meeting of that kind the kindest of sentiments should be preserved toward their fellow citizens in general, because

in Montreal the Irish immigrant was received most cordially. At that time the Mayor of the city, a Protestant, died of the disease while ministering to the wants of the unfortunate immigrants. The speaker alluded with reverence to the noble sisters of charity, whose good works had been so marked on that occasion, and eleven of whom were buried in that plot, and also to the many good priests who had sacrificed their lives in trying to alleviate the sufferings of the unfortunate. More particularly should they feel grateful to the French-Canadian clergy, for it was a matter of history, the devotion that was shown by that sainted old bishop, Monseigneur Bourget, of happy memory. He devoted his time entirely during those long mournful weeks to ministering to the wants of their fellow countrymen.

Mr. M. J. F. Quinn, M. P.
 Mr. M. J. F. Quinn, the next speaker called upon, said that this was indeed an unique occasion, particularly in the history of the Irish Catholics of Montreal. As the hon. gentleman who preceded him had said, perhaps the greatest eloquence that could be displayed there to-day would be a reverential silence, in the presence of so many hundreds, eye thousands, of their co-religionists and fellow-countrymen, who by their presence there, even at this late hour, testified their heartfelt sorrow and their warm sympathy for those unfortunate fellow-countrymen of theirs who fell victims to that terrible disease in 1847 and 1848. Silence, perhaps, would be more eloquent than any words that any of them could utter there to-day. But as history repeated itself, and they saw to-day the venerable Archbishop of Montreal, leaving all his other sacred duties, in order to testify by his presence on that occasion his heartfelt interest and his warm sympathy with his Irish Catholic parishioners, so that they flew back in memory to fifty years ago to the time when his predecessor, Bishop Bourget, spent so many of his nights and days in ministering to the spiritual wants of those whose demise they were come there to-day to deplore—when they thought of the unhappy time of 1847, when they thought of the cause that made their brethren leave their native land, and when they saw that, ever in this particular, unhappy history, was probably about to repeat itself, it was no wonder that the Irish Catholic heart should be moved to-day in deep and active sympathy with those who were the victims of those times. When they thought that every cable despatch which came across the Atlantic bore to their hearts a message, saying that, perhaps, their people in Ireland were on the verge of another famine, even as they were there to-day to honor those who died in 1847, and when they might not know but that their brothers were on the verge of just such another famine as visited the whole of Ireland in 1847, it would be difficult for them, however silent they might be, to repress their heartfelt feelings, and to keep the tears from welling up to their eyes. But there were some compensation—if their people died upon this, at that time, desolate shore, because Montreal at that time, and particularly that portion of it, was not the scene of commerce that it is to-day. It was in a desolate spot that these poor people landed. They expected that they were coming to the land of promise, and met only a cold and miserable grave. Yet they saw to-day that the hand of Providence had so worked that the resting place of those poor immigrants was to-day surrounded by everything that indicated prosperity, which had been showered upon those who followed them. Their brothers,

Mr. P. J. Curran's Address.
 The next speaker introduced was the Hon. Mr. Justice Curran, who said he felt this an occasion, where they were assembled to commemorate their dead, was one of Christian charity when he could, without impropriety, accept the invitation to participate. (Hear, hear.) This was a solemn occasion, and the thousands who were there testified to the undying devotion of the Irish heart. This was a fiftieth anniversary. Such were usually called jubilees, and recently we had several celebrations vying with each other in enthusiasm. Mournful as the gathering of to-day, yet, in one sense, it might be called a jubilee, for, at this time fifty years ago, the bodies of their departed countrymen had been committed to the grave they now stood beside, but their souls had soared aloft to the heavenly abode. (Applause.) He wished to join with those who had spoken so eloquently of the heroic conduct of those who had themselves fallen in ministering to the victims. To the clergy who had sacrificed their lives until only one Irish priest was left, the Rev. Father Connelly, who exclaimed in the pulpit that God had but one more blow to strike; to the valiant Mayor of Montreal, W. Mills, who in laying down his life in the cause of Christian charity had cemented the bonds of union amongst our fellow citizens of every creed, a union which had happily subsisted to the present day; to our French-Canadian friends who had acted so nobly in that hour of dire distress; but they should not forget the daughters of Mother d'Youville, the Grey Nuns, whose unceasing ministrations to the sick and dying was as bright a page as they followed them. Their brothers,

their sisters, their relatives, had come to this land, and had found here, not only the home which they sought, but they had aided in building up this centre of commerce, in which they

enjoyed all the liberties that they had to-day. But, while their march of progress had been going on, and they had been advancing their material interests, unfortunately, perhaps, they had neglected those which, on an occasion of that kind, seemed to claim something from their people. Yet the hearts of the Irish Catholics to-day were surely as warm as those of the French-Canadian who received into their bosoms, into their families, the children of those unfortunate immigrants. The speaker related a story told him by Sir William Hingston, who occupied certainly a prominent position at that time, of an incident which occurred at Grosse Isle, where during the fever, there were sixty-eight children whose parents had died of the disease. It was given out that the parish priest that on a certain day these sixty-eight children would be assembled in the parish church, and that any person who would take one of them to adopt might go there and do so. So anxious were the people to show kindness to the little ones that there were more than enough made application to take the children and one good lady who had a family of thirteen of her own, succeeded in getting two of the so-called orphans to adopt another. As the lady was making up a cry was heard coming from under one of the church benches, and another lady who was watching the children and had fallen asleep there, was discovered. The lady took the child and went to the priest, asked to be allowed to keep it, which she succeeded in doing despite the Rev. Father's protestations as to her own already large family. This, said the speaker, was only one instance of the kindness that had been extended by the French-Canadian to the Irish Catholic refugees of that time. It must be said to the credit of the Irish race that almost every one of those boys and girls who were received at that time came to years of manhood and womanhood to have a mark for good in some way upon the history of the parish into which they were adopted. He did not know that he had any more to say except to ask them, when the time came, that they would be asked in turn to remember the people of 1847, to make a little sacrifice. In their hands, to do at least one thing as well as the French-Canadian people of that time. And he only asked them to do that heartily, remembering that in doing so they were honoring their nationality and honoring those who sacrificed their lives in order to obtain the same liberty, the same rights and the same means of earning a livelihood that they had to-day. (Applause.)

THE DEAD AT GROSSE ISLE
 An Interview on the Subject From the United States.
 How Matters Stood in 1863—A Detroit Journal Tells About What He Knows.
 The question of a suitable monument for the Irish immigrants who died at Grosse Isle and at Montreal in 1847 is becoming a live question in the United States as well as in Canada, as is evidenced by the following interview with Dr. F. O'Rourke of Detroit, which we reproduce from the columns of the Catholic Witness of that city. Said the Doctor:—
 In 1863 in company with my father, I came up the St. Lawrence river from Detroit. He pointed out to me among the papers of interest the quarantine station at Quebec, that barren island, Grosse Isle, where three large mounds were the indications of the last resting place of six thousand of our countrymen, Irishmen, the victims of the typhoid fever.
 The impression of those hills made on the mind of the young boy never faded from my mind. It was then agreed in Quebec and Montreal the appropriate and a possibility of erecting a suitable monument to the victims of that fatal epidemic, whose bleached bones may be found along the banks of the St. Lawrence and great lakes, from New Brunswick to the Pacific States.
 The leading Irish men in Upper and Lower Canada were in sympathy with the movement, but circumstances arose to prevent the fulfillment of their noble project. The war for the Union was raging. The Mason and Slidell affair had occurred, the British extended through all the great centers of population in the United States and the American of the Potomac and Cumberland, and Canada was not without its sympathizers. Thomas D'Arcy McGee proposed having the public assistance administered to the Irish emigrants of the Great Truck and other emigrants, and as a consequence hundreds of families were broken up, hundreds of Irishmen holding literally situations giving their positions and came to this country to build up a home for the new-born in the arm and navy of the United States.
 You know what fell well: The old man and the killing of McGee, the trial, conviction and execution of the poor, unfortunate Wainwright, who no doubt was innocent.
 A half century has high passed since the emigrant ship freighted with disease and death was quarantined at Grosse Isle. No stone has been raised to mark the last resting place of the hundreds of thousands of our famished countrymen. It is true that the Irishmen engaged in constructing the Victoria Bridge at Montreal raised a most enduring monument to those who were buried at Point St. Charles. This consists of an immense boulder, some nine or ten feet high and near as many broad, taken from the bed of the St. Lawrence and marked with suitable inscription. But I know of no slab to mark the immense chained trenches of the Irish victims at Quebec, Grosse Isle, Cornwall, Kingston or Toronto. At Kingston there are two large emigrant mounds close to the General Hospital, the old House of Parliament, said to contain the bodies of five hundred.
 "However, at length the voice of a Celt, C. Fitzpatrick, is heard from the historic city of Quebec, reminding us of this sad omission, recalling an epoch the darkest in Ireland's history and the age of tribulation and our duty to our unfortunate countrymen. The erection of a suitable monument at Grosse Isle cannot be considered Canadian or American. It should be purely an Irish national movement, a monument that will reflect credit on our race, perpetuate the memory to posterity of the sufferings and sacrifices of our martyred kinsmen and remove the stigma of obliquity and reproach that clings to our nationality."

DEATH OF MRS. CUSACK.
 (From our own Correspondent.)
 GRANBY, P. Q., Sept. 20.—Mrs. B. Cusack, wife of the late Bernard Cusack, died on Friday, the 10th inst., after a short illness, deeply regretted by a large circle of relatives and friends. The deceased lady had been an invalid for years. A complication of diseases, however, hastened the end, which came peacefully as sleep. She was highly esteemed by all who knew her, and in her daily walk and conversation through life was an exemplar of the virtues of devoted wife and mother. The bereaved family have the sympathy of the community in their deep affliction.

ST. PATRICK'S CHOIR.
 At a meeting of St. Patrick's Choir, held Thursday evening the 16th inst., the following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—President, Mr. Robert Warren; vice-president, Mr. J. J. Rowan; secretary, Mr. M. E. Gahan. Committee, Messrs. W. J. Crows, J. P. Carran, J. Murray, W. J. Cherry. Conductor, Mr. G. A. Carpenter. Organist and musical director, Prof. J. A. Fowler.
 There are things which blemish perfect purity without being in themselves downright acts of impurity.

CONCLUDED ON FIFTH PAGE.