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VOL. XIV., No. 2

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 1906

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## TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

**Continuation of Prominent Catholics Who were in Toronto in 1850, when Old-Timer Came—The Macdonells of Various Branches—The O'Neill's, Auctioneers, Merchants, etc.—The Father of Captain Elmsley and the Sherwoods, Chief Justices of Upper Canada, but Protestants.**

My memory must be at fault, of course, with regard to some of the Catholics here in 1850. In speaking of the Catholic aristocracy of those days, for there was an aristocracy then, I forgot to mention the Macdonell family. This I should not have done, because it was one of the first Catholic families in point of time, just the same as the Macdonells were among the first Catholic people in Upper Canada. The first bishop, not of Toronto, but of the upper province, now Ontario, was a Macdonell, so was the first vicar-general. One of the first Catholic representatives in the united parliament, before federation, was a Macdonell—John Sandfield—who was also the first Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario. I am not able to give an account of the advent of the first Catholic Macdonell family to Toronto, but I know it was quite early. I rather think it was soon after the first settlement of the city by Governor Simcoe. There were four brothers of those Macdonells that I know of, and two of them that I know well. The brothers were named Allan, Angus, Alexander and James. The latter, however, I believe was not a Catholic and lived at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Allan was the eldest and when I first saw him he was sheriff of the Gore district at Hamilton. I remember his presiding there at the "Durham meeting" that was held in the winter of 1842-3, which broke up in a riot. He was a Conservative and was removed by the Baldwin-Lafontaine Administration, which soon thereafter came into power. After that he devoted his time to copper mining on the borders of Lake Superior and to exploring in Manitoba and the Saskatchewan Country, but lived here many years before his death. Angus Macdonell lived in Hamilton when his brother was sheriff of the Gore district. I think the Macdonells were related to Lady McNab, wife of Sir Allan McNab. McNab and her daughters regularly to the little, old roughcast church in Hamilton, that preceded the Cathedral on the same site, and when Vicar-General Macdonell was the parish priest. He, too, resided in Toronto afterwards. The homestead of the Macdonells here was on the corner of John and Peter streets, if I am not mistaken. "Alick" Macdonell was sheriff of the Niagara District at the time that his elder brother was sheriff of the Gore District, and I believe met the same fate. It is his son, Mr. Claude Macdonell, that now represents Toronto South in the Dominion parliament. James Macdonell I saw but little of and I don't think he conformed to the true faith like the rest of the family. I rather think he spent most of his time in the Niagara district. Notwithstanding the Massacre of Glencoe, it is a marvel how many Macdonells and McDonalds there are in the world to-day and what a mark they have made in it and are going on making!

The late William J. Macdonell, the French Consul, came here in 1849 or 1850. He was agent for Jones & Co. of Brockville, shippers and forwarders. Mr. Jones was his brother-in-law and also a Catholic. This Mr. Macdonell was better known in Toronto than any other of the Macdonells. I don't exactly know where he was born but he was a Canadian by birth. Probably Kingston or Glengarry. He was a bachelor all his life. He was a very learned and a very pious man, and used to take charge of the altar boys in the Cathedral in Bishop Charbonnel's time. He was not French Consul until some time in the sixties. He assisted the late D. K. Feehan in establishing the Toronto Savings Bank, which subsequently became the Home Savings Bank, and has recently blossomed forth into the Home Bank of Canada, under the able management of Lieut. Col. James Mason. Mr. W. J. Macdonell was a great student of literature, and at the time of his death had one of the finest private libraries of Toronto, including many valuable French classics. I think it a disgrace that the wealthy Catholics of Toronto that that splendid library was not the foundation of a fine general Catholic library and allowing it to be scattered and lost; or not having been purchased and preserved in St. Michael's College.

There were other Macdonells of the Glengarry brand here in 1850 that I remember, one of whom was John Macdonell, a grain buyer, who was a very worthy and pious Catholic. He was very retiring in his manner and his principal claim to distinction was his charity and devotion to the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. This John Macdonell was, I think, a native of Glengarry County, Ontario.

Alexander Macdonell was a fine young fellow when I knew him in those days. He, too, was a prominent member of the St. Vincent Society, at whose meetings I first made his acquaintance. He filled a responsible position in Osgoode Hall, the principal seat of Upper Canada's law business, yet performing its various functions, but not nearly so important now as it was before confederation, or in those days I write of, as its business is now divided up and not centralized as it was then.

Next to the Hayes perhaps the most important business men among the Catholics in Toronto were the O'Neills, Terence and Peter. Terence was a tall, spare man and very voluble of speech. His business was in many ways. His business was that of auctioneer and his store adjoined that of Hayes Brothers. He was a great talker, as our auctioneers generally have been, and was a born leader. He was successful in business, however, and at his death left considerable property. He was a strong Reformer in politics and in 1854 along with the late Frederick C. Capreol, was a candidate in the reform interest for the union parliament in Toronto. Of course no Reformer could be elected here and O'Neill and Capreol were defeated, although Mr. O'Neill made a wonderfully gallant fight. One of the services he rendered to the Catholic cause at this time was as president of the Catholic Institute, then enjoying a live influence and doing much good. During the election Mr. O'Neill was attacked by an Orange mob on Queen street west, when he showed himself no coward.

Peter O'Neill was a different kind of man altogether. He shunned publicity and confined himself to his business, which was that of wholesale dry goods merchant. His store was on Yonge street, south of King street, on the west side. He left here in the late sixties and went to Port Huron, Michigan, where he acquired wealth and honors and was chosen mayor of that city. But I suppose he has long passed to his reward. There were others of this family, brothers, that were not so well known. John O'Neill came here in the sixties from Dublin and started a retail dry goods store on King street east, opposite St. Lawrence Hall, but I believe after a while pulled up stakes and went to the States. Patrick O'Neill, another brother, lived in Chicago and may survive there yet, and if he does is a very old man.

There were three brothers of the O'Donohoes here in business in 1850. They were Malachy, John and Bernard. They were in the auction business and thrived. Malachy was the eldest of the three and Bernard the youngest. They all took more or less interest in politics and belonged to the Reform or Baldwin school. Malachy was the first to yield to the demand of nature, when John came largely to the front and entered politics as a friend and warm supporter of Thomas D'Arcy McGee. He was a first-class stump speaker and his services were much in demand. In the early sixties he was elected an alderman for St. David's Ward, in the east end of the city. There were giants in the city council in those days, when such noted men as John Hillyard Cameron, Matthew Crooks Cameron, Adam Willson, afterwards Chief Justice, and other citizens were members. O'Donohoe worked hard in Toronto to overcome the Orange influence then so largely prevailing. He effected combinations in the different wards whereby eighteen Orange-

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men were replaced by as many Liberal Englishmen and a few Catholics like the late James Stock. He next entered provincial politics. He was elected a member of parliament for East Toronto, but was unseated for some irregularity. Still he forged to the front and was appointed a member of the Dominion Senate, which exalted position he held until his death a few years ago. O'Donohoe was a zealous Catholic and was capable of performing great party services. Bernard, or "Barney," as he was familiarly called, left Toronto in the late sixties and took up his residence in Buffalo, but I believe he, too, is now dead. Senator O'Donohoe was married to a daughter of the late Dr. Bradley of Toronto, a very amiable and cultivated lady, who died young. One daughter of their union survives in the person of Mrs. Margaret Rennie of Toronto, who is the mother of a large and interesting family.

Some typographical errors occurred in my last communication. In alluding to the Sherwoods and Elmsleys I wanted to make it clear that the father of Capt. Elmsley and the father of the Sherwoods, of the Catholic aristocracy, were both Chief Justices of Upper Canada, but Protestants. This was only partly shown on account of the omission of some words.

## WILLIAM HALLEY. Catholic Population in United States

Milwaukee, Wis., Jan. 6.—From advance sheets of the official Roman Catholic directory, published in Milwaukee, it is found that the total Catholic population of the United States is 12,651,944, an increase of 189,151 over the previous year. The total number of priests, including seculars and regulars, is 44,484, an increase of 427. There are in the United States one papal delegate, one cardinal, fourteen archbishops, ninety bishops and twenty-one abbots. There are 10,789 secular priests and 3,695 regulars. The total number of churches in the United States is 11,814, an increase of 427 over the previous year. There are eighty-six seminaries for ecclesiastical students. The number of children attending parochial schools has increased to 1,066,207, an increase of almost 35,000, there being 4,281 parochial schools listed. The children who are under Roman Catholic care, including those in orphan asylums, number 1,229,668. There are 869 institutions of higher education and the total number of Catholic charitable institutions is 997.

In addition to the secular clergy there are forty religious orders of priests represented in the United States, the principal ones being the Jesuits, the Benedictines, Capuchins, Franciscans, Dominicans, Holy Cross Fathers, Paulists, Redemptorists and Oblates. Representatives of 123 sisterhoods are engaged in teaching in the country.

**Golden Jubilee in 1908**  
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## SERMON

By Rev. Arthur J. Staley, C.S.B. on the Event of his Brothers First Mass, delivered in St. Mary's Cathedral Kingston, on Christmas Day 1905.

Following is a synopsis of the sermon preached by Rev. Father Arthur J. Staley, C.S.B., of St. Michael's College, Toronto, on the occasion of his newly-ordained brother's first Mass, delivered in St. Mary's Cathedral, Kingston, last Christmas, at the 10.30 service, a very large congregation being present, which included the parents, brothers and sisters, and other near relatives of the two young priests:

"Thou art a priest forever according to the Order of Melchisedech."—Ps. 109, v. 5.  
 A priest's First Mass, my dear brethren, is always an event of deep interest to Catholic people. This is not because a first Mass differs essentially from any other, surely not. The Holy sacrifice is ever the same, the Divine Victim the same, the principal offerer the same Jesus Christ. The interest then comes from this, that now a new representative and assistant at the divine sacrifice, clothed with the tremendous power to consecrate the body of Christ and forgive the sins of men, has been chosen from your midst, from this congregation of St. Mary's, which has given, and is still giving, worthy sons to the Church—has been chosen, I say, from among you to be added to the long and glorious line of the priesthood.

Therefore, my dear brethren, on an occasion like this, when in the most solemn manner, the Church is commemorating the anniversary of the birth of Christ, who was, as you know, the Father of the Eternal Priesthood and is, therefore, the beginning of every priestly vocation, I can find no better subject for your instruction than to lay before you in the simplest manner the dignity of the priest of God, the many responsibilities and trials put upon him, and the joys and sorrows of his priestly life.

In speaking of the dignity of the priest there is no danger of exaggeration. Worldly offices may be magnified beyond bounds because they are of the earth, but the priesthood is of Heaven, for rightly understood there is only one priesthood, that of Jesus Christ, which indeed cannot be magnified, since its dignity is beyond our conception or imagination.

In a kingdom there may be thousands of magistrates, but there is only one Magistracy, one seat of power, one fountain of jurisdiction, from which flows all that which makes each one in his place capable of doing the work of the sovereign. This is what lawyers mean by saying that the State is present in every court, the Magistrate being only a participant in the power of the State and doing in his own name what in the last analysis is the work of the chief authority. So, my dear brethren, there are countless priests over the world, but like the magistrates and their sovereign, their power is not in themselves, but by participation in the power of Christ. By the appointment of God, that is by ordination, they can do this or that, and for this or that congregation what it belongs to Him alone to do for all men in every place and time. How then and wherein is Jesus priest? By having an idea of that, my brethren, we can form some judgment of what each priest is.

Is the priesthood in Jesus simply as He is God? Certainly not. For the notion of a priest is of something intervening between two beings, or of a person offering on behalf of the maker that which is his own, and which is at the same time sufficient to pay the debt, and satisfy the honor of him to whom it is offered. Now Jesus simply as He is God, cannot be a mediator between God and God, for between God and God there is no medium, nor can He anything to offer which is his own, since in God there is no division of power or glory or anything else, God being simplicity itself.

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Word took to Himself a human nature which he was not bound to take that was something which was exclusively his own; He had sovereign dominion over it and could do with it as he pleased, and when he did please of His adorable will to offer Himself as man's ransom on the one hand, and on the other in satisfaction to His Father's offended justice, there is you see the whole nature of the priesthood; a person at once both divine and human, by His divine power able to offer, and by His human nature capable of being offered.

Such then, my brethren, is the priesthood in which we share. By it although we remain human beings, still we are invested with divine authority, we receive a divine commission, we do the work of God. Is there anything higher than this? We measure the dignity of an office by its distance from the seat of power. Here the fountain is divine and so the office divine. You will find nothing on the earth to compare with it. Yes, my brethren, to get an idea of it you must pierce the vaults of Heaven, you must pass by the angelic hosts to whom has not been granted that which is given to the priest, you must pass by the Mother of God, who, although she brought forth Jesus Christ true God and true man, still never had the power to consecrate His body and forgive the sins of men, and so you must ascend to the very throne, nay to the very right hand of the Father, and there you see the Son of God, the High Priest, exercising the office of the priesthood, or, as St. Paul tells us, always making intercession on our behalf.

Great, then, is the dignity of the priesthood by reason of its nature. Great again is it by reason of the responsibilities put upon him. He is, first of all, the ambassador of Christ with men. "As the Father has sent me, so do I send you." He acts in God's name and with God's authority. "He that heareth you heareth me." Those who refuse to listen to his message of peace and good will resist the ordinance of God. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me." He is to continue here below the work of Christ for the salvation of souls. "Go ye forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." In his work here upon earth he is sure that God is with him: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

Secondly, my brethren, he is the light that shineth in the darkness. "Ye are the light of the world," said Christ to His apostles. The priest must be a light by his doctrine, a light by his example, a guiding star in Israel. As the Magi of old were led by the star to the feet of Jesus in Bethlehem, so the priest is the star which must bring men to the knowledge and love of God. O, my dear friends, what a responsibility is this? and what a terrible account he will have to render to God, if instead of being a light shining brightly and high on the mountain top for the guidance of men, he should become a dim and flickering light hurrying souls to shipwreck and destruction!

He is, thirdly, the salt of the earth. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Christ to His disciples. Just as salt preserves meat, so also the priest must preserve the people. He must render his flock acceptable to God and do what he can to promote the glory of the Divine Master. Great talents and powers and graces have been given to him for this. What an account he will have to render if he neglects these graces, if he uses those powers for destruction and not for edification, if he goes and buries the talent given him, instead of making it grow and multiply an hundred-fold.

Yes, my brethren, and to these responsibilities are added many trials and afflictions. Indeed the life of a priest is a hard and a laborious one, although sometimes people do not think so. I do not speak here of the individual cares of building and supporting houses and churches and schools, but over and above all this, is not his life a continual act of sacrifice? He bids farewell to home and friends to consecrate himself to the service of God alone; to preserve in himself that purity of conduct which the Church demands of him, he was to keep a continual watch over his actions, he has to endure many privations and sufferings. But you might say, my brethren, "That by doing all this, he is doing nothing more than his duty." Of course he is doing nothing more than his duty.

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but think you that the performance of duty is always an easy matter? Think you that the poor human heart which often grows sick of the pleasures of the world, cannot also grow weary of self-sacrifice and self-denial? Think you that he is not human as well as yourself? And yet with all the wickedness inherent in human nature, he has to raise himself above that nature, he has to be a model to his people, he has to give the example of all Christian virtues, and he has to deny himself many pleasures which are in themselves lawful in order not to scandalize the weak. In a word, he has to become all things to all men, to bring all to Christ. And this not for a week or a month, or a year, but to the end of his mortal life, because God may call him suddenly at any time and ask him what He asked the prophet of old, "Watchman, what of the night?" "Shepherd give an account of the sheep entrusted to thy care." Is not this, my brethren, a continual strain on poor human nature and human weakness? Ah, yes! a strain indeed that no man can stand except he whom God has called by a special vocation.

Yes, and besides these trials there are many others incidental to his daily life. Remember the priest must always be ready to answer the call of duty. He is bound to go to the sick man no matter how dangerous or repulsive the disease may be; he has to leave his home in all kinds of weather, and at all hours of the day or night, to assist the dying, sometimes even at the risk of his own life. And to the honor of the Catholic priesthood, he is said, no priest has ever been found wanting in the discharge of that duty.

But, my dear brethren, these are only passing troubles. The priest is hated and persecuted by the world. "They have persecuted me," said Christ to His disciples, "and they will persecute you." As the priest is within his own sphere, the representative of the Church, the opposition of the world is more or less directed against him. This opposition assumes various forms. In the early ages of the Church, it was fierce and cruel. During the Reformation, a price was set on priests' heads. They were hunted and tracked like wild beasts. It seemed as if men had vowed to exterminate all the priests of the Church. The poor, foolish world forgot that although individual priests may die, others are found to take their places, for the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians and the priesthood is to last till the end of the world, according to the oath which the Almighty swore to the Son. "Thou art a priest forever."

Such as, dear Father, the trials and hardships with which the priests of God have to contend, and such are the trials which will come upon you as surely as they come upon the rest of us, and perhaps many days will not pass till these awful responsibilities and heavy burdens are thrust upon your young shoulders. But we must not forget that if the duties and burdens of the priest are heavy in themselves, they are light compared with the consolations which God has in store for him.

There is first of all the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Can we think of a greater happiness than that of the priest who ascends the altar to commemorate the sacrifice of our Redemption? For in what does happiness consist if not in being united to those whom we love, if not in having all that we may lawfully desire? Now is there a closer union than that which exists between Jesus and His priests in the Holy Mass? The priest receives his God, who comes to enrich him with the fullness of His treasures and riches. Who comes to strengthen him against all the dangers of the day. Appeal to your own experience, dear Father, when you try to think of a day of real happiness, of a day in which everything was bright and fair, do not the sweet memories of your First Communion day come back to your mind to cheer and comfort you again? And do you not experience the same feeling every time you approach the Holy table in good and pure dispositions? Think then of the happiness of the priest who has the privilege of saying Mass every day. May he not rightly exclaim: "Heaven is a Holy Mass which is to last forever."

Again the priest finds great consolation in the administration of the Sacraments, those channels of grace of which he is the lawful minister. Take for instance the Sacrament of Penance. Our Lord tells us in the Gospel that the Good Shepherd leaves ninety-nine sheep in the desert to go (Continued on page 5.)

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