

The True Witness

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WEDNESDAY.....OCTOBER 28, 1896

MONTREAL'S FIRE RECORD.

The threefold tragedy which appealed with such force and not without substantial results to the hearts of our citizens is full of suggestions. So much has, however, been said already on almost every phase of the subject, that it might almost seem as if it were exhausted. No due tribute of praise has been withheld from the victims who fell in the discharge of their duty, and so far as the authorities and citizens could do so, they have lightened the blow that struck three families at once, leaving mothers widowed and children fatherless. The science that the Church never denies to her faithful children was rendered in un stinted measure to the sorrowing survivors. Death, under such circumstances is robbed of its worst terrors and the living, in their grief, have the consolation of knowing that the dear ones whom they mourn have not gone to unhonored graves.

The heroism of those who face death while protecting the lives and properties of others is of a type quite equal to that of the soldier who falls on the battlefield in defence of his native land. And there are not many cities that have not furnished more striking examples of such courage than Montreal. It is, indeed, curious evidence of the undesired factors that contribute to the development of the communities that successive conflagrations have helped to make Montreal what it is today. The record of its hardiest streets, most stately buildings and most important improvements is very largely a record of fires.

Under the Old Regime every citizen an inhabitant in town and country was obliged to assist in extinguishing fires. They were also obliged to supply leather buckets, which were kept in convenient places to be used when necessary. The ordinances for the regulation of the fires of Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal refer to the frequency of fires in the 17th and 18th centuries. Many of the early churches of Montreal were destroyed. The change of rule brought no change in this respect.

In May, 1767, a fire broke out in the house of a Mr. Livingstone, of St. Paul Street, which was not arrested until it had destroyed about a hundred dwellings and turned nearly a thousand persons homeless on the streets. The cause of this fire shows that the stringent regulations of the Old Regime were not called for. This terrible conflagration, which swept away a great part of the city of those days, having been caused by the ashes being carelessly left in a gutter. It was at last checked by pulling down part of the Hospital of the Sœurs de la Congrégation, on Notre Dame Street, and some contiguous houses. The flames were said to have been so fierce that they surrounded the walls and attacked some of the houses on the outside, near the Grey Nunnery. So great was the destruction caused by this extensive conflagration—the first to visit the city since the cession of Canada to Britain—that a collection was begun in the Old Country, the then young King George III., sending the list of subscribers with £500. The total loss, according to a statement sent to the authorities in London by the Governor, amounted to £1,073,185. 6s. 1d. a large sum of money for a town of some 6,000 inhabitants. A list of the families burnt out enables us to follow pretty closely the course of the fire, there being 87 on St. Paul Street, 54

on St. Francois Xavier, 26 on St. Louis Street, 6 on St. Sacrament, and the rest on other streets within and without the walls.

Three years later another fire broke out near the St. Lawrence gate, in the house of a person not inappropriately named Tison, which destroyed a hundred houses, two churches and a school building.

In 1819 a new experiment in fire extinction was made, when a shower of snowballs was rained upon the burning building.

In 1825 a fire broke out at the corner of St. Mary and Campeau streets which soon gained such headway that many families were almost surprised in their sleep.

The burning of the Parliament House belongs to political as well as civic history. There are still among our readers, doubtless, some who can recall that time of excitement. There may, however, be some others who have more cause to remember the later fires of 1852—a memorable in our annals by the destruction of a large part of the city. The first fire of that year occurred on the 7th of June. It began in St. Peter street, in rear of the old church of St. Andrew, and never stopped till it destroyed nearly all the buildings between St. Peter and St. Francis Xavier streets, on the one hand, and between St. Sacrament and St. Paul streets on the other. It crossed from St. Paul street to Custom House square and, after sweeping everything on its course, ended by destroying a block of stores on Commissioners street. Notre Dame Church, the Hotel Dieu and the shipping in port escaped as if by a marvel.

This conflagration had not ceased to be talked about when a fire, starting on St. Lawrence Main street, extended to Vignonne street, where it assailed a wood yard, and the flames, fanned by a westerly wind, carried everything before them, till they reached St. Denis street, by which they swept on all the way to Craig street, and beyond it, till they seized a timber-yard and saw-mill, near the river. Meanwhile, some wooden buildings on Notre Dame street had caught fire, and the flames sped onward to and beyond Dalhousie square, taking the Hayes block en route. The day closed, but the fire continued on its destructive course till the whole eastern part of the city, between Lagachetiere street and the river and between St. Lawrence street and Papineau Road, was in ruins. Only those whose memories can traverse an interval of forty-four years will be able to recall the indescribable desolation of the scene that Montreal then presented to the beholder.

The great fire of 1852 may be said to have been the starting point of new Montreal. It was also a great crisis in our railway history, marking the completion of communication between Boston and Montreal. The substitution of stone for wooden buildings, and the organization of an effective service for protection against fire, if they did not follow immediately, were at least suggested by that conflagration.

The perfection of our fire brigade was of course a process that took many years. The old volunteer system did some good work in its time, and the spirit that inspired its members survived its disbandment. In 1868 a volunteer, who sacrificed his life in the effort to extinguish a fire in St. Paul street, shared in the popular gratitude and in the honors of the regular firemen who fell at the same time in the discharge of their duty. More than once subsequently to the fatal St. Paul street fire has the same lot awaited the protectors of our lives and properties against Montreal's old enemy. As cities grow, while protective organization is perfected, the risks to life seem to increase. Several reasons may be alleged for this seeming contradiction. The search for those reasons, and the study of the whole question of risks to life from fire, are best undertaken not by a coroner's jury, which deals only on a special case, but by experts carefully examining every phase and detail of the subject. All such investigations ought to be kept apart from any personal element, and are, therefore, most satisfactorily undertaken at a time when the public mind is not excited by some recent casualty. If this were done, it is likely that protection to life would be more effectual. But the first essential is a thorough knowledge of the structure of the houses of the city as regards the security of the several storeys in case of fire. And there is only one way to secure this knowledge.

THE SADLIER PRESENTATION FUND.

Under the apt title, "A Worthy Cause," a correspondent writes us a letter, which will be found in another column, on a subject that will, we have no doubt, enlist the cordial and practical sympathy of our readers. The writer has presented this case so fully and so well, that nothing which we could say could add to its force and completeness. It is unnecessary for us to add that we gladly open our col-

umn to "The Sadlier Presentation Fund," which we hope will soon assume dimensions proportionate to the worthiness of the object.

BUSINESS TACT.

The qualities that win success in business are various, and they are distributed in varying proportions. A man may not always be aware of the elements in his character, disposition or demeanor that have best served him where he has succeeded or stood in his way when he has failed. Sometimes one or other fortune seems to come without regard to personal attributes. Even the most wary cannot always foresee the rocks that imperil his course or the favoring breezes that will waft him into the haven where fortune awaits him. But when every allowance is made for unknown and for contingencies, it is to something in himself and inseparable from his personality that a man owes his position in the art, craft, profession or branch of business to which he devotes his energies. One man may seem to be encircled by a sort of aura or influence that begets confidence, that makes others feel at home with him, that attracts strangers and retains friends; while in another, intellectually as well endowed and in the scale of morality as high, there is an indefinable something that repels rather than attracts. By those who know him thoroughly the latter is respected, if he is not beloved, and there may be occasions when they give him the preference over his more genial rival.

But those occasions do not occur for the world at large, which always keeps somewhat aloof from the man who does not meet at half-way. In the long run the latter, by the exercise of industry, prudence and perseverance, may outstrip the more popular business man, for those negative qualities which, in one sense, are a very real drawback, are, in another, a safeguard against temptations that popularly generally brings along with it. There is, at the same time, no reason why the bon hommie in question may not be associated with excellent sense, judgment and self-control, and it sometimes happens that this combination of business gifts is found in the same person.

The point to which we would call attention, however, is whether it is not possible, and, if so, whether it is not a duty, for a man where business brings him into constant or frequent contact with the public, to cultivate those graces of manner which attract, and, when habitual and sincere, retain the confidence of customers or clients. By sincerity in this connection, we mean that the demeanor is the expression of a genuine desire to shew attention and sympathy and to be of service in every possible way. That such a manner can be acquired, when there is a real foundation of kindness in the disposition, most business men will acknowledge. A boy who has been well trained at home will carry with him to his office or store or workshop the polite and obliging ways that have become second, if not first, nature to him. But it largely depends on the milieu in which he is placed, whether he will improve, by adopting, those manners to his new surroundings or will follow a bad example by gradually discarding them while at work, thinking, perhaps, to resume them at will in company. Many a boy has, by being thrown among rude associates or through the example of coarse or careless seniors, contracted habits of speech and manners that proved an obstacle to his future success. On the contrary, where the tone of behavior is refined, the apprentice or clerk has an advantage that is more than sentimental. A customer who, entering a store for the first time, is waited upon not only politely but with attention and sympathy—the salesman or saleswoman taking an interest in his wants and endeavoring to satisfy him—will be likely to return to that store whenever again he requires such goods as are sold there. If, on the contrary, he is treated with indifference, answered curtly, and little trouble is taken to gratify his peculiar tastes, he is more likely to eschew that establishment in future than to patronize it. And if the incident be often repeated in such a place of sale, the proprietor is pretty sure to be a loser sooner or later. There are doubtless stores in Montreal that not reckon such affronted customers among their losses, but there must be others that know the value of good service and employ only properly trained, obliging and tactful salesmen and saleswomen.

There are other qualities—such as punctuality, honesty, truthfulness—that enter into the ethics of business and of which a good deal might be said. The first of these is a rare virtue, and so many business people and tradesmen think nothing of breaking an engagement that one may sometimes regret that they escape the infliction of damages. Ultimately, indeed, they pay heavy damages, for if the unpunctual and those who disregard their pledged word succeed in life, it is through miscarriage of justice and not desert. Some may, perhaps, think such matters too commonplace for the page of our hebdomadal

clio, but it is from the commonplace that the joys and sorrows, the trials and triumphs of life, most often spring. In the daily task well done lies the secret of a life's success, and it is well to bear in mind that whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well.

TENDENCIES AND RESULTS.

When one looks around at the condition of affairs in the world at large, one sees in some directions a marked difference between tendencies, or what we have some reason to regard as tendencies, and results. Divines and moralists and jurists assure us that the civilized world is becoming more humane, more forbearing, more peace-loving. Comparisons between the past and the present are almost always in favor of the latter. We are constantly reminded of the justice and mercy of our laws as compared with those of our forefathers, and a few pages of Blackstone will doubtless be convincing on that point. The horrors of the slave trade were once familiar to so-called religious men and women without affecting their enjoyment of the good things of life. A good many of us can remember when men, women and children were bought and sold on this continent by men in whose families there were gentle mothers and tender-hearted maidens. The treatment of the soldiers and sailors who won England's battles in the Napoleonic wars is dreadful to read of. A regimental court-martial, composed of a captain and four subalterns, had the power of inflicting 999 lashes, and offences that are now punished by a comparatively short imprisonment were considered worthy of death. The civil courts were not more merciful. Acts of dishonesty, for which a few months in goal would be now deemed ample requital, doomed the unhappy offender to the gallows.

If we go a little farther back and question the tribunals of half a dozen generations ago, we find justice not only blind, but often deaf to any plea of reason and dumb as to any word of equity. We gain also doubtless in the matter of charity compared with the last century and that which preceded it. The poor are not uncared for and the sick are not left unattended. The orphan does not perish for lack of friends. There is more consideration for the manual worker and for the thrifty there are organizations that help them to make provision for the future. Religious wars have ceased, at least within the confines of civilization, and, if controversy still raises its voice, there is no actual persecution. Penal laws are happily of the past. Nor is a man asked to forswear himself by taking oaths that defy his conscience. If the day of universal and lasting peace has not yet dawned, there is some attempt to mitigate the cruelties of war. The flag of truce is respected and the citizens of a hostile state who are not in arms are unmolested. The wholesale devastations that were once thought fair in an enemy's country are no longer resorted to, and much of the vindictive savagery, of which men who called themselves civilized were not ashamed, is no longer tolerated by enlightened opinion. The Geneva Red Cross has free passage through the lines of all belligerents.

On the other hand, a military terrorism keeps Europe perpetually in a state of strained expectancy. The despatches that take the lead in the daily papers are those that treat directly or indirectly of the probabilities of war. From time to time an Emperor, a President or a Prime Minister makes a pacific speech. To read such utterances one might conclude that territorial ambition, the desire for revenge or the lust of warlike renown, was the most remote of all sentiments to the Sovereigns and Statesmen of our time. Their thoughts are all devoted to the promotion of peace, of industry, of commerce, of enlightenment. To make war is to them a forgotten art. Yet all the time they have made Europe an armed camp. Defiant militarism has become a necessity of their existence. The number of men who are in Europe's armies at this moment or have served in them, and may at a moment's notice be summoned back to the ranks to fight to the death with men similarly conditioned, across a frontier some hundred miles away, is almost beyond belief. The total force of France, for instance, including the three classes just mentioned, is about 3,750,000. The war strength of Germany is given at 3,000,000. That of Russia is from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000. In case of war the number of men who could be obliged to serve in the Austro-Hungarian Landsturm is set down as some 4,000,000. The war footing of the regular army is over 1,800,000. The annual cost of the Russian army in round numbers is more than \$250,000,000; of France's army, not far from \$200,000,000; of Great Britain, \$180,000,000; the entire annual cost of the Great Powers for military purposes, more than \$900,000,000. It is the constant contemplation of such an expenditure as this, not for the purpose of checking disorder, putting down all kinds of rascality, and making the world better and happier, but as a force, the material sections of which may, with what suddenness the wars that

went before enable us to imagine, be ordered to march to the slaughter of each other, that causes some earnest and thoughtful men to lose heart at the progress that has such an outcome. How easily, with such armies awaiting the order to advance, the profession of peace and friendship may be changed into the rude tones of menace and insult. There is much talk in our day of arbitration and we have had some fair examples of the substitution of that quiet mode of settling differences for the appeal to the sword. There are nearly 100 organizations in Europe and America whose professed object is the maintenance of peace. There is the learned Institute of International Law, composed of jurists-consults of various nations, and there is the International Law Association, also made up of lawyers of erudition, whose special work is the codification of the Jus inter gentes. The demand for a tribunal of arbitration has been made again and again and is made persistently by some of the societies already mentioned. The learned and humane men who are represented by these bodies stand assuredly for a tendency to which thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, possibly, of others contribute, that is all in favor of peace. To what extent the advocacy of what is known by the expression, "peace at any price," is indicated by the proposal to establish an international tribunal we cannot say. There are, it is true, out-and-out foes of war under all conditions, like Count Ly, of Tolstoi, who professes to give his coat or cloak to the robber and to turn his cheek to the smiter, and holds that nations which call themselves Christian should do likewise. The eminent Russian allows no exception. We should think that even if all the Christian powers bound themselves to abide by the decisions of an international court, and had resort to it only for the settlement of disputes, they would still be wise to claim some freedom of action in dealing with a nation or a ruler that acknowledged no law—the Sultan of Turkey, for instance. And indeed it is just in such cases that the system would be most fruitful in justice and happiness to the oppressed subjects of inhuman tyrants. If all the great powers were bound to peace with each other, there would be concert in dealing with such outlaws, and a terrible reproach would be effaced from the conscience of Christendom.

For such a peace, with power to strike the wrong-doer and the wrong-doer only, it is our duty to pray.

A WORTHY CAUSE.

To the Editor of the TRUE WITNESS.

DEAR SIR,—Gratitude, is, perhaps, one of the most estimable of human virtues. As between individuals there is often cause of its exercise, so, at times, does the great body of the public owe certain obligations towards those who have conferred special benefits upon a people. It is too often the case that, when the benefactors are beyond the reach of earthly enjoyment, efforts are made to perpetuate their names and to glorify their lives by means of elaborate biographies or splendid monuments; but seldom do they reap any reward during their lifetime. Public gratitude, once stirred into action, is very far-reaching; but, it would seem, as a rule, that the deserving one must first go down to the "silent majority" before that well-deserved expression is made. However, there are a few noble exceptions to this unfortunate rule; and, to prove that the great Catholic body of America belongs rather to the class of exceptions than to the rule, I have taken the liberty, through your columns, of calling the attention of your readers to a most worthy movement now set on foot in Canada, but which in all justice should extend over the whole Continent, and particularly over the Eastern States.

There is scarcely a Catholic home in America where the name of Mrs. Sadlier is not a household word. In the days when our literature was but scant, when books were few and the requirements for good, sound, healthy reading were many, Mrs. Sadlier took up her pen and by dint of hard and constant labor, helped more than any one in America to fill up the void. It would be out of place for me to here give a list of her published works or an appreciation of all the benefits that flowed for the Catholic people from her pen during a period of nearly half a century. It suffices to recall her name—dear to every sincere lover of Catholic literature in America—to at once conjure up before the minds of all the memories of the fondest and most cherished nature that twine around the hours of "twenty golden years ago."

Two years ago Notre Dame University, of Indiana, conferred upon Mrs. Sadlier the signal distinction of the Lucretia Medal. Never were there more sincere rejoicings all over America than when it was known to whom the medal was to be accorded. That it was well deserved and well-earned not one voice will deny. It must have been a consolation to that venerable and noble lady to feel that there were yet those who honestly recognized her merit. But while a medal carries to the recipient a certain degree of honor, it by no means assists in smoothing the path of life, when the twilight of existence is drawing its folds around the weary form.

A number of influential citizens, persons who fully appreciated Mrs. Sadlier's work, decided to make her a fitting presentation and one of such a substantial nature that she would be enabled in peace and happiness, amidst the tender memories of the past and the friendships of the present, to "husband out life's taper to the close."

In consideration of all that Mrs. Sadlier has done for Catholic literature in the United States—the home of her

younger days and the scene of her great labors—I feel that you, Mr. Editor, will have no objections to open your columns in so worthy a cause, and render whatever assistance you can in securing a grand success for the movement on behalf of our first and noblest Catholic writer.

J. K. FORAN. Montreal, Oct. 23, 1896.

DR. BERGIN DEAD.

His Long Career in Public Life.

Dr. Bergin, M.P., whose death occurred at his residence in Cornwall, on Thursday last, was well known in this city and highly respected for his many noble qualities. In the House of Commons he was always found foremost in the ranks, advocating the cause of his nationality and creed.

Dr. Bergin's death was the result of a paralytic stroke accompanied by a fall down stairs on the night of September 18. He had spoken briefly at an entertainment given by the local St. Patrick's Society, and with Mr. Devlin, M. P., had gone home and was about to retire when he was stricken down. At the time the attending physicians feared that he had not long to live, in fact it was rumored that he had passed away, and one or two papers published his death and obituary. He made a great fight for life, but his age, 70 years, the fall, and the wound caused by the broken lamp, combined against him. His death is regretted throughout the whole eastern district, for he enjoyed the respect and esteem of the entire community irrespective of creed or race.

The funeral, which took place on Saturday, was largely attended by the residents of Cornwall, and the surrounding districts, as well as by many leading citizens from Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. Dr. Bergin was the eldest son of Wm. Bergin, C.E., of King's County, Ireland, who came to Canada in 1823, and married a daughter of the late John Flanagan, of Charlottetown, Gengarry. His son Darby was born at Toronto, on the 7th September, 1826, was educated at Upper Canada College, and received his degree as M.D. at McGill in 1847, choosing Cornwall as a place of residence. In 1862, when the outrage on the Trent threatened to bring about war between Great Britain and the United States, he raised a company of militia, which later became part of the 59th Battalion, and of which he became lieutenant-colonel. On the outbreak of the second Riel rebellion in 1885 he was appointed Surgeon-General of the forces sent to the Northwest. He was first returned to Parliament for Cornwall and Stormont in 1872, by acclamation. He was defeated in 1874, but was successful again in 1878, and continued to represent the constituency from that time forward. Dr. Bergin was one of the examiners of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, President of the Ontario Pacific Railway Company, and a trustee of the Cornwall High School. He was unmarried.

St. Patrick's Court, C.O.F.

The annual Hallowe'en Concert and Social of St. Patrick's Court, No. 95, C.O.F., will be held in the Armoury Hall, on Friday next, at 8 p.m. The committee in charge of the arrangements have secured the services of first-class musical talent, and have engaged Davis' Orchestra for dancing. Among the invited guests will be Dr. Guerin, M.L.A., M. J. F. Quinn, Q. C., M. P., who are both members of St. Patrick's Court, the Chief Rangers of the other Courts, and His Worship the Mayor.

Mullin-Redmond.

In St. Gabriel's Church, Point St. Charles, on Monday morning, Oct. 27, with all the solemnity that the Catholic Church attaches to the union of her children, Mr. Jeremiah Mullin and Miss Lizzie Redmond, daughter of Mr. Peter Redmond, Island street, were united in the holy bonds of matrimony. Mr. Lamont assisted as groomsmen and Miss B. Redmond, sister of the bride, acted as bridesmaid. The presence of a large number of friends at the nuptial Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. Father O'Meara, and the many substantial tokens of esteem received by the contracting parties, testified to the high regard in which they are held by a wide circle of friends. After the wedding breakfast, which took place at the residence of the bride's parents, the newly married couple left by the G.T.R. for a short tour through Western Canada. As the train moved out showers of rice and other "good luck" tokens were in order. Mr. and Mrs. Mullin, on their return to the city, will reside on Richardson street, Point St. Charles. We wish them every success in their future life.

CATHOLIC SEAMEN'S CLUB CONCERT

POPULAR THURSDAY MUSICAL UNIONS.

A regular old sailors' concert was the order last Thursday evening, most of those taking part being seamen from the different vessels in port, and well indeed did the jolly fellows please the large audience, with their songs and choruses, recitations and jigs, displaying more talent than perhaps some would care to give them credit for. Mr. P. J. Gordon, was usual, was the able chairman. Miss Wheeler presided at the piano. Miss Smith, Miss Davis, songs; Mr. J. P. Curran, song, and was loudly applauded; A. Reid, song and dance, and was well received; J. M. Hannab, recitation; J. Currier, clog dance; Geo. Summers, man, song and chorus; Arch. Jewin, seaman, song; Jas. Milloy, song; J. P. Cooper, Jos. P. Walsh, Jas. Kehoe, J. Cunningham, seamen, songs. Although the season is drawing to a close, numerous kind citizens still lend their encouragement.—F.C.L.

Another Pratte piano has been exported to the United States recently. This last one has been shipped to Chicago, and is a credit to Canadian Art Manufacture. We understand another is ordered to be shipped shortly to a prominent American musician.