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VOL. XIII., No. 45

TORONTO, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1905

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TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

A Letter with News of an Old Hamilton Family—William Buckingham, of Stratford, Ont., Pioneer Journalist of the Northwest, Communicates with Old-Timer—The Adventurous Careers of Two Toronto Boys, "Wac" and John George Ryan—"Smiling Bob" Matheson of Belleville—The Oldest Ontario Printer a Resident of Chicago.

I have received a letter from Mr. James Hammond of Hamilton, informing me of what has become of the Wilson and Beatty families of whom I wrote in the Register of a recent date. Mr. Hammond read what I wrote of them, not in the Register, but in the Hamilton Spectator, which makes it appear that my reminiscences are pretty generally copied by the Hamilton papers. I notice that the Herald copies them very regularly in its Thursday issues and gives them a conspicuous position. Mr. Hammond writes: "As I read in the Spectator last Saturday your writings of old times in Hamilton, and as you spoke words of praise of cousins of mine, I thought I would drop you those few lines to let you know how many are still in the land of the living. My aunt, Mrs. Beatty (my mother's sister) died some years ago in Youngstown, Ohio. Her two sons, Beatty, are still there, and also Miss Kate Wilson; but Miss Maggie Beatty died there this past summer. James Wilson died, I would say, about two years ago, in Pasadena, California, he having lived there a number of years. He left two daughters. Hoping you will be spared many years to wield your interesting pen.

I remain yours truly,
 JAMES HAMMOND,
 8 Macaulay St. W."

I am very glad to receive this statement from Mr. Hammond, with whose family I was not altogether unacquainted when I was a resident of Hamilton in the years of the forties. I was aware that Mrs. Hammond, the writer's mother, was a sister of Mrs. Wilson, afterwards Mrs. Beatty. The Hammonds kept a grocery store on John street south, near the court house, and the writer of this was often sent there to purchase family necessities. He is glad, therefore, to learn that some members of the old stock are left there yet. But it is not melancholy to hear of old settlers, who lived in Hamilton so long and established a reputation for worth and good citizenship, dying so far away from their native places. Thomas Wilson of this family became the partner of the late Sir Frank Smith, a great business man and eminent in many ways, died here in Toronto. The mother, who I knew first as Mrs. Beatty, died in Youngstown, Ohio. James Wilson, her eldest son, who was a pretty old man, died in Pasadena, California, where he had been residing, about two years ago. Pasadena is about twelve or fourteen miles from Los Angeles, and is recognized as the paradise of the Pacific, its climate being so genial and its air so pure. Youngstown, Ohio, where some members of the family have died and where others are living yet, seems to be the present seat of the family.

I am just in receipt of a letter, from an old newspaper friend of mine and a remarkable man in some ways, and had a career of his own. It is Mr. William Buckingham of Stratford, Ont. He is an Englishman by nativity, an editor by profession, and a financial manager by present occupation. He is a pretty old timer too. Mr. Buckingham commenced his Canadian career as a shorthand reporter on the Toronto Globe in the early fifties. It was he who reported Thos. D'Arcy McGee's maiden speech in parliament for the Globe, and no one holds McGee's memory more in respect than he does. He was afterwards associated with him in his professional capacity, and he learned to love him.

I believe I may take the liberty of making a quotation, from his letter, which has reference to an occurrence that took place more than forty years ago. He writes: "You have reminded me more than once of what I wrote you in 1864, the time of the Shakespeare Tercentenary, when in writing to me you asked what the Canadian Stratford was going to do towards celebrating that event? My answer was: 'If Shakespeare were alive and well and had wheat and pork to sell he would find a ready market.' I was so struck with the grotesqueness of that answer I determined to use it in some form or other. The Toronto Leader was then in existence and had a humorous column headed 'All Sorts.' I put it in there without extension or dressing, and it was so amusing that it was copied into the English language press throughout the world. 'Well,' continues Mr. Buckingham, 'our commerce has somewhat extended itself since then, but the literary tastes of the people have not greatly improved, so that no body ventures to lecture here as they are almost foredoomed to certain failure. Whether an exception would result in your case under the auspices I have named, I could not say, I would like to hope so, and for my own part I would be glad if I had the opportunity to attend. I had been looking forward with much interest and pleasure to the publication of your book (on McGee) seeing that I knew so well both the author and his subject."

Mr. Buckingham, I think, is entitled to the appellation of "Father of the Canadian Northwestern Press" for some years before Confederation was brought about he and a young Irishman named Caldwell, established the first newspaper at Fort Garry, now the flourishing city of Winnipeg. I think the name of it was the "North-Western." After exhausting themselves and their means they returned to Ontario, where Mr. Buckingham has held positions of honor and trust, including the ownership and editorship of the "Stratford Beacon," which, however, he long since disposed of.

I find the following item in a late Hamilton paper that interests me: "Just 32 years ago the filibustering steamer, 'Virginius,' with one of the many gangs on board that for a generation sought to cause trouble with Spain in Cuba, so that the United States might be stirred up to take the island, was captured near Jamaica by the Spanish gunboat Tornada, and taken to Santiago. The Virginius had been fitted out in the United States secretly and left Kingston, Jamaica, Oct. 23, with a large party on board. The chief of the expedition was Gen. Washington Ryan, a New Yorker. Ryan and the Cuban chiefs, Remata Pedro Céspedes and Jesus del Cal, were summarily tried and executed. Three days later Capt. Joseph Fry, of the Virginius, 36 of the crew and 12 Cuban volunteers taken on board, were executed at Santiago. Out of 169 men in the party, only 18 escaped punishment in some form. But for the interference of the British and United States consuls every man of the party would have been executed."

Old-Timer is a good deal interested in the above item. It gives him an opportunity to tell a story about two Toronto boys that he knew. Gen. Washington Ryan was not a Canadian. He was the agent of the proposed Cuban republic in the United States and was well known throughout the country. Let me go back to the fifties in Toronto. There was a family named Ryan here then. And there was a newspaper called the "Catholic Citizen" here then, published by Hayes Brothers, well known merchants and citizens. Two youths named Washington and John George Ryan were apprentices in the print-

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ing office. In the course of years they found their way to the United States, Washington to the north and John George to the south. When the war of the rebellion broke out in 1860, they joined the armies of their respective sections and became officers of some distinction. When the war was over they needed some employment, and Washington entered the Cuban service as agent for the revolutionary junta in the United States. He used the initials of W. A. C. to his given name and was known as "Wac" Ryan. His brother, John George, became connected with the Southwestern press, and as a Washington correspondent was known in Washington city. At the time of President Lincoln's assassination and the attempt on Secretary Seward's life, a reward was offered for the arrest of John A. Surratt, the supposed would-be assassin of Secretary Seward. John George Ryan resembled him somewhat and he was mistaken for him and taken in a cage from Arkansas to Washington, there to be tried. He protested his innocence to be sure, but he had to go. When the United States officers having him in charge stopped anywhere on the way, Ryan was on exhibition in his cage and crowds would gather around to take a look at the "monster." Ryan looked upon the whole thing as a huge joke. When loyal people, especially women, would gather around and say, "what a fierce-looking monster," he would shake his chain and look fierce. Yet, he was anything but a fierce-looking man. When they got to Washington he was at once liberated, for when President Johnson and other high officers of the Republic saw him they knew him and said he was not Surratt, but Ryan.

"W.A.C." Ryan met the fate described above, and John George drifted to Chicago, where Old-Timer met him. There he practised law or tried to, but his notoriety brought him no clients. He had the misfortune, before stoves were set up to heat the street cars, to have one of his feet frozen one very cold night, and a suit against the company was entered for damages by him. I remember when he had three suits for damages in progress at one time— one against the Spanish Government for the killing of his brother; one against the United States Government for the false arrest and imprisonment of himself, and one against the Chicago Street Car Co. for the freezing of his foot. That he recovered damages from the Spanish Government for the taking of his brother's life, in the name of the family, I am certain; and against the Street Car Co., too, I believe. He resided in Chicago, a Mrs. Shannon, I know, because I visited him there several times. He is dead some years, but I had not seen him for a good while before the sad event. He had another brother in Chicago, a man with a large and respectable family, who was in the service of an extensive wholesale shoe house and doing well; but I don't think there was much cordiality between them.

I think the late John Gannon, a respectable retired journeyman printer, of Toronto, was an uncle of these men; also Patrick Burke, a newspaper publisher at St. Thomas, Ontario, had another uncle, but I do not know the particular Ryan in Toronto, who was their father. Thus it is with this adventurous race of ours, ever seeking change and adventure, and risking many things for something within the range of danger and glory. I remember seeing John George Ryan at the Rossin House in Toronto, after the civil conflict in the United States was over, collecting money for the relief of distressed southern families.

I notice that Superintendent Matheson of the Ontario Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Belleville, is being congratulated. "Smiling Bob" is an old friend of Old-Timer, with whom he transacted business for the Brantford Expositor and Hamilton Times before both strayed away to seek pastures new and realize greater expectations. He is an old-time disciple of the "art preservative."

While the subject of old-time printers is fresh in our memories I want to say that the oldest printer known to Dundas or Hamilton, yet amongst the living, is William Pigott, who flourished in the eventful forties. He is a resident of Chicago and a member of the Old-Time Printers' Union and managing a real estate office. Long may he continue to maintain his hold on the thread of life!

WILLIAM HALLEY.

The Horrible Example of Samson

In the book of Judges, for instance, we are told that Samson, when an impressionable youth, happened to cast his eyes on a maiden of Philistia and straightway was so captivated by her beauty that he ran off to his father and mother, saying, "I saw a woman in Thammatha of the daughters of the Philistines; I beseech you, take her for me to wife." But the father and mother were not kindly disposed to mixed marriages, being fully likely old-fashioned folk. "Is there no woman," they said to him, "among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all thy people, that thou wilt take a wife of the Philistines?" In the eyes of Samson, however, the lovely apparition of Philistia was the only woman that could ever satisfy the romantic yearnings of his heart. It was evident a case of love at first sight, which all novelists concur in declaring the most impervious to reason. The parental remonstrance was unheeded, and Samson got his wife, the beginning of all his woes. In a week or so after the marriage feast she got a Philistine divorce from him on the ground of desertion. And no doubt at this moment there are thousands of youths and maidens scattered beneath the moon, praying the Lord that they may have the good fortune to be united in wedlock to some angel of loveliness or some person of manliness. Let us trust that the Lord in His infinite love may not hear the prayers of some of them—Father Prosnahan, S.J., in The Messenger.

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ORANGEISM AND THE WHITNEY GOVERNMENT

Scurrilous Crusade Against the Catholic Church and Clergy

(From the Orange Sentinel.)
 During the last years of the Ross Government a system of espionage was established at the Parliament Buildings in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, which was as degrading to the Ministers as it was intolerable from a public standpoint.

WHITNEY CONFIDES IN THE SENTINEL.

Since Mr. Whitney assumed office he and his colleagues have been made aware of the existence of this system. In more than one instance that has come to our knowledge confidential matters, supposed to be known only to the inner circle of the Ministers and higher officials, have been communicated to dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church. To put it plainly, in almost every department of the Provincial service the Church has a spy, so that every move of the Ministers is reported to headquarters, and everything contemplated, whether it affects the interests of the Roman Catholic electors or not, is known to the priests, sometimes before it is discussed in council. It was partly by this means that the Church terrorized the Ross Government. Their secret organization was so complete that Mr. Ross was hardly safe in discussing public questions in the privacy of his own room.

ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE OF CABINET "FACTS."

We speak with absolute knowledge of the facts when we say that in at least one instance the Hon. J. M. Gibson was forced to put a clerk in a department when there was nothing for that clerk to do, and the only purpose of the appointment was to keep watch on what was going on there and report to his religious leaders.

KICK FROM THE PROSELYTIZERS.

It is a fact well known at the Parliament Buildings that in the Department of Neglected Children everything that happens is immediately communicated to the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. The name of every child that goes through the Department is investigated to the third and fourth generation in the endeavor to discover a Roman Catholic forbear, and if it can be found that a child had a grandmother or a great grandmother who was a Catholic, the Church immediately claims the custody of it. What is true of this department is true of other departments.

SENTINEL SYMPATHIZES WITH WHITNEY.

We sympathize with Mr. Whitney and his colleagues in being surrounded by those who are loyal to their religious teachers rather than to those from whom they draw their salaries. The policy of the Church was, under Mr. Ross, and is now under Mr. Whitney, to raise a great hue and cry if a Roman Catholic is interfered with. It makes no difference how incompetent the man has been or how much he has deserved dismissal, the very fact that he is a Roman Catholic is taken as evidence that he is dismissed because of his religion. The priests know that this is not the case, but they find it the strongest ground upon which to fight, and that they fight every member of Mr. Whitney's Cabinet can bear testimony. This is a shrewd policy. The effect of it is to limit the number of Roman Catholics who are dismissed.

SWEEPING CHARGES AGAINST PRIESTS.

The priests descend upon a Minister and in the most offensive and dictatorial manner demand reasons for executive action that does not suit them, and by inference, if not in direct terms, threaten the Government with the loss of the Roman Catholic vote unless they (the priests) are allowed to nominate the men to fill certain appointments. Not a messenger or an elevator man can be removed without a protest from a priest. The Government is held responsible for the action of the License Commissioners in refusing liquor licenses to men who are Roman Catholics. It is one constant conflict with the political priests. We venture to say that if some of the interviews between priests and Ministers were accurately reported the public would believe the reports to be gross exaggerations. This is the force that Mr. Whitney has to deal with. They are fighting like tigers for their graft. The priests know how much their political influence depends upon getting public offices for members of their flocks, and holding them there. They will not give up without a struggle.

PATting WHITNEY ON THE BACK.

Mr. Whitney has so greatly disappointed his opponents since he became Premier that we have reason to expect from him good government in the best sense of the word. The way he has treated the franchise-holding corporations is the most encouraging feature of Provincial government in twenty years. Mr. Ross submitted to the capitalists. Mr. Whitney has defied them and protected the public interest. He has proved that he is a strong man, one with ideas of his own, and the force to dominate his party in the interests of the people. One who is strong enough to protect the citizens from the buccannery of finance we gave reason to hope will be strong enough to deal with the priests of the Roman Catholic Church when they assume the prerogative of making appointments.

IN THEIR TRUE COLORS

(From the Globe.)

It is evident that the wing of the Conservative party which desires to divide this Dominion on racial and creed lines has determined to make a dead set against Mr. Aylesworth in North York. The leaders of the movement jumble a lot of things together, such as public ownership, the salary grab, etc., but the real soul of the opposition to Mr. Aylesworth is that sectional and racial rancor, of which every Canadian who has a spark of love for his country hoped the last had been heard long ago. In the manifestoes that have been issued "clericalism," "Quebec's bigotry," and similar phrases, show what the real purpose of these disturbers is. The Liberal party has met these illiberal and disintegrating cries many times before, has fought them to a finish, and has always been victorious. It is ready to face them again, and it could ask no better ground to try the cause than that North York which 64 years ago returned Louis Hypolite Lafontaine to Parliament. The Conservative party in convention assembled has chosen their candidate and we have had a declaration of the intolerant and disrupting platform on which he has taken his stand. The mouth-piece of the movement has stated that Mr. Aylesworth's candidature "flaunts the triumphs of Quebec clericalism in the face and eyes of Ontario when it asks the manhood of North York to applaud the cowardly pursuit of a son of Ontario, Hon. F. W. G. Haultain, by all the tyrannies of French-Canadian power, prejudice, and bigotry."

Mr. Aylesworth could not be commissioned to fight in a better cause than in crushing once again such unpatriotic and disgraceful appeals. There is no use of mincing words. The real meaning of the Telegram's utterance is that the French-Canadian however public-spirited, able, honest, and patriotic, will, if he dare aspire to the high places of his native land, be assailed by all the barking dogs of intolerance until he is hunted into his grave. The talk about public ownership and salary grabs is a mere stalking-horse for the fellow who fires his middle-age fowling-piece from behind it. There are more men who believe in public ownership and who denounce the salary grab in the ranks of the Liberal party than in the ranks of the Conservative party. They are not issues between parties. The men who are leading the Conservative party in North York are merely sectarian bowlers, who are besmirching the name of their party, and who will receive such an answer in a few weeks from the intelligent men of North York as will keep them quiet for some time to come.

Australian Plenary Council

The Third Plenary Council of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Australian Commonwealth concluded its labors at Sydney on September 8th, by the issue of a joint pastoral to the clergy and laity of the Commonwealth. The pastoral reviews the progress of the Church during the decade that has elapsed since the last Plenary Council, and gives an interesting summary of the present position of the Church in Australia, which reveals the strength of the larger section of Irish-Australia. "The period," says the pastoral, has been one of quiet growth and consolidation, rather than of that pioneer missionary expansion which was distinctive of earlier periods of our history. Our Catholic population (in Australia) has grown to something over a million (1,911,556). The clergy number over thirteen hundred; the teaching Brothers over six hundred; the Nuns over five thousand five hundred. We maintain thirty-three colleges for boys and one hundred and sixty-nine boarding schools for girls; two hundred and fifteen superior day schools; ten hundred and eighty-seven primary schools; ninety-four charitable schools number over one hundred and twenty-seven thousand. From these figures it can be seen that, although ours is a land which has developed and grown with the rapidity of adolescence, the Church has progressed also, even so as to keep well to the front among the most progressive institutions of the country." Irish-Australia is, therefore, nearly as populous now as Munster. The strength of the Catholic schools is remarkable, seeing that they are maintained without one farthing of assistance from the State.

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