

The Catholic Register

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—D'ALMEZ

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MATTERS OF MOMENT

To Perpetuate Her "Plains"—No Place for Sectarianism—Royalty at Mass.

The movement to perpetuate the memories of the heroes who fell on the Plains of Abraham on that fateful day which meant so much to France and England, is being forwarded by the broad and patriotic spirit, which characterizes the utterances of such men as Earl Grey and Archbishop Bruchesi, whose ideas on the subject have already been published. These two noted men in common with the rational and broad-minded of the nationalities they may be said to represent, look back with the calm eye of distant history upon the momentous battle-field and recognize that the contest on either side was a struggle in which brave men fought for those things that patriotism everywhere holds dear. The Canadians of New France had everyone the remembrance of a home, to protect which his utmost endeavor needed to be put forth. The words of Horatius were in the mind if not on the tongue of every man of New France who assembled on the Plains on that eventful day. The lines:

How can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the fresides of his fathers
And the temples of his God?
might have been appropriately blazoned on the forehead of every Frenchman who took the field. The English on their side had the reputation of England to sustain. Success for them meant more than the feat of scaling the "Heights," impossible as this was thought to be, for at that moment it meant the prestige of their nation before the world. Each army was led by a hero in whose person was fully illustrated the words:

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."
Which was the greater character, Montcalm or Wolfe, it will be difficult for even the judicial scale of the distant historian to decide. The Battle of the Plains was a contest between gallant men who fought along the lines and according to the principles of militarism—mistaken though these may be—and patriotism and the feelings that actuated either side must have been those that have actuated armies under similar circumstances from the beginning of time.

In reading the story of the days of the great battle, something like the above would, it seems to us, pass through the ordinary mind, but there are, as we know some minds that are not ordinary, and what these metaphysical cylinders are capable of evolving is sometimes matter for marvel. An article on the editorial page of "The News" of Saturday reveals one of those astonishing evolutions. Speaking of the Battle of the Plains, its causes and effects, our Toronto contemporary tells us that "France of the eighteenth century was not a suitable mother of colonies. Nor was Britain until after the advent of the Wesleyans," and comparing things in Canada, with those of revolutionary days in France, The News continues: "The conditions were similar, an arrogant and avaricious aristocracy, extravagance and looseness in living, an ambitious and powerful ecclesiasticism and oppression of the poor." Could anything more sectarian and far-fetched be imagined than to bring in the name of Wesley at this juncture? What it had to do with making England a "suitable mother of colonies" is a proposition the answer to which is not clear to the ordinary mind. Then the conditions pictured as existing in Canada prior to its fall are not borne out by history. Here is the way Parkman describes it: "The St. Lawrence was watched by British ships; the harvest was meagre, a barrel of flour cost two hundred francs; most of the cattle and many of the horses had been killed for food. The officers of France were starving on their pay, while a legion of indigenous and imported scoundrels fattened on the general distress." Who were the aristocracy in those days? Principally those very officers who were "starving on their pay," and who were told by The News, were "arrogant and avaricious, given to extravagance," and the rest. Of course there were the "scoundrels" mentioned by Parkman, but even the great Battle of the Plains did not succeed in ringing the bells on all of these, and there have been many since who, like those of that day, "fattened on the general distress." Then as to the ambition and power of the ecclesiastics of New France, we readily accept them, but somehow we imagine that the directions in which these stretch out to our view are not those in the mind of the writer in The News. The ambition and power we have in mind were such as reached out to help those in need, which saw in every suffering human being, a brother of the Crucified Saviour, one for whom they must labor as for themselves, remembering the promise, "As often as ye do this to one of these, My little ones, ye do it unto Me."

The power and ambition of the ecclesiastics of those days were such as led to the peace and piety of the people, as represented by Longfellow when he tells us:

"Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the children Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them. Reverend walked he among them, and up rose matrons and maidens, Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome."
The power and ambition we have in mind is further illustrated by Longfellow, when he tells us:

"In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention,
Lo! the door of the chancel opened,
and Father Felician

Entered, with serious mien and ascended the steps of the altar, Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into silence
All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to his people:
"Let us repeat that prayer, 'O Father forgive them,'
And they repeated his prayer, and said, 'O Father, forgive them!'"

The poet's picture of the direction in which the ambition and power of the priest-hood, whether of the 17th century or of the present day are carried, is the one that appeals to us as being built upon that most essential truth, while the insinuation which the phrase "an ambitious and powerful ecclesiasticism and oppression of the poor," as used by The News, is one which for general application has no foundation on fact. The project of perpetuating the memory of the brave on both sides who fell on the Plains of Abraham will not be helped by the suggestion of the sectarian, nor by the perversion of history for sectarian ends. The events of that day, from the historian's standpoint, were but the concluding scenes in a great military drama, upon which the curtain fell when Montcalm was laid in his soldier's grave beneath the convent floor at Quebec, and that other hero, Wolfe, was borne across the wave to have poured into his dead ear the praises never deemed his in life. Sectarianism and recollections of religious recriminations should have no part in the act of immortalizing the memory of Wolfe and Montcalm. The example of conqueror and conquered, at the time when the English and French held this position in Canada, should be ennobled by their descendants of the present day. England proved herself humane and generous, the French acknowledged this by an offering of loyalty, upon which nothing since has been able to encroach. That the great event which brought this about should be memorialized as proposed by the erection of a statue of an Angel of Peace, under whose folded wings an amalgamated people shall rest, happy and contented, is a plan that all must approve and to which assistance should come from every possible quarter.

The presence of their Majesties King Edward and Queen Alexandra at the Mass of Requiem offered in St. James' church, London, for the repose of the souls of the late King and Prince of Portugal has had the result of awakening a good deal of the old spirit which many thought dead, and the organization known as the "Protestant Alliance" voices the sentiments of its members in the matter as follows:

"The Protestant Alliance, representing Protestants of all denominations, views with astonishment and distress His Majesty's attendance at a Mass for the dead at St. James' Roman Catholic Church, such action on the part of His Majesty being inconsistent with his position as head of this Protestant nation, and a violation of the spirit of the Coronation and Accession oaths. While deeply sympathizing with the Portuguese nation in their great sorrow, the Protestant Alliance would humbly point out to His Majesty that, by Act of Parliament, 1689, 'all and every person and persons that is, are, or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with the See or Church of Rome, shall be excluded, and be forever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the Crown and government of this realm, and the people of these realms shall be and are hereby absolved of their allegiance.'"

Public opinion has been variously expressed both on the matter of the attendance of their Majesties at Mass and as to the pronouncement it has been the means of bringing forth from the Alliance. From an editorial in the New York Freeman's Journal we learn that the Protestant Alliance, which was interviewed on the subject, said the resolution was badly drafted and it was not clear, whether or not it was actually addressed to the King. If it was addressed to his Majesty he was afraid it would be considered by some as a direct insult—even treason and a resistance to his Majesty's rights. Undoubtedly every Protestant of the Church of England would be grieved that the Sovereign had attended in public a Mass for the dead, because that was in direct opposition to their own faith. And we are further informed through newspaper report that some of the extreme members in the House are to bring the matter before Parliament, their attitude being strongly endorsed by the Protestant Alliance, condemning the presence of their Majesties at the Mass, as "a violation of the spirit of the Coronation and Accession Oaths." It is also stated that this is the first occasion of a British Sovereign in his State capacity attending Mass in the city, since the days of James II.

The paper from which the Freeman's Journal quotes is of the opinion that apart from the painful controversy involved, the incident may have the result of settling once and for all the matter of the Accession Oath, which few persons in these days consider should continue to be administered to each succeeding British Sovereign in its present form, which is crudely offensive to the feelings of every Roman Catholic in these realms. That the words "crudely offensive" are well chosen will be seen from the following, which is part of that to which every British Sovereign has to subscribe:

"I solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify and declare that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at or after the consecration of them by any person whatsoever, and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint and the sacrifice of the Mass as they are now used in the

WORKMEN'S RETREATS

A Successful Experiment as It Works in Belgium—Makes Social Apostles—Six Houses of Retreat.

(Catholic Universe, Cleveland.)

The following is the second of the series of four thoughtful and timely articles on the relation of the Church to the working man contributed to the English Catholic Times by Rev. Charles Plater, S.J., a fellow of Oxford. In the first article, quoted in the Universe last week, Father Plater spoke of the spiritual isolation of the working classes and the need of forming an apostolic nucleus among the workmen themselves as a remedy. He advanced the suggestion that the best means to form this nucleus was a spiritual retreat.

"We are not advocating an untried experiment," he resumes. "As we are now to see, these 'retreats for workmen' have had a success upon the Continent which is simply amazing. The retreats have been started in many countries, but they have attained their most complete development in Belgium."

"It was in 1890 that Msgr. Doutreloux, Bishop of Liege, urged upon the Catholics of Belgium the work we are to describe. 'Start this apostolate,' he said, 'and I will cover it with blessings.' The first beginnings were made at Charleroi a few days afterwards, when forty-two workmen made a retreat at the college of that town. They did not sleep at the college, but merely spent three days there, returning at night to their own home. It was soon seen that this arrangement was unsatisfactory. The full effect of the retreat was only to be obtained by withdrawing the men altogether from their usual surroundings."

"A house, then, had to be procured for the special purpose of enabling workmen to spend three days in uninterrupted retreat. This was effected in 1892, when a house and grounds admirably suited to the purpose, were bought at Fay-lez-Manage, and the first 'enclosed' retreat was given in the month of August to twenty-six workmen. The work grew rapidly, and all Belgium speedily became aware that a new social and religious force was active in the country. Some Catholic critics shook their heads. 'The new work would interfere with mission, and other parochial institutions.' These fears were unfounded. As bishops and clergy now all admit, the men who have made these retreats become pillars in their respective congregations, are assiduous at their parochial duties, and support their clergy with a self-sacrificing zeal and devotion which has changed the face of numbers of parishes in the country."

"Three years later, a second house was built at Ghent. Since then four more houses have sprung up—at Arlon, Liere, Liege, and Alken. The numbers of the men who have, in the last fifteen years, made retreats in these houses is simply astounding. The first house (Fay) during the sixteen years of its existence has given retreats to more than 22,000 men. Ghent in nearly fourteen years has received some 18,000 men. Liere in eight years about the same number. Alken in its first year received about 1,000. About 10,000 men made retreats in the various houses during the year 1907. Before long 100,000 men will have passed through these six houses."

"Now, we remember that these thousands of men have, in the great majority of cases, undergone a real spiritual change—that they have gone forth as apostles and centres of light and strength to their fellows—we shall easily understand that the good effects of the retreats have been felt all over Belgium, and that they have produced a radical change in the character of whole districts of the population. But before considering these effects, we must see something more of the retreats themselves."

"Let us pay a visit to one of these houses and follow the course of a retreat. We may take for our purpose the house at Liege."

"Leaving the city in a train, we find ourselves after half an hour at the top of a high hill where stands a well-built mansion enclosed in spacious grounds. A great gallery with huge glass windows runs along its entire length. Here the men may walk about when the weather prevents their venturing into the garden. The garden, by the way, is an absolute necessity for the purpose of a retreat. For a man unaccustomed to dwell with his own thoughts, to be boxed up in a small room for half a week would produce a state of nervous tension fatal to the success of a retreat. He must be able to find a secluded garden walk where he can stroll up and down between the meditations and smoke his pipe. The shrubs and flowers have their part to play in a retreat. The contrast between them and the rush and roar of industrial life is not without its effect."

"Entering the house, we survey the chapel, the dining hall, the forty plain but neat little bedrooms (privacy for prayer and reflection is indispensable; each man must have his private apartment, however small), and the rest. Two or three priests live permanently in the house. One is occupied incessantly with organization and direction. Another gives the retreats. "Three days' retreats are given every week to batches of thirty or forty men. Most of these are workmen; but not infrequently special retreats are given to a batch of students or business men, or clerks, or soldiers, and so on. Employers and employed do not unfrequently make a retreat together. The writer has seen a distinguished member of the Belgian Senate in retreat with workmen."

"In the evening, we may imagine, we witness the arrival of a batch of workmen. How they have been got to come is a matter that will occupy us presently. At any rate, here they are, and it is interesting to watch their faces and listen to their conversation. Some, who have made a retreat in previous years, are business-like and seemingly quite at home. Others are evidently wondering what they are in for. They wander in a lost sort of fashion about the galleries looking vacantly or curiously at the pious statues and pictures, or exchanging whispered comments. Some are even sullen, or wear a defiant or truculent expression, as if to indicate that they are not going to be taken in by any humbug. They have come up to oblige an insistent friend, or from curiosity or bravado, or even, it may be, with a desire to canvass the priests in favor of Socialism. So long as they undertake to keep the rules of the house and not to disturb the others, they are asked no questions about their motives or dispositions. But it is ten to one that they will have reconsidered several important matters before they leave the house. What happens to them in the interval we shall see in our next paper."

SUBJECT OF THE HOUR

Lent a Time to Mortify the Body That the Soul May Be Strengthened.

Lent, with its sackcloth and ashes, with its fast and abstinence, with its enchanting wand dispelling all unbecoming sport and amusements and its stern dictum forbidding festivities and social gatherings, is now at hand. Penance is so interwoven in the religious beliefs of a Christian as to be almost an integral part of his being. He recognizes the fact that he must do penance in order to merit the good will of heaven. And how beautiful to see the Christian World kneeling in penitential garb at the feet of God!

Lent, from the Anglo-Saxon *lenten*, which means spring, signifies the fast which takes place just before Easter, by which it runs. The forty days were introduced to commemorate the 40 days' fast of Christ in the desert before He began His public ministry. Christ, however, did not institute Lent, neither did He order His disciples to fast, though at one time He said they would fast when the bridegroom, meaning Himself, would be taken away from them. It is, therefore, not of divine origin. It is purely an ecclesiastical institution, but one so thoroughly in harmony with the spirit of Christianity as to be inseparable from it.

Like many other practices and institutions of the Church, it has an interesting history. She goes back so far and has passed through such dark nights, whose blackness no human eye can pierce, and has seen the beginning and end of so much that it is impossible to account for everything. The Lenten observance is one of these; in other words, its origin is lost in the gloom of the past. It is certainly a very old practice, probably dating back to the times of the Apostles. The Scriptures, however, make no mention of any fast before Easter; but early ecclesiastical writers refer to it as in existence for generations immediately succeeding them. It is enough to cite one of the Fathers. St. Irenaeus, speaking in the second century of the fast before Easter, and of the many ways in which it was observed in different parts of the country, says that this diversity of observance was no new thing, but had arisen "long before in a past generation."

About the same time, we find Tertullian engaged in a discussion about the same subject. These references show the very old standing of this salutary institution of the Church. Its age has cast about it the sanction of antiquity and imparted to its name a divine approval. It was never a mere sentiment or theoretical proposal of discipline. It was considered to be binding, as we learn from the Council of Nicaea, held in the fourth century. This council enjoins upon all Christians the obligation of keeping the Lenten fast "observed by the Church." It may be supposed, too, that the great faith of the early Christians as well as their belief in the efficacy of severe disciplinary laws, made their observance of the penitential season much more exacting and less sentimental than at present. To talk of the Lent of Tertullian's time is to talk of bread and water, sack-cloth and ashes in the fullest sense of their meaning, of deep faith and close communion with God, such as the world does not now behold. The way it is now kept is only a shadow of the old time-honored custom.

In primitive times it had no uniform duration. There is no allusion to the forty days which the Church now makes binding. It was only after the custom itself was well established that the length was prescribed. In the absence of any general law to the contrary, each province, through its Bishop, determined the duration of its penitential season; but all were agreed in one thing, namely, that it should take place immediately before Easter, or the day commemorating the resurrection of our Saviour. Hence the non-uniformity of length of time which springs up in different places. The people of some localities fasted seven weeks, of others four weeks, and of still others only three. As a rule the Greeks kept seven weeks, but excepted Saturdays and Sundays; and the Latins generally kept it six weeks, but excepted Sunday, a custom to which they still adhere. St. Gregory speaks of Lent as a little less than two months, while St. Augustine calls it Quadragesima, and connects it with the forty days' fast of our Lord, and also with that of Moses and Elias. In the fifth century the northern part of Africa, which was then flourishing and intensely Catholic, all Egypt, Palestine and the West generally kept it for six weeks; but, by excluding Sundays, there were left thirty-six fast days. Constantinople—which then knew no religion but the Catholic—and the Eastern provinces under its influence kept it for seven weeks, but by excepting both Saturdays and Sundays there were left only thirty-five fast days.

Along in the seventh century, the Church, in order to insure uniformity and to supply the extra four days, so as to make the fast coincide with that of our Lord, prescribed that it should begin on the fourth day before the first Sunday in Lent, that is, on Ash Wednesday. The whole Catholic Church has strictly adhered to this rule from then till now. It begins on Ash Wednesday, it ends with Holy Saturday—just forty days, leaving the Sundays out. When people observe this holy time as their religion teaches them, does it not look much like an imitation of Christ's conduct? "And when He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry."

The custom of sprinkling the forehead with ashes on Ash Wednesday has a somewhat surprising origin and

APPOINTMENT OF MR. J. J. AUSTIN

Hamilton Herald.

John J. Austin, 57 Oxford street, a mail clerk, is being congratulated by his many friends in the city on his promotion to the position of assistant post-office inspector at a salary of \$1,400 a year. His headquarters will be at London. Mr. Austin has been a mail clerk on the Harrisburg and Southampton division of the G. T.R., and has lived in Hamilton for ten years. During that time he has made many friends in this city, and has taken a prominent part in fraternal and charitable organizations. For the past five years he has been the acting president of St. Vincent de Paul Society, and for two years he was president of branch No. 56, C. M.B.A. He is also a member of the A.O.H.

Speaking of his appointment the London Free Press says:

"The office of assistant post-office inspector here became vacant by the superannuation of D. Maloney. The former occupant of the position having been a Roman Catholic, it was held that his successor should be chosen from among his co-religionists. This claim has been recognized, as Mr. Austin is a Roman Catholic. The new deputy will assume the duties of the office on the first of March. The appointment will cause a good deal of heartburning among the residents of the city. The bringing in of an outsider will not help to allay the opposition among those who did not lead the official plume. Mr. Austin was born of Irish parents in the neighborhood of Goderich."

Mr. Austin's friends claim that as he has worked in the London division, and has had many years' experience, he is entitled to the promotion. The patronage did not belong to London.

Rich Catholics Arraigned

Frequently, says the Catholic Sun, it is claimed that the prelates and priests of the Church tolerate actions in wealthy Catholics which they bitingly denounce when the offenders happen to be poor.

This cannot be claimed true down in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, apparently. A few days ago Father Francis H. Wall delivered several blows from the shoulder which it is probable a number of his hearers will long remember.

The occasion was a sermon delivered by Father Wall in which he scored rich families who have let their social ambitions interfere with their religion.

"There is a strong tendency among men to divorce business from religion," he said. "It seems to be taken for granted that a man cannot be an eminent lawyer or physician or successful business man and at the same time an eminent and practical Catholic. If such were the case then the Redeemer of the world was a visionary and the mission of His Church an absurd hallucination. The injunction of the Founder of our faith that you cannot serve God and Mammon has no bearing whatever on the question at issue."

"It is sad beyond all sadness to witness the conduct of so many of our Catholic people, who, having amassed wealth, stifle the faith in their hearts and in their unhealthy greed for social prestige send their sons and daughters to places of education where their faith is jeopardized and their moral character wrecked. Therefore we have the scandalous spectacle of the sons and daughters of those who should be zealous members of the household of faith filling the divorce courts, shocking the religious sensibilities of coreligionists, bringing unmerited dishonor upon the Church."

Canvassers wanted

Canvassers wanted for "The Catholic Register."

First-class remuneration to good workers. References required.

interesting history. In primitive times ashes were not placed on the heads of every one indiscriminately. Public penitents alone were sprinkled with them. The ceremony took place at the church door. As the ashes fell on the head of the penitent, he heard these words: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and back to dust thou shalt return. Do penance, that you may possess everlasting life." There was always sympathy for these public sinners, and soon their friends came and received the ashes with them, but to the latter the words, "Do penance," etc., were not addressed, as they were not considered sinners. Gradually the number of sympathizers grew until finally, in the course of time, the whole congregation was sprinkled with ashes, as symbolical of man's origin and last end.

"Dust thou art, to dust returneth,
'Twas not spoken of the soul."

We have thus seen that Lent, as we now have it, is an old institution. It sprang into existence when faith was strong, when religious teachings were thought more of than worldly principles of wisdom, greatness, or renown—when the world was governed by men whom all acknowledge to have been immeasurably our superiors in imitating the conduct and following in the blessed footsteps of Him whom we call Master. The custom which they brought into vogue was by no means an empty theory, for the betterment of life, but a severe reality. With them fasting meant fasting, not a useless desire to give up articles of food; abstaining from pleasures meant just as it reads, not donning a sombre looking gown, appearing sad on public occasions, or staying indoors when there is any possibility of gaining a little credit by so doing. Early Christianity presented no sentimentalism, no sham, no merely outward appearances. The primitive Catholics were in earnest, as their divine Master was in earnest; they believed with Him that the way to everlasting life was not easy; on the contrary, they believed with Him that it was narrow and hard to traverse, full of ups and downs, full of pit-falls and stumbling blocks, and literally strewn with thorns and briar.

It is man's human nature that makes it so; and hence to bring by the most efficacious means, that nature under control was the motive at the back of the practice of fasting and abstaining during the Lenten-tide. It was, therefore, a time in which the faithful asked God's mercy for themselves and showed it to others—a time in which sinners had greater opportunities of being reconciled to God—a time of mourning in which all amusements, festivities and social gatherings were considered to be out of place—a time in which the body was mortified by discipline that the soul might be strengthened and fortified with virtue. That is what Lent was to the Catholics of ages long since gone by, and that is its spirit to-day. This may be a dark and gloomy picture of six weeks of the welcome year—the God-given year, with its warmth and sunshine, with its charms and beauty, with its recurring seasons of activity and repose—but it is no darker than the spirit of Christ's teachings, the universal testimony of the early Catholic writers, and the constant ruling of the Church in every age of her long existence will warrant us in drawing.—Chicago New World.

Oath of Fidelity to the Holy See

The following is the declaration made by the Archbishop of Boston, when he lately received the Pallium:

"I (and then the Archbishop pronounced his name), elected to the Chair of St. Peter, from this hour henceforth will be obedient to blessed Peter the Apostle, and to the Holy Roman Church, and to our Holy Father, Pope Pius, and to his successors canonically elected. I will assist them to retain and to defend the Roman Papacy without detriment to my order. I shall take care to preserve, to defend, increase and promote the rights, honors, privileges and authority of the Holy Roman Church, of our Lord the Pope, and of his aforesaid successors. I shall observe with all my strength, and shall cause to be observed by others, the rules of the Holy Fathers, the Apostolic decrees, ordinances or dispositions, reservations, provisions and mandates, unless prevented by a canonical impediment. I shall make personally the visit ad limina apostolorum every ten years, and I shall render to our Holy Father, Pope Pius, and to his aforesaid successors, an account of my whole pastoral office, and of all things pertaining in any manner whatsoever to the state of my Church, to the discipline of the clergy and the people, and finally to the salvation of the souls which are entrusted to me; and in turn I shall receive humbly the apostolic mandates and execute them as diligently as possible. But if I shall be detained by legitimate impediment, I shall fulfill all the aforesaid things through a designated delegate having a special mandate for this purpose, a priest of my diocese, or through some other secular or regular priest of known probity and religion, fully informed concerning the above-named things. I shall not sell, nor give, nor mortgage the possessions belonging to my mensa, nor shall I enfeoff them anew or alienate them in any manner, even with the consent of the chapter of my Church, without consulting the Roman Pontiff. And if through me any such alienation shall occur, I wish, by the very fact, to incur the punishments contained in the constitution published concerning this matter."

When friendships are real, they are not the glass threads of frost-work, but the solidest things we know.—Emerson.