

GLEANINGS FROM THE ENGLISH "CATHOLIC TIMES."

The fall of M. Combes.

People outside the Catholic Church may call it a superstition to hold that those who fall foul of Peter's successor never thrive, but the belief is none the less well-grounded. The case of M. Combes is an illustration. Ever since he flouted Pius X his power has been manifestly declining. Saturday's debate when his majority on a vote of confidence was only ten, sealed his fate. On Tuesday he communicated to a meeting of Ministers at the Ministry of the Interior a letter tendering his resignation and next day he took this letter to the Elisee on the return of President Loubet to Paris after his mother's funeral. Exit M. Combes. Most people who love France will say: A good riddance. He has shown unmistakable cleverness. In bringing Ministers into line with his policy, in bridging over serious differences, in feeling the pulse of the people, he has displayed quickness of perception and adroitness. But he over-estimated the power of anticlericalism. Whilst utilising with an air of independence special knowledge of the ecclesiastical condition of France, he allowed himself to become the tool of men, whose chief aim is to dechristianise the country. In plain words, his Ministerial work was atheistic propagandism, but the nation revolted against the despicable arts he employed, especially the Masonic spying system. We cannot hope for a very radical change of tactics, but the new Ministry will be, at least to some extent, an improvement on that of M. Combes.

A Forgotten Quality.

In estimating the weight of public opinion in France in the matter of separation between Church and State, it is well not to omit the parochial clergy in the rural districts. Should the Concordat be abrogated, and the churches taken from their present possessors, a great reaction might not improbably take place in the views of the country electors. Thousands of Frenchmen, who cannot be called practical Catholics, regard baptism and marriage and burial as ecclesiastical rites necessary for their children, and would shrink from being deprived of the Church's services in those important matters. They would never be content to exchange the priest for the mayor or prefect. Whatever else they may think, they think they should have Christian baptism, marriage, and burial. And should the State carry its persecuting policy so far as to make it impossible for the clergy to administer these spiritual helps, they would feel that it had deprived them of a great consolation and a necessary succour. Their sympathy and support would veer round to the clergy, who might find that persecution of themselves had proved a wholesome lesson to their flocks. So at least think acute observers of French affairs, and many believe that M. Combes' Bill, if passed, will lead with startling suddenness to a campaign in the country parts in favour of the Church.

Protestants and Baptism.

Appropos of the discussion on this subject which has been going on in our columns, the "Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury" points out that no record appears to exist of the baptism of the late Queen Victoria, who for more than three-score years was the Supreme Head of the Church of England. It seems that State papers and archives have been examined for documents of this character without success, and what is more, there is no reference to the celebration of any religious ceremony of the kind in the Court intelligence of the newspapers of the period covered by the infancy and youth of her late Majesty. It is, the "Daily Post and Mercury" states, the only instance in English history since the Norman Conquest of any such omission. Whatever be the truth as to the case of Queen Victoria, the evidence that the ceremony of baptism is either negligently performed or altogether omitted in various Protestant denominations is very strong. In their ecclesiastical colleges its importance is not impressed upon the clerical students, and they take on themselves the duties of the ministry without any distinct idea of its necessity or of the way in which it should be carried out.

Great Novelist (dictating): The storm increased in fury, rain fell in torrents and the gale shrieked all night like—like—what shall I say?"

Secretary (father of three): "Like a baby cutting its teeth."

NON-CATHOLIC MISSION WORK IN ENGLAND.

In England the non-Catholic Mission Work has been undertaken in good earnest by a band of convert ministers. Prominent among these converts are Fathers Filmer, Chase, Evans, Sharpe and Grimes. Some of these fathers have had some years of experience in the priesthood. They have associated themselves together under the title of Our Lady of Compassion and Archbishop Bourne has assigned to them a portion of the Westminster parish and out from this home they go to various parts of London and elsewhere and they give Missions to non-Catholics. It is a part of their policy to avoid all controversy and to content themselves with simply explaining Catholic doctrine to the crowds who come to listen to them. They are securing some very remarkable results. They have a large class of converts under instruction all the time.

One of the English bishops writes sending a contribution of \$50 to the Apostolic Mission House: "I am deeply interested in the work you have in hand of converting the heretics of your country. In our own dearest England I have seen such wonders of conversion and such glorious priests and religious as its effects. So may America share in this great and blessed movement. Here it is still going on, all due to one magnificent man, Cardinal Newman, its originator."

The New York Apostolate received into the Church, during the past year, 240 converts. If they had directed their attention more continuously to the giving of Missions to non-Catholics they might have doubled this number.

OBITUARY

THE LATE A. F. MARTIN.

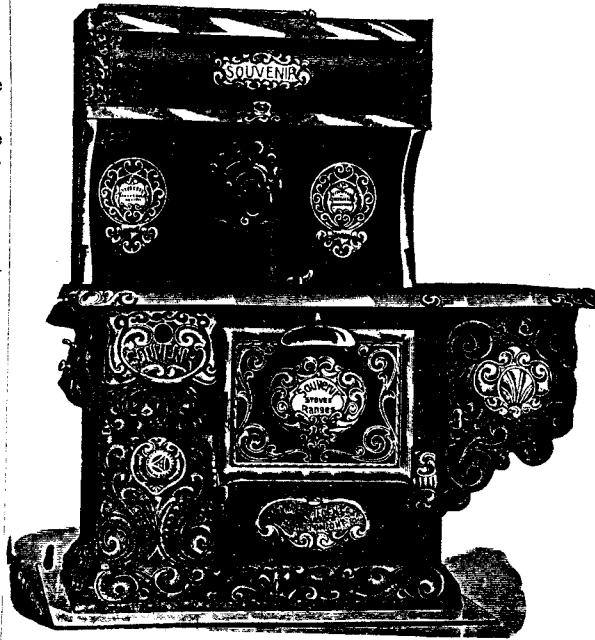
The many friends of Mr. Alphonse Fortunat Martin were grieved to hear of his death last Wednesday morning, of diabetes. A couple of months ago the disease began to leave no hope of recovery, and the brave patient prepared for his last hour, receiving frequent visits from his spiritual adviser, Rev. Father McCarthy, O.M.I., who administered the last sacraments.

Mr. Martin was born at Rimouski, Quebec, on May 14th, 1849, and was the son of the late Henri Martin, merchant, of that place. He was educated at Rimouski college, and after graduating studied surveying and civil engineering in the city of Quebec, and was admitted as a D.L.S. for the province of Quebec in 1871. Mr. Martin was also a graduate of the Royal Military college of that province and had two years experience in active service during the Garibaldi wars in Italy as a member of the Pontifical Zouaves, in which he served from June, 1868, to November, 1870. He was present at the siege of Rome in 1870, and was taken prisoner with 300 of his compatriots and taken to Leghorn, where they suffered the greatest hardships for three weeks. He received the papal medal as a mark of his loyalty to the cause of the Church. In 1871 he was appointed paymaster at the rural battalion of Rimouski. In 1876 he married Louisa, daughter of John Radiger, barrister, of Montreal. They had ten children of whom only four survive. They are Louise (Mrs. Chas. Mabbie), Bertha, Edward and May, all of whom reside in the city.

Mr. Martin came to this province in 1872, and began to practise his profession as civil engineer and land surveyor, being employed in many of the early surveys, one of the most important being the laying out of the parish of Ste. Agathe. Having been elected a member of the legislature in 1874 for the electoral division of Ste. Agathe, he was the following year chosen to lead the opposition in the house. Defeated in 1879, he was elected for Morris in 1886 and again, by acclamation, in 1888. One of the most notable incidents of his parliamentary career occurred during the debate in the house on the school question in 1891 when he spoke for nine hours continuously, which was then the longest continuous speech, with one exception, ever made in a parliament. He was a lifelong Liberal but opposed the Liberal government on the school question with the other French speaking members of the house.

After leaving West Lynne Mr. Martin took up his residence in Emerson and subsequently removed to St. Boniface. A few years ago he built a fine house in Roslyn Place, Fort Rouge. After retiring from politics he again took up the active practice of survey-

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ing and was engaged in laying out large tracts of government lands in the Territories. It is thought that it was while he was employed in this work that the disease from which he died developed.

R. I. P.



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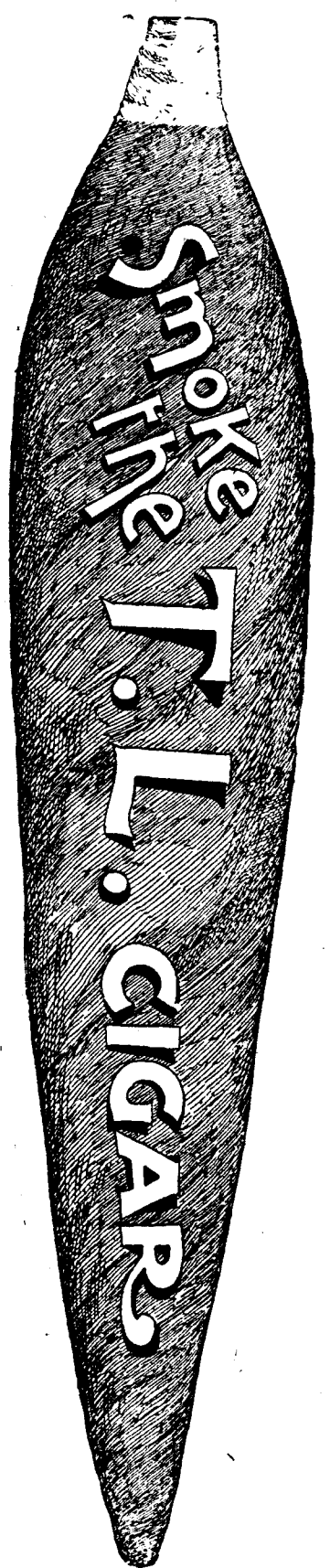
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