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## The Late Cardinal Taschereau

LIFE AND WORK OF HIS EMINENCE

Written for the Review.

At 6.15 o'clock last evening, namely, April 12th, 1898, His Eminence Elzéar Alexandre Cardinal Taschereau breathed his last breath. His end was peaceful as his life was calm, well regulated and virtuous. The death scene took place in his own palace in Quebec, and among the sorrowing onlookers around his dying bed were His Grace Archbishop Begin, Mgr. Marois, Vicar General, and the other members of his household, together with his two nephews, Messrs. Alexandre and Edmond Taschereau. The end did not come suddenly, for since '94, when he gave over the administration of the diocese to Mgr. Begin, his health was broken, and thence forward he led a retired life, concerning himself more with the things of eternity and spending his days in diligent preparation for the life of happiness that lies beyond the grave.

Two years ago or thereabouts his maladies increased and his already shattered constitution began to break up, and even then it was thought that his end was near, but his strong will power stood him in good stead, and while submitting himself to the Divine dispensations of Providence, he bravely clung to life and, until very lately, was able to walk in the grounds of his palace and University, and on special occasions he appeared in the sanctuary of his well-beloved Basilica.

A week or ten days ago he grew rapidly worse, and then it became plain to medical experts that the venerable Cardinal had not many more days to live; he gradually sank and hovered between life and death in a partially unconscious state until his hour of release came last evening. I called at the Palace a few minutes before six o'clock, p.m., to make enquiries, and learned that a crisis of the heart had occurred in the early morning; the vital organ had refused to beat for a moment, but it went on again and kept the vital spark active for a few hours more. The doctors said the spasms were likely to return in twelve hours, and so they did, with fatal results.

Needless to say that the city is in grief for the demise of its illustrious churchman and model citizen, whose genial face was so well known to the people of Quebec for the past fifty years and more. Every building in the city of a public nature that owns a flagstaff has it decorated with some emblem of mourning and courtesy. Looking from the windows of my study I see the Papal colors raised on one end of the University building, the national flag on the other, and the central tower is adorned with the cross. As it stands high upon the pinnacle pointing heavenward it seems to speak with more impressive force to the Christian heart on this solemn occasion.

The biographical sketch of the deceased Cardinal need be but brief, because his exalted rank in the Catholic Church of the New World for so many years has kept his name almost as a household word. Still it were well to keep fresh in the minds of the reading public what heights of fortune may be attained either in or out of the clerical domain by the pro-

per exercise of the talents which God bestows for good and wise purposes.

It may be said that the eminent man whose life-work we are shortly reviewing did not rise to distinction through any specially brilliant parts, for his elevation was due rather to persistent application to his studies and duties in the early stages of his clerical career, keen perceptive faculties, sincere devotion to official duties, firm determination of purpose, which never suffered itself to be drawn aside from the path of rectitude by the clamours of popular favor or disfavor. With him there was always a difference between the serene world of religion and morality and the world of boisterous politics and corruption. And no man strove harder to keep the evil influence away from contaminating the good and virtuous. He had a keen horror of the follies and deceptions of the outer world, and whenever he failed to correct them he shrank from contact with them. In this sense he seemed to resemble the late Archbishop Kenrick, of St. Louis, for of both prelates it may be said in a certain sense that they were not of the world although they lived in it.

Whatever work Mgr. Taschereau put his hand to that he did with great seriousness of purpose, and he seemed to realize that the lives of priests, charged with the care of souls, should be held up as a guiding light to the world. At the call of duty Monsignor Taschereau journeyed several times to Rome. He went to Baltimore to participate in the ceremonies commemorating that See's hundredth year of establishment. At various times he visited Montreal, Ottawa and Kingston dioceses, but always called by duty or courtesy; and perhaps he took these trips with reluctance, because travel of itself had no fascination for him. In this feature he had an affinity with prelates like Archbishop Corrigan of New York,—calm reserved prelates, who are always happiest in the midst of their own priests and people, ministering to their every want and safely guiding them on the road to heaven.

Of course the deceased Cardinal had no spare time on his hands: for the outlying parishes of his wide diocese absorbed much of his episcopal attention, and at home he had his affections and interests deeply centred in the welfare of his noble University, his seminaries, convents, charitable institutions, and other seats of learning and culture. He had a very clear conception of the sacred ties that bound him to his clergy and faithful laity, and while he had his share of episcopal troubles, he always strove to adjust differences between pastors and flocks by the strict rule of justice and equity, and always with discreet judgment and foresight. Being one of the founders of Laval University and a Professor and Superior in it for so many years, he, naturally, was attached to it and its students, those of the Seminary were dear to him, and upon them he bestowed much attention, knowing well the advantage of shaping their minds in the direction of purity and virtue, so as to make of them worthy priests to minister at the Altar.

The ideals he set for his own guidance were of the exalted pattern, and in their fulfilment he

had the example of illustrious predecessors, beginning with the historic Bishop Frs. de Montmorency Laval, who ruled the ancient See from 1658 to 88. All of the succeeding prelates labored with zeal to keep up the standard set them.

In seeing to the up to date equipment in the great educational institutions under him, he neglected none of the aids furnished by advanced science or the latest discoveries. It is largely to his vigilant care that Laval University owes its high position among the first seats of learning in this New World.

In speaking of the lamented deceased it is difficult to convey a clear idea of his individuality. He had many personal endowments that made him seem different from many of his predecessors; being a perfect model of punctuality himself he was quick to detect its absence in others. He lived and moved by nicely regulated method and by strict economy of time he effected much without hurry or confusion. He instinctively felt the principles of truth in himself, and whenever he had business to do with other people less favored they were obliged to defer to his well reasoned decisions. To some people, who viewed him from afar, he was counted cold and austere in manner and bearing; but this was a wrong idea of his real disposition. Close contact with him dispelled the thought and the misleading impressions gave way under his courteous and dignified treatment. He had the inherent stamp of the enlightened Christian prelate and well bred gentleman, combined with a high degree of the proverbial politeness of the French race of the best school. Neither had he any of the contentious spirit that would cause annoyance to friend or foe. While steadfastly upholding the doctrines of Catholicity he never gratuitously meddled with outside creeds, but treated all men with tolerance and charity. No wonder then that he should have been regarded with deepest respect by the different creeds, sects, races and nationalities. And far less wonder, indeed, that he was beloved by the Irish Catholics of Canada, for in the terrible famine years of 46-47, when the poor Irish Catholic immigrants were cast by the ship-load, plague-stricken, cholera-smitten and in a dying condition, on the shores of Grosse Isle, the then Rev. Father Taschereau willingly offered the sacrifice of his life to save the bodies and souls of the destitute beings who were actually perishing in those horrible fever sheds, wherein the stench of contagious disease would frighten any one save and except a servant of God, who values the crown of martyrdom above all else. Hundreds of the Irish peasants died on board the stinking pestilential ships that carried them from Ireland and the shattered remnants that were dumped on this Isle on the St. Lawrence had no earthly hope of relief save in God's mercies and the kind ministrations of His anointed ministers. The cause of this dread calamity could be traced to the inhumanity of the British Government, but this is not the time to pursue the subject. Let it suffice to say that Fathers Taschereau, Bonneau, and others, joined with Rev. Father Moylan—then chaplain at Grosse Isle—and Father McMahon of St. Patrick's, Que-

bec, to save the saveable and to prepare the dying for their appearance before the Judgment seat. Rev. Father Taschereau worked heroically until he was stricken down by the fell disease. He did enough, however, to earn the lasting gratitude of the Catholic Irish race in Canada. And now that the self-same man, although in elevated rank, is lying cold in death, Irish hearts will recall his services and send up fervent prayers that he may be in eternal rest.

The deceased Cardinal, Elzéar Alexandre Taschereau, was born at the Seigneurial Manor-house, Sainte Marie de la Beauce, Province of Quebec, on February 16th or 17th, 1820, and came of a parentage which counts among its kinsfolk some of the oldest and best known French Canadian families. His father was Hon. Judge Jean Thomas Taschereau, whose ancestors came from France early in the 18th century. His mother, Marie Panet, was daughter of Hon. Jean Antoine Panet, first President of the Assembly of Canada. His father was a warm-hearted patriot, possessing all the rugged principles of honor that marked the true gentleman of the old school, and he won distinction by his ability when he was a member of the Legislative Assembly Lower of Canada. The Taschereaus inscribe the name of Louis Joliet among their ancestors, the brave *conféère* and companion of the heroic Pere Marquette on that historic voyage which resulted in the discovery of the Mississippi.

In spite of his manifold duties he found time to write an erudite history of the Quebec Seminary, which contains much valuable information of the earliest annals of Canadian Catholicity. His varied intellectual powers were now in full bloom, and his stability as a zealous churchman was recognized in Rome; consequently he was appointed Coadjutor, with right of succession to Archbishop Baillargeon, whose health was fast failing him. Before the day of the Auxiliary's consecration had come, the venerable Metropolitan was called to his reward, so that Dr. Taschereau was consecrated seventeenth bishop and fourth archbishop of Quebec, by the now lamented Archbishop Lynch, of Toronto, on St. Joseph's day, 1871. His record as a diocesan administrator for nearly a quarter of a century is well known, and by it the success of his wise rule may be measured.

In 1886 the Cardinal's hat was bestowed upon him. In this connection it may satisfy curiosity to know that, although the venerable deceased was practically the first Canadian Cardinal, there was a like honor conferred upon the Rt. Rev. Thomas Weld, D.D., in 1830, who, at the time of his elevation, ranked as Coadjutor to the Hon. and Rt. Rev. Dr. Macdonnell, of Kingston, and first Bishop of Upper Canada. Cardinal Weld's See was *in partibus*, and the great English dignitary never set foot on Canadian soil nor exercised any of his functions in this land. Still, he was a member of the Canadian Hierarchy at the time he received the red hat. It was thought that his honor was due to a desire of Pius VIII. to express gratitude to the English Government for having granted Irish Catholic emancipation the year before.

In virtue of his being the head of the historic See of Quebec, and by his own high personal charac-

ter, it was universally admitted that Mgr. Taschereau well deserved his honor and right worthily wore it. Having "fought the good fight," he goes down to his grave accompanied by the benediction of the Church and the prayers of the people, leaving an untarnished name behind him and a prosperous archdiocese to his worthy successor, Archbishop Begin.

WM. ELLISON.

## Mounted Police in the North.

Regina Leader.

Everybody has a good word to say about our police boys who are doing duty in the far north, from Wrangel to Dawson City. An American, who has just been over the Skagway trail, says of them:

The Mounted Police are proving one of the greatest safeguards to the men on the trail. They are divided into squads stationed at distances ranging from 25 to 50 miles, between the Summit and Dawson. The police are under instructions to aid all men on the trail whenever found in need of assistance, such as upsets, break-downs, and other mishaps incidental to the trail. Besides that, their presence has a wholesome effect toward checking petty thieving, much of which is constantly going on on the trail, which, without the police, would grow to a proportion that would make necessary a vigilance committee. The Canadian Government is evidently going to great expense in perfecting this organization, judging from the immense stores of supplies, hay, feed, etc., coming in and being stacked at the various posts.

## THE OLD ENEMY AT WORK.

Catholic Record.

A story was sent recently from Rome by Reuter's telegraph to the following effect:

"It is estimated that the value of the presents received by the Pope on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of his first Mass amounted to 5,000,000 lire. Among the more valuable gifts were a check from the Duke of Norfolk for £3,000, 100,000 florins from the Bishops of Austria, a similar sum from the Bishop of Hungary, 100,000 lire from the Spanish Bishops and 60,000 lire from the German Bishops, while a diamond cross from the Catholics of the United States is valued at 250,000 lire."

This has been officially denied by the Osservatore Romano, which states that is an absolutely false and maliciously invented fabrication. Being false, the originator of the story could not have known it to be true, and it was therefore maliciously invented to make it appear that the Pope is receiving large sums of money from all parts of the world, whereas his receipts are actually small in comparison with the large expenses which are necessary for the administration of Church affairs throughout the world.

BARCELONA is now a most populous city of Spain, the result of a census just taken showing 520,000 inhabitants to Madrid's 507,000.

Mothe—Don't take your sister Peggy's wheel, Molly; she may want it Molly—O, no; she won't want it; she has a cold in her head. Mother what in the world has that got to do with wheeling? Molly—Peggy isn't yet able to blow her nose while riding her wheel.