

The True Witness

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1896

HOLY WEEK.

Well and justly is this week called "Holy." Were it not that the Church commemorates, throughout the year, the various important events in the history of Redemption, men would soon forget all about them. During this week, however, the Divine Establishment recalls to the faithful the most important of all the events connected with the life of our Lord. In truth, the death and resurrection of Christ constitute the source of our salvation and of Christianity. While strangers to our religion apparently fail to understand the sublime but ever mystical ceremonies of the Church, still there is not a single ornament, symbol, gesture, word, prayer or ceremonial that is not eloquent with great significance. Particularly so is it during Holy Week.

We may quote a few lines from Abbe Alexander Mazzinelli's Italian work on "Holy Week." He says: "The majority of the faithful have greatly degenerated from their first fervor; but the spirit of the Church is still the same, and her intention is that these days be spent in recollection and holy sadness. \* \* \* In Holy Week she (the Church) can only bewail the sorrows and death of her Spouse. Her ceremonies are devoid of pomp, her altars divested of costly ornaments. Her office is no longer enriched with harmonious hymns. In a word, she leads her children to compunction by her example. \* \* \* It is also worthy of remark, that as our Divine Saviour during His season worked the greatest wonders that appertain to the mystery of our redemption, so the Church has reserved for this week the most august and holy of her ceremonies. \* \* \* At this time baptism is solemnly administered, sinners are reconciled, priests are ordained, the Paschal communion is distributed."

The ceremonies of Holy Week are not for the eye alone; they are intended to awaken the devotion of the faithful, to recall the events that cluster around the close of Our Lord's earthly life, and to parade before the vision the scenes that consecrate the world's history above all others. We will have a word to say, as has been our wont each year, about each of these important days. Meanwhile there is a still more imperative duty that the spirit of Catholic journalism prescribes; it is to warn our readers of the great obligation of approaching the sacraments at Easter time.

The Church ordains that each one of the faithful shall, under pain of excommunication, receive absolution and the Blessed Eucharist, at least once in each year; and that at Easter time. The period prescribed for the performance of Easter duty extends from the beginning of Lent until the Sunday after Easter. Of course there are exceptions to every rule; there are circumstances which excuse those who otherwise would come within the limits of the precept. For example, there are some people so situated that it is physically impossible for them to reach a priest or a church at that season. Such persons are not bound by the rule; but they are obliged, just as soon as an opportunity presents itself later on, to perform the duty thus omitted. It is not only necessary that each one should approach the Holy Table; but he, or she, must do so in the regular parish church. It does not suffice to receive Holy Communion in a chapel, or in a neighboring parish church, unless special permission is obtained. You must perform that duty in your own parish church.

We will not dwell upon the penalties incurred by neglect of that duty. We trust that no one of our readers will be guilty of omitting the Easter duty this year.

HOLY THURSDAY.

To-morrow the Church celebrates with all due solemnity one of the most sublime mysteries of our Holy Religion. Thursday, the last day of Our Lord's actual mission. On that day did He pronounce His last will and testament; on that day did He establish His Church upon the immutable rock; on that day, at its close, when partaking of the last earthly supper, did He take bread, and breaking it, declare it to be His Sacred Body; on that day did He give us the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist; on that day did He establish His priesthood, confer all necessary powers upon St. Peter and his successors, and lay down the guarantee of His Divine promise that He would be with His Vicar and the Church, all days, even unto the consummation of the world.

When we reflect upon the mysteries that cluster around that eventful occasion, we are struck with awe, veneration, love and gratitude. No wonder that it is called "Holy" Thursday. Holy, indeed, are the events that transpired on that day. It was then that the Church was actually established, that the mission to go forth and preach was given, that St. Peter was made the infallible representative of Christ, that the first ordination took place, that the Eucharist was bestowed upon humanity as the sweetest evidence of Divine Love, and that the final preparations for the morrow's sacrifice were completed.

The spirit that should animate the faithful on Holy Thursday is one of extreme gratitude and intense devotion. That day brings with it the memory of gifts that no earthly power can ever adequately comprehend or fully appreciate.

GOOD FRIDAY.

The saddest and most glorious day of the year. The day of twilight sentiment, half shadow and half light; the darkness of Calvary blending with the flood of Redemption accomplished. We need not invite our readers to walk with us along the Via Dolorosa, to pause at the various stations, to ascend the slopes of Golgotha, to gaze upon the terrible scene when the Son of God expired between two thieves, and on a cross. In spirit each one will follow along that path. No words that we can command are sufficient to paint the picture. The cry, "Eon-ummatum est," reverberates down the centuries, and will go on re-echoing from mountain range to mountain range of time, until it dies away upon the bosom of Eternity's illimitable expanse.

Nature was struck with awe when Divinity bowed down to the fate of humanity. The sun grew dark, the earth trembled, the dead arose and appeared to many. So it is that the Good Friday of this, and of every other year, should be celebrated. The flashing orb of worldly enjoyment should be darkened for the time; the souls of men, like the earth they inhabit, should tremble with a salutary fear; and the ghosts of our evil and sinful years should be summoned from the grave of the past that their contemplation may produce an effect upon the future of our lives.

On that great Good Friday the Redeemer of mankind fulfilled the mission that He had prepared for Himself since the hour when sin first darkened the soul of man. Unto the tomb they carried Him; the seal of the city was set upon it. So, on that day, should we bury in the grave of existence the old life of waywardness and set upon it the seal of salutary repentance. Kneeling humbly before the image of Calvary, let us unite in singing, "O, Crux, Ave!"

HOLY SATURDAY.

The day of silence, transition and expectancy. On Saturday the Church pauses between the sad solemnity of Friday's tragedy and the glorious resurrection of Sunday. The Saviour sleeps in the tomb; the guards of the city keep armed watch over the place; the holy women and faithful disciples weep the departed Messiah. And while the whole world is in suspense, awaiting the fulfillment of the promise that on the third day He will arise, the bells of the churches are silent, the stillness of the sepulchre is undisturbed. It is at this time—after the strain produced by the sorrows of the Passion, and before the mighty reaction that Easter morning will bring—that the Church prepares all the necessaries for the coming year.

The office of Easter-night is advanced to Saturday morning, even as the office of Saturday has been advanced to Friday night. It is the vigil of Easter. On that day is performed the ceremony of renewing and blessing the fire. The Holy Trinity is symbolized in the triple candle that is lit and blessed. But the blessing of the paschal candle is the most solemn of all. It is first carried unlighted to represent Christ dead; then it is lit to represent Christ risen. Grains of incense are placed in the candle in the form of a cross; the incense signifying the sacrifice. All the ceremonies

correspond with the words used, and the prayers offered have reference to the various events in the work of redemption. Water and the oils used in Church ceremonies are likewise blessed on that day. In a word, the ministers of the Church then make all preparations necessary for the celebration of Easter and the continuation throughout the religious year of all the functions of the Church.

Let us pause on Holy Saturday, collect our thoughts and prepare for a due and holy celebration of the glorious Resurrection!

THE RECENT RETREATS.

In nearly all the parishes of Montreal most successful Retreats have been going on during the last weeks of Lent. The effects of those missions are so numerous, so far-reaching and so salutary, that we cannot refrain from devoting a short editorial space to the subject. It would be impossible for us to reproduce the instructive and eloquent sermons delivered in the different churches; equally difficult would it be to attempt an account of all the incidents connected with these events. In fact their is a similarity in all retreats; the preachers may differ in their methods and subjects; the sizes of the congregations may vary; but a like spirit animates them all and the same current of graces flows through each one.

If there is anyone section of the community more worthy of attention, on such occasions, than another, it is that which comprises the young men. If the enemies and tradurers of our Faith, the people who actually know nothing, beyond what their prejudices teach them, about our religion, were to carefully watch the young men who attended—for example—St. Patrick's Retreat, they would have their eyes open to the reality of true devotion. Imagine hundreds of young men arising long before daylight and congregating in the church to listen to the instructions and to take part in the holy sacrifice. Think of those same hundreds, leaving the temptations, enjoyments and allurements of life, and flocking to the church each evening to join in the devotions of the Mission. See them with their lighted tapers, placing those emblems of eternal light and truth at the foot of the altar, bowing down in meek humility and accepting the advice, admonitions and even corrections that come from the pulpit. Look at them, in numbers, going to the confessionals, coming out with the radiance of resurrected hope on their faces, and then approaching the Holy Table to participate in the celestial banquet of the Eucharist. Contemplate and study them, and then learn, that Faith is not a mere phantom as far as the rising generation is concerned.

God bless the missionaries! Their reward will yet be great; and the truest satisfaction, as far as this world goes, that they can know, is in the fact that their efforts have drawn souls to God, have helped to strengthen the ranks of the Church Militant, and have won victories greater than any—the victories of Faith.

OUR REPRESENTATION.

As a rule, when we ask for any acknowledged right of our people, we are told that we came too late. This time we will leave no excuse for such an argument. Of late there has been considerable commotion in the new St. Lawrence Division over the selection of candidates, in both political parties, for the coming Federal contest. It would appear, by all that has taken place, that an English-speaking Protestant representative is expected to sit for that Division in the House of Commons. Since circumstances, in the political world, force upon the public the race and creed considerations, much as we dislike the system, we must also accept the situation. Both the Liberal and Conservative electors seem to centre upon English-speaking Protestants as candidates in the approaching election. So far we have no fault to find. But we contend, and we urge strongly, that, at least in one House—in one Legislative Hall—the division should have an English-speaking Catholic representative. We care not whether it is in the Federal or Local House; but if, in one of these, the Protestant element is represented, in the other the Catholic element should have a voice.

At a recent meeting for the selection of a candidate, by one political party, a prominent English-speaking Catholic drew attention to the lack of representation on the part of his element. He was perfectly right. We do not ask that a Liberal or a Conservative be elected; that is a matter that belongs to the voters to decide. But we do insist that in one of the Houses an English-speaking Catholic should sit for that division. We state this plain contention, and we will return to the subject in a more emphatic manner, if reasons and details are required. Meanwhile we trust to the spirit of justice that animates the people of the division, and we hope that our stand will meet with approval.

While on this question of representation we desire to call attention to the existing vacancy in the Legislative

Council. All manner of rumors are abroad regarding a successor to the late Hon. Mr. Starves. Here again does justice demand that an English-speaking Catholic should be appointed. The district represented by the late Honorable gentleman—who was an English-speaking Catholic—is, with the exception of Pontiac, the most English district in Lower Canada. In the Council we are unrepresented at present—particularly the Irish-Catholic element. If we had no person eligible, as in the cases of other appointments when that argument was used, we would have nothing to say; but we can count fully half a dozen—if not more—Irish-Catholics in Montreal, men in every walk of life, commercial, professional, literary, and other spheres, who have strong claims and who possess every qualification requisite. We fervently hope that the Government will not pass over the fair and just claims of our people in this instance.

THE REMEDIAL BILL.

What is the next move? So far the Remedial Bill has had a second reading and has got as far as the committee stage. Meanwhile the commission of three sits in Winnipeg, and every imaginable means would seem to be used to bring Mr. Greenway and his Government to a sense of justice. Whether the few days that remain between this and the expiration of Parliament will suffice to allow the Bill to reach a third reading is more than we can now venture to say. Even we are not in a position to judge of the results or to calculate the effects of the Winnipeg conference.

While we thoroughly appreciate the spirit of conciliation that prompted the Government at Ottawa in sending the delegation to meet and confer with Mr. Greenway, still we never had much faith in the success of the mission. The most that we think can come of it is the establishment of proof positive that, for political or other reasons, Mr. Greenway will not allow the question to be settled. We before stated that the only proper course, and only consistent one, for the Government to follow, is that of pushing the Bill through to a final reading. As the presence of the commission in Winnipeg in no way retards the Bill, we are inclined to consider it a good move and one that surely tends to show the conciliatory spirit of the Government.

But, no matter what the ultimate outcome, we desire—as a matter of principle—that the Bill should be carried to its legitimate and legal end. It is time that we in Canada should learn to act on principle rather than through motives of expediency. And the principle that this law would establish is one calculated to affect the dearest interests of every section of the country, of every element that goes to make up our cosmopolitan population. Never before had we a better illustration of the difference of logic and system that exists between the Latin and Celtic races, on one hand, and the Anglo-Saxon race on the other.

In the very laws that obtain in Canada, we find that difference accentuated. The French laws are completely and almost entirely based on principle; while the English laws come from precedents. It is the same in nearly every subject of study, political, social or otherwise. The Anglo-Saxon seems altogether unable to grasp an idea or a principle in the abstract; he can only see it in the concrete. He does not consider the establishment of a principle that may be universal in its application; he merely considers whether it is applicable in this or that special case. And thus, unrestrained by the anchor of principle, he drifts about in the stream of expediency, and turns with the tide. What suits his purposes to-day may not suit them to-morrow; he is absolutely selfish; the rest of the world is of no account when his interests are at stake. Therefore, it is foreign to his policy to establish any fixed principle; for to-morrow he may want to depart from it himself.

We have a fair illustration of this in the principle of Home Rule, that is of political autonomy for a country forming part of the Empire. England refuses to allow the Home Rule principle to be established; it is combated bitterly by all sections in parliament, yet in practice—where it suits her purpose—she gives effect to that principle. She grants Home Rule to Canada and refuses it to Ireland. If the principle were once legally acknowledged there would be no excuse for making Ireland an exception. But England does not want to place that country on an equal footing with her colonies, therefore she will not allow the general principle of Home Rule to be established. It is a spirit of grab all and of extreme selfishness that causes this sacrifice of principle at the uncertain and dangerous shrine of expediency.

In this Manitoba school question we have another illustration of the same tendency. The Federal Government desires to establish the general principle of the right of minorities to separate schools; the opposing forces do not want any such principle, because in this immediate case its effects would prove beneficial to the Catholic element. But the other important fact is overlooked, that to-morrow its aid might be invoked

in favor of a Protestant minority, or a Jewish minority, or any other minority. The spirit, therefore, that opposes the establishment of such a principle is one of absolute tyranny, one that will acknowledge no rights but those that suit its own convenience. Wherefore is it that we are anxious to see the government carry the Bill to its logical conclusion in order to establish a liberty-fraught principle of justice.

THE SAILORS' CLUB

Several times of late have we drawn attention to the noble work that is being done by the members of the Catholic Sailors' Club. Of course the organization is yet in its infancy; its numbers are not as large as the cause deserves; but there is every promise that great strides forward will be made this year. The drawing of the Tombola, in aid of the Catholic Sailors' Club, that was fixed for Easter Monday has been postponed until the first Saturday in May. This Tombola should be the medium of encouraging the promoters of the Club. It is a purely charitable—and a nobly benevolent institution. The members have secured a large building, most admirably adapted to the purposes of their good work. This, however, involves very heavy expenses, and they are earnestly soliciting subscriptions to enable them to carry the undertaking to a successful issue.

As our readers well know the work of the club consists in looking after the Catholic seamen who arrive in this port. So far very gratifying results have rewarded the efforts of the few who formed the nucleus of the Society. Even in their old rooms on St. Paul street, they were able to do untold good for the Catholic sailors. It is to be expected that increased benefits will flow from the new and enthusiastic departure. We, therefore, specially appeal to our readers to help, in every way they can, the promoters of this noble Catholic work.

SOME NEW BOOKS

During the past week we have received a number of new publications, all of which deserve a word at this season. First amongst them is a neat and complete volume of five hundred and seventy-five pages, translated from the Italian of Abbe Alexander Mazzinelli, published by John Murphy & Co., of Baltimore, and entitled: "The Office of Holy Week, with the Ordinary Rubrics, Summaries of the Psalms, Explanations of the Ceremonies and Mysteries, together with Observations and Devout Reflections." The title above should suffice to show how important is the work, especially at this season.

From H. L. Kilner & Co., of Philadelphia, come two very pretty and most useful as well as interesting volumes. Eleanor C. Donnelly, the well known and popular author, has contributed both of these to the literature for the young. One is entitled "Amy's Music Box and Other Little Stories and Verses for Children"; the other is, "The Lost Christmas Tree and Other Little Stories and Verses for Children." Miss Donnelly is the author of "Poems," "A Tuscan Magdalen," "Children of the Golden Sheaf," "Hymns of the Sacred Heart," "Petronilla and other Stories." All Catholic families, where there are little boys and girls, should have Miss Donnelly's stories. They are short, well told, interesting, appropriate and edifying.

The Angelus Magazine has come to us again, full of new and most charming contributions. For a time we feared that this fine addition to Catholic periodical literature was going to vanish from the scene. But it has happily survived any difficulties that may have arisen, and Mr. Chas. J. O'Malley, the able and untiring editor, has given us a number equal to the best yet issued. We were highly pleased to find in it a sketch and portrait of Denis Florence McCarthy, from the pen of that gifted poet and essayist Mr. Henry Coyle. Too long has McCarthy's worth been unrecognized. Our readers may have noticed that during the past five years we have regularly quoted from poems by the gifted Celt. We did so with a purpose. We felt how unjustly McCarthy's muse was overlooked and how few knew anything of his magnificent achievements in the field of letters. We have always considered him far superior to Davis as a poet; the latter, however, gained more fame and drew more attention on account of being a founder of the Nation, of having died at the dawn of his career, and of having startled the world with his great political essays and editorials. But McCarthy was a more prolific and certainly a more scholarly poet than even the "Minstrel of Mallow."

Our friend Captain Chartrand begs to be excused for the lateness of his March number of "La Revue Nationale,"—an accident to the press being the cause. No excuse necessary, Captain! It pays in the end to wait a few days for such a splendid treat as your last number furnishes. In it Father Gohier, O.M.I., continues his able articles on Pasteur; Dr. Paul E. Prevost, one of our rising literary and musical talents, furnishes an ad-

mirable series of Psychological Studies; "Un Ancien Legionnaire"—evidently the editor—tells a thrilling story of a military execution in Africa; Mr. E. J. Barbeau and Mr. J. M. Guill add several most interesting pages; our old friend Benjamin Suite is again delving into his rich mine of Canadian history, this time to unearth the story of Nicolas Perrot; one of Pamphile Le May's very best short stories, "La Derniere Nuit du Pere Rasoy," is worthy several careful perusals; that generous-penned, enthusiastic lover of all that is old and beautiful—Mr. O. N. Monpetit—tells of the old castle, "Le Chateau de Ramsay"; in fine, Mr. J. Germain's account of the Longue Pointe Asylum, X's Notes on the St. Maurice, Mr. Leon de Tinsseau's serial, "Francoise's" fashions, and Mr. C. Dume's music and song on "The Ocean," all go to make up a number that does honor to the enterprising editor and proprietor, great credit to the contributors, and is a bright evidence of the progress of French-Canadian literature.

One word more: Captain Chartrand will this time excuse us. We sincerely and urgently beg of all true lovers of Canadian literature—not only our French-Canadian friends, but all Canadians who have the happiness of being able to read and understand the French language—to come forward generously, and by advertising, or subscribing, assist the editor of this truly meritorious publication to make it a lasting success. The Captain deserves well at the hands of all Canadians. He did honor to our young country when abroad in Europe; he has consecrated his latter years to a revival and encouragement of elevating literature. Therefore do we bespeak for him and his magazine a proportionate recognition.

THE ROAD DEPARTMENT.

The action of the Road Department in allowing the gullies in the residential portions of this city to remain closed at this season, with tons of snow and ice on the roadways and footpaths melting and streams of water running into the basements and cellars of houses, is nothing more or less than criminal negligence. What will be the outcome of allowing streams of surface water to lodge under floors in these houses? It simply means sowing the seeds of disease. The system of administration now going on in such matters at the City Hall is not only a ridiculous one, but it will cost the city thousands of dollars in damages.

The New York Freeman's Journal seems to have taken quite seriously a manifesto issued by seven, or at most eight individuals, who have styled themselves "The Canadian Republican Committee." The fact that our New York contemporary not only reproduces extracts from this "manifesto," but comments editorially upon it, indicates that even some of the wisest people are most gullible. Anything, no matter how absurd, provided it has a tendency to Canadian annexation with the neighboring Republic, is snatched up at once by our friends across the line. We confess having seen a copy of this "manifesto" when it was issued some time ago. We never before heard of its signers; nor have we since heard anything about this great committee until the Freeman's Journal recalls its existence. We hold a penny that of the thousands in all Canada who read our paper there are not five who know any of the members of that "Canadian Republican Committee"; not ten who have read its "manifesto"; and not twenty who ever heard of it.

From the Rev. Mr. Noble, to whom we referred in a recent issue, we received a communication that we do not think it necessary, as not likely to be productive of any good, to publish. The Reverend gentleman contends that the Church of Rome can have no special claim to the title "Catholic." He arrives at this conclusion because certain Protestant denominations add on the word "Catholic" to their ordinary appellations. As well contend that a family had no right to its surname because the children of other families have received the same name at baptism. We do not wish to be discourteous to the Rev. gentleman, but we think that he asks a great deal too much when he requests us to publish unjustifiable attacks upon what we hold most sacred. He claims to love all men, Christian, Jew, or infidel, but he hates the dogmas of Rome. It is only a step from hating the teachings to hating the teachers. The former he admits, the latter he evidences in his correspondence.

W. GORDON GORMAN, of London, is about to publish a work entitled, "Converts to Rome." He has the names and data concerning six thousand converts, of whom six hundred are Americans. He desires to learn of others on this side of the Atlantic. The expense of publication being very great, the book will be sold only by subscription. Those who desire may address him at 25 Murthy's Terrace, Castleman, Barnes, London, S.W., England.