

Letters.

Month of the Sacred Heart.

By a Regular Contributor.)

June is the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and in this diocese especially it is held in particular devotion.

Again it is fitting that this month, when nature has reached fullness of glory, should be dedicated to the one who is the plenitude of all glory and all greatness.

Then we have the double feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. Again personages in the sacred history of the world that were most intimately connected with Our Saviour on earth and the Church that He established to endure unto the end of time.

"St. Paul's love of Jesus. St. Paul displayed as much energy in laboring for the glory of his divine Master as he had displayed ardor in persecuting the disciples of Jesus.

Thus it is that in this month of June we behold so many of those closely associated with our Lord in His wonderful work of Redemption, again grouped around His Sacred

Heart by the Church, and lending, as it were, their influence and example to heighten the devotion of the month.

A Plea for a Catholic Hall

Dear Mr. Editor,—There appeared in the issue of the "True Witness" of May a letter signed "R. L.," under the caption of "A Plea for a Catholic Hall."

Now, Mr. Editor, to accomplish such a task a starting point must be made somewhere, the ground work must be laid out and ways and means must be considered carefully and thoroughly before such an important enterprise is undertaken.

SHAMROCK.

Montreal, June 1st, 1903.

In Catholic Country Parishes

While sections of the continent are being flooded and lives are swept away in the excess of waters, we in this part of Canada have been long weeks in need of rain.

Hence it is that four times in each year the Church sets aside days called Ember Days, when the faithful are ordained to fast and pray that

the season about to commence may be blessed. On those days of rogation, or petition that the Church keeps so faithfully, men ask for the help of heaven for the fruits and crops of the earth.

This is actually in the order of things. And at present, as we are passing through a most trying period, when the clouds have refused us rain for five or six weeks, and the sowing of the seed has been rendered almost a useless task, the Church again reminds the faithful that they must pray in order that God may grant them the blessing they so much need.

On Thursday of last week at Varennes, a most edifying ceremony took place. A solemn procession was held from the parish Church to the shrine of Ste. Anne de Varennes, in which parishioners from Varennes, Boucherville, Ste. Julie, Vercheres and other surrounding parishes took part.

On Friday, the day following, another like religious demonstration, for the same purpose, took place at Boucherville. At 6.30 in the evening all the bells were rung and the faithful from the surrounding districts flocked to the Church.

We have frequently heard strangers and Protestants especially traveling up and down the St. Lawrence, express astonishment at the number of Church spires that rise, at given distances, along the shores, and like the light-houses mark the centres of activity.

They do not seem to understand that these are the real beacons that guide our province and its Catholic people along the immense stream of existence. These are the lightning-rods that protect the mansion and the cabin alike against the flash of adversity's tempest.

While we might, from a Catholic standpoint, go further into details and show the difference, in regard to the sacred character of the places in the Holy Land, between the views of our Church and that of others interested in Palestine; but for the present, we will confine ourselves to a gleaming of the information afforded by Dr. Peter's article.

Memorials Of The Past.

The archaeologist, especially the one inclined towards oriental research, cannot fail to be interested in some very instructive comments recently published by Rev. Dr. J. P. Peters, on the recent work of explorers in the Holy Land.

"From the architectural and artistic standpoint the relics of the past are, if anything, less valuable. Excavations have revealed no works of art and no buildings of great importance or beauty, if we except perhaps the colossal foundations of the various Byzantine, Crusading and Saracenic structures built upon or adjoining those same foundations.

We must not conclude, however, from this that what has been discovered is without interest, or that there is no prospect of the discovery of Edom, southeastward of Palestine; There is the rock-cut city of Petra in Edom, southeastward of Palestine; the picturesque castles that form a line east of the Jordan, from its source at Baniyas southward to Kerak; the great caves in the hills of the Shephelah, between Judaea and the land of the Philistines; the rock-cuttings in Gilead, north in Bashan, and a whole city cut in the rock in the same vicinity.

One great reason why Palestine is not as excavated and explored as other lands in the East is very well set forth in the following passage:—"The sanctity attaching to most of the localities in Palestine, while it has attracted much attention to those sites, has also to some extent prevented a more accurate and scientific investigation of their antiquities.

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this furnishes us with a fine theme for a future occasion:—

"I need not speak of individual efforts and of the various small archaeological and Biblical collections which one finds in Jerusalem. Almost every resident of Palestine—English, American, French, and German—has some interest in and knowledge of or theory about the antiquities, the ancient history, and the identification of sites in Palestine. So, for example, as I am walking down the Bethlehem road, west of the walls of Jerusalem, a man accosts me in English and expounds to me his theory of the topography of Jerusalem, and the actual site of the hill of Zion. I call on a lady, the head of an English school, and am shown some interesting Graeco-Pheonician glass and a small piece of gold leaf, with an inscription in Greek letters: 'Good luck to the newly married.' The holes in the gold leaf showed that it had been sewn on the garment of a corpse, and the reference of the inscription was to the marriage of the dead with Persphone. It had come from a tomb excavated by the natives in the neighborhood of the ancient Mareslah in the Shephelah. I am the guest of the Franciscan monks in Tyre, and the abbot holds a discourse on the antiquities of the country. He had been in Jerusalem when Dr. Bliss was excavating there, and had followed his work closely and intelligently. I meet an American missionary at the Jewish town of Safed in Galilee, and he tells me of monuments which he has discovered in northern Galilee in missionary and hunting tours, which are as yet on no map, of a cave full of flint fragments, remains of the period of the stone workers, and much more."

The next most important point in this noteworthy article is the mention of the collection of the Assumptionist Fathers—like all the Catholic orders, from time immemorial they were the real custodians of all that antiquity held of useful for coming generations. Here is the passage:—

"In Jerusalem, at the hospice of the Assumptionists, there is a scientific collection of antiquities, with a catalogue in French. To be sure, the collection is small, but it is well arranged. At the monastery of the White Brothers, by the supposed pool of Bethesda, where a fresco of an angel stirring the waters was found some years ago, is also a Biblical Museum, but here there is more zeal to illustrate the Bible than scientific knowledge of archaeology. In the Moslem high school is a collection of pottery gathered and arranged by Dr. Bliss, from objects found by him in his excavations for the Palestine Exploration Fund. Unfortunately, it is difficult for the stranger to visit this collection, nor is the collection itself kept up. Of late it is whispered, also, articles which were in that collection have been offered for sale by dealers; for there are dealers in antiquities in Jerusalem whose agents through the country are causing an enormous destruction of antiquities."

We simply take these few quotations. Later on we purpose returning to this subject and dealing with it from a standpoint not within the scope of Dr. Peter's article. But the foregoing will serve to indicate the importance of the subject.

THE SACRED HEART.

O Sacred Heart, my yearning Both spend itself in Thee; For Thou art ever waiting My Haven sure to be; The world and its allurements Both cease me oft to stray, But swiftly comes the waking, And I am Thine away!

O Sacred Heart, forgive me If still from Thee I turn; If yet from Thee I wander, And seem Thy Love to spurn; 'Tis not that I am faithless, But errant ways are mine; For these do not despise me, But make me ever Thine.

Amadeus, O.S.F., in St. Anthony's Messenger.

BUSH FIRES.

Mrs. William Howes, a widow of 65 years of age, was caught in a bush fire in Caledonia township, a few miles from Vankleek Hill, last week, and burned to death. She was found by neighbors a few hours after in a sitting position and her remains were badly charred. She went to the bush alone to fight the fire and was evidently overcome by the dense smoke. Bush fires are raging in all directions in that vicinity.

Jubilee Of Immaculate Conception.

Rome, May 14.—Another Jubilee! The echoes of the Pontifical Jubilee of Leo XIII. have not died away, when Rome begins to prepare for another great Jubilee, in which the Holy Father, not only by reason of his office, but of his person, occupies the leading place. In the apex of St. Peter's are a number of marble tablets containing several hundreds of names of Cardinals and Bishops of the Catholic Church throughout the world. All these hundreds, representing the whole hierarchy of half a century ago, have, with one solitary exception, disappeared from this world. They met in that very spot to hear from the lips of Pius IX. the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The portraits of many of them still speak from the magnificent frescoes in the Hall of the Vatican, in which the historic scenes have been handed down to posterity.

The only one of them who survives to-day is Cardinal Pecci, whose name was printed almost last among the members of the Sacred College of the time; and Cardinal Pecci has just closed the Jubilee of his pontificate in the Chair of Peter.

During the present month the programme of the celebrations in honor of the Jubilee of the Immaculate Conception will be published here in Rome under the auspices of the commission which has already been established to make the necessary arrangements. Three of the Cardinals of the Roman Curia are at the head of this, Vincenzo Vannutelli, Ferrata and Vives, while the detail work has been appropriately entrusted to the Circle of the Immaculate, which has been in existence in Rome for nearly half a century. The first part of the programme is to consist of the appointment of committees throughout the world, the organization of pilgrimages to the Eternal City, the execution and diffusion of a "cantata" on the Immaculate Conception composed by the great Maestro Perosi, the formation of a Marian Library for works dealing with the Mother of God, especially in relation to the dogma; a preparation of the statistics of the institutions existing in honor of Our Lady under this title, the organization of a universal Marian Congress to be held in Rome, a collection of the best poems composed in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the publication of special periodicals to bring out all the significance of the great event.

The second part of the programme has special reference to Rome, and consists of a series of missions for the people, a particular organization of preparation for first communions, retreats for members of the different Catholic associations, a special religious service for the 8th of every month in the year in the basilica of St. Mary Major—the chief church in Christendom, dedicated to Our Lady. On Dec. 8, 1904, the fiftieth anniversary of the Solemn Definition of the Immaculate Conception, there will be a magnificent function in the presence of the Holy Father in St. Peter's, where the dogma was defined, at which all the Catholic associations of the Eternal City will be represented; a similar function in St. Mary Major—without, of course, the presence of the Pope. On the same day there will be a solemn reception in the Vatican, at which the people of Rome will offer the Holy Father a magnificent ring, and out at San Lorenzo a Solemn Requiem will be offered for the repose of the soul of Pius IX.—the Pope of the Immaculate Conception.

Just four years ago a committee took in hand the preparations for the Jubilee of Leo XIII.—an apparently audacious undertaking, for His Holiness was then almost ninety. Strange to say, nobody seems to consider the presence of Leo XIII. at the crowning of the Immaculate Conception Jubilee a year and a half hence as a far-fetched supposition. Even His Holiness himself has ceased for the last year or two to speak of his death as imminent. Certainly, he is at present in as good health as he has been any time during the last four years, and his private physician, Dr. Laponni, continues to answer all enquiries about his illustrious patient with a confident optimism which is inspiring.—Roman Correspondent, New York Freeman's Journal.