

## The Catholic Record

Published every Friday morning at 422 Richmond Street, over McCallum's Drug Store, and nearly opposite the Post Office.

Annual subscription.....\$2.00  
Six months.....\$1.00

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Twelve and a half cents per line for first, and five cents per line for each subsequent insertion. Advertisements measured in non-paired type, 12 lines to an inch.

Contract advertisements for three, six or twelve months, special terms. All advertisements should be handed in not later than Thursday morning.

Terms to agents, twelve and a half percent, or one free copy to the getter up of each club of ten.  
We solicit and shall at all times be pleased to receive contributions on subjects of interest to our readers and Catholics generally, which will be inserted when not in conflict with our own views as to their conformity in this respect.

All communications should be addressed to the undersigned, accompanied by the full name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

THOS. COFFEY,  
CATHOLIC RECORD,  
LONDON, ONT.

## LETTER FROM HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP WALSH.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MAY 23, 1879.

DEAR MR. COFFEY.—As you have become proprietor and publisher of the CATHOLIC RECORD, I deem it my duty to announce to its subscribers and patrons that the change of proprietorship will work no change in its tone and principles; that it will remain, what it has been, thoroughly Catholic, entirely independent of political parties, and exclusively devoted to the cause of the church and to the promotion of Catholic interests. I am confident that under your experienced management the RECORD will improve in usefulness and efficiency; and I therefore earnestly commend it to the patronage and encouragement of the clergy and laity of the diocese.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

J. WALSH,  
Bishop of London.

MR. THOMAS COFFEY,  
Editor of the "Catholic Record."

## Catholic Record.

LONDON, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1879.

THE French Radicals have been compelled to withdraw Ferry's Education Bill. We are glad this attempt to undermine the Christian teaching of the children of France has signally failed.

THE elections for the Ontario Legislature have resulted in returning a large majority of supporters of the present Government. Now that the contest is over, it would be well to forget all the bitterness engendered by the struggle. Fifty-eight Reformers and twenty-eight Conservatives have been elected.

THE Orangemen of the city of Montreal have resolved to hold no public demonstration on the 12th of July next. We are glad that wise counsel has at length prevailed amongst these men. Celebrations of this sort serve no good purpose, and we hope the western section of the Order will, ere long, follow the example of its eastern brethren. The commemoration of local Irish feuds in Canada is more than nonsensical.

SAYS the London *Universe*: "Our great English Cardinal is still the observed of all observers; numerous handsome presents pour in upon him daily from all sides. His health is still delicate, and it becomes more evident every day that his constitution cannot resist the insidious attacks of an Italian spring. We shall be glad to hear that Cardinal Newman is on his way back to us."

A TELEGRAPHIC dispatch from New Orleans of May 20th brings the intelligence of a plot for the assassination of the principal Catholic clergymen of that city. It was the ill-defined craze of a lunatic. His plan was to call at the archiepiscopal residence and ask to see Father Rouxel, Vicar-General of the diocese, during Archbishop Perche's absence. On being admitted to his presence he would attempt to murder the Vicar-General, and then make his escape if possible. The lives of the other prominent heads of the Church were afterward to be assailed as opportunity offered. With the inconsistency of insanity he communicated his intentions to his sister, who is sub-prioress of St. Mary's Dominican Convent, New Orleans. On the strength of the information supplied by the sister his interception and arrest were accomplished without much difficulty.

OUR Presbyterian friends in Saratoga seem to be possessed of as much nonsense as ever. Forty years ago the assembly of that body made the following declaration, which must have appeared very unreasonable to thoughtful minds at that time, but what can we think of a number of

educated men of the present day who will calmly re-affirm such a resolution:

"The assembly re-affirms the deliverance of the assembly of 1835 as applying to that Roman Hierarchy headed by the Pope, the following of whose doctrines is working absolute and irreconcilable injury to the Church of God."

And if we were to ask these men which is the Church of God, possibly they would make answer, it is the Presbyterian Church of Saratoga and vicinity, leaving out altogether many Presbyterian churches not there represented.

WE publish to-day an article concerning F. G. Widdows, the individual who created such a stir amongst a portion of our fellow-citizens about a year ago, as assistant pastor of Grace M. E. Church, Queen's Avenue. Evidently the people of Scotland are not as easily humbugged as some of our shrewd Londoners who placed so much confidence in the sincerity of the little actor and vocalist. We suppose he will put in an appearance here again shortly with a new and original assortment of anti-Popery jokes, etc., all to be heard for the small sum of twenty-five cents; and doubtless many of his hearers will solemnly believe every word he says is the truth. There are to be found many people, even in the United States, who believe Barnum is a very clever, honest showman. We could put our finger on many good people in London who think Widdows is a very clever, honest Christian.

## THE IRISH CHURCH IN THE PAST.

IN the history of the Catholic Church we cannot discover a page that tells of so much suffering and wrong as that which relates to the Irish branch of it. Since the days of Nero, there is not on record a more fierce, or bloody, or lengthened persecution than that to which the Church in Ireland had been subjected, since the period of the so-called Reformation until the Emancipation. The history of the fiery ordeal through which our national Church has passed is but faintly written in books—it is far more eloquently and more indelibly recorded on the surface of our country. The ruined monuments of our faith that strew the land, the remnants of our ancient churches and monasteries that everywhere meet your eye, and that are still beautiful, even in their ruins, speak far more eloquently than words, of the force and violence of the storm that wrought so much havoc and devastation. There is a great blank in Irish Church history, extending over the worst days of the penal laws, which it is to be feared will never be filled up. No manuscript, no written record, has been left, or at least discovered, which throws light on the sepulchral darkness that broods over the first years of the Cromwellian occupation. But a wail, as from the martyred dead, comes forth from the ruined fane that meet your gaze in the sheltered vale or on the bleak hill-top, which supplies the place of written history, and pathetically describes the sufferings and wrongs our fathers endured for the faith they held to God. Laconically somewhere says, that nationality is one of those misfortunes of the human race which claims the greatest sympathy. There is in one's country something so sacred, that when, in reading history, we reach one of those moments in which God, by an inscrutable judgment, withdraws the life from a nation, we are seized with sympathy for that country, even though it has disappeared from the mist of ages, and we would wish to bring it to life again. Ages have passed away; the grass has grown on the humble graves of Philoemen and Arminius; never will the Athenian League and the tribes of Germany awaken to weep once more around them; but God, who is great in mercy as well as in justice, has made of the heart of man an immortal country for all those who have lost their's, whilst by their courage they remain worthy of having one. The death of a people, as a nation, appeals to the sympathies of every generous heart. The conquerors themselves are not insensible to it. Scipio wept at seeing Carthage wrapt in the devouring flame, and when surprise

was expressed at his doing so, he said, "I think of the day when Rome's turn shall come." Yes, it is a touching sight, that of a nation striking for its liberties and rights; and when it is conquered by superior force, when its national life is crushed out beneath the iron heel of despotism, when its once free and cherished institutions are laid in ruins, and the galling chain of slavery is around its neck, what heart so hard as not to be moved to its centre at this overwhelming misfortune? What tongue is there that can refrain from muttering anything but blessings on its oppressors? But when a people so crushed and conquered—robbed of its dearest rights and driven from its ancestral home—still clings to its persecuted faith, and clings it to its heart, in spite of all that tyranny can do, our sympathy gives way to admiration; for this is a fact that does honor to our race—it is the triumph of mind over matter, of moral strength over brute oppression—it is the noblest vindication of the dignity of manhood and of the free, unfettered independence of conscience, which chains cannot fetter nor tyranny enslave. Yet this is the spectacle which the Irish Church, during three hundred years of sorrowful existence presented to the world. During the dark period, the whole force of a powerful government was employed to make Ireland renounce her faith; but in vain. Every means that human ingenuity could devise, and physical force put into execution, were resorted to, to pluck the faith from the Irish heart. Catholic education was strictly interdicted—the Irish priest was proscribed and hunted down like the wolf—the national Church was robbed of its rich possessions—the celebration of Mass was felony—the rack and the thumb-screw were employed to make our ancestors love the new-fangled creed of their oppressors; but all to no purpose. For three centuries of persecution like this did our brave ancestors cling to the Church of their choice and affections, and we now see that Church, after this terrible ordeal, young, fresh, and vigorous, and bright in the effulgence of its resurrection.

WE have been led into this train of thought by the appearance of two works that have been some time ago issued from the press. We allude to Dr. Moran's *Life of Oliver Plunkett* and Aubrey de Vere's *Imitator*. These two works, though differing widely in character, still serve, in their way to illustrate the history of Ireland in relation to penal times. We have not much space to make extracts from either; but we cannot pass over a letter written about the end of 1673, by the martyr Prelate of Armagh, which throws a flood of light on the crippled state of the Church in Ireland at the period—

On the vigil of Christmas, Mgr. Daniel Mahey, Bishop of Down and Connor, most perfectly obeyed the last edict, and departed, not only from Ireland, but also from the world, to enjoy now, as we hope, a country and a kingdom where he will be free from the Parliament of England and its edicts. He was a good theologian, educated in Spain, and chaplain for many years of De Pedro of Arragon. At his death, he had no more than thirty-five bajocadi (eighteen pence) so that, to have even a private funeral it was necessary to sell part of his goods.

Like the present opportunity of sending to the Sacred Congregation, and the effect of this report will be, I hope, to prevent for some time the appointment of any more Bishops for this kingdom; and my opinion is based on the poverty of the various dioceses, which is, indeed, astounding. The following is the annual revenue of all my suffragan Sees:—

The Primatial See of Armagh.....£22 0  
Diocese of Meath.....20 0  
do Clogher.....15 0  
do Down.....10 0  
United Dioceses of Down & Connor 25 0  
Diocese of Raphoe.....20 0  
do Kilmore.....25 0  
do Ardagh.....20 0  
do Downpatrick.....17 0  
Clonmacnoise.....7 10

These are all the Sees, with their revenues, in the province of Armagh. You may easily reflect and ponder how little it becomes the dignity of the episcopal character to be Bishops of dioceses which cannot yield a sufficient support. Moreover, I know for certain that the Metropolitan Sees of Dublin, and Cashel, and Tuam, do not yield £40 each per annum. It is true, that the diocese of Elphin, which is a suffragan See of the Archbishop of Tuam, yields about £50, and the diocese of Killaloe, in the province of Cashel, yields about £55; but of the other dioceses not one exceeds £25.

The churches of Ireland, however, as they are in the hands of Protestants, are very rich. For instance, the Protestant Primate derives from the lands and possessions of the church of Armagh £5,000, and the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin has about £3,000. But the Catholic Primate and Archbishop have only the revenues which I mentioned above; whence you may conclude how inexpedient it is

to appoint any more Bishop in this kingdom. And should any such be appointed, it will be necessary for the Sacred Congregation to supply them with revenues, as it does the Bishops in the Indies, and *ad insubel infidelium plagas*. I have two suffragans: Dr. Plunkett, Bishop of Meath, brother of the Earl of Fingal, who, for the past twenty-five years has served the Sacred Congregation with the greatest integrity, even at a time when there was no other Bishop to act in Ireland; the other is Dr. Patrick Duffy, Bishop of Clogher, who even ventured to take possession of his See at the moment the persecution was about to burst forth.

You thus see the state of the ecclesiastical riches of the Catholic Bishops of the kingdom, and I assure you, that during the past four years, I would have been reduced to beggary, were it not for a few pence that I had set aside, but which are now wholly exhausted. I pray you to send this letter to Mgr. Ravizza, who is the present Secretary of Propaganda, as I have been informed. I already requested you to direct your letters to me thus, "For Mr. Thomas Cox, Dublin," and they will surely reach me without being intercepted.

I now make my reverence to you, from my hiding place, on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, 1673. I wish you a most happy new year, replete with every felicity.

In turning to Aubrey de Vere's volume, find the following plaintive piece, descriptive of our oppressed and suffering Church during the dark penal days:—

O, who art thou, with that queenly brow  
And unbroken heart?  
And why is the vest that binds thy breast  
Over the heart blood-red?  
Like a rosebud in June was that spot at noon  
A rose-bud weak?  
But it deepens and grows, like a July rose—  
Death pale is thy cheek.

The babes I fed, at my foot lay dead;  
I saw them die.  
In Hannah a blast went waiting past—  
It was Rachel's cry.  
But I stand sublime on the shores of Time,  
And I pour mine ode,  
As Minerva sang to the cymbals' clang,  
On the wind to God.

Once more at my feast my Bards and Priests  
Shall sit at my feet;  
And the shepherd whose sheep are on every  
Shall bless my meat.  
O, sweet, men say, is the song by day  
And the east by night;  
But on poisons I thrive, and in death survive,  
Through bloody night.

Equally touching, and in the same spirit, is the following piece on the woes of the Irish Church:—

FLORA'S EPIGRAM.  
She sits alone on the cold grave-stone,  
And only the dead are high her;  
In the tongue of the Gael she makes her wail—  
The night wind rushes by her.  
"Few, O few, are the dead and true,  
And fewer shall be,  
The land is a curse, no night, no force;  
Oh, wind, with sore leaves strew her!"  
"Men ask what scope is left for hope,  
To one who has known her story;  
I trust her dead—their graves are red,  
But their souls are with God in glory!"

## NOVEL READING.

NOVEL READING: ITS BAD CONSEQUENCES UPON SOCIETY IN GENERAL AND THE YOUNG IN PARTICULAR.

BE not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners. 1st Corinth. xv. 33. In this passage we are warned by the Holy Ghost to beware of the dangers which arise from evil company. In these few words the Apostle sets forth in a simple and forcible manner the manifold dangers which await the young at the very threshold of life, and the multitude of the inexperienced portion of mankind who are daily ruined by wicked company. It is in bad company that the evil one usually sets his snares to entrap souls. The discourses, examples and conversations of the wicked serve the enemy of mankind as instruments to corrupt the most holy and subvert the most solid virtue. Such being the fatal effects resulting from evil company, we beg leave to make application of these considerations to another danger not less destructive to morals, and as pernicious to youth; we mean the reading of bad books and immoral prints of every kind. This, also, is one of the greatest, most powerful, and most universal of all the obstacles to their salvation. Our age is deluged with such productions. It has multiplied them in all languages and in all shapes. They are disguised under the appearance of learning or eloquence or of some ingenious invention; they are read with pleasure and eagerness, and easily remembered. Discourses are forgotten, but books remain in the hands of the readers who daily peruse their infectious pages, and swallow down by degrees their deadly poison. They fill the mind with dangerous thoughts, and the imagination with loose ideas; the venom spreads to the heart; and corroding its vitals, effectually corrupts it. Against this pernicious contagion it is the duty of the Catholic journalist to raise his voice, feeble though it be, and warn his readers against one of the greatest dangers which, at present, threatens the very existence of society.

We understand by bad books such works as tend to corrupt the soul and lead it into vice, and also those the object of which is to impair our

faith, and invite us to deviate from the straight path of solid piety. Bad and prohibited reading is therefore of two kinds; the one dangerous with respect to faith; the other with regard to morals. To the first class belong those books which produce doubts and errors in the mind. To the second such as pervert the judgment, corrupts good inclinations, making that appear good which is evil, and that evil which is good. Of this class some teach vice openly, excite our passions, inflame concupiscence and kindle dishonest love in the hearts of the most chaste. They wage open war against chastity. Others not seeming to be directly bad, attract the mind by their enchanting descriptions, and by the agreeableness of the subject delight the senses, and inflame the heart with impure love. Such are most of the poets, and the greatest part of romance and works of fiction. Those books are even more dangerous than the most lascivious productions which attack open morality; because the latter teach wickedness without disguise and easily excite aversion to themselves in souls which have yet some shame and conscience. But the former being disguised under the most ingenious invention, become by so much more dangerous, as under these disguises they conceal a mortal poison which is deeply imbibed in the soul. Now in order to caution the young and unsuspecting against the danger arising from reading bad books we may be permitted to lay down some considerations which bear on our subject. Though our remarks may apply equally to books contrary to sound doctrine and pure morals, we have chiefly in view works destructive of morality, such as novels, and romances or books of fiction. What we have to say on the matter will be, in great measure, taken from sources not to be suspected. Our first witness is a close observer of the world, the well known historian of the English Reformation, Wm. Cobbett. "And first of all," says this impartial writer, "whether as to boys or girls, I deprecate romances of every description. It is impossible that they can do any good, and they may do a great deal of harm. They excite passions that ought to lie dormant; they give the mind a taste for imaginary scenes of life; they make matters of real life insipid. How is it possible for young people to read such books, and look upon orderliness, sobriety, obedience and frugality as virtues. And this is the tenor of almost every romance, and of almost every play in our language. In short," continues the same close observer of the immorality of his age, "the direct tendency of the far greater part of these books, is to cause young people to despise all those virtues, without the practice of which they must be a curse to their parents, a burden to the community, and must, except by mere accident, lead wretched lives. It is impossible for me by any words that I can use, to express, to the extent of my thoughts, the danger of suffering young people to form their opinions from the writings of poets and romances. Nine times out of ten, the morality they teach is bad, and must have a bad tendency. Their wit is employed to ridicule virtue, as you will almost always find, if you examine the matter to the bottom." Thus far the great historian of the Reformation in England.

The opinion of one of the greatest philosophers of our age, the late Mr. Brownson, is not less to the point on this subject. "We have," says the distinguished reviewer, "experienced too much romance in real life, and seen too much of the effects of romance and novel-reading on those dear to us, to be able to recommend the reading of novels and romances. It is not well to waste over scenes of fictitious woe the tears and sympathy due to the real miseries of life."

"Romances," says Dr. Beattie, "are a very unprofitable study; most of them are unskillfully written and the greatest part indecent and immoral. To contract a habit of reading romances is extremely dangerous. They who do so lose all relish for history, philosophy and other useful knowledge; acquire a superficial and frivolous way of thinking; and never fail to form false notions of life, which come to be very hurtful to

young people when they go out into the world. I speak not rashly, but with too good evidence, when I affirm that many young people of both sexes, have by reading romances, been ruined; and that many of the follies, and not a few of the crimes, now prevalent, may be traced to the same source." Now if this be true of writings which seem less dangerous, what censures shall we find harsh enough for the generality of such productions which are filled with scenes and intrigues of love and tend to awaken, cherish and entertain the most dangerous of all passions?

To the above conclusive denunciations of the dangerous effects produced by immoral productions, we may be allowed to add the solemn and public declaration of the English nation. At the death of Lord Byron, which occurred in Greece, April 19th, 1824, the committee appointed to examine his claim to the honor of a burial in Westminster Abbey refused to the remains of this too famous poet the privilege to which his genius, better directed, would have entitled him, but of which he was deprived on account of his immoral and licentious works. Wisely did England through her representatives give thereby a warning to the present and future generations to avoid the infamous productions of this too celebrated poet, as the poisonous source of infidelity and immorality.

But need we consult the evidences furnished by moral philosophers and historians in order to form a correct idea of the baneful influence of reading immoral or infidel literature? Within the circle of our own acquaintances and those dear to us, have we not occasionally observed the most disastrous effects of immoral works? How many have fallen victims to this insatiable craving for novel-reading? Witness the many instances of lamentable suicide recorded in the daily press; which are the result of a sentimental melancholy brought on by the constant perusal of the poisonous literature of the day. Witness again the unnatural and disastrous marriage of many a young female who has found in an elopement with a brainless youthful adventurer the exact counterpart of love intrigues so familiar to the novel-readers. How many have to bewail the rash curiosity that unhappily induced them to peruse these works? They are now sensible that the irregularity of their conduct, the loss of their health, and the ruin of their fortune, are chiefly owing to the operation of this cause. The reading of licentious writings first sowed the seeds of corruption we all bear in our hearts; and the passions once inflamed bid defiance to control.

One single bad book is enough to pervert a thousand young people. It passes through a variety of hands. The contagion circulates and infests whole families. But the effect is still more ruinous, if it be one of those abominable writings in which, together with wanton intrigues, lascivious anecdotes, and impassioned descriptions, are joined in pious maxims and religious principles, calculated to banish the fear of God, and to make faith itself totter. These restraints once trampled on, into what excesses will they not run, who have levelled the barrier? What lengths will they not go? And what is there to stop them? Religion is the surest safeguard and protection of virtue, the strongest fence that can be opposed to the violence of the passions. Destroy this fence, and the current will rush in and sweep everything before it. Faith, whilst it continues to hold, keeps the door open for repentance. If we have the misfortune to act wrong, at least we condemn and reproach ourselves for it. But if faith be lost, we are deprived of the means of returning to our duty. The evil is without remedy; the mischief without resource. A fatal experience affords but too many proofs of the depravity bad books occasion. Witness the horrors of the French revolution, at the recital of whose atrocities humanity, as well as religion, stands appalled and shudders, a catastrophe principally caused by the influence of infidel and licentious writings.

In concluding the above remarks, we trust it will not be deemed out of place, on our part, as a Catholic journalist, to