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# The Globe and Witness

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## VOLTAIRE'S TERRIBLE DEATH.

### AN UNPUBLISHED ACCOUNT

A Manuscript Which Lays Bare the Incidents Surrounding His Passing.

(Catholic Fortnightly Review.)

Under the heading "The Death of Voltaire," the Catholic Fortnightly Review (Vol. xvi., No. 1, page 20) referred briefly to an important and hitherto unknown document, published by M. Frédéric Lachèvre, and entitled "Voltaire: Enquête faite en 1778 sur les circonstances de sa dernière maladie; publiée sur le manuscrit inédit et annoté." The publication of this manuscript definitely removes the uncertainty that hitherto shrouded the death of the "Philosopher" who gave out the terrible war-cry: "Ecrasez l'infâme." The present paper, based on M. Lachèvre's work, presents a fuller account than we were able to give in our note of last January, of the last days of the "Patriarch of Ferney." On page 5 of his lengthy "Avant-Propos," Lachèvre states that this is a "true inquiry made between the month of June, 1778 (the day following the decease of the Philosopher) and the first of December following," that it bears a "caractère sérieux," and that its author is reliable in his statements. It is doubtful who the writer was, though some believe that he was a prelate who desired to have an authentic account of Voltaire's death for use in combatting his irreligious teachings. This uncertainty as to the personality of the writer does not, however, diminish the value of his testimony, for the simple reason that we know and are able to control the sources from which he drew.

From letters and other evidence adduced in the "Enquête" it may be inferred that the author had direct relations—whence the value of the account—with the Abbé Gaultier, who came to hear the confession of Voltaire, and with M. de Tersac, curé of Saint-Sulpice, Voltaire's parish priest. He also had "rapports directs" with M. Try, the surgeon, his pupil Brisard, who daily waited upon the sick man, and with the two nurses, Roger and Bardy.

### LIFE ENDED IN DESPAIR.

"Our manuscript, therefore," continues Lachèvre (page xiv), "is a faithful reproduction of answers to inquiries, from persons who had been with Voltaire. It has not the appearance of a hasty compilation made up of clippings from newspapers. . . . The question: 'Did the great enemy of Christianity pass away peacefully and like a philosopher?' is answered by Lachèvre as follows: 'By consulting the testimony already known—and some of it is crushing—with the facts brought to light in our MS., we may affirm that Voltaire ended his life in despair, cursing God and nature. From the moment he realized that he was in danger of death, his one care was to prevent his remains from being cast into the voirie (sewer or dumping-ground). This fear always haunted him.' His manifestations of religious fervor during the progress of the malady were prompted solely by the dread, that if he were to die an open enemy to Christian faith, his remains would be thus dishonored. A dialogue (Lachèvre, p. xvi) between Dr. Lorry and Voltaire, which took place some three months before the latter's death, gives clear proof of this.

People had long speculated as to what would be the end of Voltaire. "If he dies gaily, as he has promised," wrote his physician Tronchin in 1773, "I shall be much mistaken." The Curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Abbé Gaultier made another attempt to reconcile the sick man with God. Voltaire made several threatening gestures to the Curé and looked at him with "regards de feu." At the same time he pronounced some words that could not be understood, but which might easily be interpreted by the menacing gestures. The Curé made room for the Abbé Gaultier. The latter's voice calmed the fury of the enraged patient, who made some ridiculous proposals, which were suspected to be victimizations. Seeing the uselessness of further effort, the two priests withdrew.

### DIED IN TERRIBLE DESPAIR.

Lorry, regent of the Paris Faculty of Medicine, and Tronchin went to see the patient. Tronchin, with another physician, was present in the death-chamber on the day of his death. Saturday, ten o'clock at night, when they examined the sick man, they found his "sens poubés" and he uttered a low cry, which they interpreted as "dieu." One of them, with a candle in his hand, happened to touch the forehead of the dying man. He opened his eyes and in the words of the two doctors, cast upon them "un regard farouche" and said in a terri-

## LOURDES AND SCIENCE.

### FREETHINKERS RECEIVE BLOW.

A Surgeon-Priest Speaks From a Scientific Viewpoint.

The conference delivered on "Lourdes and Science" at Rome recently by Father Gemelli, O.F.M., medical doctor and surgeon in Rome has been a sad blow to the freethinkers who have passed the last three months campaigning through Italy against belief in the supernatural character of the miracles wrought at the Grotto of Lourdes. Before becoming a Franciscan Father Gemelli took out his degrees as doctor in medicine and surgery and has since then been the recipient of various honorary degrees conferred by learned bodies in recognition of his scholarship and profound research. Thus additional interest was lent to his lecture, as was evident from the concourse of ecclesiastics, journalists, scientists of every branch who attended his discourse.

### VERACITY PROVEN.

From the standpoint of a scientific critic, the learned Franciscan examined into the cures effected at the famous grotto, and stated that, although from one thousand to fifteen hundred cures take place every year in Lourdes, only about one hundred and fifty are examined afterwards by the board of doctors, that form the Bureau des Constatations. Now, from two to five hundred medical men of various nations, religious persuasions, and many of no religion—take part during the year in these examinations, so that the result becomes thereby a greater triumph for the veracity of miracles.

### LACK OF GOOD FAITH.

An examination of objections raised by freethinkers showed what little good faith is to be found among them. Some of those cures are wrought after immersion in the waters of Lourdes, some without immersion. Some pilgrims are cured at the Grotto, others hundreds of miles away. Organic and nervous diseases, physical deformities, ailments that have been chronic—all are cured as if to refute the slander of unbelievers.

### Successor to Mgr. Proulx.

Very Reverend Monsignor Joseph Antoine Ireneu Douville has been appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Nicolet, by His Lordship Bishop Brunault, to succeed the Very Rev. M. G. Proulx, who recently died at Rome. Monsignor Douville has, for many years, enjoyed the love and esteem of all his colleagues, and of the community in general. He is the author of a History of the Seminary of Nicolet. He was made papal domestic prelate in 1903. He also holds the degree of Doctor of Theology from Laval University, Quebec, was appointed honorary Canon of the Cathedral of Montreal by Archbishop Bruchési, and on the 14th inst. was elected Vice-Superior of the Seminary, succeeding Monsignor Proulx.

lyng tone, "Let me die!" A few moments before expiring he uttered a terrible cry and his face assumed such fearful contortions that the bystanders were horrified. The daughter of one of the nurses, who had been in continual attendance, afterwards said of this scene: "Il (Voltaire) est mort comme un chien, il semblait à un damné." The "Enquête" continues: "Tronchin, a Protestant physician whose testimony cannot be suspected, Tronchin, who did not leave his patient for a moment, touched by the awful death, cried out immediately afterwards: 'The picture of Voltaire pursues me everywhere. . . . I can not drive it away, and I cannot recall it without a shudder. What a death! How it is to be wished that the unbelievers of Paris might have witnessed it! What a striking lesson they would have perceived!' In a letter written in October, 1778, based on conversations with the same Tronchin, we read: ". . . Voltaire dies not with sentiments of salutary sorrow but in horrible despair, repeating that he was abandoned by God and man and that this was his just desert."

The manuscript further recounts the sad and fruitless attempts made by Voltaire's friends to obtain for him the honors of a Christian burial at Scellières. M. Lachèvre states in his preface that in editing his "Inquiry" it was his sole purpose to "produce indisputable testimony from indisputable facts." We agree with a reviewer of his work, who concludes an extended notice, by saying: "In this he has fully succeeded."

## FRANCISCAN CENTENARY.

### DEMONSTRATION AT OXFORD.

Where 700 Years Ago Their Founder Had Sent Them.

The constant repetition of an assertion that has no foundation in fact makes mere argument useless. An object-lesson may, however, be effective. Such is the steady persistence of our separated Anglican brethren to regard the State Church of England as a flourishing branch of Church Catholic and Petrine, with an unbroken chain of Continuity—in all but Papal Supremacy—from the ages before the Protestant Reformation to the present day. Had any Anglicans who persist in claiming Continuity for the Establishment Church chanced during the past week to climb the very stony and difficult hill from Oxford to its outskirts at Temple Cowley, he would have witnessed a demonstration all the more effective since it was quite unpremeditated, and, unlike the pageants of which so much has been heard lately not specially designed to uphold any theory. It was simply an example of the ordinary way of the Church with her children whom she wishes to honor and encourage.

### UNIQUE CELEBRATION.

The presence of the head of the Catholic Church in England with several of his suffragan Bishops naturally added splendor to the scene; but it was an accustomed splendor, not an acquired one for which rehearsals had been necessary. The prelates bore their mitres, purple silken trains, and other accessories of their state as Judges of the High Court, as other exalted States functionaries wear their robes, as part of a second thought on the matter. The occasion was the seventh centenary of the foundation of the Franciscan Order, and the celebration for the Friars of the English Province who honored at once the memory of their father, the Poor Man of Assisi, and the return of his sons to that Oxford to which, 700 years before, he had himself sent them. And this return was so entirely on the lines of their first coming as to form an unmistakable link of continuity between the two events.

### THE MUSTARD SEED FLOURISHES.

We read in the contemporary Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston: "Just before the feast of All Saints, Brother Richard of Ingworth and Brother Richard of Devon went to Oxford and were received as brethren by the Friars Preachers for eight days. Afterwards they obtained a house in the parish of St. Ebbe. Here the sweet Jesus sowed the grain of mustard-seed which was afterwards to become greatest among herbs." The modern parallel runs: On the vigil of the feast of St. Andrew of Abersychan, lately Provincial of England, and Brother Pacificus, a lay-brother, went to Oxford. Here they abode for a short time amongst friends at Temple Cowley, where the Province had acquired a building, much dilapidated but otherwise suitable for the purpose desired.

### POVERTY THEIR WATCHWORD.

They came in extreme poverty, having for the halving of a place wherein to say Mass a common kitchen basin to hold the holy water, and for a sprinkler a bough cut from a shrub. Joined later on by two companions, the four Friars depended upon "the Table of the Lord for their daily bread." Such was the coming of the men who, after having given to Oxford her "golden age," were persecuted, robbed, and banished from home and country; such the return of their successors who, nothing daunted, have trodden in their footsteps, and given rise to the hope expressed by Professor Little, that "the twentieth-century Franciscans may not prove unworthy of those of the thirteenth century." At Oxford the friar and protector of the first Franciscans was the Chancellor of the University, Lord for their arrival, became long after their arrival, became Bishop of Lincoln. In the course of his huge diocese was placed untimely separate jurisdictions, one portion becoming the present diocese of Oxford, the other remaining at Lincoln. When the Catholic Hierarchy was restored part of the original diocese of Lincoln passed to Northampton, part to Nottingham, and the portion which included Oxford was placed under the Bishop of Birmingham. When, therefore, the Bishop of Birmingham set enthroned as Ordinary in the sanctuary of the college chapel, he represented the honest succession from Bishop Grosseteste as regards Oxford and the Midlands, while the Bishop of

## NOT OPPRESSED OR PRIESTRIDDEN.

### CONDITIONS IN SPAIN.

Brilliant London Author Gives His Views.

Under the heading, "Spanish Horror and English Humbug," G. K. Chesterton suggests some arresting thoughts on the Spanish situation to the readers of the London Daily News. "The end of your Monday article on Ferrer suggests," he says, "a certain English attitude; it is an attitude which I have sworn a private oath never to let pass without a protest. You indicate that some past effort of the English people (I presume, the Reformation) has fortunately saved us from the misfortunes of Madrid by freeing us from priestcraft and oppression. This a great part of the public will have no difficulty in rendering in the familiar form, 'Thank God at least we are not so bad as Spain.' That is the delusion, that is the monstrous trance of pride and false hope which I for one will always strike at whatever it shows its face. We are as bad as Spain. In certain special and peculiar ways, much worse."

"Now we have no political excursions in England, for the very simple reason that we have no political rebellions in England. Why I cannot conceive. But that the clemency does not arise from our religion or our Protestant freedom can be proved at an stroke. Wherever we do have rebellions, there we do have executions much more mean, reckless and savage than the execution of Ferrer. The celebrated hanging of the Fenians at Manchester has been admitted by the ordinary Unionist lawyers to have been done in contempt of logic and law. The killing of Scheepers in South Africa is a thing of which numberless Imperialists are now ashamed. Sergeant Sheriden swears away Irishmen's lives, and walks unpunished. A few harmless peasants at Denshaw objected to the looting of their property by total strangers; they were tortured and hanged with the wholesale hand of Alva. When our rulers act with such brutality and baseness to small and ineffectual local risings, the mind recoils from imagining how horribly they might behave if confronted with the Spanish problem, with civil war in the heart of our civilization, barricades in Piccadilly, or blood in the gutters of the Strand."

### DOMINATION OF PLUTOCRACY.

"We are at peace, not because we have thrown off the domination of the priesthood, but because we have sunk utterly, silently, and almost without a struggle under the domination of the plutocracy. Things far more fundamentally horrible than the death of Ferrer go on quite quietly all the time, because we have forgotten the trick of mutiny. A private soldier the other day tried to commit suicide with a penknife in order to avoid a flogging. Words cannot express how much more hideous is that fact to a generous mind than the hasty execution of a party leader in a time of armed rebellion; because we are the one people in Europe who are successfully oppressed. I have no wish to open up the religious question; it is enough; you would find it very hard to fit the theory of Protestant liberty with the facts of Europe. The plain fact is that it is only in Catholic countries, like Italy, Ireland and Spain, that the tradition still remains of taking up the sword for freedom. The few remaining Protestant countries are exactly the countries which will not rebel against any extreme insolence from aristocrats or officials; England, for instance, and Prussia."

### Father P. Boylan, M.A., an Athy man, has been offered the Lecture-ship in Eastern Languages in the National University, Dublin.

Father P. Boylan, M.A., an Athy man, has been offered the Lecture-ship in Eastern Languages in the National University, Dublin. Father Boylan is a distinguished student of Conliffe and Maynooth. He has also studied at Berlin University for three years in Philosophy. He has been the collaborator of famous German professors in a great scheme for the publication of a lexicon of the Egyptian language. He has worked through a great mass of Egyptian texts and inscriptions for that purpose, and is at present engaged in a systematic treatment of inscriptions on the Temple of Edfa. The post carries a salary of £200 a year. Father Boylan, it may be mentioned, is a son of Mr. P. Boylan, Woodstock street, Athy.

The proprietors of the Caledon Woollen Mills, have leased and will shortly reopen the Millan Woollen Mills, Bnyvale, Monaghan, where woollen materials of excellent reputation have been manufactured for years.

## Compromise on Irish Land Bill.

### Both Parties in House of Lords Come to Agreement.

Since the Commons declared that they would not agree to the amendments made by the Peers in the Irish Land Bill, negotiations between the Government and the Opposition have been carried on in accordance with the hope expressed by Mr. Birrell, says the London Tablet. The result was seen on Wednesday, when the Lords discussed amendments introduced by the Government and the Opposition to carrying out the agreement arrived at. Lord Crewe having moved that the reasons of the Commons for disagreement should be considered, the motion was supported by Lord Lansdowne. He stated that the House had endeavored to do nothing to jeopardize, and all it could do to help, land purchase in Ireland. They had sought to secure fair dealing, and in case of compulsory sale an independent tribunal of appeal. In regard to congestion they wished the standard of congestion to be reduced from £10 to £5, and they stipulated a different constitution of the Congested Districts Board. Lord Crewe then moved, in order to start the discussion, that the Lords should not insist on their amendments. This having been agreed to, the House came to close quarters with the amendments, carrying out the understanding arrived at between the two front benches. Most of these were agreed to without difficulty. Lord MacDonnell and Lord Crewe strongly objected to the reduction of the £10 standard to £5 but Lord Lansdowne carried his point, insisting that the change was not so far-reaching as seemed to be thought. In regard to the Congested Districts Board, the Government now abandons the proposal for including in the Board nine members representing the congested districts counties. The three ex-officio members are to be retained, while the five members to be appointed by his Majesty are increased to eight. These are to hold office for five years instead of four, as originally proposed. Lord Atkinson then moved that the powers of the Board should be restricted by a right of appeal to a court composed of the Judicial Commissioners and two Judges of the King's Bench Division, with a further appeal to the Court of Appeal on questions of law. Lord Crewe warned the Opposition that very serious objection was likely to be taken to this amendment in "another place." Lord Lansdowne regretted the chilling reception given to the amendment, and carried the House with him in his insistence on it. The remaining amendments were speedily agreed to. It now remains to be seen whether the Lower House will accept the bill as it now stands. It is said the Irish members had no part in the negotiations over the compromise.

### The Agitation Against the Bishops.

There would seem to be no doubt that something is being prepared by way of a counterblast to the joint pastoral of the Bishops on the right of parents to secure school neutrality. An official note in the papers has informed us that Ministers are very busy with "the campaign which is developing against the secular school." This is a piece of misrepresentation from high quarters which should be too obvious to deceive anybody, but it only shows how determined is the party in power to make political capital out of anything which can be distorted against religion. As to the prosecution of the Bishops for libel by the Federation of the Teachers' Friendly Societies, it is somewhat difficult to say what exactly will happen. On the one hand, the Matin declares that the teachers are determined to persist in their intentions; on the other the Eclair has definitely announced the abandonment of the prosecution. Here we have a contradiction which it is not easy to explain, but it is thought that the teachers have not consulted the professional chiefs, and that the Ligue de l'Enseignement is not showing itself very ready with a grant from its funds to pay the costs of the case.