

numerical strength, when not only the throngs that worship at St. Patrick's from early morn until noon at the successive masses, but the congregations of Saint Ann and Saint Anthony, Saint Gabriel and Saint Mary may be viewed every Sunday, and are the living evidence of how the Irish Catholic population of this great and growing city have increased and multiplied, and preserved the inestimable boon of the faith of their fathers. With all this in view, and other unmistakable signs of moral and material progress, can it be realized that only a few years ago the Irish Catholics of Montreal were so mere a handful as not even to attract notice to their existence, and that it was only in 1817, a zealous priest of St. Sulpice learned that a small colony of sons and daughters of the Green Isle were to be met every Sunday, pouring forth their applications to God at the shrine of His Immaculate Mother, *Notre Dame de Bonsecours*. It was but natural they should have flocked there; their lively faith was intensified by their isolation in a strange land, and the sequel shows that they appealed not in vain for the protection of our Lady of Good Help. In 1817 the Rev. Father Richards of the S.S., discovered this little band of Irish Catholic worshippers, numbering not more than thirty to fifty adults. They increased but slowly, since in a directory of the city, published in 1819, we find not more than thirty names that could be identified as hailing from Ireland, and in 1820 their number was still so small that a prominent gentleman who visited the Bonsecours Church in that year stated, "he could have covered with a good sized parlor carpet all the Irish Catholics worshipping there on Sundays." The tide of immigration soon set in, and in 1830, the congregation had largely increased. At that time the old Recollet Church on Notre Dame Street was considerably enlarged, and in the following year was reopened for the use of the Irish Catholics of the centre and western portion of the city, those of the eastern section still remaining attached to *Notre Dame de Bonsecours*. From that time until the opening of St. Patrick's the Recollet was the religious headquarters of the Irish Catholics of Montreal. There the Rev. Father, afterwards Bishop, Phelan commenced his remarkable career of usefulness as pastor of our people.

The indefatigable Father Richards still continued his labours in the interest of the section of the community to which he was so devotedly attached. In 1829 the Church of Notre Dame, commonly known amongst the English speaking residents of Montreal to this day as the "French Church," was opened. There the Rev. Father gathered the Irish soldiers in the British garrison then stationed here, every Sunday morning at eight o'clock mass, and numbers of Irish Catholic civilians unable to attend morning service at the "Recollet" used to flock and assist at the holy sacrifice at the Virgin's Altar, when a short but impressive sermon was invariably preached. The contingent from Ireland swelled to large proportions in 1831-32, and the "Recollet" became altogether inadequate to the wants of the people. Not only was the sacred edifice crammed to suffocation at High Mass, but across Notre Dame street, and in Dollard lane, opposite to the line of St. James street, the devout worshippers actually knelt in the roadway in rain or sunshine.

This rapid increase necessarily gave rise to a demand for further accommodation, and room had to be found for the Irish who could not attend Mass at the Recollet, and crowded the low masses in Notre Dame, Bousecours and other Churches. Rev. Father Patrick Phelan, who was ordained in 1825, continued his pastorate at the Recollet Church till his consecration as co-adjutor Bishop of Kingston in 1843. His successor was Rev. J. J. Connolly. The relief came at last. After several meetings of the Irish Catholics, in which urgent representations were made to the Seminary and Fabrique on the necessity of a new Church, the Fabrique determined upon building one which should bear the title of the patron St. Patrick. In this consummation they were efficaciously assisted by the Abbe Quiblier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, who held the Irish in high esteem, with full appreciation of their services to the cause of religion, in consequence of which he strongly supported their claims in the premises.

No time was lost; on the 20th May, 1843, the purchase of the land was made, comprising the area bounded by Lagau-chetiere, St. Alexander and Dorchester Streets (including the sites of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and St. Bridget's Home and Night Refuge). The property was bought of the Rocheblave family for £5,000, or \$20,000. Shortly afterwards the ground was broken and blessed by the Bishop of Montreal,

and a cross was planted according to usage. Immediately the work of digging the foundation was begun, and on the 26th of September of the same year, the corner-stones were blessed and laid. They were seven in number; they were blessed by the Bishop, Monsignore Ig. Bourget, and laid, the 1st by the Bishop, the 2nd by the Mayor, the 3rd by the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the 4th by the Chief Justice, the 5th by the President of the Irish Temperance Association, the 6th by the President of St. Patrick's Society, the 7th by the President of the Hibernian Benevolent Society.

The work was prosecuted with vigour, through the efforts of the Fabrique, and all the materials employed were of the most substantial character. Finally, on the 17th March, 1847, the church was dedicated to the honour of St. Patrick, and the inauguration partook largely of the ceremonial generally observed on the festival of the patron saint of Ireland. Early in the morning of that day all the Irish Societies, comprising the St. Patrick's Society, the Hibernian Benevolent Society, and the Irish Catholic Temperance Society, with the children of the Christian Brothers, attached to the Recollet Church, and the whole body of the Irish Catholics of the city, joined in procession at the Recollet Church on Notre Dame Street, and marched to the Place D'Armes, where they were joined by the Bishop of Montreal and a number of the clergy of Notre Dame and others, whom the Societies conducted to the church. High Mass was celebrated by Right Rev. J. C. Prince, coadjutor of the Bishop of Montreal, assisted by a number of gentlemen of the Seminary. The eloquent sermon on the occasion was preached by the Rev. J. J. Connolly, director of the Irish Catholics of Montreal, on the text, "Build the House, and it shall be acceptable to me. I shall be glorified." The collection taken up at Mass amounted to £53, or \$212, a large sum for those times.

Father Connolly continued to preside over the fortunes of the new Church and parish until 1860, when he resigned, and it became necessary to find his successor. Several years before in 1846, very Rev. M. Quiblier, superior of the Seminary, had visited Ireland expressly to recruit priests for them, and obtained permission from the then primate of all Ireland, the Most Rev. Dr. Crolly, for the transfer to Montreal of Rev. Fathers Dowd, O'Brien, McCullough and others, all of them distinguished for their piety, zeal, and eloquence, while Fathers Dowd and O'Brien were further noted for their great administrative abilities. The choice of a new pastor was therefore an easy task, and Father Dowd, appointed by the Seminary, entered upon those duties which he has discharged uninterruptedly for the past 27 years.

The year 1847 was further painfully memorable for the Irish Catholics of Montreal in the outbreak and ravages of typhus fever. A few months after the opening of St. Patrick's Church, a member of the clergy of St. Sulpice contracted the pestilence while attending the poor Irish immigrants at the fever sheds, Point St. Charles, where the pastor, Father Connolly, had distinguished himself by his zeal and great labours among the infected, and several of these devoted men died the death of martyrs, among them being the venerable Father Richards, and Father Morgan, a cousin of Father Dowd, who had preceded him to Canada by a few years, and several others. In consequence of this great mortality, the Seminary secured the aid of five Jesuit Fathers, just arrived in the country, and for a few years these assisted in the ministry of St. Patrick's until the Seminary found means to do the work once more through its own members. The more recent history of the congregation is fresh in the minds of all who feel an interest therein. One of its pleasing features was the pilgrimage to Rome, headed by the Rev. Father Dowd in 1877, when the good priest had the pleasure of laying at the feet of Pope Pius IX., the sum of \$6,000 as the contribution of his parishioners to His Holiness.

As already mentioned, the parishes of St. Ann and St. Anthony, St. Gabriel and St. Mary have each their large contingent of the Irish Catholic population of the city of Montreal, but all look up to the venerable pastor of St. Patrick's as the father of the Irish Catholic people of this city and district. His career proves him to have been a providential man. Coming at a critical moment in our people's history, he has guided their steps and unceasingly watched and unflinchingly contended for their interests. They were growing in number, but lacking the institutions necessary for consolidation; these his great powers of administration have provided. His like we may never see again, but the influence of his master mind will