

## Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick

### Retirement from Political Life.—Appointed Chief Justice of Canada. —Sketch of His Career.—A Strong Personality.

(By an Observer.)

On Saturday last Sir Wilfrid Laurier received the resignation of Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick as Minister of Justice, and the Cabinet at its regular meeting appointed the hon. gentleman Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in succession to Sir Henri Elzéar Taschereau.

The newly appointed Chief Justice has been recognized for the better part of the past decade the foremost member of the legal profession in the Dominion. Whilst his loss to political life is felt and acknowledged on every hand, there is but one opinion regarding the high office he has just assumed, that the country could not have supplied any one more eminently qualified for the judicial duties belonging to the Chief Justiceship of the highest court of Canada.

The predecessors of the new Chief Justice have all accepted the honor of Knighthood. The title and the position are linked together by precedent. Although Chief Justice Fitzpatrick could have had this distinction years ago, it goes without saying that his personal desires, which are characteristically democratic, may not interrupt the custom of conferring upon the head of the chief Court of Appeal a distinction direct from the King that gives an added dignity to the office.

For the first time in the history of Confederation an Irish-Catholic holds this prestige. With the exception of Sir Elzéar Taschereau, the

most of the Supreme Court is final. The first session of the Supreme Court of Canada was held in 1876, although Chief Justice Richards had received his appointment in 1875. Sir W. B. Richards, who came from Ontario, served until January, 1879, when he was succeeded by Hon. W. J. Ritchie (New Brunswick), who was the first of the associate judges appointed in 1875. Chief Justice Ritchie gave place in 1892 to Hon. S. H. Strong, an Ontario appointee to the original tribunal; and Sir Elzéar Taschereau, who was a later appointee from Quebec (1878) became Chief Justice in 1902. Sir Elzéar Taschereau was the only one of the Chief Justices who received the honor of Knighthood previous to the date of his elevation.

Chief Justice Fitzpatrick, though not the youngest man who has occupied a place on the Bench of the Supreme Court, is, however, the youngest to reach the Chief Justiceship. There is not perhaps in the public eye another man whose advancement to the highest places in his profession in statesmanship and in popular confidence has been so rapid and splendid.

Except Sir Wilfrid Laurier, no other member of any of the Liberal Ministries since 1896 has received the same degree of public attention as this Irish Catholic who came into the Government from Quebec, but who almost instantly was hailed as the representative of his race and

indifferent wherever printed concerning him stood without gainsay. In two of the more recent pen-pictures presented of him in the opposition press he is spoken of as a man of unmistakable determination and method, whom no one cared to encounter in debate, because his only purpose was to knock his adversary down, and if he did not succeed with argument, his manner suggested his inclination to do the job with his fist; besides that, if once stubbornly opposed, he never forgave the enemy. The real man is totally unlike either of these flights of fancy.

Though he spoke with intense sympathy and earnestness on occasion, there was always a reserve of consideration and good humor which was most effective in discussion when suddenly revealed to some opponent who had caught the excitement of jousting with a giant. Very often when cross-fire on the floor of the House or in a Committee was getting hot, the air was cleared by a rapid flash of suavity or generosity at the end of a speech by the Minister of Justice. There is not the slightest doubt the Minister had his enemies. What Irish-Catholic holding his influential place in the Government and constantly enhancing it by his intellectual superiority in Council and Parliament could possibly escape envy and ill-willed opposition? But this can be said of Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick, that no enemy ever knew him to do any act

the mark to say that during the whole of that period no one else in the country held Charles Fitzpatrick's confidence except the Premier. About a year ago outside Mr. Fitzpatrick's family none except the doctor and Sir Wilfrid Laurier knew that the Minister of Justice was in such a state of health as to give cause for the gravest alarm. A strong will alone enabled him to pull through, unremittingly discharging the heavy labor of his Department and his place in the House of Commons.

Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick leaves political life at the age of fifty-three as poor as when he entered it at thirty-seven. He has ever been a man of generous but most unobtrusive charity. He was born at Quebec on Dec. 19, 1853, being the son of the late John Fitzpatrick, a Quebec lumber merchant, who was also the son of a merchant of the city of Waterford, Ireland. Young Charles Fitzpatrick was educated wholly in Catholic schools. He entered St. Ann's College as a lad and passed to the seminary, finishing in Laval University. His academic distinctions marked his earlier promise. He is a B.A., and B.C.L., and was called to the Bar in 1876, being made a Q.C. in 1893. He was called to the Ontario Bar in 1896 to enable him to plead certain important cases in that province, in which he was engaged.

Charles Fitzpatrick was Crown Prosecutor in Quebec district at different periods and his name became known throughout the Dominion as counsel for the defence in the celebrated trial of Louis Riel for high treason in 1885. He also defended the late Honore Mercier in the prosecutions by the Government following the fall of that able man's clouded administration. Another big case was that of Hon. Thomas McGreevy before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the House of Commons in 1891, in which Mr. Fitzpatrick was counsel. He represented the Dominion of Canada before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England in the notable case involving jurisdiction of federal and provincial authorities over the ownership of beds of rivers, lakes, harbors and fisheries. He visited England in June, 1898, as Canadian representative in the proposed arbitration between the Governments of Russia and the United Kingdom with reference to compensation for the seizure of Canadian sealing schooners.

Patriotic attachment is certainly one of Charles Fitzpatrick's strongest heart strings. He is a patriotic Canadian, a lover of Ireland and of the Irish race, and a stalwart local patriot, wherever the welfare of the city of his birth is concerned. In the wide or the restricted field patriotism to him means duty; and he would not reckon time or money devoted to the interests of Canada, of Ireland, or Quebec.

The writer heard a story once from a new member of the Press Gallery at Ottawa, who after the close of the session was taking a well-earned holiday with his young wife and found himself in Quebec. Walking the street on the day of his arrival, he saw the Minister of Justice striding along in his direction. He had never spoken to the Minister and was surprised to find himself recognized. After a few minutes' conversation in which the newspaper man conceded that he liked Quebec, the Minister went off; but at the hotel the reporter was informed that there was a carriage for himself and wife as long as they were staying in the city.

"Who ordered it?"  
"Mr. Fitzpatrick."  
The Minister of Justice was doing good by stealth for Quebec.

Charles Fitzpatrick's associations with Irish interests began in his boyhood. He was president of the Quebec branch of the Irish National League and Crown Prosecutor when William O'Brien visited the Ancient Capital upon a memorable occasion. Charles Fitzpatrick received the visitor and the reception disappointed only some ridiculous persons who could see no room for dignity or consistency in the arrangements. Mr. Fitzpatrick was named in 1896 by the Irishmen of Quebec as the delegate from their city to the Dublin Peace Convention of the Gaels. Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick has by invitation addressed the Irish real-

doments of all the leading cities of the Dominion. But he has been the darling of a French speaking constituency all the time.

Last Sunday, after sixteen years of unbroken confidence, there were tears shed on both sides when the parting took place in Lorette. Mr. Fitzpatrick sat for Quebec County in the Legislature from 1890 to 1896, when, at the request of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, he resigned and was elected to the House of Commons for the seat. He was appointed Solicitor General in 1896, and was sworn in Minister of Justice in 1902.

In the Justice Department he has realized the high public conception of what the office should be. Though in the conventional sense he is no respecter of persons, there was never a humble or poor petitioner who came to him to plead the cause of a husband, son or brother in prison but knew what true respect and courtesy meant. Often when official clemency could not be strained personal charity was kindly and generously proffered.

The Chief Justice has a large and happy family. His gracious and warm-hearted wife was Miss Corinne Caron, daughter of the late R. E. Caron, Q.C., Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec from 1873 to 1876.

### Funeral of Michael Davitt.

Dublin, June 2.—The love and respect in which Michael Davitt was held in Ireland, and the widespread sorrow at his death, were amply evidenced by the scenes in the streets in Dublin on Saturday morning, when the body of the "Father of the Land League" was removed from the Clarendon street chapel, where it had lain over night, to Broadstone Station, for conveyance to the peaceful country graveyard at Strade, County Mayo.

The business places closed their shutters, the shades were drawn down in the private houses and the streets were lined by enormous crowds of people, the men doffing their hats as the coffin, which was almost hidden by beautiful floral wreaths, was borne by. The funeral cortege included many Nationalist members of the House of Commons, and clergymen representatives of every religion and political creed. John Redmond, John Dillon and other members of the Irish Nationalist party, were among the mourners, who closely followed the hearse. While the procession stretched out to enormous proportions, another vast crowd awaited the arrival of the body at the station, and on all sides a feeling of the deepest sorrow was apparent among the people. Numbers of mourners joined the train conveying the body at Mullingar and Athlone. An enormous crowd awaited the arrival of the train at Fuxford, and a procession of vehicles nearly a mile long followed by a big gathering of persons drawn from miles around, started for Strade, the family burying place of the Davitts, five miles from Fuxford. The ceremony was most impressive. The old graveyard is near the ruins of one of the western abbeys, and the grave is under an ash tree, and with in sight of the birthplace of Mr. Davitt. A large body of peasantry was awaiting at the cemetery and many persons threw wreaths on the coffin when it was lowered into the grave.

### A Protestant Boy who Sang the Choir.

(Rev. R. W. Alexander, in the Missionary.)

Wherever there is a Sunday school and a train of altar boys, methinks, if they heard the following true story, some souls might be brought to the Master, and a little child would lead them!

About two years ago, when my choir boys were standing in the sacristy waiting for services to begin, I noticed for several Sunday evenings a little fellow about 12 years of age looking in the open door and wistfully and earnestly watching the train of red cassocks and white surplices that were ready to march into the sanctuary.

"Who is that boy?" I asked on the third Sunday evening.  
"Father, he's a Protestant. He is Charlie X—" I looked around, but Charlie had disappeared. However,

the next Sunday night he was there, and when I went towards him he stood his ground like a man.

His big blue eyes widened when I spoke pleasantly to him.

"Glad to see you, Charlie! Do you like to watch the choir boys?"

"Yes, sir," and an unspoken wish shone on his face. He was a bright, manly-looking lad, and I was pleased with his appearance.

After a moment, during which he never took his eyes from my face, he said:

"Could I be a choir boy?"

"But you don't believe in the Catholic Church, Charlie!"

"Won't you give me a chance, father?"

The words struck me particularly, and the lad's earnest face impressed me. I turned away to look up a spare cassock and surplice in the wardrobe, but the boy mistook my movement for a refusal, and was turning slowly and sadly away when I called him: "Yes, my boy, I will give you a chance; put these on." And I helped him.

No king robed in ermine could have been more grave, even reverent, than this boy when, fully equipped in cassock and surplice and hymn book in hand, he stood beside a companion in the middle of the lines.

"Now, do as the other boys do," I whispered, as the train started into the sanctuary. I watched him from the door. He was reverent and attentive, even surpassing his Catholic companions in respectful devotion and listening breathlessly to every word that fell from the lips of the priest who preached the sermon. Sunday nights we have sermons of a doctrinal nature followed by Benediction. Charlie never flagged in attention. Every Sunday evening he was there, and the boys never once referred to his being a Protestant, at least in my hearing.

One evening he lingered after the boys had said good night.

"Well, Charlie," I said, "tired of being a choir boy?"

How he looked at me!

"Oh, father! No, indeed; but, father, may I be a Catholic?"

I put my arm around him. I couldn't help it, the little face was so serious. "Certainly, my son, but your parents must be consulted and give consent."

"Why, father, I brought them to church every Sunday to see me in my choir clothes, and mother says she would be glad if I were good enough to be a Catholic."

I inquired his address, and I went to see his parents soon after this. I found they were unbaptized Protestants, and, of course, not one of the six children had ever been baptized.

I talked about Charlie and found both parents were not only willing to see Charlie instructed and baptized, but wished the same for themselves and the rest of the household.

The end is soon told.

I instructed the little apostle and his father and mother and baptized them and all the brothers and sisters, eight in all. He was soon confirmed and made his first Communion, and then encouraged and helped the rest. All are now fervent converts, and the little choir boy still is seen each Sunday in the sanctuary rejoicing in his new-found treasure of faith and lifting his innocent heart in prayer.

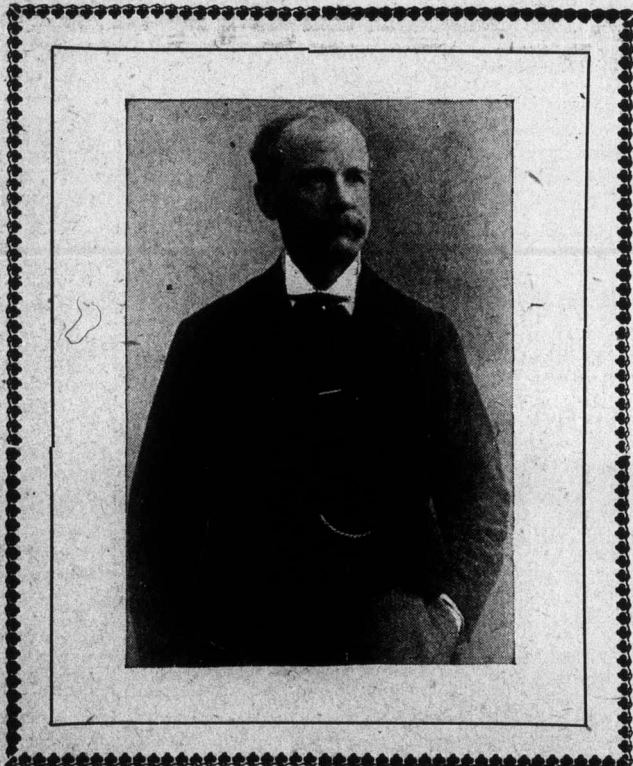
Who knows but some day he may stand on the altar steps and break the Bread of the Word to starving souls who are yearning for just such an apostle?

Friends of the mission work, pass on this true story. Perhaps somewhere there may be another father and mother who need "a little child to lead them."

In the Right Direction.

The trend of the Catholic press is toward something broader and deeper than the featuring of parish gleanings. A Catholic paper should take on something of the nature of the institution to which it is consecrating its powers. The events that loom up big on the Church's horizon the problems that are agitating men's souls, above all else the instruction and edification of its readers are the proper objects of a Catholic journal.—Catholic Transcript.

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HON. CHIEF JUSTICE FITZPATRICK.

past Chief Justices of the Supreme Court have been English-speaking Protestants. Because of the attention that will naturally be given by Irish Catholics to this matter, it may not be amiss to devote a few words to the Supreme Court and to the place it occupies in connection with the government and administration of the laws of this Dominion. The jurisdiction civil and criminal of this tribunal is, of course, appellate. In controverted election cases it also possesses appellate jurisdiction, and its powers cover the examination of any private bill or petition in election cases. Controversies between the Provinces of Confederation and between any of the provinces and the Dominion come within its jurisdiction; and since 1891 the Governor-in-Council may refer to the Supreme Court for an opinion upon any matter affecting the public interest. The only appeal is to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of England. In criminal cases, however, the Judge

electoral element. He came in as Solicitor-General and made his way to the Ministry of Justice after a brief interval. Distinguished and commanding in appearance, with that unmistakable personality which, in the common phrase, is called magnetic, Charles Fitzpatrick was always a sort of enigma to friends and opponents. The most likable of men, his manner was not devoid of a general suggestion of aloofness and reserve. A first impression of him, when seen either in the House or on a public occasion, was apt to be contradictory. The Fitzpatricks were princes in Munster, and there is a veritable dash of knightly bearing about this scion of a proud race. Some of his confidantes never knew how to take him. Many members of the House on his own side scarcely knew him. To the press he was a subject of extensive character-sketching, and because he never noticed anything said of him if it were unkind or malicious, the result was that everything good or

or speak any word for enmity's sake. Nor did he purposely ignore the enemies he made. He simply possessed the faculty or mental discipline that allowed him to forget them without bitter thought. If they came in his way they never could complain of any special want of courtesy. It is not our intention to intrude upon the private side of a living man's character. Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick from his boyhood is correctly known as a strictly living Catholic. The influence of his rigid personal habits upon his public life could not, of course, help making itself felt to some extent. In public life he was not only the great lawyer, but much of the soldier and Christian also. Indeed a combination of all three high characteristics must be present in the character of a statesman, who should be at once strong in intellect, courage and faith. It was Sir Wilfrid Laurier who, some sixteen years ago, personally induced Charles Fitzpatrick to take up politics, and it would be within

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