

The Catholic Record.

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London, Saturday, Dec. 26, 1891.

CHRISTMAS.

Once more the great festival of Christmas, a festival which brings great joy to every Christian soul, is being celebrated.

On that first Christmas day when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, an angel of God appeared to the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks and announced to them that it was a festival of joy, and gave the reason thereof:

"Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David."

The advent of Our Saviour was promised from the earliest days of man's life on earth, that is, from immediately after the fall of our first parents, that, as by their sin of disobedience death came into the world and the human race forfeited all right to the eternal inheritance of heaven, so by the birth of Christ the work of redemption was begun whereby man was to recover life and to regain his rights to eternal happiness.

Throughout the Old Testament the coming of Christ is looked for as an event which will bring joy to earth. The Saviour promised to our first parents is to undo the misery brought upon them by the deceit of the serpent. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are told that He will be the source of blessings to be conferred on all nations.

The prophet Daniel is told by the angel of God to expect Him as the means whereby "transgressions may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished, and everlasting justice may be brought, and vision and prophecy fulfilled."

But it is in the New Testament that His office and character are fully displayed. In a word, St. Paul tells us "He gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present wicked world according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i.)

The feast of Christmas is the preliminary event in the work of our Redemption, and for this reason is celebrated every year with joy, as it was in the first instance celebrated by the angels who sang at the birth of our Lord:

"Glory be to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

True peace cannot exist unless we are at peace with God, therefore at this holy season all Catholics should make their peace with God, and for this end, they must begin by becoming "men of good will."

Christmas day is the only festival on which it is permitted to each priest to celebrate three Masses, in honor of the threefold birth of Christ, His generation in eternity as the Son of God, His birth at Bethlehem as the Son of Mary, and His birth by grace within the soul of the sanctified Christian.

For four thousand years the world was preparing for the birth of Christ. The sacrifices of the Old Law were instituted to signify His coming by which the reconciliation of man with God is to be effected. It is, therefore, a time of peace, when injuries should be forgotten, and when all mankind should be at peace. For this reason, also, originated the beautiful Christian custom that neighbors express to each other during the festival season their wishes for each other's prosperity.

We also wish our readers good health, long life and prosperity, and many returns of A HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

DEATH OF FATHER DOWD.

Seldom has the wires flashed sadder news than that which reached the people on Monday. "Father Dowd, of Montreal is dead." To hundreds of thousands this announcement will bear a shadow at this festive time. It cannot be expected that those who live outside of Montreal can realize in its fullness the terrible loss which the Irish Catholics of that city have sustained. For nearly fifty years Father Dowd had been their counsellor, their friend, their guide—their all—when sorrow overtook them and misfortune placed its blighting hand heavily upon them. He was, too, their champion, and whenever their rights were assailed foremost was he in the work of defence and protection. Dignity and position came be-seechingly to woo him, worldly renown and glory could have been his without the asking; but all were refused. He loved the Irish Catholic people of Montreal, and they loved him. Nothing save a command from Rome could have severed the tie. But the love-links were great, and Rome would not break them. It may be truly said that dearest to the great heart of this good priest were the orphans of St. Patrick's; and many think that were it not for the intense affection which he bore these little ones of Christ he might have been persuaded to accept higher dignities. He has passed away full of years and full of honors, reposing in the bosom of that Church for which he unceasingly toiled, his very thought for her glory and advancement. Now that he has been transferred to the goal of his ambition—now that he is about to enter the gate which leads to eternal glory and joy in the home of our Blessed Redeemer—may we not say that legions of the young and the pure to whom he was a kindly father in this world, will greet him with acclaim as he enters the heavenly portals this holy Christmas tide.

THE DRAMATIZATION OF SACRED EVENTS.

Two or three ministers of different Protestant churches of Hamilton have recently caused considerable commotion in that city by denouncing in very strong terms the production of a drama from Ben Hur, in which our Lord and the Blessed Virgin are among the character to be represented. The intention was to bring out the play during Christmas week, and as a Christmas representation, and notwithstanding the fact that the parties who had undertaken to represent our Lord and His Mother, as well as other characters, are members of the Protestant churches whose ministers have spoken so decidedly, we learn that the preparations are still continued to bring out the play according to the original design of its promoters.

We are all aware that the clergymen who have spoken on the subject, and who have even gone so far as to pronounce the representation blasphemous and sacrilegious, do not profess that they are themselves infallible, nor even that they are authorized to speak as the exponents of an infallible creed, or as having a divinely appointed authority to pronounce the expediency or inexpediency, the blasphemousness or sacrilegiousness of representations such as it is proposed to produce in the Ambitious City. We presume that it is for this reason that the Protestant ladies and gentlemen who have the play in hand refuse to be guided by their spiritual directors in this matter. They undoubtedly feel that they have as much authority to decide upon what religion requires of them as have their clergy; and it is probable, besides, that there are other clergymen who would join issue with those who have condemned the representation.

In a matter so nearly affecting religion as this drama there ought to be surely an authority capable of giving a decision whether it should be tolerated or not. Catholics have such an authority; and they would bow with respect to its decisions in cases of doubtful propriety.

From history we know that mystery plays were common during the Middle Ages, and they certainly were encouraged by some illustrious Fathers of the Church, as early as the reign of the Emperor Julian. But the object was then to instruct Christians in the mysteries of religion at a time when it was difficult to give efficient instruction otherwise. Printing had not been invented, and instruction by means of written books was necessarily restricted to a comparatively small number. It is not surprising that the clergy should have adopted these mystery plays as means of conveying salutary instruction. But the number

now who cannot read is as small, particularly in this country, as was the number of those who could read at the time we speak of. There was certainly much stronger reason then for the use of mystery plays than there is now; and while we do not by any means assert that they are necessarily an evil, we can safely say that they should not be produced when there is serious danger lest they should do more harm than good. This is more particularly the case when the characters and scenes to be represented are so sacred as those which are proposed to be brought on the stage at Hamilton. The question is, therefore, is such a representation likely to produce irreverence towards those events and personages who are the most sacred under the Christian dispensation?

We believe that with the loss of the simple faith of days of yore, with the prevalence of the worship of the almighty dollar, and the irreverence arising out of multiplicity of sects and the spread of irreligion, the introduction of such scenes upon the stage would not be attended with the good results among us for the attainment of which they were originally established, and that this is a matter in which there is not a medium possible. We believe, therefore, that these sacred subjects should not be brought out in public dramas.

The Hamilton drama is said to be for a benevolent purpose, but this does not justify the representation of scenes so sacred for the purposes of amusement. But even though mere amusement were not the object in the present instance, our readers must be aware that efforts have already been made in America to get sacred scenes upon the stage. Some stock companies proposed to represent the Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau in New York theatres, but they were very properly prevented from carrying out their design. It would be a fearful desecration if that sacred event which has been represented in a spirit of piety by the townsmen of Ober-Ammergau should be made a sport for Bowery theatre-goers, which would be the next step if the stock companies had been allowed to exhibit it for gain. It is to be feared that the exhibition would degenerate similarly if, beginning at Hamilton, it were to become an institution amongst us.

Even at Ober-Ammergau the time seems to be past when the representation was a work of pure piety. The citizens themselves preserve the ancient spirit, but the money-changers are getting into the temple and turning it into a den of thieves, simultaneously with the great influx of visitors who have been attracted thither along with the modern conveniences of travel, and it is believed that the Passion Play was represented last year for the last time for this very reason, though hitherto it was a work of piety performed in thanksgiving to God for the delivery of the people from the ravages of the plague.

Ben Hur is in itself written in a spirit of piety; but its representation on the stage, it is to be feared, would be productive of results very different from those which would follow the careful reading of that learned and interesting book.

ADDRESSES AND RESOLUTIONS OF LOYALTY.

The Presbyterian General Assembly, in session last week in London, England, passed a strong resolution declaring its loyalty to the Queen, and the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, which was also in session, passed a similar declaration of unswerving loyalty and adherence to the throne, and it is announced that the Free Kirk Assembly will also pass a resolution to the same purpose.

It is, of course, eminently proper that these bodies should thus express their loyalty from time to time, especially as we have been recently assured by a Presbyterian organ, the Halifax Witness, that "Presbyterians may revise and change their creeds every year, if they see fit." We have no assurance, therefore, that there may not have been a change in the sentiments of loyalty since last these synods and assemblies met; but from the Catholic synods and councils such declarations are not necessary, as Catholic faith is one and unchanging. With Catholics it is a matter of doctrine that we are bound to be loyal to the established authorities, and this is expressed once for all in the Catechism as the duty of all Christians, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake, for such is the will of God."

Judging, however, from what has

happened to an address which was presented by the Canadian General Assembly to the Marquis of Lorne and the Princess Louise, when the Marquis was Governor-General of the Dominion, such resolutions are not very highly prized by royalty. An address of the Assembly, richly enclosed and beautifully illuminated and framed has found its way into the possession of a second-hand furniture dealer in Ottawa, who offers it for sale for \$25, it being expected that some good Presbyterian will pay that sum for it to rescue it from its degrading position.

It is not supposed that there was any intentional slight offered by the Marquis to the Assembly, but it is, of course, true that such addresses are not of any intrinsic value, and when once they have been presented, they are frequently never looked at again. In the present instance it appears that the address was sold by a Government employe who was commissioned to dispose of the old furniture of Rideau Hall when the Marquis was about to leave Canada. It thus fell into the hands of the present possessor. It is seriously said, however, by Presbyterians, that the Assembly should in future be less ready at passing such resolutions and presenting such addresses.

DISCOVERING THEIR MISTAKE.

The recent move made by the authorities of the Church of England at Winnipeg has created a considerable sensation, as it has shown that the injustice inflicted by the school legislation of the Greenway administration does not fall upon Catholics alone; and coming so soon after the session of the Presbyterian Synod in the same city, the action now taken by the Church of England is a complete refutation of the resolution adopted by the Presbyterians, as the latter boldly endeavor by a false assertion to excite public sentiment against Catholics, and thus to prevent justice from being done.

Ex-Mayor Logan, on behalf of the Anglican body, has obtained from the Chief Justice a summons requiring the city of Winnipeg to show cause why the by-law establishing Public Schools in the city should not be quashed, inasmuch as it inflicts injustice on the Church of England by practically closing its parochial or Separate schools, which were in a flourishing condition until the passage of the Manitoba School Act. This Act, as Ex-Mayor Logan contends, is contrary to the Dominion Act of Parliament, by which Manitoba was erected into a Province, and which reserves to all denominations those rights and privileges which they "possessed by law or practice," when the Province was constituted.

The application is supported by the affidavits of Mr. Logan himself, and also by those of Bishop Machray and Robert H. Hayward, to the effect that the authorities of the Church of England had established, in various parts of the Province, denominational schools, wherein the doctrines of the Church were taught. These schools were regularly organized for the teaching of boys and girls, and were under control of the clergy.

The applicants claim that whereas these parochial schools had been opened and closed with prayer, and that instruction in Holy Scripture had been given in them, the new Public Schools do not afford these advantages, or afford them very imperfectly. They declare that they had been induced to support the establishment of a Public School system, in the hope that satisfactory religious instruction would still be given in the Protestant sections thereof; but in this they were disappointed, whereas they now find that the education given is very incomplete, and even hurtful owing to the very limited amount of religious education given, which is indeed so limited "that it is doubtful if there is any religious teaching at all." They add that the schools are not what they expected them to be when the School Act was passed, and that they are so dissatisfied with them that they would now establish, if they had the means, a system of parochial schools for the teaching of children belonging to the Church of England.

This protest places the authorities of the Church in an exceedingly strange light. They declare that they are, and always were, in favor of religious education; yet that they consented to the destruction of the system of denominational education in the hope that the newly-established system would continue to be denominational, or at least thoroughly Protestant, while professing to be non-sectarian. This is an avowal that they, at least, consented to the change, in

the hope that they would be able to compel the attendance of Catholic children at thoroughly Protestant schools. For the purpose of gaining this end, they were willing to do violence to their own consciences by yielding the rights they had before enjoyed; and it is only now, when they have discovered that Catholics have fought successfully against the injustice which they cooperated in inflicting, that they regret having given up their own conscientious convictions.

We presume that as the Supreme Court has decided that the Manitoba Legislature exceeded its powers in endeavoring to rob Catholics of their rights, Bishop Machray and his co-petitioners will reap the benefit of the Catholic triumph; but in the face of the acknowledgment of the persecuting spirit in which they acted towards Catholics, few will have the hardihood to say they deserve the success which they are likely to gain. A more shameful avowal it has never been our lot to read.

We have referred to the false statement made by the Presbyterian Synod. It asserted by resolution that the Catholic Church has, under the decision of the Supreme Court, privileges which other denominations have not. This is the falsehood which Bishop Machray's application refutes. He certainly would not make the application in its present form unless he were convinced that the Church of England has all the rights which Catholics possess in the premises.

There is another aspect under which the incongruity of the application is manifest. Not only did the Church of England authorities join in the crusade against Catholic schools, but they actually used for a year the schools for which they now refuse to pay their quota of taxation. The Catholics had justice on their side in objecting against the taxation, because they kept their own schools and sent their children to them. The latter were consistent in their objection to paying for their support; but it is the height of inconsistency for the representatives of the Church of England to refuse to pay their share for schools which they used after assisting, of their own accord, in establishing them.

We have no wish to be guided by this spirit of intolerance and duplicity which seems to dominate over the conduct of Bishop Machray and his fellow-applicants. We wish them to enjoy the same liberties to which Catholics are entitled, and liberty of education is one of these. If the sects of Manitoba are willing to maintain Separate schools, they are entitled to have the fullest liberty to do so, provided they are willing also to grant Catholics the same liberty, and even though the members of the Church of England made the mistake of not knowing their own wishes in the past, we would willingly see them obtain justice now that they have discovered their mistake. Perhaps they are somewhat to be excused for not having known what they really wanted, inasmuch as Protestantism has no fixed principles to guide it. The difference between the courses adopted by the Anglicans and the Presbyterians is sufficient evidence of this, the former now advocating what the latter declare to be unnecessary and hurtful to the community; but from what is now happening, both of these denominations ought to learn to be more charitable in their demeanor towards Catholics, who have been self-consistent throughout the struggle. Why should they desire to force their views of education upon Catholics, when we have their own avowal that they are not themselves agreed upon which is the correct method of imparting education; that is to say, they are not agreed upon the matter whether education should be denominational or godless?

Under these circumstances we hope to find that there will be now liberal Protestants enough in Manitoba to unite with the Catholics, so that any future efforts of the fanatical party there to renew the oppressive legislation of 1890 may lack even the hope of a successful issue.

The New Bishop of Cleveland.

Another Philadelphia clergyman, whose piety, zeal and learning have made him famous and beloved far beyond the confines of his native city, is to be called to another field of labor and elevated to the high office and dignity of Bishop. This time it is the Rev. Dr. Ignatius F. Horstmann, chancellor of the archdiocese, who has been apprised of his appointment to the bishopric of Cleveland, Ohio, to succeed the late Bishop Gilmour, recently deceased.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Send 25 cts. and get a copy of Benziger's Home Almanac for 1892.—THOMAS COFFEY, London, Ont. Also to be had from our travelling Agents.

THE PROSECUTION OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF AIX.

It is a matter of no little surprise with what unanimity the anti-Catholic journals which usually make the loudest professions in favor of the liberty of the subject, nevertheless condemn the vindication of that liberty by Mgr. Gouthe-Soulard, the Archbishop of Aix.

The attacks made by the Italian mob upon French pilgrims who visited the Holy Father were utterly unjustifiable, and it is now fully established that they were premeditated by the mob. It was at first represented that the hot-headed pilgrim who was said to have insulted the memory of King Victor Emmanuel had spat upon the visitors' book which was presented to him, and that he had written thereon "death to Victor Emmanuel;" but it was afterwards shown that he had done no more than write upon the book the words "Vive le Pape." (Long live the Pope.) This act was undoubtedly foolish and worthy of condemnation as an uncalled-for occasion given to the Italians for their manifestation of their hatred for the visitors to the Pope, but it was otherwise a very pardonable and slight fault, and being only the fault of one over-enthusiastic young man of nineteen, it should not have been made an excuse for the insults heaped upon the pilgrims both because they were pilgrims, and because they were French. The French Government would have shown more dignity if it had demanded rather than the insults shown to Frenchmen should be apologized for, than to issue a prohibition against the Bishops of France accompanying their flocks to Rome, in consequence of the outrages to which Frenchmen had been innocently subjected, and the Archbishop of Aix in publicly declaring that he would not be bound by the Governmental decree is justly to be regarded as a champion of popular liberty.

It is needless to say that the prosecution of Mgr. Gouthe-Soulard is regarded by his colleagues in the episcopacy as an unjustifiable act of persecution on the part of the Government, and all true Frenchmen regard the conduct of M. de Fallieres as humiliating and shameful to France. His Grace the Archbishop has the general sympathy of the people in the midst of the persecution to which he has been subjected, and the Government itself now feels that it has placed itself in an awkward position by its sycophancy to Italy. We cannot regard in any other light the letter which the Government has recently sent to the Pope stating that it has no desire or intention to renew a conflict with the clergy, and expressing the hope that the policy of conciliation will be continued on both sides.

It is very hard for the clergy to be conciliatory with a Government which takes every opportunity to show its desire to persecute the Church, and to interfere with its liberty, and the anti-Catholic press of this country which approves of these tyrannical measures show that their pretended love of liberty is but a sham where the liberties of Catholics are in question. Mons. Boissard, the learned advocate of Aix who defended the Archbishop, made a most eloquent speech, basing his defence on the patriotism of His Grace, and appealing to the love of country of the judges. He asked whether there was any Frenchman who would not feel indignant at the treatment of his countrymen by the Italian mobs. The judges, however, inflicted a fine of \$500 with costs of the suit. Figaro, which is a patriotic, but not a clerical paper, made an appeal to the public and collected the amount of the fine in a few days; but as it is against the law thus to collect a legal fine by public subscription, the proprietors of Figaro have also been summoned before the court.

It is said that the Bishop of Ancy will also be prosecuted for having written a letter similar to that of the Archbishop of Aix, but it is altogether likely that this step will not be taken, as the Government must by this time be aware that by such measures they will expose themselves more and more to popular indignation. The triumphant acclamations everywhere given to the Archbishop after his condemnation should teach the infidel rulers of the Republic that they have gone already too far.

A Long-Felt Want.

There are loud complaints in regard to the money order department of the London post office. The two clerks do their utmost to perform the work, but it is altogether too much for them. Besides, the place in which this business is done would not be considered a fair-sized bed-room. Another hindrance is that appointed and more room provided, and that at once. During the holiday season, especially, the public have to suffer much inconvenience and loss of time.

DIocese

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