

The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department.

CATHOLIC HISTORICAL NOTES.

CHURCH REGISTERS AND THE NEED OF A CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

We have here gathered together a few scattered fragments bearing on the history of the Church in Canada, with the object of making them more accessible to the student of Church history. Notes of this kind, though in themselves of no great importance or value, may yet be found to be of some service when collected together, and at a time when renewed interest is being manifested in the past history of our country, it seems worth while to preserve every fragment, no matter how insignificant in itself, which may perchance throw light on the past. Current newspapers and periodicals not infrequently contain paragraphs of considerable interest of this nature, which are printed, read, thrown aside and forgotten, and in the absence of a regularly organized historical society, we have undertaken in this department to preserve anything of the kind which may come under our notice. Canada is rich in historical associations, and it is much to be deplored that greater interest and zeal is not shown by both clergy and educated laity in unearthing the buried treasure.

There is one source of information which has hitherto been almost entirely neglected in this Province, and that is the Church registers. As was shown by Mr. Philip S. P. Conner at the last public meeting of the American Catholic Historical Society, "these manuscripts, besides being interesting and valuable as records of past generations, have a special value as legal evidence receivable in our courts." "Indeed, I am informed," Mr. Conner goes on to say, "that some years ago St. Joseph's register was the evidence that decided a law-suit involving a fortune in New York; and it was only last year that I discovered in the same register the entry of a marriage solemnized a century ago, which may result in a similar manner. Like results are not infrequent, for it was to ensure the preservation of such proof, and also that of the orthodoxy of the parishioners, that the registers were instituted."

We do not propose at present to dwell at any length upon the great importance of preserving the parish registers of this Province, but it may not be amiss to remind our readers who may be interested in historical studies, and more particularly amongst the clergy, of the practical benefit to be derived from the preservation, not only of old registers, but of records of events which may have transpired in the past and the memory of which will surely die with the generation that participated in them unless an adequate effort is made to record and preserve them. This is the work of an historical society, but in the meantime we appeal to our readers to assist us in this important work by sending to us for publication in this department any matter they may have in their possession likely to be of value to the historical student. With reference to Church registers, we here conclude with another extract from Mr. Conner's valuable paper, which we earnestly and respectfully commend to the serious consideration of the clergy. We regret we have not space to re-publish the whole paper, but as it relates principally to the States of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, the following extract, which is of general interest, may suffice.

"These manuscript books.....are invaluable as the sole existing records of the forefathers of people who may now number thousands; hence many should be actively interested in the preservation of these volumes; but through ignorance or utter indifference few of the descendants of the people noted in these registers take even the slightest interest in the matter, and so these old volumes, filled with the records of their progenitors and bearing the proofs of the toilsome journeyings and pious labours

of devoted priests among rough frontiers-men and fierce Indians, are allowed to remain, year after year and generation after generation, liable to the damage arising from utter neglect and the total loss of all-consuming fire. On this account I cannot help thinking that all old Church registers, after a certain limit of time, should be placed in some repository convenient to all the diocese, and safe from fire, damp and theft. The fittest depository for the collected parish registers of a diocese is, unquestionably, the archives of the diocese, and I would most respectfully suggest that the Bishops of the various Sees call in the old registers to some safe, convenient place for preservation and to facilitate transcriptions, when necessary. My suggestion is not a new one; the return of transcripts was practised centuries ago by the Church; it has been revived in our day in Europe, and to it we owe the preservation of records which otherwise would now be numbered among the lost."

ROBERT DE LA SALLE.

(*John Lesperance, in Montreal Gazette.*)

I NOTE another historical event of special Canadian significance. On the 26th May a monument was raised in Rouen to the memory of Robert Cavalier de La Salle. Among Canadian representatives were Robert Hector Fabre, Canadian Commissioner General in France; M. Pierre Margry, the eminent historiographer, and M. Louis Frchette, who read a poem written for the occasion.

The monument consists of a large black marble slab set up in the chapel of St. Etienne. On the upper part there is a bronze bas-relief, of the Louis XIV. style, in the centre of which is placed a medallion representing in profile the keen, yet gentle, features of the great explorer, with upper lip shaded by a light moustache. The medallion is surmounted by the La Salle arms, and on both sides there flows a banderolle with these words: "Robert Cavalier de La Salle, MDCXLIII, MDCLXXXVII."

Although rather long, I give the inscription in full, *in rei memoriam*, and because of our local interest in La Salle, from Montreal to Lachine (which he named), and his domain, granted by the Seminary of St. Sulpice, opposite the Rapids, where his large stone house is still standing on the Fraser property. This inscription is engraved under a great bronze anchor:

A la Memoire de
ROBERT CAVELIER DE LA SALLE,
Baptise a Rouen le 22 Novembre, 1643,
En la Paroisse de Saint-Herbland.
Aujourd'hui Reunie a L'Eglise Cathedrale de
Notre Dame,
Anobli le 13 Mai 1675 par Louis XIV.
En Recompense de Services Rendus a Son
Pays.
Mort le 19 Mars 1687,
Après Avoir Decouvert et Explore
Les Bassins de l'Ohio et du Mississipi
Et Pendant Vingt Annees du Canada au Golfe
du Mexique
Fait Connaitre aux Sauvages de l'Amerique
La Religion Chretienne et le nom Francais.
Ce Monument,
Consacre a Honorer son Patriotisme et sa Piete,
A ete Erig par les soins
De Monseigneur Thomas Archeveque de
Rouen,
Primat de Normandie,
L'an Mil Huit Cent Quatre-Vingt-Sept.

THE FIRST BISHOP OF TORONTO.

WE hope at no distant day to publish an extended sketch of the life of Dr. Power, first Bishop of Toronto, but in the meantime the following short notice, which appeared some time ago, from the pen of an anonymous contributor, in the N. Y. *Freeman's Journal*, may be of interest:—

Right Rev. Michael Power, D.D., was born at sea, of Irish parents, lived for some years in Nova Scotia, and was educated and ordained priest in Montreal. At the time of his consecration he was P.P., or Curé of La Prairie, near Montreal. He was installed by Bishop Gaulin, in the little brick church of St. Paul, in the east end of