

MONTREAL GOSSIP.

On Sunday, the 15th instant, the Province of Quebec celebrated one of its national festivals, that of the Holy Family. In Montreal the day was also chosen for the first public celebration of the Society of Artisans, which, though established only a few years ago, already numbers over six hundred members. These formed into a very respectable procession and paraded in the east end of the city, after which they attended Divine Service at Notre Dame, where Mass was sung by Monseigneur Soulé, Bishop of Ile Bourbon, and the *sermon de circonstance* preached by the Rev. Père Plessis, O.P.

An amiable but irresolute old lady, who had been promised a place in the pew of a friend, upon entering the vast Church lost her head, and forgot the number of the pew for which she had been told to look. With creaking boots and quaking heart, she proceeded on tip-toe up the main aisle, and suddenly halting near where your correspondent was kneeling, she audibly whispered to a man in the seat which she fondly hoped was that of her friend; "If you please sir, who occupews this pie?"

The dwellers in the loyal Province of Quebec are rapidly making inroads in the forest primeval. The work of colonization goes on apace; parishes are formed and villages growing up around the pioneer log churches, with incredible rapidity. At the 8 o'clock mass in the Church of the Gesu, on Sunday, the Diocesan preacher of colonization, Rev. Father Nolin, S.J., spoke on the subject and expressed himself much pleased with the returns of the past year. The Colonization Society of Montreal numbers now over one hundred thousand members. Each member pays ten cents a year towards the good work, which entitles him to a share in the mass said every Friday at 6 o'clock, at the high altar of the Jesuits' Church. Ten year tickets can also be purchased for the sum of one dollar. The Quebec Government has promised to cover one-third of the Society's subscriptions, and the money thus raised is employed in opening good roads to and through the Ottawa Valley, and the great country lying to the north west of it, and in building bridges, mills, chapels, etc. As the Rev. Father truly says: "It is very advantageous to join this Society, for the members greatly aid the progress of religion by helping on the opening of new parishes and missions. They contribute to increase their country's wealth and prosperity, by developing its agricultural and other resources and they have a share in the great spiritual benefits attached to the Society, so long as they pay their yearly contribution of ten cents.

At St. Patrick's and at the Gesu yesterday, sermons were preached touching on the burning question of the day, the "to be" or "not to be" of the statue of the Mother of God on old Mount Royal's Crown. Father Martin Callaghan at St. Patrick's gave a masterly explanation of the honour paid by Catholics to the Blessed Virgin. He quoted largely from Scripture—dwelling among other Biblical phrases upon the words of the angel, "Hail, full of grace, Blessed art thou among women!" It is strange, said the reverend preacher that the Protestants who so vaunt the possession of their Bibles disregard those words, while we Catholics, who are taunted with not having our Bibles, daily use them. Father Callaghan alluded to a clergyman of the city, who was announced to preach a sermon that day which would prove that the mother of God was "only a woman," surely a waste of trouble and of time, for it is her very womanhood in which we glory. She is "Our fallen nature's solitary boast." At the Gesu Rev. Father La Rue, S.J., did not allude directly to the subject, but after a few introductory remarks on the feast of the day, the patronage of St. Joseph, he went on to shew how the Catholic worship of saints is a practice most congenial to human nature resting on that powerful feeling of the human heart, which clings to, and seeks to commune with, those who have glided from this world of trial to the only real, everlasting, world of sorrow or joy. Such he said was the feeling common

to all, and which expands into that general outburst of respect and veneration, in the hearts of nations towards those heroes, who have won by their noble deeds the title of great and good, whose statues are sometimes unveiled amidst the enthusiastic cheers of vast multitudes. Repelling indignantly the charge of idolatry imputed to us by men whose ignorance of our doctrines is equalled only by their unwillingness to enquire into them, he dwelt on the slender reasons which serve to substantiate this odious charge, and stated clearly the teaching of the Church which attributes to saints no other power than that possessed by them on earth, that of ministering to the wants of their suffering bretheren, by the fervent prayers which they pour forth to the throne of God, through the passion and death of Him who is the one and only mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus.

He ended by claiming for those great heroes, the saints of heaven, the honours paid to common heroes of earthly mould, such as the erection of public monuments; saying that statues and images of saints only served to recall to Catholic minds an exalted ideal of Christian virtue and heroism.

Very deep and sincere is the sorrow which reigns here to-day over the death of the Hon. Thomas White. He was a loving son of Montreal, a tried and trusted friend, and as such the city mourns him. Few public men in the arena of political life retain such freshness of spirit, such true kindness of nature as was his to the last.

He was a good man, a loyal Canadian and a true friend—a friend whose noble heart retained fond memories of comrades gone before him into that quiet land beyond our ken, and whose faithful spirit delighted in befriending their sons and daughters left behind to do battle with the world, that world which is always so hard a place for those who are heirs of nothing but an honoured name. May God reward his good deeds and grant unto him eternal rest!

OLD MORTALITY.

SCIENTIFIC FREEDOM.

Those who are subject to spectral illusions are often advised, as a remedy, to walk boldly up to the unsubstantial air-vision and clasp it in their arms, or, better still, if circumstances permit, unflinchingly to sit on it, and then invariably the terrifying phantom vanishes into thin air. A similar conduct would perhaps meet with a like success in the case of many of the ghosts of objections which the hierophants of infidelity are fond of conjuring up for our edification. There is a risk lest too much looking and listening should give them an appearance of strength and weight not their own, and enable them to make a sinister impression on our nervous nineteenth century faith, or at least tempt us to draw a sword which should be reserved for more solid foes, and make us wound ourselves in the vain effort to cleave them.

One such phantom objection, which seems to be a scare to many minds, is the reproach that we Catholics have no scientific freedom. In the harangues and lucubrations of the coryphæi of physical science, the Church, the mighty mother, generally figures as a sort of Goddess of Dullness, who lulls the aspiring inquirer in her soft bosom, and then puts her bandage over his eyes. The readiness with which a Catholic scientific man professes to submit his views to an authority which teaches without reference to their hypotheses, seems to them a sign of worse than Egyptian bondage, and justifies their regarding him as the champion of a retrograde obscurantism. "You hardly deserve the title of man of science," they taunt him; "you are afraid of experiment lest it should explode your *a priori* you cannot bring forth the smallest pet of a theory without living in daily alarm lest it should be strangled by a papal definition; you cannot give our most brilliant hypotheses a frank acceptance, because you are ever haunted by the suspicion of an approaching bull. Bridled by the Pope, ridden by priests, saddled with Moses, what freedom have you in scientific investigation, and consequently what right to be called a scientific man?"

The conclusion is certainly trying, and has put several disputants on their mettle and made them look to their weapons.