

# THE LONDON CATASTROPHE

## The Main Floor in the City Hall Collapses.

Two Thousand Five Hundred People in the Building, Assisting at a Public Meeting—Twenty-Three Lives Lost and Hundreds Seriously Injured.

LONDON, Ont., Jan. 5.—London is truly a city of sorrow. Again has the devoted town been visited by a calamity which, in its magnitude, could only be surpassed by the one of May 24, 1881, when over two hundred lives were lost in the careening of the steamer Victoria.

It is hardly possible to describe the grief and sorrow which fills the breast of every citizen. And it is not so much the present catastrophe, appalling though it be, that is causing so much sadness among the people, as it is the reopening of old heart-breaks, those of '81 when so many loved ones closed their eyes for ever in the muddy waters of the river Thames. At that time there was scarcely a family in the city which had not felt the loss of some beloved one, and now, when again, at a moment of rejoicing, so many lives were snatched away in such a terribly sudden manner, the recollection of the first fatality combined with the present has made every one heart sick.

Probably by this time all Canada is aware of the full details of the disaster. Even at the present moment it is impossible to learn the number of those who will die from the result of the terrible affair. So far

### THE DEATH ROLL

numbers twenty-one, but there are fully as many more hovering between life and death. As an observer, and one preserved almost miraculously from the fearful fate which befel so many others, I will never forget the scene which presented itself to me as I peered down into that awful hole and saw the squirming mass of humanity pinned to the earth by that massive safe and almost as massive radiator.

The groans of the dying ring in my ears yet and the horror of the scene was beyond conception. Public opinion, which was at first inclined to blame the city authorities for, as it first appeared, having not taken sufficient care to stay the building, is now taking a different turn. It must be borne in mind that there are few public buildings which will stand the tremendous stamping of 2,500 men without the floors breaking down.

In this connection it may not be amiss to give the views of Mr. Graydon, the City Engineer of London. He states that

### THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

was the breaking of the heavy beam which runs beneath the floor almost at the centre of the space which gave way. This beam was composed of twelve three-by-four-inch timbers, securely jointed together. There was a span of eighteen feet, and the beam broke in the centre, rolling all the people standing in this space into the mass. The engineer stated that supports of this part of the floor were not taken away in making recent alterations. The wall where this joint ran was taken out in 1888. The engineer did not consider the wall dangerous, and says that the tremendous dead weight simply caused the beam to snap.

The building was one of the oldest of the pretentious ones in the city. It was built in 1855, when London experienced a boom, and was far ahead of the requirements of that day, but the city had outgrown it, and the repairs and alterations had so weakened the original structure that it is easily seen now that for years it has been unsafe for large crowds. This will furnish the line of evidence that will be given at the coroner's inquest. There is no doubt that the evidence so offered will form the basis of many suits for damages against the city.

The inquest was commenced this afternoon, the body of Edward Luxton, one of the first taken out, being the one chosen for the jurors to deliberate on. It is probable that the enquiry will be over by next Saturday at the latest.

Many messages of condolence have been received from all over the Dominion and outside points as well.

Mr. Boomer, president of the local Council of Women, received the following telegram yesterday afternoon:—

"His Excellency and I are deeply distressed to hear of the terrible disaster. We know Local Council of Women will be prompt to render all help possible. Our most heartfelt sympathy with you all."

(Signed) ISHBELE ABERDEEN."

The following telegram from a well known Londoner was received by the Advertiser yesterday afternoon:—

"Montreal, Quebec, January 4.—My native city has my heartfelt sympathy in its sad bereavement."

W. D. GILLEAN."

Mayor Wilson-Smith, Mayor Shaw, of Toronto; Mayor Colquhoun, of Hamilton; Mayor O'Donoghue, of Stratford; Mayor Smith, Chatham, and many others, also wired their sympathies.

## TO CONVERT ENGLAND.

A Task Which the Roman Catholics Will Undertake Through Confraternities.

There has been laid before the Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops of the United States and Canada, says the New York Times, a request to consider the formation of affiliated fraternities of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Compassion, which has its headquarters in the Church of St. Sulpice, Paris, and for its object the conversion of England to the Roman Catholic faith. None of the Archbishops or Bishops have yet indicated what action they will take. If they take any, it will be done very soon, and addresses will be issued to the priests and laity of the Church urging the action, and setting forth the man-

ner in which they expect such affiliated fraternities to be organized and conducted.

This movement originated with Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster who laid the matter before Pope Leo XIII., about a year ago. After careful deliberation, and after calling into consultation the archbishops of Paris and of Autun, the Pope gave his approval of the movement, and his formal sanction of special services to be held in St. Sulpice, Paris, to formally inaugurate the organization of the original archconfraternity. These services have already been held, Cardinal Vaughan being the principal figure in them, and reading at them the formal sanction and blessing bestowed upon the movement by the Pope.

While France has been chosen from historic reasons to be the seat of this movement the chief centres of activity are intended to be congregations speaking the English language. Hence the appeal to the Archbishops and Bishops in the United States and Canada. The same appeal has also gone to Australia, to New Zealand, and to every country where the English tongue is spoken. It is an appeal and not a command, because, owing to the peculiar character of the movement, the Pope has expressed a wish that confraternities grow, if they grow at all, because the faithful desire thus to enter into the great task.

Cardinal Vaughan has just issued a pastoral letter, which was read in all Roman Catholic churches in England last Sunday, in which he describes the inauguration of the archconfraternity, and points out that already the Cardinals of Paris, Lyons, Autun, Rheims, and of Malines in Belgium; the Archbishops of Rouen, Aix, and Arles; the Bishops of Montpellier, Nimes, Marseilles, Orleans, Arras, and other dioceses have taken steps to further the interests of this confraternity of prayer. He says that the Cardinals of Paris, Lyons and Autun have issued pastoral letters devoted entirely to the subject of prayer for the return of England to the Roman Catholic faith, and he closes by telling English Catholics that English-speaking people in the United States, in Australia and everywhere, will join in this movement.

The movement is to be made to take the form of organized societies in different churches, the members pledging themselves to constant prayer, to hear Masses at stated intervals, and through their proper ecclesiastical head to make regular reports to the headquarters of the movement in the Church of St. Sulpice, Paris. Cardinal Vaughan, in his pastoral just issued, urges the faithful not to hate those who are in error, but to hate only the error itself, and says that England will never be won to the Roman Catholic faith by controversy, but by calm expositions that satisfy the reason, and by the prayers of the righteous men "which availeth much."

It is said that it is doubtful if any American Archbishops or Bishops issue pastorals on the subject, as the French and English prelates have done, but that permission will be given to form confraternities in such churches in this country as may desire to form them.

## TELEPHONE STORIES FROM KENTUCKY.

(From the Elizabethtown News.)

A green-looking man came to town the other day with a small bucket of very white butter to sell and called on Will Matthis to buy it. He said he didn't want any at the store, but he would inquire if his wife wanted any. So he stepped to the telephone, called her up, and talked for a few seconds through the instrument. Then, turning to the countryman, who was standing with his hands in his pockets, his eyes dilated and his face very red, he told him that his wife said that she would not need any butter. The indignant countryman blurted out: "Look here, mister, if you didn't want any butter why didn't you say so? I ain't such a fool as to think that you've got your wife in that little box!"

(From the Louisville Dispatch.)

Mr. and Mrs. J. came to town the other day. The madam is a large muscular looking woman, and is evidently the boss of the ranch, while Mr. J. is a cowed, effeminate looking creature who seems to be afraid when the madam is around. While Mrs. J. went into Gold-namer's to do some shopping, the little man slipped off to Bell's to get a drink. While he was down there he heard the telephone ring, and inquired what it was. The mysteries of the instrument were explained, and Mr. Bell offered to call up his wife at Goldnamer's and let him talk to her. This seemed to please him very much, but just as he got the trumpet to his ear the lightning struck the wire and knocked him down. Staggering to his feet, he said, "That's her; it sounds just like her."

## BOUGHT A FIRE DAMAGED COFFIN FOR \$3.

Wes Hall is the name of a Smith County, Kan., farmer whose 17-year old daughter died last week. He came to town after a coffin, and found one, it is said, that had been badly damaged in a fire that he could buy for \$3. Loading the coffin into his wagon, so the story goes, he drove around to the different carpenters of the town in search of one who would repair it. Knowing that Hall was well off, the carpenters indignantly refused to do the work, and he was compelled to take the casket home and repair it in the kitchen of the house where his dead daughter lay. The local papers took up the affair, and it is believed that the country will be made too warm for Hall by his scandalized neighbors.

Oh, Those Girls!—Miss Westlake—I really believe George Benwood is weak-minded.

Miss Cutting—Why, dear, has he been making love to you?—Cleveland Leader.

The Enthusiast—The game of golf consists in getting the balls over the course with smallest possible number of strokes. You can understand that? Friend—Of course. The players natural desire to get through with it as soon as possible—Puck.

## LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

### The Aftermath of the Elections

Important Meeting of the Catholic League of South London, Eng.—Father Brown Congratulated Upon his Splendid Victory—Resolutions Adopted.

We take the following report of a meeting of the executive of the Catholic League of South London, Eng., from the Universe, which serves to illustrate what unity in the ranks of Catholics can achieve in regard to public affairs generally:—

After the transaction of routine business and the reading of several communications in regard to the recent School Board election, Mr. D. McCarthy addressed the meeting. He said he had much pleasure in moving the following motion: "That this meeting heartily congratulate Father Brown on the magnificent victory he achieved at the recent School Board election, and thank him for fighting so gallantly in the Catholic interest, and instructs the social committee to at once organize a social gathering or dinner to commemorate his triumph."

Father Brown (said the speaker) fought a good fight, and from the day he accepted the invitation of the League to contest Southwark in the Catholic interest until the day of the poll he went into the work with such thoroughness that he won the admiration and votes of those who differed from him in many ways. (Hear, hear.) The enthusiasm which he threw into the work affected the Catholic people of the Southwark division, so that at no other time, although there had been good men and true come forward in the Catholic interest, had so much enthusiasm been put into the work. It would be unfair to mention individual names, but he would certainly publicly thank Father Mostyn for all the work he had done during the election (loud applause.) Father Brown did not receive any support from the daily press. Indeed, if he had been dependent upon their support they would very soon have been left in the cold (hear, hear.) But happily there was an exception. The Catholic press stood loyally by them and gave them great assistance (hear, hear.) Father Brown's success had taught them a very valuable lesson, and he thought it should have the effect of inducing men of ability, who were connected with the South London League, to come out and take part in public life (hear, hear.) They had an equal chance with those who were already filling certain positions on the public boards, and he thought if there was anything that would tend to break down the monstrosity, it was Catholic representatives seeking election in the various public bodies (hear, hear.)

The Very Rev. Canon Murnane, in seconding the resolution said he was expressing the sentiments of the Catholics, not only of South London, but of the whole of London, and he could do so with a great deal more grace, because to a certain extent he felt that his own little share of the victory was the feeblest kind. (No, no.) He stood by and cheered, and that at least added to the enthusiasm of the people. The election, as far as the Catholic candidates were concerned, was fought on independent lines.

Mr. O'Connell (Bermondsey) while he was proud of the success of the Catholic candidate, certainly thought that some of the "swell" members of the League did little or no work during the election (Oh, and laughter.) It was a great scandal that at the various meetings of Father Brown it was found necessary to pass round the plate, especially when it was remembered that the Catholic Five Hundred consisted of gentlemen of position who had the means of reaching others in a similar social position. (Hear, hear.) He considered that such an undignified proceeding in passing round the plate at an election meeting seriously injured the prospects of the Catholic candidate. They had won, and therefore they could afford to wash their linen in public (No, no, and hear, hear.) The swells of the Catholic League were not present at the meetings, but no doubt they would be at the dinner (loud laughter.) Those who should be invited were the boys of various bands, the bagpipers and the men who devoted many hours to the work of canvassing (hear, hear.) If a dinner was to be given, let it be for the workers, and let them keep out the parasites who did nothing for Father Brown (Oh, oh, and laughter.)

Messrs. J. O'Mynn and Atwood also supported the motion, the latter gentleman remarking that the price of the dinner it was proposed to have to celebrate the victory should be within the reach of all. Some of the most enthusiastic workers during the recent election were working men, who could not afford to pay a large sum for a ticket.

### EXULCIZING THE CATHOLIC PRESS.

Father Brown, who was loudly cheered, thanked the members of the League for the valuable assistance which they had rendered him during the election. The election was won, not so much by perfection of organization as by the enthusiasm and excitement created amongst the people. He took this opportunity of thanking all who took part in the contest, and especially the press. The Catholic papers on this occasion "bucked up," and he thought it was a long time since the Catholic press had devoted the same amount of space and gave the same amount of attention to the election meetings as was given during the campaign (hear, hear.) He thought the press representatives roused up excitement in many directions (hear, hear.) The London School Board had met, and the Catholic members had already had a brush with certain gentlemen (applause.) One active member of the Progressive party who had witnessed the action of the Catholic members, recently shouted to him: "Brown, Darwin say animals that make the most noise always get fed first. That seems to be the principle you are going on" (loud cheers.) They were only two in fifty-five members, but there were already signs that certain

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Respectfully,

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members of the Board desired to cooperate with the Catholics (loud cheers.) But he and his colleagues had no intention of forfeiting their independence or being absorbed by any party (cheers.)

### THE CLERGY AND THE LEAGUE.

Mr. J. Pearson (Bermondsey) moved the following resolution: "To call attention to the conspicuous absence of a large number of the clergy from our monthly meetings, and also the regrettable falling off of the delegates generally for some considerable time past, and to move a resolution that, in view of these facts, the executive do revert to Tuesday to again hold their monthly meeting, with the hope of securing the better and larger attendances in the future." He assured the meeting he was actuated only by the best motives in moving this resolution. He yielded to no man in his respect for the Catholic clergy—(hear, hear) but he thought that they ought, by their attendance at the monthly meetings of the League, to show their appreciation of the work which was being done by the laity. There was no limit to the usefulness of this organization. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Fitzgerald, while in perfect sympathy with the resolution, moved in addition to the effect that the hon. sec. should obtain the opinion of every parish priest in each mission on the question (hear, hear.) Many friends of the Catholic League did not meet at the meeting because the parish priest did not think it worth while to attend the meeting. If the executive turned into a school debating society the Catholic League would cease to be a power, and it would simply be a gathering at which men could poke fun at each other. Very few clergy were present at the executive meetings. Happily there were exceptions. Canon Aurnane attend every single meeting, and if he could do it why not the other clergy. Father Sprankling came from Brockley because he was in earnest, and, although personally he (the speaker) thought Father Sprankling went on the wrong track at the school Board election, he preferred this rather than he should do nothing at all (hear, hear.)

Father Brown advised the executive not to go into a state of panic, and to imagine the League had come to the end of its existence. They must not expect all the clergy and delegates to attend these meetings regularly, but if they got a considerable portion of the earnest men of each branch they must be satisfied.

Father Buckley as one of the much-abled clergy, fully appreciated the remarks that had been made, and approved of the suggestion made by Mr. Fitzgerald. They must, however, bear in mind the fact that the duties of the clergy were many, and frequently their duties in a mission prevented them from attending these meetings.

After further discussion the motion as amended was adopted.

### OVERPLAYED HIS CONSCIENCE ON OYSTERS.

"For many long years," announces a Chillythe restaurant man in the local press, "the people here have been paying 25 cents for oyster stews. In doing this they have been robbed, and I have been one of the robbers, but I have repented and will now serve the same class of stews for 15 cents."

Diseases often lurk in the blood before they openly manifest themselves. Therefore keep the blood pure with Hood's Sarsaparilla.

The attention of our readers is directed to our advertisements, who are representative business men. Please tell them you saw their advertisements in the True Witness.

### SOME INDIANA DIVORCES.

At Anderson, Ind., last week, the unusual spectacle of a mother and daughter both appearing at the court the same day asking for divorces was presented in the Superior Court. Both were granted the decrees. The mother was Mrs. Ella Burton, and she charged intoxication. The daughter was Mrs. Minnie Stanley, and her charge was cruelty.

The recent filing of a suit for divorce revealed a more remarkable case than this. It was found that the applicant's two sisters had been divorced, that her mother had been divorced three times, two aunts had been granted two divorces, and the grandmother had also a good divorce record.

### PRESENCE OF MIND UNDER WATER.

OHIO FALLS, Dec. 22.—A marvellous experience happened to Matthew Dolan of Jeffersonville last night. Dolan was coming down the river on a tow pushed by the steamer Sam Clark, and in the darkness fell off. He is a vigorous swimmer and diver, and knew his safety depended on holding his breath. Before he could rise, the tow, an eighth of a mile long, was over him, and he, feeling the bottom of the boats, knew he must dive. To come up a moment too soon meant death by the steamer's wheel. Feeling his way until the prow of the boat struck him he

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Great Reductions in Plain Velvets, Figured Velvets, Plaid Velvets, Sho. Velvets, Cheek Velvets, Broadway Velvets Corduroy Velvets. Silks of every description, embracing all the prettiest color effects and patterns.

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Our Dress Goods offerings are away ahead of previous January sales: 25 to 50 per cent reductions, 10 per cent further reduction for CASH.

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small amount of water by a superhuman effort. Then he rose and swam to Six Mile Island, whence he was rescued by a skiff. He says that he had no idea of drowning, and thought of nothing but how to get out of his predicament.

### DIPHTHERIA SPREAD BY RABBITS.

Rabbits are spreading diphtheria throughout the central part of St. Lawrence City, Ia. Such, at least, is the opinion of physicians who have investigated the cause of the outbreak. Some time ago it was noticed that hundreds of the bunnies were dying of a disease which doctors pronounced almost identical with diphtheria in the human family. Soon after the epidemic commenced among the rabbits diphtheria began to be noticed among the families in the locality. The conclusion was reached that the germs were conveyed by the animals.

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Following our usual custom, we will devote the month of January to a strenuous effort to reduce the various lines in all the departments before our annual stock-taking. This will be our main object for the present month; it may entail loss, but it must be done.

A small purse will grow big in purchasing power if brought to this sale. We will offer big discounts off low prices in Dress Goods, Silks, Linens, Blankets, Cottons, Curtains, Hosiery, Underwear, Mantles, Costumes, Boys Suits, Children's Dresses, Fancy Goods Men's Furnishings, etc., etc.

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## CONSUMPTION THE SLAYER.

More Deadly than Smallpox, Typhoid and Diphtheria Combined

The annual report from the Provincial Board of Health shows that in 1896 the mortality from pulmonary tuberculosis, and certain death to these

double those from scarlet fever, smallpox, measles, influenza, diphtheria and typhoid combined. Such a death rate from consumption and pulmonary diseases is certainly startling, and it is to be noted that these diseases are curable in any climate, if the patient has a good understanding of the disease, and if he follows the directions of a learned physician. T. A. Slocum, patent only a linguist, has spent years in the study of this disease, and has made such valuable discoveries as to the nature of the disease, and the mode of its transmission, that he has been able to produce a medicine which will cure it in almost all cases. Sufferers should take instant advantage of this medicine, and send for a trial bottle at once. The Slocum Cure will be promptly sent free of charge to anyone who writes to the Slocum Chemical Company, Limited, 186 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, and sends the price of the bottle, and the name of the person to whom it should be sent. The Slocum Cure will be promptly sent free of charge to anyone who writes to the Slocum Chemical Company, Limited, 186 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, and sends the price of the bottle, and the name of the person to whom it should be sent.

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