

The post carrying the placard surmounts an iron box for the reception of contributions. We copy it from *La Petite Revue*, a French semi-monthly magazine, which pretty freely discusses ecclesiastical and political questions from a French-Canadian standpoint:

**AH ! QUE JE SOUFFRE DANS CES
FLAMMES !... ET VOUS M'OUBLIEZ.**

AYEZ PITIÉ DE MOI ! AYEZ PITIÉ DE MOI !
VOUS AU MOINS QUI ÊTES MES PARENTS
ET MES AMIS.

Chaque année, au mois de novembre, un service sera chanté à l'église Notre Dame pour les âmes des fidèles inhumés dans ce cimetière et selon les intentions des personnes qui y auront contribué.

Translated freely into English this would read: "Oh, what am I suffering in these flames!.... and you forget me! Have pity upon me! you at least who are my relatives and my friends! Every year, in the month of November, a service will be chanted in the Church of Notre Dame for the souls of the faithful buried in this cemetery, and according to the intentions of those who may have contributed to it." As there seems to be no provision made for recording the intentions of donors to this pious fake, it will be seen that, excepting in cases where written communications may be deposited with the cash, the relatives and friends of the poor burning victims must depend upon some sort of telepathic communication with the priests or upon the good memory of the occupant of the Great White Throne. One point that seems puzzling to us is the statement that the poor sufferers in the flames are of the "faithful." Surely it is poor encouragement to the living faithful to be told that their faithful relatives and friends are suffering as much punishment as the wicked atheists and Protestants. Possibly, however, there may be degrees of heat under the purgatorial gridiron, and, just as the cold winter blast is tempered to the shorn lamb, so a comparatively cool corner may be reserved for those who have friends able to drop a coin into the slot of the iron box. We give it up. *La Petite Revue* comments thus upon the placard:

"It results from this—

"1. That the souls of the dead buried elsewhere have no right to this precious annual intercession;

"2. That the souls of the dead buried in the cemetery of the Cote des Niegues have a right to the benefits of this intercession, but only when a friend has slipped a piece of money with this purpose in the slot of the box.

"Without this little formality, very simple and very easy to perform, the souls that suffer the fires of purgatory must remain there until the divine anger shall be appeased with a crown, with a half-crown, or even with a poor little five cent piece!"

"This inscription and appeal constitute a manoeuvre which some harsh people, in certain places, would call a swindle. We do not go as far as that, but we see in it a blasphemy—that is to say, a direct insult to the good God.

"In effect, do they give us to understand that he shows himself clement and merciful only to those who purchase his mercy and his clemency?

"No one would dare to make a similar insinuation against even the most partial of our human judges, but when it is a question of the good God, they are less scrupulous and much less afraid, and do not hesitate to represent him as a dealer in favors and as a prevaricator."

In its last sentence *La Petite Revue* hits the nail fairly on the head. The priests attribute actions and motives

to their "god" that would make a Hindu Thug feel mean, and make out of their poor victims profits that a Shylock would not touch. But the subject deals with matters that are so far away, have such a remote connection with the daily struggle for bread and butter, that the mass of people assume a quite different mental attitude towards them from that which they take up regarding the practical affairs of human life. Business men who would not for a moment depend upon a preacher's judgment in regard to a railway journey, will pay hundreds of dollars per year for the same preacher's advice as to the best way of getting to heaven. We join our contemporary in calling this iron-box collection a rank swindle, and we can well understand the leer that must stamp itself on the face of the priest who occasionally opens the iron box and collects the gifts of the victims. The fact, however, shows conclusively that the belief in hell is still a living factor among the Catholic majority of the Canadian people as well as among Protestants, and a paying asset of the Church.

We should not forget that it is the same spirit which consigns men to hell-fire after death as that which led men to burn their fellows at the stake. The terrible scenes witnessed during the last few years in the States, where men have been burnt alive by mobs without trial or on mere suspicion, have shown that the spirit of racial and sectarian jealousy and hatred that in past ages converted men into fiends, is by no means extinct. Given, indeed, the opportunity—let the priests acquire the power at which they are aiming—and the simple-minded people who piously drop their coins into the iron box to save the souls of their dead friends from purgatorial fires, are just those who would support the priests in punishing, if not with stake and faggot, at least with imprisonment and disabilities, their religious opponents. Perhaps our best hope is that the almost equally bigoted and superstitious Protestants, though they may just at present be playing into the hands of the Romanists by struggling for State aid to their denominational schools, may find that their ultimate salvation from the tyranny of the Romish hierarchy lies in their taking sides with the Liberals, and demanding a real separation of Church and State—a complete secularization of all State affairs—instead of the partial connection that now exists. It is astonishing that Protestants cannot see that they are really selling themselves when they attempt to secure State aid for their different schools and schemes, and that for every advantage they gain the Catholics will secure more than an equivalent.

"How can the Churches be made Familiar and Serviceable to the People?"

This was the subject of a discussion held a few weeks ago in New York, among principally a few prominent preachers, which turned mainly upon some remarks made on the declining influence of the Church by Comp-troller Bird S. Coler, who had said:

It is a waste of money to build churches costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, and then use them only once or twice a week.

These immense auditoriums that we now own should be thrown open for educational as well as religious teachings.

I believe that the masses of the people in our great cities are away from the churches simply because the churches are away from them.

There should be libraries connected with every church, and certain educational work should be started in all of them where none is in progress now either in the church proper or in the lecture-room.