

## THE MOST REV. ARCHBISHOP TACHE.

*Written for the Catholic Almanac of Ontario.*

**T**HE severest loss which the Church of Canada suffered during the past year was the death of the apostolic and saintly Archbishop of St. Boniface, the Most Rev. Alexander Antonin Taché, who died at his residence on the 22nd of June, 1894.

He belonged to one of the oldest families in Canada, some of whose ancestors were amongst the great historic pioneers of America, *e. g.* Louis Joliet, the famous discoverer of the Mississippi, and Sieur Varennes de la Verandrye, the hardy explorer of the Red River and the Saskatchewan country. Other members of the Taché family rendered eminent services to their country, in the government of which they occupied at various periods very distinguished positions. The Archbishop's uncle, Sir Etienne Pascal Taché, died Premier of Canada in 1865. On the side of his mother, who was Miss Boucher de la Broquerie, he was no less distinguished, she being the great-granddaughter of the founder of Boucherville, and grand-niece of Madame, d'Youville, foundress of the Grey nunnery of Montreal. His father was Charles Taché, who had served in the war with the United States.

Archbishop Taché was born at Rivière-du-Loup in the Province of Quebec July 23, 1824. Whilst very young he lost his father, but had the blessing of a careful training at the hands of an excellent mother, whose only care was to have her sons tread the path of honor and duty in which their forefathers had walked. The future prelate was sent to the College of St. Hyacinthe, where he prosecuted his classical studies, he afterwards proceeded for theology to the Grand Seminary at Montreal. He subsequently returned to St. Hyacinthe, where he was appointed professor of mathematics.

About this time the arrival in Canada of a few of the Oblate Fathers gave an entirely different turn to the young man's future, and developed his deep religious zeal and natural inclination for a life of adventure and hardship. He applied to be admitted into the Order, and was received into the novitiate in October, 1841. The services of the good Fathers were sought for by Bishop

Provencher for the vast North-West, then a lonely wild whose scattered inhabitants were hunters with no settled abode, or the more nomadic Indians. When the venerable Bishop's proposal was accepted and announced to the community the young novice, Taché, heard a new call; he hastened to consummate the sacrifice he had already made by offering his services. And the very force which in general might have been expected to deter him from it was the very thing

which attracted him towards it, the love of his mother. She was at the time suffering from a dangerous illness; and, in order to obtain her recovery, her son with true filial piety offered to God the sacrifice of home and comfort to devote himself to the apostolate of that unknown territory which offered only hardship to its missionaries. The offering was accepted: the mother recovered, and had the happiness of being spared for twenty-six years, and the son started on the 4th of June, 1845, for the field of his labors. He thus vividly describes his feelings upon this occasion:

"You will allow me to tell you what I felt when I receded from the sources of the St. Lawrence, on whose banks Providence had fixed my birthplace and by whose waters I first conceived the thought of the Red River. I drank of those waters for the last time, and mingled with them some parting tears, and confided to them some of the secret thoughts and affectionate sentiments of my inmost heart. I could imagine how some of the bright waves of this river, rolling down from lake to lake, would at last strike on the beach nigh to which a beloved mother was praying for her son that he might become a perfect Oblate and holy missionary. I knew that being intensely preoccupied with that son's happiness, she would listen to the faintest murmuring sound, to the very beating of the waves coming from the North-West, as if to discover in them the echoes of her son's voice asking a prayer or promising a remembrance."

"I bade to my native land adieu, which I then believed to be everlasting, and I vowed to my adopted land a love and attachment



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