

PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH.

There is something so wonderful, so sublime, so overpowering, in the contemplation of the unbroken existence of the Catholic Church, that even the greatest enemies, when seriously attentive, are forced to acknowledge and admire. Yet they never attempt to explain it. They always shun that question. They have no love for the contrast between the unchanging and unchangeable Church of Rome and the modern and ever shifting creeds that oppose her. Of course we of the ancient faith fully understand the meaning of that perpetuity which is a note of our religion, but non-Catholics, while forced to admit the fact of its existence, either strive to escape its contemplation or else attempt to ridicule our claims based thereon. Had the Catholic Church been interrupted in its life—for even a day—since the hour of its foundation; or had its strength diminished, or had its principles varied a hair's breadth, there would be a glorious argument to refute the contention that Christ is perpetually present in His own institution; but no such opportunity has been afforded the enemies of our Faith. We repeat, that the perpetuity of the Church, the absence of all weakness, the immutability and the unchangeableness apparent in her history of long centuries, are facts that no sane person can dispute and which no opponent of the Roman Catholic establishment dare attempt to explain. There is but one explanation; the Divine Founder of the Church is true to His promise that He would remain with her until the end of time, and that the gates of Hell should not prevail against her.

In order to better illustrate that at which we are aiming, we will quote from a great opponent of Catholicity and then from a great defender of our Faith the former admitting his inability to explain the unchangeableness of the Church of Rome, the latter explaining it most readily and rationally. Our readers are all acquainted with Lord Macaulay's wonderful passage, in the introduction to his essay on Van Ranke's History of the Popes, upon the wonderful perpetuity of the Catholic Church; but many may not have read the following extract in which he speaks of the Irish establishment. Macaulay said:

"Two hundred and eighty-five years has this church been at work. What could have been done for it in the way of authority, privileges, endowments, which has not been done? * * * And what have we to show for all this lavish expenditure? What, but the most zealous Roman Catholic population on the face of the earth? On the great solid mass of the Roman Catholic population you have made no impression whatever. There they are, as they were ages ago, ten to one against the members of the Established Church. Explain this to me. I speak to you, the zealous Protestants on the other side of the House. Explain this to me on Protestant principles. If I were a Roman Catholic, I could easily account for the phenomenon. If I were a Roman Catholic, I could content myself with saying that the mighty Hand and the out-stretched Arm had been put forth according to promise, in defence of the unchangeable Church; that He who, in the old time, turned into blessings the curses of Balaam, and smote the host of Sennacherib, had signally confounded the arts and the powers of heretic statesmen." Lord Macaulay does not, however, give us his explanation. He tells us what he would say were he a Roman Catholic; but not being a Roman Catholic he fails to present his answer to the irrefutable argu-

ment which his keen mind had raised. But if the great Protestant historian was so blinded by prejudice, against the Faith of Ages, that he would not accept even the very evidence that he so clearly comprehended, we will find others equally as eminent and far more consistent who can give a thorough explanation of that mysterious sameness of the Church of Rome. It seems to us that this sphinx-like unchangeableness, despite the tempests of centuries, is one of the most convincing evidences that the Truth is in the Church, and that the Spirit of the Sanctifier and Illuminator—the Holy Ghost—abides perpetually with her. We will quote from a sermon preached by the great Dominican, Pere Lacordaire, in the church of Notre Dame, Paris:

"Assuredly the desire has not been wanting to lay hold of us, or put us to fault against immutability; for what a weighty privilege to all those who do not possess it; a doctrine immutable when everything upon earth changes! a doctrine which men hold in their hands, which poor old men, in a place called the Vatican guard under the key of their cabinet, and which without any other defence resists the course of time, the dreams of sages, the designs of kings, the fall of empires—always one, constant, identical with itself! What a prodigy to deny! What an accusation to silence! Therefore, all ages, jealous of a glory which disclaimed their own, have tried their strength against it. They have come, one after the other, to the doors of the Vatican; they have knocked there with buskin and boot, and the doctrine has appeared under the frail and wasted form of some old man of three score years and ten. It has said: 'What do you desire of me?' And they answer 'Change.' 'I never change!' 'But everything is changed in the world. Astronomy has changed, chemistry has changed, philosophy has changed, the empire has changed. Why are you always the same?' 'Because I come from God, and because God is always the same.' 'But know that we are masters; we have a million of men under arms; we shall draw the sword; the sword which breaks down thrones is well able to cut off the head of an old man and tear up the leaves of a book.' 'Do so; blood is the aroma in which I recover my youthful vigor.' 'Well, then, here is half my sceptre; make a sacrifice to peace, and let us share it together.' 'Keep thy purple, O Caesar, To-morrow they will bury thee in it; and we will chant over thee the *Alleluia* and the *De Profundis*, which never change.'"

Dear Catholic readers, you can understand the full depth, the great beauty, the sublime meaning of this passage. The world may change, so may the sciences, the arts, the inventions; the face of the universe may change; the ideas of men, the principles of philosophy, the policies of States, the forms of governments,—all, all may change, and must change, for it is their nature to be mutable. The different creeds may change; the idols of the pagan may disappear before the barbaric fanaticism of the Mahomedan; the Koran may give place to the mutilated and revised Bible; the beliefs of the sects may change as rapidly as the clouds upon the sky in autumn season. But alone, amidst all these changes, the Church of Christ, the great Catholic Church, the Roman Church remains unchanged. There she stands "like a majestic monument in the desert of history, immutable amidst change, magnificent amidst ruin," towering sublimely aloft, gazing down upon the centuries at her feet, "solid in her foundation, magnificent in her proportions,

sublime in her associations, rich in the relics of her saints, cemented by the blood of her martyrs, pouring forth for ages the unbroken series of her venerable hierarchy, and only the more majestic from the ruins by which she is surrounded."

SATURDAY'S MATCH.

To read the reports of Saturday's championship lacrosse match that appeared in the morning and evening papers of Montreal and Ottawa, and to peruse the editorials of these organs, a stranger would be under the impression that a club of spoiled children had been pitted against a band of savages. There is an absence of justice and an evidence of prejudice in every line of those rabid attacks upon the Shamrocks. We do not pose as the champion of any foul players, nor do we desire to palliate any offences against the laws of the game, or against that decorum which should reign on such occasions, but we do believe in fair criticism, and in even-handed justice. The attacks made by the press of this city and of the Capital upon the Shamrock team are not unlike the senseless and unbridled cries of the Southern lynchers who think it is a work of manhood to join in a chorus of execration simply because their prejudices are excited and their vindictiveness [has an opportunity of manifesting itself. The roughest play that could possibly be made by any team is not a whit more disgraceful to the participants in a game than are the unmerciful and unjust attacks of the press a stigma upon fair journalism.

In the first place the Shamrocks have ever been the victims of an ill-disguised jealousy on the part of the press. If they won the championship last year it was by fair play, hard work and without any favor. But the fact of the Shamrocks carrying off the colors was "gall and wormwood" to the critics of the press. No opportunity has been lost to cast a slur upon the team, to sneer at them, or to create by mean insinuations, when there was no room for direct attack, a prejudice in the public mind against them. Why so? We could assign many reasons if we choose; but one in particular is the fact that the Shamrocks were invincible upon the field and the pet clubs of the press were unable to snatch from them the laurels justly won.

This year it was determined, come what might, that the Shamrocks should not carry off the championship; and if one thing more than another settled that determination it was the great victory won by Montreal's best team at the Chicago World's Fair. The Capitals came down on Saturday, with their backers, determined to carry off the colors; the Shamrocks were equally as determined to retain the championship. There was evidently from the outset no compromise, no give and take, no half measure upon one side or the other. The Capitals had the field before them and their opponents ready to contest it; the Shamrocks had an equal advantage so far, but they had also to contend against ungenerous prejudice and to expect the severest of criticism. It was evident to any impartial man that a slip or mistake that would be passed over on the part of the Capitals, would be magnified into an attack, foul play, or ruffianism on the part of the Shamrocks.

Thus the teams met. A match was played that cannot be called a match; even were it not a draw, it was in no way a fair test of the respective merits of both teams. But, such, as it was, we find the press coming out in blazing characters of condemnation upon the

Shamrocks and with nothing but fulsome praise for their opponents. And yet the truth of the whole matter is,—that the first excitement, the initial aggravation, came from the favored team. There are glowing pictures of the cuts, wounds and batterings received by men of the Capital team; not one word about the equally, if not more serious, treatment received by members of the Shamrocks. No man on the field was injured as was O'Brien, but he was a Shamrock man and no sympathy was felt for him. Sticks, fists, knocks, blackguardism, and such like terms leap through the reports in all the mazes of confusion; the melancholy companions of prejudiced imaginations. We do not ask that the Shamrocks be excused, if they acted in any way deserving of censure; but we do demand that they receive fair play, just criticism, and credit where credit is deserved. Were they other than what they are, the Montreal press would be able to point out all the provocation to which they were subjected, but they are Irish, and their emblem is not relished by the scribes who heap unjustifiable censure upon them.

BISHOP OF SHERBROOKE.

Just as our form was going to press we received a despatch stating that Rev. Father Laroque, of St. Hyacinthe, has been named Bishop of Sherbrooke. It is at present impossible for us to give a sketch of the distinguished prelate whom the Holy See has just raised to the dignity of Bishop, but in our next issue we shall endeavor to do justice to the subject. Meanwhile we congratulate the new Bishop, the diocese of Sherbrooke, and the whole Catholic Church in this Province on the appointment of such a zealous and able prelate.

A RETRACTION.

In our issue of the 6th September we published an editorial note, in which we referred to the Hon. Mr. Mercier and Hon. Mr. Robidoux. In speaking of the latter gentleman we repeated a play upon the name that had been made some time ago, and which flashed upon our mind at the moment of writing. It appears that Hon. Mr. Robidoux considers that the paragraph in question has been injurious to him and that it was directed against his integrity and personal standing. We beg to state that nothing was further from our intention, and that we merely repeated, in a humorous manner, what we considered to be a harmless play upon words. If, however, any injury has been suffered in consequence of said paragraph, we sincerely regret the same and positively disclaim any serious intention in writing the apparently offensive words. Above all, we wish it to be thoroughly understood that no reflection upon Hon. Mr. Robidoux's personal integrity was intended, because that gentleman's well-known character is far above the reach of any serious attack.

The following unpleasant piece of news has been sent to the American press from St. Petersburg:

"The religious intolerance of the Russian government seems to have taken a new form. Not only Jews but Roman Catholics are now victims. Early in the year nearly all the Polish employees of the railroads of western Russia were dismissed. A commission of the ministry on ways and communications is just issued. In the regulation about such employees five religious categories are formed, beginning with a Roman Catholic born of a Roman Catholic parents in Russia, next a Roman Catholic born of a Roman Catholic father and a mother of orthodox or other creed and so on. The last category is that of any man professing the Roman Catholic religion irrespective of parentage. Those belonging to the first category cannot be employed as engineers elsewhere than in northern Siberia, those belonging to the second category only in western Siberia and the extreme eastern province of European Russia, those in the last category can be given posts in Russia generally exclusive of Poland and the Baltic provinces. This regulation practically excludes Roman Catholics from all appointments in the ministry of ways and communications."