

# The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, AUG. 8, 1894.

## OUR AGENT.

Mr. James Martin, one of the most popular and widely known young men in Montreal, has undertaken the duties of advertising and canvassing agent for THE TRUE WITNESS. It is daily becoming more evident that our people require an organ to defend their interests and advocate their rights; it is also apparent that THE TRUE WITNESS, as it is conducted to-day—on broad and solid principles—is a necessity. It only requires that it should become known to the public, that each one should have an idea of the work that it is doing, in order to secure its permanent success. In all Montreal no better or more able man than Mr. Martin could be found to lay our claims and position before the public. Himself a writer of high merit and one calculated to appreciate fully the value of an Irish-Catholic organ, he will receive, we are confident, a kindly welcome from all whom he may visit, and we trust that through his instrumentality THE TRUE WITNESS will enter many homes where to-day no representative paper of our people in this province is to be found. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that we introduce Mr. Martin to our friends and well-wishers and bespeak for him that encouragement which his zeal and exertions so well deserve.

## OUR INTERVIEWS.

We have a number of important interviews on hand regarding the School Commissioners' appointments, but owing to the crush of matter this week we are obliged to leave them over. We did not anticipate that the material furnished in this issue, and for which a great majority of our readers has been anxiously looking forward, would occupy so much space. Moreover, the matter of the School Board cannot at present be materially advanced until the Government has an opportunity to act. If no action is taken, we have emphatically entered our protest, and there is nothing to prevent us from striking again upon the same anvil the moment the blows can be of practical utility. We make this short explanation in order that all concerned may know that if the interviews in question do not appear this week, it is not due to the fact that we have at all lost sight of the question, nor that we hesitate for a moment in our determination to see justice done in this matter.

## AUGUST THOUGHTS.

It is mid-summer; the season of flowers, of ripening harvests, of blue skies, of gorgeous sun-sets, of nature's bounties lavished upon and around the Earth. It is the season in which we behold—perhaps more than in any other—the wonderful goodness of the Creator and the care that He bestows upon His creatures. Abroad, the hills are beautiful in the fulness of the foliage; the fields are golden with their loads of grain; the breezes fan the brow of day and temper the fierce rays of a glorious sun; the husbandman watches joyously the rapid changing of the crops, and the winter's provisions are secure to him—for he looks forward to a successful harvest when autumn comes. It is also a season of rest, the vacation time, the period when the haunts of busy life are abandoned for the temporary repose that all need, the time when strength and energies are recuperated for the coming struggle in the great harvest-fields of the approaching season.

How like the seasons, in their unbroken revolutions, is the life of man on earth. Each one has the spring-time of hope, joy, light, when the seeds of the future are sown in the parterres of his mortal existence; then comes the summer, the fulness of vitality in June, the gradually ripening powers in July, the completion of gathering vigor in August's matured manhood. And then comes the season of Autumn; the time of harvest, when all the fruits of the life are collected and placed in the granary for the long, chill winter that is approaching. But while the different seasons of the year are like unto those in life there is yet a wonderful abyss between them. Year after year the seasons come and go, winter is succeeded by spring, spring is followed by summer; but to man, once the snows fall upon his earthly career there is no renewal of life in the spring-time.

Looking at the seasons and again at man, how often do we not recall those admirable lines of Beattie—lines that have immortalized his "Hermit."

"Nor yet for the ravage of Winter I mourn;  
Kind Nature the embryo blossom shall  
save:  
But when shall Spring visit the mouldering  
urn?  
Oh! when shall day dawn on the night of  
the grave?"

When August's glories are upon the land and the mid-summer moon rolls red and large above the eastern horizon, ascends gloriously toward the zenith, and looks down upon a world of enchantment, that other stanza comes back, from old school days, wafted upon the wings of memory:

"Now, gliding remote on the verge of the sky,  
The moon half extinguished her crescent  
displays;  
But lately I marked, when majestic on high,  
The shone and the planets were lost in her  
blaze.  
Roll on thou fair orb, and with gladness  
pursue  
The path which conducts thee to splendor  
again!  
But man's faded glory; what change can  
renew?  
Ah! fool, to exult in a glory so vain!"

It is August; the mid-day of life for many of us. The hills of our existence are all beautiful in the full foliage of manhood, the golden fields of our prosperity, the heated rays of life's fevered struggle, are tempered by the cooling shades of domestic or social joys; we watch the ripening of the grain that promises an abundant harvest of temporal wealth, power or honor. Poor dreamers! The autumn is at hand; the leaves of the forest will be painted by the frosty pencil of the Invisible, and the great gathering in of the treasures will take place. We will scarcely have stored them in the granaries that our industry built, when the chill breath of the North will sweep down and the shroud of snow will cover us. In the spring time others will take out that

grain and sow the seeds of another harvest, while we sleep on oblivious of all that we left behind.

But in another domain, in the grand spiritual sphere, it is the August, the mid-summer, of our opportunities. The seeds are ripening, seeds of Truth, of Faith, of Hope, of Charity. Their golden spears nod to the breeze that comes from beyond the realms of Time. The harvest that we must reap will not be stored in perishable barns, but in a treasure-house where it shall be multiplied a hundred and a thousand fold. When the snows of death's winter fall upon the past, we shall find the guarantee of an unending summer in the fruits that our hands have culled and that we have treasured up against an unending existence.

This may be for many of us the last August we are to enjoy. How glorious it should be if in the spiritual life of each the blue of a summer sky over-arched it, and the gorgeous splendors of the summer sunset flung a majesty and a promise around its close! Spring and Autumn are each suggestive of very wonderful reflections; Winter brings its sad thoughts and sombre comparisons; but August is not without its salutary lessons—lessons that, if taken to heart, may lead to a rich harvest in the autumn of life and a glorious prospect beyond the sphere of that Winter which must come, sooner or later, to all.

## THE CONFESSIONAL.

Times out of mind have we written on the subject of this great institution—the Roman Catholic Confessional; we have argued the utility, the necessity, the power, of that tribunal from different standpoints; we have adduced one argument after another in favor of its existence and its inviolability; but there is a light in which it may be viewed and in which we have not sought to place it before our readers.

He was a lonely man—he moved through the thronged streets of the city as solitary as if he been amidst a primeval wilderness. Outwardly the man pursued his way to business and daily avocations; but on his brow there was a shadow and in his heart a fire; his soul was in an abyss of misery that he could not explain to the world and his life was haunted by spectres that he vainly sought to exorcise. He wished to do well, he desired to shed happiness on all sides, he sought to perform his duties, he dreaded temptation, he hoped against hope. Turn as he might, move as he wished, act as best he could, a phantom seemed to hover above and around him—and in the shadow of its wing he felt every good slipping from him, all his best intentions turned to failures, his every effort to perform his sacred duties translated into a defeat. He asked himself, "Am I not accursed of God? How is it that temptations spring up where I least expect them? How is it that with all my will, and strength, and character, I invariably succumb? Why am I not like other men, who go about their business, and all they touch turns to gold, their every undertaking is a success, their homes are the scenes of domestic felicity and their most cherished aspirations are always gratified? How is it that my every intention, no matter how good it may be, is turned against me, and the results of my every action are the very opposite of what I desire?"

Thus did the lone and mysterious man (a mystery to himself and to everyone else) move along down the avenues of a checkered life; ever seeking to do good, and ever performing ill; ever wondering at his own fate and over finding his life an undefinable mystery; now filled with

a fitful hope, now verging upon a dreaded despair. To the world he was most successful, and in his own life he felt but failure; to the "cold-eyed many" he was honored, and in the mirror of his own conscience he was miserable; to the busy crowd he had attained all that he could expect in life, and on his own soul there was a cloud, in his own heart a void, in his own bosom a fire that scorched. Was he pursued by a curse? Or had he fallen the victim of some unholy incantation?

One day this sad-browed, pensive, lonely man passed by a church. The great tide of commercial life rushed onward along the street; he left the busy thoroughfare and entered to rest in the temple. It was cool, shaded, and even gloomy within; the aspect of the church corresponded with his whole being. Away down the main aisle a little lamp flickered in front of the altar; it was so like the one tiny light that still shone through the shades of his spiritual life. A few worshippers knelt around, absorbed in their pious meditations or fervent prayers. A black-robed priest came forth from the sanctuary and silently moved down the side of the temple and entered a confessional box. The lone and troubled man watched the priest until he had disappeared behind the grated doors. Every now and again a penitent dropped into the confessional box and came forth silently to take up some interrupted devotions or to make the Stations of the Cross.

An idea suddenly flashed upon the mind of the observer; like the ray that struck down Saul on his road to Damascus, it overpowered him, seized his whole being and imparted an impulse that he could not resist. He, too, arose and went noiselessly into the confessional. Much longer than any of the others did he remain. What there was said no man shall ever know; it is a secret that belongs to the penitent; the priest had forgotten it all before the weary-hearted man was well back in the church pew, the only audience consisted of God and His Recording Angel.

The lone man returned to the seat he had occupied, he looked down the vista of the church, the sanctuary lamp still flickered; but beyond it he saw the little door of the tabernacle, and above that abode of Divinity he noticed the sacred emblem of boundless Love and universal salvation. Half an hour, and that man was once more in the midst of the great rushing, throbbing world; the eddies of life whirled around him, men came and went as ever, all intent upon their business or pleasure. But he was no longer dejected; his face glowed with an inward light; his eyes seemed to have borrowed new life from some mysterious source. The days lengthened into weeks and weeks into months; again and again might he be seen going quietly into that temple and kneeling at that same confessional. Exteriorly, to all his friends and acquaintances, he was the same as of old; he performed the same routine of business. But a change had come; a mighty metamorphosis had taken place; happiness succeeded disquietude, success replaced failure; his home grew radiant; the seasons came and went and each brought its blessings; the air was alive with grand creatures of the soul; the earth unfolded evidence of God's bounty; the sky above seemed to bend lovingly over his span of existence; all men grew apparently better; his every intention, instead of being frustrated, was realized to its fulness. In a word, the man was as happy as imperfect human nature can possibly be.

Dear readers, this is no fiction; it is not a story drawn from the realms of