

## The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department.

### BISHOP MACDONELL.

AN OLD LETTER ON ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS.

The following letter of Bishop Macdonell has been sent to us, and as it is of historical interest and value, we publish it under this heading, omitting only such portions as treat of purely personal matters.

GLENGARRY, UPPER CANADA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

24th Jany. 1826

On receipt of this please write when you will be in Canada next summer.

I wrote from New York to Bishop Fraser, but deferred writing you until my arrival in Canada, well aware that you would feel interested in the news of this country as well as in the result of my long travels and long negotiations both in London and in Rome. My last letter to you was, I believe, from Rome, in that letter I think I mentioned to you the wish and even anxiety of Earl Bathurst that Upper Canada should be erected into a Diocesan Bishopric, in order to be independent of that of Quebec, and his full and entire consent that New Brunswick, the islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Nova Scotia should form one independent Diocese. To this I saw no difficulty as Bishop Fraser might become your coadjutor *cum successione*. This arrangement I proposed to Monsignore Caprao, Secretary of the Propaganda, and he consulted several of the Cardinals on the subject, who thought that you had not sufficient means to support a Seminary and *mensa*.

Every one of the members of the Propaganda to whom I spoke and the Pope himself seemed to consider it a very desirable thing and a matter of expediency as well as of utility to accede to the wishes of the British Government with respect to Upper Canada, as Bishop Plessis has given consent to that measure and authorized Dr. Poynter to carry it into effect with the Court of Rome as well as with that of London; on second thought he began to throw so many difficulties in the way that the members of the Propaganda were staggered, and wished to draw time before coming to a decision, so that I was obliged to leave Rome without bringing my business to a close.

It would appear, however, that Bishop Plessis before his death had repented of what he had done, for I have seen a letter of his to Mr. Mason in which he said that from the tenor of his last dispatches to Rome he hoped my business would soon be finished. I also find that references had been made by the Propaganda to some of the Bishops of the U. S., on the subject, who returned a favourable answer so that, with pull and row, my business will be brought to a conclusion this year, and if you and Bishop Fraser will come here next summer I shall lay plans and proposals before you that must tend to the benefit of Religion and of the people of whom you both have the charge. I wrote to Bishop Fraser to the same effect. I spoke on the same subject to Dr. Power, of New York, who it is expected will be made Bishop in place of Dr. Conolly and who promised on the event of your coming by New York that he would accompany you this length, for I see we cannot bring the people of Rome to pay the least attention to these countries until three or four of us put our heads together and talk to them in a way that they must understand. I gave at the request of the Colonial Secretary an estimate of the expenses for supporting a certain number of clergymen and school masters in your District, and I have every reason to believe it is the intention of the Govern't to give you a moderate salary; to which I received for answer that there were no crown revenues in Nova Scotia to support an establishment of this kind. Much do I long to see you as I have a great deal to communicate to you on different subjects. Our friends in Montreal are as far as under and as difficult to be brought together as ever. The death of Bishop Plessis has deprived Bishop L'Artigue of support and the same event renders it more necessary than ever for Bishop Fraser and you and me to put our heads together

and make one cause, we must act in concert in our relations with the British Government and with Rome. Dr. McKee here starving. I sent you in a former letter instructions for him for recovering some money that was due him on the land, he is much surprised you don't send it. I mentioned to you in my last letter that I thought myself ill-used by Roxerick and John Glenaladale which makes me very loath to interfere in the family affairs even in behalf of my nephew. I have a copy of the mortgage given by the late Captain McDonald to Glenaladale and I spoke to Borodale who thinks that until the whole be paid up none of the family can receive a full discharge. Pray procure me all the information you can on this head.

Yours unalterably,

ALEX. MACDONELL.

The Right. Revd. Aeneas B. McEachern,  
Prince Edward Island.

### FREEMASONS ON FREEMASONRY.

One of the first points for the consideration of the Catholic polemic who undertakes to treat of Freemasonry, is one often raised by Masons themselves, or by weak-minded Catholics who contemplate joining the order—namely, that the Masonic idea does not interfere with a member's religion, but that, on the contrary, Masonry respects the religious faith and the political sympathies of its subjects. There is indeed a Masonic statute to this effect, but nothing is more certain than that Masonry substitutes itself for any and every system of religion. Of course, this substitution is more easily forgiven by the average Protestant than by even a nominal Catholic, for the former is no positivist in dogmatic matters; but the fact still remains, even for him, that by making itself supreme in religion, Masonry does interfere with whatever semblance of religious conviction he ever entertained. But let us hear some eminent Freemasons on this point.

Bazot, general secretary of the French Grand Orient, in his "Historical, Philosophical, and Moral Tableau of Freemasonry," written when he had been thirty-one years a Mason, says: "Our religion is the natural, primitive, unique, universal, and unchangeable religion—it is Freemasonry." Ragon, in his "Interpretative Course," solemnly authorized by the French Grand Orient in 1840, says that "he who would make a religion of Masonry, falsifies it;" but, in order to agree with Brother Bazot, who calls it "the primitive and universal religion," he makes this distinction: "The first man who, perceiving the order manifested in the universe, concluded that there is a God, was a benefactor to the world; but he who made that God speak, was an impostor." According to Ragon, therefore, Masonry is not to be regarded as a religion only in this sense—it rests on no revelation. *The Pelican*, the organ of Brazilian Masonry, cited by Mgr. Antonio de Macedo Costa, Bishop of Grand Para, in his "Instruction on Masonry," 1871, declares that "Masonry is a great temple, which, like an ancient one at Rome, gives hospitality to all the gods because, taken together, they form one God."

In the *Freemason Orator*—"a selection of discourses pronounced on Masonic solemnities, relative to the dogmas and history of the order, and to the morality taught in the workshops," and published by the French Grand Orient (Paris Caillet, 1825),—we read the following words of a member of the Lodge of Mt. Tabor, Paris: "Nothing is more incontestably true than nature—that, is existence. The Masonic order is derived from the ancient mysteries, which themselves arose from nature, and had nature for a sacramental [*sic*] basis. It certainly follows that this royal art, this symbolic and mysterious temple, in fine the Masonic order, is the emblem of nature of pre-existing truth. Therefore, this order is natural law, the true and unique religion." In the *Courrier de Bruxelles* of March 7, 1879, may be read a report of an address made by Brother Goblet d'Aviella to the lodge of the "Philanthropic Friends" of Brussels, in which the following passage occurs: "Masonry shows that it is not only a philosophy, the philosophy of progress, but that it is also a religion, the religion of the ideal. Can one contest the utility of a vast association like Masonry, which, while theocracies are everywhere tumbling down, meets to dedicate temples, as we do to-day, for the worship which will survive all others, because it rests on a progressive conception of nature?"

The above quotations are sufficiently eloquent, but Masonry