

The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

The True Witness Printing & Publishing Co.,
(LIMITED)

At No. 761 Craig St., Montreal, Canada.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

City, \$1.50; country, \$1.00. If not paid in advance \$1.50 (country) and \$2 (city) will be charged. Subscribers, Newfoundland, \$1.50 a year in advance.

All business communications to be addressed to C. A. McDONNELL, Managing Director THE TRUE WITNESS P. & P. Co.



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1894.

TO OUR READERS.

We find it necessary to state a few facts this week and to respectfully call the attention of our subscribers, advertisers and general readers to what we have to say. It is obvious, to the least observing, that great improvements have of late been made in THE TRUE WITNESS, and that considerable expense has been incurred in order to give our friends a thorough reliable and animated Catholic organ. No doubt all this is very encouraging and highly satisfactory to the public; but there is an absolute necessity of a certain amount of co-operation on the part of all who participate in the benefits of the paper.

It is all very fine to have an increased number of subscribers and a perceptible augmentation in the advertisements and printing work; but if the majority of kind patrons find it difficult, or impossible to pay the small amounts of their respective accounts, they surely cannot expect that THE TRUE WITNESS possesses some Alladin's Lamp, whereby to raise the money necessary for the carrying on of the business. Take the subscriptions as an example; it is only one dollar for those in the country districts and one dollar and fifty cents for those in the city. Although the city subscription is apparently the higher, still it is the least profitable to the paper. We are obliged to send out fifty-two issues per year, and to place a one-cent stamp upon each of them, consequently we pay out fifty-two cents for the fifty that we receive.

In each individual case the amount due is small; but in the aggregate they constitute an important item of several thousand dollars to us. It does not seem much to send a paper once weekly, to each individual; but when the bills for the paper, the ink, the composition, the press work, the accountant who has to keep track of each subscriber's indebtedness, and of the numerous employees required in the preparation of an issue, all come in, we cannot be expected to meet them with fair words and plausible promises. There is the rent, the light, and, soon, the heating, as well as the hundred and one accounts for stationery and minor expenses that the management must face. And yet we are supposed to meet all these with the reiterated statement that our subscribers have not paid up.

The very people who should encourage a truly Catholic organ, the only paper upon which they can rely, the only friend they have to defend their interests or take up the cudgels for them in the hour of difficulty, are the first to go out of their way to encourage pub-

lications that, at any moment, may turn upon them and attack their most cherished rights and ignore their just and honest privileges. They will subscribe, advertise, purchase—or do anything in their power—for papers that they know well are at best the half-hearted and grudging granters of fitful justice to their people, while they cannot find it in their hearts to act generously with the one that stands by them. And yet they go about complaining that they have no one to speak for them, no paper to uphold their cause. Of course these remarks are not to be taken as applicable to the large number of interested and zealous friends of the paper who have shown the utmost good will and desire to encourage such a necessary work.

We know full well that "hard times" are pleaded by many, and there is no question as to the absence of a superabundance of money during the past summer; but it must be remembered that the same "hard times" affect the management and the employees as well as the creditors of the newspaper. We cannot issue a journal without paper, and the paper-makers cannot furnish us with their goods unless they receive remuneration. So it is with every other item of necessary expense.

It is not for the purpose of "putting on a poor mouth," or of complaining, that we thus express ourselves openly; it is because we clearly see that unless we stir up the memories of a goodly number, these people are likely to forget entirely that they owe an honest and legal duty to THE TRUE WITNESS. We hope sincerely that this will be the last time it shall be necessary to make such a broad statement and to call upon our friends to make some effort to settle the accounts presented and long due.

THE SCHOLASTIC YEAR.

This week the majority of the schools, academies, convents and colleges commence their scholastic terms. As we stated in our last issue it is highly advisable that the parents should make it a point to have their children attend school from the very first day. Their presence facilitates greatly the work of the teachers, helps in the organization and classification of the different grades, and places the students themselves in a position to commence the year's work upon an equal footing. There are a few words more of advice that we wish to give the parents, and we feel confident that our remarks will be taken in the good spirit in which they are offered.

When the parents place a child in school, under the guidance, direction and care of regular paid instructors, they do so because their own duties and positions prevent them from being able to impart the necessary instruction and training that the young person requires to commence the battle of life. The parents have full confidence in the teachers, and they delegate to those experienced educators the authority which they have received from God over their own offspring. The teacher is supposed to know all the requirements of the child, and by his or her training is highly calculated to impart a proper and suitable instruction. Parents know, from experience, how difficult it is to care for the child at home; they can easily imagine the numerous difficulties with which the teacher has to contend when dealing, not with one child, but with a number of children. The result is that the teacher has often to train and instruct several boys or girls, as the case may be, and to judge of the temperament, character, sensitiveness, aptitude and other char-

acteristics of each one of them. The task is far from easy and often is an ungrateful work. Once the parents place their child in the school it would be well for them to remember that the least interference with the methods and programme of the teacher the better for the pupil and the better for all concerned.

Children will find it difficult to submit to the restraints of school regulations; often they will fret under the work that they are expected to perform; at times it will be necessary for the teacher to correct, to restrain or to admonish the pupils. Too often the young persons make complaints to their parents and the parents, in turn, take upon themselves to annoy the teacher by reprimands, harsh words and unjust criticisms. This course is the most unfair and ungenerous that could be adopted. There may be exceptional cases in which teachers are over-zealous, and perhaps do not take into consideration all the peculiarities of the children; but as a rule it is the child that is in the wrong. If parents feel that they can train and educate their children better than the teacher, then they have no necessity of sending their children to the school. But unless they impress, by their words and actions, upon the young pupils that they must look upon the teacher as the representative of the father and mother, they cannot expect to reap any benefit from the school work. Moreover, such parents only render it impossible for the teacher to properly perform his duties. They make a difficult path still more difficult, instead of helping they merely obstruct the work.

Knowing from experience how much the educator of the young has got to contend with, we deemed it advisable to express these few ideas. Let the parents do all in their power to help the teacher and the result will be of untold benefit to the pupils. There is also that spirit of unjust criticism which is so injurious. Generally those fault-finding parents are the people who know the least about a teacher's duties or a pupil's requirements. Untrained and uneducated—we don't say uninstructed—themselves, they judge the working of the school by their own standard and they always are in the wrong. Would such people undertake to dictate to a lawyer, who has charge of their case, the mode of procedure before the courts? Would they begin to criticize the medical adviser's prescriptions or treatment? Not at all. They employed the lawyer or doctor because they acknowledged the professional man's superior knowledge and experience in a particular branch or science. Apply this rule to the school, to the teacher of your children, and you will, in nine cases out of ten, be doing a service to both the educational establishment and to the pupils.

THE IDEA OF SACRIFICE.

Not long ago, in conversation with some non-Catholic friends, the question of cloistered monks and nuns was brought up. One person, a lady, remarked that she had visited several convents of cloistered nuns and was surprised to find the inmates nearly all healthy, pleasant and happy. She could not understand how women could pass their lives inside four walls and seem never to desire a return to the great world outside. She said that it was beyond her comprehension that these nuns should feel always contented, and she would like to have an explanation of the mystery.

It would please us very much to satisfy that lady's curiosity, but it is almost impossible. She, like thousands of others, looks at monastic life through the glass

of experience. She is of the world, was brought up and educated in it; she knows nothing of contemplative life; perhaps she has never even meditated upon a religious subject for a single hour. She knows that her life craves for a something that is always absent; there is a void there that cannot be filled. She feels the necessity of change, of travel, of amusement, of society and of the great world in general; and yet no change, no pleasures, no social distractions can give that contentment for which our human nature craves. The cloistered religious, who has followed her vocation, enjoys that ever sought-for peace which the world cannot afford; possessing it, she is happy, and she would not barter it for all the pleasures or changes that even the most refined social elements could present. In this may be found one reason for that happy contentment that is the share of the one who has abandoned the world forever.

But there is another thing that the person of the world—especially if non-Catholic—does not and cannot understand; and yet it is the key to this great secret of perfect satisfaction in the cloister. It is the *idea of sacrifice*. It is not after one or more years of monastic life that we might expect to find the religious growing anxious for the outer world; the moment after her perpetual vows are spoken, she is voluntarily and for all time cut off from external life—not only actually but in desires and hopes. The world may have had for her its allurements, its attractions and its ambitions; it was not without a struggle that she left them all behind. But that struggle took place in the days of her novitiate. All the battle was fought in that period from her first desire for a religious life until the pronouncement of her vows. It was then that she weighed everything—the past, the present and the future; it was then that, in the presence of God, she placed the world in one plate of the balance, and the religious life in the other, and allowed her internal monitor to decide her future. She was aware of the great and mighty sacrifice that she had to make. The decision came, after due deliberation and constant prayer; God's grace descended into her soul; she was fortified for the heroic step. Once that sacrifice made, all regrets, all hankerings after the world, all desires for life outside the monastic circle vanished—and vanished forever. Out of the burning crucible of that wonderful sacrifice her heart came forth purified of earthly dross, and the only liberty she thenceforth anticipated was that of eternal life beyond the walls of the monastery, beyond the barrier of the grave, beyond the confines of Time.

It was our intention to refer this week to an admirable publication, The Rainbow, that comes from the Loretto Convent, Niagara Falls. The title is a fitting one. It spans, with its prismatic literary beauties, a grand space in Catholic literature, and it recalls the countless rainbows that nature has flung across the turbulent and majestic chasm over which stands the Convent of Loretto. In a future number we will make our readers acquainted with this charming and ably edited Catholic periodical.

The report of the speech of the Hon. Solicitor-General Curran, delivered at Kirkfield, Ontario, for the benefit of Rev. Father Sweeney's Church, is well worthy of perusal. His stinging rebuke of the utterances of Rev. Mr. Madill, President of the P.P.A., agent Sir John Thompson as a Catholic Premier, have been widely reproduced in the Canadian press, and deservedly so. We are indebted to the Canadian Post, of Lindsay, for the report of the proceedings.