

REV. JOHN McNEIL.

The Toronto Globe hails the advent to Canada of Rev. John McNeil as though no such preacher had ever before existed. He was a railway employee in Scotland, who, after his conversion, felt that preaching the gospel "was a greater vocation and more fruitful for God than despatching trains." The Globe does not hint that Mr. McNeil considered preaching a more lucrative occupation than rail-roading; nor does he assign any reason for the preacher's abandonment of the flock he had charge of in West London, England, before setting out to make a name and reputation for himself in the Queen City of the West, where Sam Small can draw thousands to listen to scriptural slang, and which city by some enthusiasts is styled the "Vestibule of Heaven." It appears that Rev. John McNeil undertook to run two churches in London, and that the church which gave him the biggest salary insisted on his confining his work and limiting his apostolic zeal to the congregation of Presbyterians that paid him most and that he first bargained to cater for at morning and evening services. He did not willingly put up with the idea of being limited either in zeal or in salary; so a misunderstanding occurred. Offers were made him for the transferring of his allegiance and pulpit ministrations to the Kirk in Montreal, which he did not absolutely refuse, and of which the acceptance will depend entirely on the number of thousands the Church in Montreal feels able and willing to offer him for his services.

Rev. John McNeil is described as of medium height, like St. Paul, "broad-shouldered and athletic." Just the man to

Prove his faith orthodox. "Apostolic blood and knocks" "with shaggy hair and beard of brown," says the Globe, "with deep, wide-set dark eyes and a forehead that ends abruptly in two knots just over the eyebrows."

This description would indicate that, like Joe Hess, Mr. McNeil had some experience in the prize-ring. "With ruddy flush of health on his face and a somewhat pawky expression in his countenance," continues the Globe, "he might well pass for a moorland farmer from the covenanting west. His broad chest, with the ringing R sound, strengthens the impression and gives force to his words." The reporter continues:

"Six thousand people went last Sunday morning to hear this man preach in the Mutual street rink. The six thousand were composed of rich and poor, of men and women of every age, of governors and governed, with all their eyes turned on one man, still young, but five years in the ministry; but who in that time, without seeking it, without even knowing it, has become one of the greatest preachers of the Anglo-Saxon world."

The Globe's eulogies will go a long way towards securing a twenty-five thousand dollar bid for the services of so rare a prodigy in pulpit oratory and power. A few specimens of the man's style and mannerism will scarcely convince outsiders of his excellence as an orator or his prudence as a spiritual guide and exhorter. For instance, he says:

"When God hears there are only two things that can be done: to forgive or to keep it up against you. If you are not forgiven it is because you haven't been heard."

The gospel does not mention an instance of any sinner being rejected who prayed, or of our merciful Redeemer keeping it up against any one. All who came to Him went away rejoicing that their petition was heard, that their sins were pardoned, that their faith made them whole, that they were restored to health and cleansed from their iniquity.

"I am not an old man," said Mr. McNeil, "but I have lived to see the bravest troops fleeing before naked savages, because they had no right to be there. . . . Think of it; think of the army department of a nation on its knees, of the Commander-in-Chief on his knees saying: 'that last campaign, O God, was a crime.' I never heard of it, but it ought to be done, and done kind of often."

"Kind of often" is not a phrase usually employed by the greatest preachers of the Anglo-Saxon world.

The following passage does not exempt Mr. McNeil as a prudential or safe guide to other men:

"And the priest could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. Mathew Henry, I think, says that this is a prophecy of the New Testament dispensation. The priests could not enter, because, like Othello, their occupation was gone. Oh what a pleasure it must have been to get rid of the priests! What a weary crowd

they were! The priest is beginning in again with Ritualistic and sacerdotal functions, coming between God and man. Deal kindly but firmly with him, Oh my brothers. Tell him what o'clock it is since he, poor Rip Van Winkle, fell asleep. Oh hunt them out. Hunt out the priests who would enter into the New Testament temple that's filled with the glory of God! Hunt them out."

This was spoken in thundering tones and with flashing eyes, and the depth of the speaker's convictions against Ritualism was shown in the prayer that followed, in which the suppliant said that the people had come to God with no gorgeous ritual, with no ringing bells, no swaying censers.

An address of this savage nature exhibits the Scotch preacher as a veritable Rip Van Winkle, who fancies that he is living in the days of John Knox and Theodore Beza, and not in the enlightened toleration of the nineteenth century. The Iconoclasts of the early Reformation made war upon Ritualism and encouraged by word and example the demolition of churches and altars, the pillage of God's temple and the smashing to pieces of crucifixes and the images of Christ and His saints. John Knox preached in a style very similar to that of Rev. John McNeil (the greatest preacher of the Anglo-Saxon world). After his sermon in Perth (in 1559) the people were so inflamed against the Ritualists that they rushed into the Catholic cathedral and tore all the pictures from the walls, which they trampled under foot. They broke into atoms statues and images, the noblest treasures of mediæval art; and demolished the altar, with all its sacred appurtenances, chalices, vestments, etc., which they tore in pieces and carried the fragments of them, howling like vandals, through the streets. Nor did they stop until they had sacked and laid in ruins the two grand colleges conducted by the Dominicans and Franciscans; even the Carthusian monastery, that fed hundreds of poor people every day, was attacked by the mob and utterly and forever destroyed. John Knox preached in the cathedral of St. Andrews with such fury and shouts of "hunt them, hunt out the priests," that even the magistrates united with the inhabitants in desolating the churches and monasteries. The horrors at Perth were followed by the sacrilegious profanation of churches and altars in Stirling, Lindores, Cupar, St. Andrews and other places. It is stated in the chronicles of the times that in less than one year three hundred Catholic churches were razed to the ground—and all their magnificent properties, bells, organs, sacred vestments, statues and works of art—utterly ruined and effaced.

We are of opinion that the public sentiment of Canada will compel Rev. John McNeil to alter his methods, and stop his savage, though futile, roar of "Hunt them out, hunt out the priests."

His style of preaching may suit the hoodlums of Toronto and tickle the ears of Dr. Wild's and Dr. Johnston's followers for a change, but he must change his tune in Montreal or the people will have none of him.

BISHOP DOWLING'S VISIT TO MT. FOREST.
Last Sunday was a day of memorable joy to the Catholics of this town, commemorating as it did the pastoral visit of Right Rev. Dr. Dowling, Bishop of Hamilton, and the consecration of the altar of St. Mary's Church, of which Father Cassin is the esteemed pastor, by His Lordship, together with an able and brilliant lecture, which the zealous and eloquent Bishop delivered in the evening. The Bishop was assisted in the consecration of the altar by Fathers Hinchey and Cassin as deacon and sub-deacon, and Father Kloepper, of Berlin College, as master of ceremonies. In the sanctuary was also Father Owens, of Arton. High Mass was sung at half past ten, Father Hinchey being celebrant. In the evening there was a large attendance—many of those present being from the various churches in town—to hear Bishop Dowling deliver his lecture on "Popular Objections to Catholic Doctrine." It is worthy of note that Mt. Forest is the first place in which Bishop Dowling has lectured since his consecration, and the pastor and congregation of St. Mary's feel very grateful to His Lordship for this kindly mark of his esteem and episcopal favor. It is needless to say that Dr. Dowling's lecture was an exceedingly able effort, full of close reasoning, admirably delivered, and entirely devoid of any references which might wound the most tender sensibilities of those not of the Catholic fold. No synopsis could do justice to the Bishop's lecture, nor could the most extended criticism convey to the reader the earnestness, logical potency and elegance of diction and delivery which characterized the discourse of Dr. Dowling, whose scholarly attainments are equalled by his zeal for the spread of that faith which he is so able a light and defender. The musical services were of an exceptionally high order of merit. The choir, under the able leadership of Miss K. C. Strong, was strengthened by some of the best singers from the various church choirs in town. At the morning service Peter's Mass in D was sung, while at Vespers service Lambillo's "Laudate Pater Dominum" and "Tantum Ergo" were rendered with great power and expression. The solos were rendered by Mrs. Tanner, who sang with great acceptability, and Mrs. Murphy and Miss Julia Malone, both of whom sustained the excellent reputation for their singing. The choir was much aided by Dr. Thos. O'Hagan, editor of the Duluth Tribune, who is at present spending his holidays with friends in Ontario.

ARCHDIOCESE OF KINGSTON.

His Grace the Archbishop at Spencer-ville.

On Tuesday, the 8th of September, His Grace the Archbishop of Kingston made his official visitation of the parish of Spencer-ville. He was received at the Canadian Pacific station at Spencer-ville by the pastor, Rev. Father Walsh, and a large number of the Catholics of the district, and was driven thence to the handsome church of Saint Lawrence O'Toole, where the customary prayers prescribed in the ritual for episcopal visitation were publicly and solemnly recited. His Grace then exercised and announced the order of exercises for the next day. According to a promise made by the Archbishop a few years ago the sacrament of confirmation was to be conferred in the outside mission of Throopdown on this occasion. In fulfillment of his promise His Grace left Spencer-ville at 9 o'clock on Wednesday morning.

A procession of one hundred and thirty-seven carriages formed the escort to the distinguished prelate and accompanied him the entire distance of nine miles. After a rigid examination of the one hundred and twenty-three candidates presented to him, His Grace required them to take the temperance pledge until they should have completed the twenty-first year of their age. The children promised also that they would attend catechetical instructions for another year. Confirmation was then administered by His Grace, assisted by the Rev. Father Masterson, of Prescott; Rev. Father Kelly, of Kingston; Rev. Thomas P. O'Connor, of Stanleyville; and Rev. Father Walsh.

The Archbishop, replying to an address which was presented to him, spoke eloquently and forcibly of the beautiful example given to children in the humility and filial obedience of the Child Jesus, and the necessity of their following it as long as their parents lived. He showed that the education of a child began at the mother's knee, and that salutary home influences governed its entire future career in life. Christian schools were necessary to complete and perfect the home training. He then spoke at great length on the baneful results and irreparable injuries done to innocent children in schools where the holy name of God was never mentioned with reverence. His Church and His revealed truth are treated with contempt, and the names of His saints are too frequently reviled. At the conclusion of his grand instruction he commanded the Catholics in the immediate vicinity of Throopdown church to establish a Separate school at as early a date as possible. They in turn promised a faithful compliance with His Grace's orders. Steps will be taken at once to erect a suitable building for the purpose.

His Grace left Spencer-ville on Thursday for Kingston.

In Wolfe Island.

On Friday afternoon the Archbishop of Kingston proceeded to Wolfe Island for visitation, accompanied by his Secretary, Rev. Thomas Kelly, and Rev. Thomas Murray. On arrival of the steamer, he was received by Father Spratt, pastor of the island, Rev. Charles McWilliams of Loboro, Rev. Michael Spratt, of Kitley, and Very Rev. Vicar-General Gauthier, pastor of Brockville, and a large number of the laity, with the candidates for confirmation. A procession being formed, they moved to the church, where the prescribed ceremonies were observed; after which His Grace arranged the order of proceedings for the next two days, and dismissed the congregation with his blessing. On Saturday he spent the forenoon in examining and carefully instructing the children in the forms of daily prayer appointed by him for commitment to memory by the youth of every parish, and in the catechism of Christian doctrine. At the conclusion he expressed himself highly delighted with the remarkable excellence of the children's answering, which gave evidence of the care bestowed on them by the pastor and their parents and by the teachers in the three Separate schools of the island. Here, as in every other mission, His Grace extracted from the children a two-fold pledge, viz., to attend the class of catechism every Sunday for at least one year after confirmation, and to abstain from tasting alcoholic drink of any kind till after the completion of their twenty-first year of age. Next day (Sunday) he presided at High Mass and confirmed the children, numbering exactly one hundred. An affectionate and heartily loyal address of welcome was then presented to the Archbishop by the congregation, in the course of which they proclaimed their admiration and grateful feeling towards him for the eminent services he had rendered to religion in Ontario by his powerful and persistent defence of the educational rights of Catholic parents and of Holy Church, the loving mother of both children and parents, to have and to hold their Separate schools for the training of youth morally and religiously, as well as mentally and secularly. This passage in the address supplied a text to His Grace for a long and lucid exposition of the true principles and methods of youthful training, by which the child is fully formed and all its faculties developed in the right direction for attainment of the end of human existence and the safe passage through this vale of tears to the home of everlasting bliss in the kingdom of the heavenly Father. Another passage in the address assured the Archbishop that the congregation had cheerfully complied with the suggestion heretofore given by him, to prepare for the enlargement and ecclesiastical adornment of their church. A fund almost

equal to the proposed cost of the work is already on hand.

The Archbishop was much pleased at this, and in token of his satisfaction, handed the treasurer \$100, as his offering towards the good work.

In fine, the Archbishop thanked the people of both congregations, Spencer-ville and Throopdown, for having effectually and in substantial and elegant form carried out his wishes by the erection of the priest's residence beside the handsome new church in Spencer-ville. Less than three years have elapsed since this mission was formed, and already it is fully equipped, and may be regarded as one of the first class missions of the Archdiocese.

The address of welcome to His Grace was signed by Messrs. D. McNeil (Reeve), John Baker, Thomas Brickland, Thos. Hogan, Patrick O'Reilly, Terence Murphy, Thomas Dawson, James McAllister, Alexander, Docteur, Archibald Staley, George Morgan and D. J. Macdonald.

Fortieth Anniversary of the Archbishop's Priesthood.

The following was read from the pulpit of St. Mary's Cathedral, Kingston, at the several Masses last Sunday, the Archbishop presiding at the High Mass in *cappi magna*:

"The Archbishop asks the congregation to offer a Pater and Ave to Almighty God through the Blessed Virgin Mary to-day for his special intentions. It is the anniversary day of his baptism and also of his ordination to the priesthood forty years ago. He feels how much he is indebted to God's goodness for the special helps of light and strength that have been accorded to him by divine bounty for the fulfilment of his baptismal and priestly vows; and for these he desires to give God thanks, and to unite his people with himself in humble thanksgiving. He also feels how much he is indebted to God's justice for his 'sins, offences and negligences' throughout all those years of his personal and priestly life; and for these he begs of you to join with him in beseeching God's pardon. He feels, moreover, that his mission as a priest, and especially his mission to you and the people of this Archdiocese generally, as chief pastor of this flock, has not yet been fully accomplished. Whatsoever may have been done in the past eleven years in the city and diocese of Kingston, and whatever part God may be pleased to credit him with having had in the execution of religious works, he feels and is assured that the whole purpose of his appointed mission to the people of Kingston city and diocese has not yet been fully accomplished; and, therefore, he requests you to unite with him in this day's Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in humbly begging of God to direct him by the light of His Spirit and to strengthen him for the opportunity beginning and successful direction of the works preordained for him to do in the days that remain of his life amongst you."

The entire congregation knelt and recited the prayers in loud and fervent tones. The choir sang the "Vivat." All were deeply moved.

DIOCESE OF LONDON.

Goderich Signal, Sept. 18.

Sunday last was a red-letter day in the life of a large number of the young people connected with St. Peter's Church, Goderich. On that day forty-three candidates presented themselves for confirmation, forty-two of whom were juveniles. The services in connection began at 9.30 a.m., when the children were examined by the Bishop in accordance with the tenets of the Church. All of the candidates were found duly qualified and were accepted primarily. High Mass was celebrated at 10 a.m., the Ven. Dean Murphy, of Irishworth, singing the service. Miss MacCormac presided at the organ most efficiently, and excellent solos were rendered by Miss Nellie MacCormac and Thos. Griffin. Immediately after the celebration of High Mass the sacrament of confirmation was administered, and a pledge of sobriety was obtained from every lad amongst the applicants, which was to hold good until the age of twenty-one years was reached.

Bishop O'Connor is a fine-looking specimen of an Irishman, large and genial in appearance, with a happy manner and pleasant voice, and his address to the candidates was of a sound, practical, common-sense order, well calculated to leave a lasting impression on the minds of his hearers. Briefly epitomized his address was as follows:

THE EXHORTATION.

He warned all of them against keeping bad company, for bad company invariably was the ruin of all previous good character and praiseworthy intentions. At first they would blush and feel embarrassed in bad company, but contact with the evil eventually wore that feeling off and callousness ensued. There was not one who did not recollect with regret the first person who had led them astray. His Lordship dwelt upon the necessity for avoiding the very appearance of evil so far as bad company was concerned.

Another evil, nay, one of the greatest, was intemperance, and a solemn warning was entered against it by the Bishop. No vice was working greater harm than that of intemperance. In the world at large its baneful influence was felt, and he regretted to know that even amongst his own people it had got a foothold, with terrible results in some cases. For that reason it was that at confirmation it was now the invariable custom to pledge the male candidates to abstain until they had passed their twenty-first year in the hope that habits of sobriety would be so formed by that time that strength to resist the temptation would prevail.

Turning to the girls, His Lordship said he did not think it was necessary to pledge them to total abstinence, as from their appearance he did not think they would ever be subject to so foul a vice; but while saying this to them he would also say that even amongst women drunkenness was too prevalent, for even if one woman fell by the evil that was too many. No matter how degrading drunkenness was in a man, it was a thousand times worse in a woman. Another evil that it was well to warn them against was the reading of bad books. An infallible rule in this regard was that when a book was found that made the reader blush, or made her feel that she would not like to have her parents know that it had been perused, it was time to throw it away at once. It was not a fit book to be read.

A general admonition was given to all to remain at home as long as possible, and not to be tempted to go to the cities. God alone knew of the many young people who had gone to ruin by leaving the old hearthstone to follow the bent of city life. In conclusion he advised parents to keep their children around them as much as possible. The presence of parents worked a restraining and healthy influence upon the children and kept them from falling into evil habits.

At the conclusion of the confirmation service a delegation from the congregation consisting of Judge Doyle, B. MacCormac, Jos. Kidd, E. Campion, J. A. McIntosh, T. Carroll and James Luby went forward and presented the following address to the Bishop which was read by Judge Doyle:

To the Right Rev. Denis O'Connor, C. S. B., D. D., Bishop of London:

MY LORD—It affords us a very great deal of pleasure to extend to you a most cordial and happy welcome. Though this is your first official visit to our parish we beg to assure Your Lordship that you do not come a stranger amongst us; your reputation for zeal and energy in the discharge of your high, sacred and onerous duties has preceded you and has already won our warmest affections and highest admiration.

Our parish, though now comparatively weak and unimportant in the midst of so many large and flourishing parishes of your extensive diocese, has a venture to think, entitled to a place in the history of the Church in this Province.

This was the parent trunk that supplied spiritual nutriment to the neighboring branches for many years throughout the adjoining counties North, South and East of here for many miles around; and that, too, at a time when it was a most serious undertaking to travel, owing to the lack of roads and means of conveyance and to the absence of accommodation by the railways.

It is fresh in the memory of many of us when Stratford was still a station attached to Goderich and our pastor had to minister to the spiritual wants of its people as well as to those of all intermediate points. Though we cannot boast of material wealth we assure Your Lordship that we feel spiritually rich, indeed. We have a most devoted, a kind and zealous pastor who spares no effort for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his flock. We have a prosperous Separate school most ably and successfully managed by the good Sisters of St. Joseph. We possess a branch of the O. M. B. A., and the League of the Sacred Heart is flourishing in our midst as is also the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin; and Your Lordship's appointment to the chief pastorate of the diocese is our crowning happiness.

We are, therefore, as we feel we ought to be, a content and a happy people. And, while thanking Almighty God for His abundant mercies we unite in earnest prayer that He may long be pleased to spare Your Lordship's valuable life, and continue to pour out His blessings upon us.

Signed on behalf of the congregation by B. L. Doyle, J. P. Luby, E. Campion, Jas. McIntosh, P. O'Brien, B. MacCormac, Thomas McBride, Xavier Baechler, M. V. Chilton, Thomas Carroll.

THE REPLY.

His Lordship thanked the congregation for the complimentary tone of the address, and said although this was his first official visit to Goderich, the people were not strangers, for he had always heard a good report from the parish. He was glad to see that credit was given to those who had gone before, for it was a good sign to see people who were able to look back to good work done. It was another good sign to see that the present congregation claimed no credit for what they had done themselves, for self-praise was not at all times a desirable commendation.

Goderich had always held a good position in the diocese, and though it might not be materially wealthy he was aware of the fact that the parish was an important one and always held a prominent place. He was glad to see the people pleased with their pastor, and giving him full credit for faithful ministrations. Whilst he performed not to refer to Rev. Father West in his presence, he (the Bishop) was fully aware of the good work he was doing in the parish, and knew that God would bless him for the

work's sake. The various beneficiary and religious societies then came in for a need of praise from the Bishop, and he particularly expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which the Separate school was prized by the people, paying an especial tribute to the good work that was being done by the Sisters of St. Joseph throughout this district. In conclusion he said that, though he did not desire to find fault, he regretted to be obliged to say that the church was not what he would like to see, and certainly was not worthy of Almighty God, considering the size of the parish and the ability of the congregation. He did not wish it to be understood that he desired the people to incur more debt until they had got rid of their present incumbrances, but an effort should be made to get over the existing indebtedness as soon as possible, and then a further effort ought to be made either to improve the present church or put up a new one. In view of the fact of uniform good crops in the section this year, liberal offerings should be made to wipe off the present debt. They would never be the poorer for returning liberally to the Giver of all good.

The ceremony lasted about three hours.

A roary and benediction service was held at 4 p.m., after which a number of prominent members of the congregation called informally upon His Lordship, who was the guest of Rev. Father West.

At 4.30 p.m. Bishop O'Connor, accompanied by Ven. Dean Murphy and Rev. Father West, set out for Ashfield parish, where a confirmation service was held on Monday. The party returned from Ashfield Monday afternoon and took the 4 o'clock train for Seaford to hold similar services on Tuesday.

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