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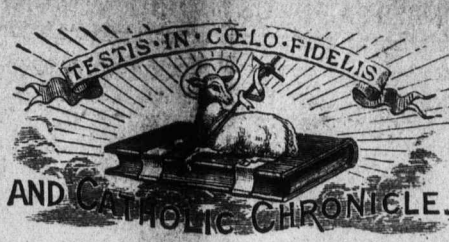
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The True Witness



Vol. LVI., No. 49

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1907

PRICE FIVE CENTS

Gardien de la Salle
de Lecture
Feb 19 1906
Assemblée Legislative

Church
as a
and
Mont-
real bore
to the late Rev. Father
Gregory O'Bryan, S.J. From every
part of the city people had flock-
ed to the Gesu. Almost all the priests,
both pastors and curates, of the Eng-
lish-speaking parishes of Montreal,
representatives of all the religious
orders, filled the sanctuary; while
nuns of various congregations were
seen throughout the church. The
occasion was felt to be a solemn
one. By the death of Father O'Bryan
the clergy of Canada have lost one
of their most conspicuous figures,
the Jesuit order in this country prob-
ably their best known member; the
faithful in general a missionary whose
powerful and manly eloquence has
been heard in almost every part of
Canada; the Catholics of Montreal,
and especially the Irish Catholics, a
priest whom they loved and of
whom they were justly proud.

Like at least two others of his
fellow Jesuits, Father Kenny and
Father Connolly, Father Gregory
O'Bryan was a native of Halifax, N.
S. He was born there on April
28th, 1858, being thus but scarcely
over 49 years of age when he died.
He studied for a time at the Grand
Seminary in Montreal, but felt him-
self called to the religious life and
in August, 1879, he entered the
Jesuit novitiate at Sault au Recollet.
In the novitiate with him at this
time were five of the men who
at some time or other were associ-
ated with him in the work at Loyola
College: Frs. Kavanaugh, Devine,
Devlin, Fox and Cotter. After his
two years' novitiate and a further
year spent in literary studies, Fr.
O'Bryan was sent to St. Mary's
College on Bleury street. A year
later we find him in England at
Stonyhurst for his philosophical
studies. In 1885 his superiors sent
him to St. Boniface, Man., to be
one of the preachers in opening this
Jesuit College. He began his theo-
logical studies in Montreal, but
was sent to complete them in Ire-
land at Milltown Park, Dublin, where
he was ordained priest.

From the first, his superiors had
remarked in him a wonderful gift
of preaching, and after his ordina-
tion gave him time to prepare him-
self for this ministry by studying the
Fathers of the Church and by giving
missions under the direction of ex-
perienced Irish missionary Fathers.
From Ireland he went to Rochampton,
London, England, for his ter-
tianship, a year devoted to prayer
and the study of asceticism and of
the Institute of the Society of Jesus.
The Lenten season of 1892 brought
him back finally to Canada and in-
augurated that missionary career
which, though short, was of unpar-
alleled activity. Up and down Can-
ada he travelled, and even into
Newfoundland and the United States,
seemingly incapable of fatigue. He
was heard to say recently to one
that showed surprise at his acquaint-
ance with a certain priest, that he
knew every English-speaking priest
in Ontario—he might almost have
said in Canada. There are few Cath-
olic centres of any importance in
which Father O'Bryan has not
preached; few religious communities
to whom he has not given retreats.
He many times gave diocesan re-
treats. He was the counsellor of
priests and people alike, and the
confidant of bishops. His thorough
acquaintance with the needs of every
parish in a diocese made bishops
seek his advice, while the work of
conversion wrought in parishes
caused pastors to seek eagerly for
his ministrations.

Father O'Bryan was a most dis-
tinguished preacher. Apart from
the silent preaching of an unblem-
ished life and the prayerfulness that
brings down grace, Father O'Bryan
had the natural gifts that make the
great orator and recall the traits of
Daniel O'Connell.

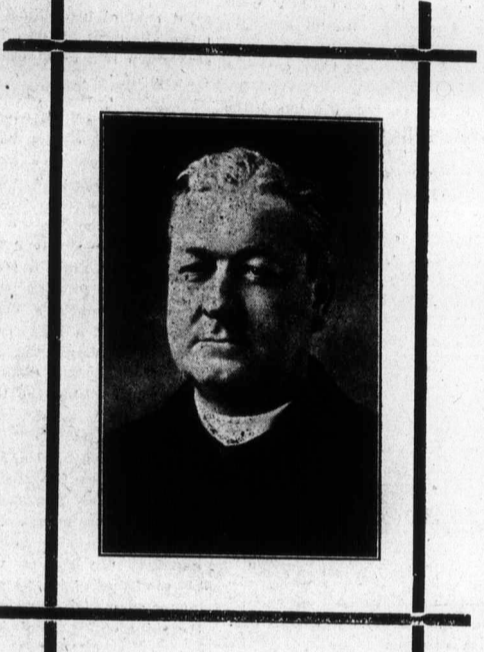
A tall, strikingly handsome man, of
powerful physique, with massive
head, strong yet mobile features, he
seemed ever to dominate his hearers.
His voice, of singular strength and
richness, heard in the remotest cor-
ner of the largest church, responsive
to the changing passions, would cap-
tivate or more often would the au-
dience. A memory of marvellous ten-
acity and readiness served him ad-
mirably. Indeed he could not imag-
ine how anyone could be at a loss

Death of Rev. Father Gregory O'Bryan, S. J.

One of Canada's Most Distinguished Scholars—Rector of Loyola College—Remarkable Pulpit Orator.

for a word; his difficulty lay in choosing amongst the many which came crowding to his mind.

The dominant note in Father O'Bryan's character as a missionary was his utter self-forgetfulness. A fellow-missioner relates to us how Father O'Bryan always insisted on



THE LATE REV. FATHER GREGORY O'BRYAN, S. J.
Photo by Gordon.

It was a school of patience, resignation and gentleness, in which the kindness and generosity of the rector shows more conspicuously than even in the missionary. A trial peculiar to himself was that of being frequently misunderstood by those who did not know him. He was

making his companion rest while he would rise in time to say the earliest Mass and to hear any stray confession, and this after having preached several times the day previous and having spent six and eight hours even till late at night in the confessional. Indeed it was surprising how little sleep he seemed to require.

But his health was being gradually worn out. Twelve years ago he fell ill in Halifax, and the physician then warned him that he had but ten more years to live unless he relaxed from this mode of life. Father O'Bryan was then but thirty-seven. At forty-seven he was condemned by frequent attacks of heart disease to give up forever the missionary's life.

In the meantime he did not spare himself. He would accept no holiday, refuse no mission; the good was waiting to be done, the grain was white for the harvest and he simply could not, even for a time, seek quiet and rest.

In 1896 a different field of work opened before him. A college for English-speaking boys was opened in Montreal, and to Father O'Bryan was entrusted the work of organization. The great missionary became an administrator, to break loose every now and then to preach a mission or give a diocesan retreat. In 1902, the Rev. A. E. Jones being named Rector of Loyola, Father O'Bryan was once more free to go on the missions, and he availed himself of his opportunities to the full.

Early in 1905 his friends noticed that the great missionary showed unmistakable signs of fatigue. His heart had weakened under the strain. In August, 1906, Father O'Bryan was once more Rector at Loyola, but this time chained to his post. This was the most trying period of his life. To a man of his boundless energy and activity, to remain quiet in his room or on the same plank not to go up stairs, not to walk fifty yards from the door, not to speak in public even to the boys more than a few words—under pain of risking an attack of heart disease, each one of which caused intense pain and any one of which might prove fatal—this was his purgatory. His ardent, impetuous nature, chafing at all obstacles, carrying all before it by main strength, had to adapt itself to the narrow bounds of college life, and to the detailed monotony of college routine.

thought by some to be unsympathetic, and even at times, by those who misinterpreted his jokes, somewhat sarcastic. On the contrary, he was one of the kindest of men. He never deliberately gave pain, and whenever made aware that someone had taken offense at some remark of his, he was never satisfied till he had made an ample apology.

At the general convention of the A.O.H. in August, 1906, Rev. Fr. O'Bryan was chosen Provincial Chaplain.

Though generally feeling well and outwardly the picture of robust health and colossal strength, yet death was ever near him. He lived in the thought of death. If ever he was tempted to forget it, a sharp attack would recall to him the fact that at any moment he might have to face his God. One of the worst of these attacks was at Father Doherty's funeral. He seems to have thought himself dying, but the attack passed off and Father O'Bryan, as if nothing had happened, took his place amongst the clergy who were reciting the office for the dead. The disease was slowly gaining on him. Absolute rest and absence of all worry might delay the end for years.

On Monday evening, June 3rd, the Loyola College Old Boys' Association, which Father O'Bryan had organized, held its second annual meeting. When the refreshments had been got through, and the speeches by 'old boys' and present students had been delivered, Father O'Bryan rose and gave a stirring address. He attributed the prosperity of the college to the good example set by the boys whom the college had trained. He held up before these young men already engaged in different professions, in business life, or in preparation at the universities, or still at college, the ideal of the Catholic gentleman, true to Holy Church in public, whether in social or political duties, as in private life. He spoke of the courage needed to hold principle above expediency, truth and justice above all personal interest. His words rang out with an earnestness that made a deep impression on all who heard him, though many persons also noticed the effort only too painfully evident towards the close. This was his last public utterance. It was to be his farewell message to the youths whose characters he had help-

ed to form, and he delivered it with all the energy of his ardent soul. But this speech fatigued him greatly. "I shall have to give up speaking altogether," he repeated sadly.

On Thursday, the day of his death, he set out for Sault-au-Recollet to attend the funeral of an old friend and fellow novice, Father Daniel Fr. Angus Campbell, S.J., come out from Scotland to give missions in Gaelic through Nova Scotia, arrived, and Father O'Bryan saw him off on the noon train for the east. In the afternoon he attempted to go down to the Place Viger Hotel to bid good-bye to another old friend, Mr. Thomas Kenny, ex-M.P. for Halifax, a sufferer from the same disease that was so soon to prove fatal to himself, and whom he had administered a few weeks ago. Father O'Bryan seemed in his usual health all evening, went to supper with the community, and to prayers in the chapel. A little later his great friend, Dr. McCarthy, came in to have a chat, and after examining him advised him to remain quiet, as he had over-exerted himself. Towards half-past ten Father Doyle, hearing him cough, got up and came as he had often done before to listen at his door whether all was well. He found him seated in an armchair in the middle of his room. A feeling of suffocation had come upon him, and he had got up out of bed. "I am not well at all," he replied to Father Doyle's query. "Then I shall send for the doctor." "No, do not disturb him. It is only a difficulty in breathing." But Father Doyle persisted and the doctor was summoned. A second doctor was called when the injections administered took no effect.

As soon as Father O'Bryan learnt that he was in danger, he asked for the Last Sacraments and made his last confession. Almost immediately afterwards he was seen to be sinking rapidly. The rest of the community were hastily aroused. Father O'Bryan was conscious almost to the last breath; calm and collected, though gasping for breath, he replied to the questions put to him; gasped out pious ejaculations, and quietly ceased to breathe while his brethren, kneeling around him, recited the prayers for the dying.

It was only during the seven o'clock Mass next morning that the boys were told of the death of their Rector, when they were asked to offer the indulgences of their communications or this feast of the Sacred Heart for the repose of his soul.

His body, clothed in purple vestments, remained exposed till Monday morning. An almost continual stream of visitors came to pray before the remains.

On Monday morning at eight o'clock the funeral procession started for the Gesu, the boys of Loyola College leading the way.

At the Gesu, the office for the dead was recited by the assembled clergy and the boys of St. Mary's College. Father Doyle said the Mass—a low Mass, in accordance with the custom of the Jesuit Order. As has been said, the church and sanctuary were filled. Several priests came from Ontario and more would have come had the notice of the funeral appeared in the Ontario papers.

After the service, the remains were conveyed to the Sault for interment. Several members of the local clergy, and Fathers Brady (Hamilton) and Corbett and McRae, Cornwall, and representatives from the different Jesuit houses, students of Loyola College; with the relatives of the deceased and a few intimate friends followed the bier. Rev. Father Bourque, Rector of the Novitiate, received the body, and a choir of novices sang the Benedictus, as the body was lowered in the grave.

Thus was simply laid in his last resting-place one who was much loved and will be long regretted. He died young, but he worked hard and accomplished much.

To the brother priests of Father O'Bryan the True Witness extends its sympathy in their loss of a true friend and adviser; to Loyola College, a rector of deep culture; to the Jesuit order, a godly priest and to the sorrowing relatives a brother whose distinguished manner, courtliness and kindness of heart had endeared him to countless numbers with whom he had come in contact. May he rest in peace.

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Resolution of Condolence.

The following resolutions were adopted at a meeting of Division No. 1, Ancient Order of Hibernians, held June 7, 1907:

Whereas, Deep consternation fills the hearts of the members of this Division on learning of the sudden death of their beloved chaplain, the Rev. Gregory O'Bryan, S.J.;

And whereas, Through the demise of our "Soggarth Aroon" the order in general, and Division No. 1 in particular has suffered an almost irreparable loss in the death of one who, by his sterling qualities, and zeal aided towards the elevation of our people to the higher standards of principle, religious zeal and nationality, and who by his kindly advice and encouragement endeavored himself to every member of our order;

Resolved, That a solemn Requiem Mass be offered up for the happy repose of our deceased friend and brother, and that our charter be draped in mourning for three months;

Resolved, That these resolutions be spread on the minutes of this meeting, and copies sent to the press for publication.

Sacred Heart Church Destroyed

Ottawa, June 10.—The Church of the Sacred Heart at the corner of Cumberland street and Laurier avenue east, was totally destroyed by a fire which broke out about 5.45 this evening, and the work of destruction was completed within an hour. It was a comparatively recent structure, and additions were even yet in course of construction.

The fire is believed to have originated at the front entrance of the church on Cumberland street, the unfinished portion. The flames were discovered by Rev. Father Duchaussois, of the Junioriate of the Sacred Heart, where the priests and instructors reside, across the street, and he rang in the alarm. Within ten minutes the fire brigade was on the scene, but though thirteen streams were soon playing on the fire, nothing could avert the destruction of the church, one of the finest in the city. Nothing now remains of the once handsome structure but the stone walls, and these at some parts are

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so damaged that they will have to be demolished.

The total loss is placed at \$150,000, with insurance of \$90,000, while on the church was a debt of over \$100,000.

Father Jeanotte is the priest of the parish. The loss is a heavy one to the congregation, but doubly so to the Oblate Order, which owned and erected it, and which had not yet recovered from the blow sustained in the loss of the Ottawa University, a few years ago.

The fire brigade did good work in confining the fire to the church, as the wind was very high and the embers were carried some distance. The house of Dr. Chabot, immediately east of the church, was in peril, but was saved by the exertions of the firemen.

The dome of the university took fire, but the flames were quickly extinguished by the use of the college hose by the students.

The Church of the Sacred Heart was the one Sir Wilfrid and Lady Laurier attended.

PERSONNAL.

Rev. Fathers McPhail and Holland are at Renfrew holding mission services. They go from there to Mount St. Patrick, Killaloe and Barry's Bay.