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VOL. XII., No. 5

Chronicles of An Old-Timer

The Memory of McGee Maintained—Irish Blood in Lower Canada—J. P. Downey, the "Young Irish Member" for Central Wellington—Officers of the "Crown" Bank of Canada—"Gerald de Courcy O'Grady" a Great Name—Death of Charles Edward Romaine, who was a Prominent Torontonian Fifty Years Ago and well-known by Old-Timers.

Chicago Dec. 30, 1904.

Dear Register:

I notice that the memory of McGee is not forgotten in Canada, and why should it, for is he not one of the fathers of confederation? Judge W. B. Wallace has been lecturing on him in Halifax and holding him up as an example of sterling patriotism. A short time since ex-Detective Cullen of Montreal gave the press his views of why he was assassinated and put the blame on the government informers instead of the Fenians, as heretofore. And my old friend Morgan, the veteran Canadian biographer of Ottawa, during the course of last year, made an appeal to the Canadian people to erect a monument to his memory. There are many old friends of McGee's yet to be found in this city, some of them Canadians and some of them people that never knew Canada, like the Hon. W. J. O'Hanlon, and the Hon. P. T. Barré, foremost leaders of Catholic and Irish opinion in Chicago. There is a perverted idea prevailing among many Irishmen in the United States that because McGee used his talents to persuade his countrymen against their hostile invasion of Canada from the United States he was not true to his antecedents as a lover of his native land. This is a very erroneous idea because Canada was not to blame for the wrongs inflicted on Ireland by England, and an armed invasion of Canada by Irishmen from the United States was not only tactically but morally wrong. I have in my own way endeavored to show such of my fellow countrymen as are misled by a wrong idea of the falsity of their view. And I know that some of the best Irishmen that ever lived, such as the late A. M. Sullivan, shared my views, because I had a long talk with him about McGee in the Dublin "Nation" office in the latter part of 1869, and no one mourned McGee's loss more than that gifted son of the Emerald Isle. Another thing. Although justly radically minded with regard to the government of Ireland by England, McGee was conservative when good and honest government prevailed. While he admired the constitution of the United States he did not like its practical politics, because there was so much corruption and demagogism in actual practice, and he considered, as I know personally, our methods somewhat degrading. McGee, as he once told me himself, made Edmund Burke his model, and he did not think there was any exalted statesmanship in Great Britain since that great man's day. When he went to Canada he gave his thoughts altogether to building up of a great, free commonwealth, and showed that he was an Irishman who possessed great constructive ability, like that other Canadian Celt, Sir John A. Macdonald.

Francis Foley Lemelux, the new mayor of Sudbury, Quebec, shows by his name that he is of mixed nationality—French-Canadian and Irish. It is not generally recognized that there is a considerable percentage of Irish blood intermingled with that of the principal stock in Lower Canada, enough, perhaps, to pervade one-fourth of the population. At the time of the conquest there were several regiments of Irish soldiers in the French army in Canada. Those were disbanded and scattered through the parishes. They were all unmarried men and soon found French wives. Another large infusion of Irish blood took place at the time of the immigrant fever in 1847, when so many children were left parentless at Gross Isle on account of the death of their fathers and mothers and were adopted into French-Canadian families. Many parents, too, recovered, but never

found their children again. Among those that I knew personally was the late Thomas Barry, for many years a practicing attorney at Toronto, who was separated in sickness from his wife and children, but never recovered one of them. "Here is the theme," said S. B. McCoy, to me once, when editor of the Toronto "Mirror," for the great Irish-Canadian novel, or poem, and I often wondered that Mrs. Sadler never took it up. We have had several Canadian public men made up of this composite, the present Solicitor-General for instance, being one. It is but little known that Louis Riel, the Fort Garry rebel leader of a third of a century ago, was of mixed Irish and French blood, his grandfather having been an Irishman, according to his own declaration to Patrick Ford, editor of the "Irish World" of New York. There is, therefore, a blood reason as well as a religious reason for the French Catholics and the Irish Catholics of Canada to pull together.

Some of your Toronto editors write of Mr. J. P. Downey as "the young Irishman who represents South Wellington." Mr. Downey should no more be spoken of as an Irishman than Mr. Ross as a Scotchman. He is "to the manor born," but at the same time you have no reason to disown him, because so far as I am able to learn, he is a credit to the race. I am interested in him personally, for several reasons. I knew his father in the forties and have never forgotten him. He was well acquainted with my people, first in Hamilton and afterwards in the county of Wellington. He was a school teacher by occupation and a bright, intelligent man, who always knew how to uphold his native land and explain her wrongs. He was a good neighbor and a good friend, and grew into the good graces of his neighbors whether Scotch, English, German or Irish. So, you see, the South Wellington legislator comes of good stock and will be no hindrance to the influence of his race. There is another reason why "Old Timer" has an interest in the Guelph editor. He saw the beginning of the influential daily journal he edits and publishes, the story of which runs this way: When the writer was a "printer's devil" in the early forties in what is now the "Ambitious City," one day the proprietor of the printing office was absent and the "devil" was in full charge. A tall, spare gentleman with straps to his trousers came and said he wanted the prospectus of a new newspaper for Guelph printed. Your correspondent set up, "worked off," and delivered the job, the customer calling for it the same day. It was the prospectus of the "Guelph Herald" and the late James Austin, the Toronto banker, was the customer. There have been a number of intermediate publishers of the paper between Mr. Austin and Mr. Downey, and sometimes its fortunes have been at a pretty low ebb, but I am glad to learn that in its present proprietor's hands its condition is prosperous.

James Austin, the founder of the Guelph "Herald," did not long continue to be its publisher, but went into the wholesale grocery business in Toronto with the Hon. J. Foy's father, Mr. Patrick Foy, and both became rich. In conversation with Mr. Austin one day, perhaps forty years ago, while talking about newspaper publishing, he revealed to me that he was a newspaper man himself, and then it came to me that he was the man for whom I had printed the prospectus. I have another old Toronto friend, perhaps the oldest newspaper man now in Ontario, who was at one time connected with the same paper, and that is Mr. A. H. St. Germain, who lives a short distance north of Toronto. Mr. St. Germain was born of French-Canadian parents at Kingston, and his first wife was an Irish woman. This gentleman has been fortunate in land speculations and is well off. Mr. Austin, I learn, before his death, became one of the masters of Toronto. Mr. Downey's brilliant career and wish him all kinds of success both as a journalist and a legislator and one who will uphold the credit of his race on the Conservative side of the Ontario house.

I have noticed an advertisement of the Crown Bank of Canada in Toronto to which interests me on account of some of the names that are given as officers of that institution. Edward Gurney of the Gurney Foundry Co., is given as president. I know Mr. Gurney slightly, and I know his father and uncle well. They were successful foundrymen that found their opportunity in Hamilton. I remember the day they began to "pound sand" in their red shirts in the old vacated Journal and Express office in John street, when their only employe was a young Irishman named John Kenny, who used to break the pig iron with a sledge hammer and do their chores. The Gurneys—Edward and T. C.—were brought from York State by one Alexander Carpenter of Hamilton, a tinsmith, who went into stove manufacture and hired them to run the foundry. The brothers were exceedingly thrifty and soon got the business of the little foundry themselves. In the sixties they made a great deal of money manufacturing and selling "The Little Wanzel" sewing machine, having agents all through Europe. I don't know who Charles McGee, the Vice-President, is, but there was a John McGee, a well-known iron founder, in Toronto, one of our own kind, in the fifties and sixties, who was a successful business man. He died and the foundry remained idle for a time until it was bought by the Gurneys, and Mr. Edward Gurney, then quite a young man, was sent down from Hamilton to take charge of the management. I am glad to notice that he had thriven although I hear that he does not deal exactly fair with his men. The name of John L. Coffee as one of the directors is a surprise to me. I was not aware that Lawrence Coffee left a son as one of his successors in business. I knew both father and

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mother before they were married and I am delighted at this surprise. Lawrence Coffee, this man's father, was one of our stand-bys in the good old days and one of the first produce dealers and wheat buyers of your city. Mr. Thomas Flynn, his partner, who is still "on deck," was one of my intimates, and I always admired his prudence and discretion if not his zeal.

But it is the name of Gerald de Courcy O'Grady, the General Manager, that takes my particular fancy. That's a great Irish name, a combination of Norman and Milesian, great in war, great in peace, and great in rank. I would like to know whence its owner comes to take the management of Canadian money! De Courcy was the name of an Irish Earl who once ruled Ulster and was permitted to wear his hat before the King! The true heirs of the earldom have for many years been planted in Maryland, while a spurious earl wears all the honors.

So "Charlie" Romaine is dead. He was a prominent character in Toronto fifty years ago. He was in the city council when "Old Timer" was city editor of the Daily Colonist, and latter had a good opportunity of knowing him pretty well. He was not one of the old aristocracy, but he belonged to their den when he opposed the Hon. George W. Allan for Legislative Councillor for the York district in 1858. The members of the Upper House were then one-half elected by the people instead of all being appointed by the administration as at the present time. Mr. Romaine had no strong political proclivities, but at that election he was taken up by the Reformers and received the support of the Hon. George Brown and the "Globe," while Mr. McKenna and his "Message" were against him. Mr. Romaine had made no political reputation, and was never known as a party man before the election. He was considered more as a "sport" than a party man. Mr. Romaine, I believe, had made a good deal of money as a Grand Trunk contractor and was then spending it. Hon. Geo. W. Allan had been mayor of the city a few years before and had made a reputation for himself as a public-spirited and faithful public servant as well as being a gentleman in behavior and feeling, and he deservedly won the election. But Mr. Romaine made the money fly. He erected shortly after this splendid block of buildings on King street west known as the Romaine buildings, which in architectural structure excelled anything in Toronto up to that date. My memory, too, goes back to the time when the Misses Romaine, his daughters, "cut a dash" on the King street promenade and were the envy of the aristocratic ladies of Toronto, both for personal charms and distinctive style. They were of the pale order of beauty and were greatly admired. I had no idea that Mr. C. E. Romaine lived so long a life and was so recently in the land of the living. Much less was I aware that he was of Italian blood and born in Lower Canada.

WILLIAM HALLEY.

Compliments for the "Old-Timer"

Dear Register,—Your paper is double value since "Old Timer" began to contribute. It does my heart good to read his chronicles, they are so full of love for Ireland and Catholicity. It is a pity there are not more like him. May the Lord spare him many happy years in the wish of a LOYAL IRISH WOMAN.

Election of Officers

The following officers were duly elected for Sacred Heart No. 201, for ensuing year: J. Lefebvre, Chief Ranger; Jas. E. Dopp, Vice-Chief Ranger; John J. Ryan, Treasurer; Wm. D. Vogel, Recording Secretary; J. E. O. Blaydon, Financial Secretary; Trustees, Martin J. Healy, Chas. C. Costance, John Dodds; Drs. Wallace and McMahon, Medical Examiners.

WM. D. VOGEL, Rec.-Sec.

Dec. 15th, 1903.

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Knights of St. John

And Their Annual At-Home

On Feb. 15th the Knights of St. John will hold their Annual At Home in Assembly Hall, Temple Building. This affair bids well to be the greatest social event among Catholic fraternal societies which will have been held in this city for a long time.

The affair is in the hands of a strong and efficient committee, who are sparing no efforts looking to the comfort and welfare of the guests of the evening.

This noble Order is indeed worthy of the consideration and encouragement of all honorable men and women, being the oldest Catholic fraternal organization, its name comes down to us covered with glorious deeds done for God, for Church, and suffering humanity.

The Knights of St. John must indeed read with a thrill of pride of the noble deeds done by the knights of old, who, while ever ready to draw the sword against oppression, and in defence of the weak and protection of innocence, were just as ready to bestow mercy and charity upon the sick and poor, and to alleviate the wants of suffering humanity.

That this same spirit is alive with them to-day is evident from the fact that they are banded together for the purpose of inculcating the noblest of Christian principles, and the practice of the highest civic virtues, and as stated by the Supreme President in a recent address to the Order, "It seeks to instruct men in charity, kindness of heart and the disposition to help those who need help. It protects the home; it likewise protects its members in their inability to pay dues when incapacitated by sickness or other misfortune. As an educator, it teaches morality and a higher type of citizenship. It is in this grand association that we receive some of the noblest impulses to virtuous actions and generous deeds that make us better men, better fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, and better citizens." Besides sick and death benefits, we believe they have one of the best insurance features among fraternal orders.

C.O.F. Condolence

At a regular meeting of Sacred Heart Court No. 201, Catholic Order of Foresters, the following resolution was unanimously passed:

That whereof it has pleased Almighty God to remove by death the beloved uncle of our esteemed Bro. Chas. McGillivray.

Resolved, that we extend to Bro. McGillivray and family our heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement.

Resolved that a copy of this resolution be inserted in the minutes of this meeting and also sent to Bro. McGillivray and to the Catholic press for publication.

William Kinsman

The death of William Kinsman, aged 74, a resident of Toronto for 54 years, who died on Saturday, removes an aged and respected member of the Catholic community. He was a successful business man. He was born in Cornwall, England, in 1830. He leaves a widow, two daughters—Mrs. John Bonner and Mrs. J. J. McConvey—and two sons—Joseph L. and William J., of Washington, D.C.—and a brother—Daniel Kinsman of this city. Deceased had only been ill one week.

Death of Hugh Finn

Hugh Finn, for 20 years a liquor merchant on Dundas street, died last Tuesday after a few weeks' illness, from pneumonia. Deceased was 44 years of age, and resided all his life in the West End. He leaves two small children, a sister and brother, Joseph Finn. He was well known in Muskoka, where he had a summer residence. The funeral took place Thursday morning at 8:45 to St. Mary's R. C. Church, thence to St. Michael's Cemetery.

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Death of Rev. William Bergin

With sincere regret The Register records the death of Rev. William Bergin, one of the well-known priests of the Archdiocese of Toronto. A little more than a week before the sad intelligence was received that he had succumbed to an attack of pneumonia we had a visit from him and congratulated him upon the improvement then noticeable in his health, which had not been satisfactory for some years and had necessitated a rest from the strain of parochial cares and labors. The severe weather of January and the danger always attendant upon the duties of a priest in a scattered parish, no doubt exposed the deceased pastor of Dixie to the attack which terminated his life in the exercise of his ministry. By a wide circle of friends and especially by those of his brother priests, who had known him for nearly a quarter of a century, his death will be mourned as a loss. As a friend he had a warm, generous heart and as a minister of the Church his memory will be respected in many parts of the archdiocese where he labored earnestly and fruitfully.

Rev. William Bergin was born in the County of Tipperary, Ireland, where his family has remained. His preparatory education was received in his native county and his ecclesiastical education was taken in the Grand Seminary, Montreal. He was a notable student of Church history and canon law and through his life had a strong inclination to literature. Several series of historical papers from his pen appeared in The Register from time to time, but lately he had ceased to write.

The deceased priest was ordained in London, Ontario, by the late Archbishop (then Bishop) Walsh, for the Archdiocese of Toronto, the Archbishop of Toronto being absent at the time—July 9, 1870—in Rome. Much of his priestly life was spent in Toronto; he had been parish priest of St. Joseph's, Leslieville, and curate of St. Mary's, Bathurst street, and was also located at St. Michael's Cathedral for a time, where he served as Chancellor of the Diocese. He was also secretary-treasurer of the Separate School Board. In the Cathedral he was succeeded by Rev. Father Rohleder. Among the out-of-town posts he held was that of Dean of Barrie, and parish priest at Newmarket. When St. Cecilia's Church was opened at Toronto Junction about ten years ago, he took charge of the parish, but his health gave way, and he acted for an interval as chaplain of the House of Providence. A year or two ago he became assistant priest at St. James, South Adala, and was later appointed parish priest of Dixie. Though he had partly regained his health, he had been a delicate man for years.—R.I.P.

Death of Bishop Gravel

The Church in the Province of Quebec has lost a champion in the person of Bishop Gravel of Nicolet.

The Right Reverend Elphege Gravel, late Bishop of Nicolet, was born at St. Antoine, River Champlain, October 12, 1828. He was educated at the colleges of St. Hyacinthe and Montreal and at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass. He studied theology at the Grand Seminary, Montreal, and after being a professor for two years at the College of Ste. Marie du Monnoir went through the military school and also studied law at Laval University. After finishing this course of study he again returned to Ste. Marie du Monnoir, where he occupied a professional chair for five years.

Mr. Gravel was ordained to the priesthood in 1870, and during the following year and until 1873 he was vicar at Sorel and the succeeding year at St. Hyacinthe. For six years he was curate at Bedford and in 1880 he again returned to St. Hyacinthe, where he remained till 1885, in the first year of his stay being made Canon of the Cathedral in the city.

In 1885 he was appointed Bishop of the new Diocese of Nicolet, which was then newly created. Bishop Gravel was consecrated at Rome on August 2, of that year. During his Episcopal term in this diocese he has been active in educational and charitable matters and has founded a commercial academy and a hospital to minister to the educational and medical needs of the people over whom he exercised his authority. The scholastic attainments of the Bishop have been recognized by Laval University, which, in the year of his appointment, conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. Bishop Gravel, in 1895, addressed a letter to Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda at Rome, in connection with the Manitoba School question, the publication of which brought him into some prominence. Bishop Gravel's residence, since 1885, has been at Nicolet, where the Episcopal Palace for the diocese is situated.

The diocese of Nicolet comprises 82,234 Catholics and 118 priests. The co-adjutor is Mgr. Joseph Simon H. Brunault, and the Vicar-General, Rev. M. L. Victor Thibaudier. The diocesan Council is composed of Mgr. S. H. Brunault, Mgr. J. A. Fr. Douville, Superior of the Seminary; M. M. Marchand, curé of Gentilly; L. V. Thibaudier, secretary; and Rev. P. Bellemare, curé of Ste. Monique.

The funeral took place on Tuesday morning from the Nicolet Cathedral. His Grace Archbishop Bruchési officiated. The Solemn Requiem Mass was sung by the priests and Seminarians, and was most impressive. After the different absolutions by the Bishops present, the remains were borne to their last resting place, amid the tears of a grateful and loving multitude of priests and people.

Nicolet, Feb. 2.—The funeral of the late Bishop Gravel took place here this morning in the presence of an immense gathering of Bishops and priests from all over the country. Mgr. Sbarretti, the Apostolic Delegate, chanted the service, and was assisted by Vicar-General Thibaudier and Rev. Abbes Lecoq, Superior of St. Sulpice, and M. G. Froulx, Procurator of the Seminary of Nicolet, Abbe F. A. St. Germain, the late Bishop's secretary, was master of ceremonies, and Rev. Abbes N. Pepin and H. Belcourt also took part.

In the sanctuary were Monsignor Dubamel, Archbishop of Ottawa; Bruchési, Archbishop of Montreal; Gauthier, Archbishop of Kingston; Larocque, Bishop of Sherbrooke; Cloutier, Bishop of Three Rivers; Lorrain, Bishop of Pembroke; Emard, Bishop of Valleyfield; Brunault, Bishop of Tribuna; Marois, Vicar-General of Quebec; L. S. Richard of Three Rivers; L. Z. Racicot, Vicar-General of Montreal, and Paquet.

The funeral oration was delivered by Mgr. Paquet of Laval.

Immediately after the funeral Abbe Lavallée made known to the faithful the Papal bull consecrating Mgrs. J. S. H. Brunault, Bishop of Tribuna, second Bishop of Nicolet. The installation of the new Bishop took place at 2.30, after he and about two hundred Bishops and priests had lunched in the convent of the Assumption.

PERSONAL

Mr. Thomas C. McCarthy, son of the late Alex. McCarthy, P.O. inspector, has returned to Toronto from Chicago, where he has resided for some years past.

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