THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

## THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF VICTOR LAFONTAINE.

farm in all St. Polycarpe was that belonging to Victor Lafontaine. Victor himself used often to admit this fact when, on summer evenings, he leaned forlornly upon the top rail of his ragged fence, and contemplated with pensive gaze the melancholy deof his meagre estate. The tails stretch of level fields upon which stood his yearly crop, showed with startling distinctness their meagre of oats and barley, their patches straggling rows of corn and tobacco. The old barn, with sagging roof and crumbling under-pinnings, seemed protesting mutely against further

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ed protesting mutely against further tax upon its strength and capacity. Even the little pointed-roofed house, half hidden as it was beneath its big silver poplar, could not conceal the fact that whitewash was dropping in great patches from its walls, that the shutters hung from broken fast-enings, and that the gallery railing under the time thets lacked half its slats.

married at once a bor of equal youthfulness, and start-ed to follow in the footsteps of his

ed to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors as a modestly successful farmer. At this point, however, that ill-fortune, which despite his name it was destined should follow Victor so persistently in his after career, be-gan to make its baleful influence felt. Foilure to make his inheritance Failure to make his inheritance yield its customary profit had been the first difficulty he encountered : and he was forced to watch with of hay aching heart fair harvests of hay ruined by weeks of rain, crops of young grain destroyed by late frosts, and valuable flocks and herds deciof

mated by disease. In the wake of these crushing pecuniary losses, had come also a cor-responding series of domestic trials. Angelina, his wife, had done the best she could, but a family of eight children, including a deformed boy in-capable of self-assistance, left her but little time for the manufacture but little time for the manufacture of those helpful accessories to his Friday market-load common to his neighbors, well-filled charrettes; and scarcely had the ninth clamorous mouth been added to the flock when poor Angelina suddenly died, leav-ing the burden of the humble menage to be horne by the not too steady to be borne by the not too steady shoulders of the fifteen-year-old Adele

Adele. Could anyone prosper in the face of such adversity? No, it was not possible. Yet the nine mouths must be fed, the nine backs covered; and if the farm could not produce mate-rials for these necessities in the usual manner, there was no alterna-tive but to force it to do so in the only other possible way-the way in-solving visits to the notaire. convolving visits to the notaire, con-versations regarding rates of interlooking

For many years the very worst arm in all St. Polycarpe was that belonging to Victor Lafontaine. Vic-tor himself used often to admit this act when, on summer evenings, he eaned forlornly upon the top rail of his ragged fence, and contemplated with pensive gaze the melancholy de to the second sec

But eight hundred, dollars ! It But eight hundred, dollars! It might as well been eight thousand, or eight million as far as his ability to obtain the amount was concern-ed. Earn it he could not, borrow it he might not, since the only security he now possessed was the persons of himself and his nine. What was to become of him?

What was to become Clearly there was nothing of him left fo for him but to put the children upon the parish and go away himself the 10 States, where perhaps he could get work and in time make another litwork and in time make another lit-tle home. And yet how could he leave St. Polycarpe — he who had never spent a night away from it in his life? How could he close the door of the old house where he had been born, and his father before him? How could he say good by to Octave, the baby, and Joseph. the lame boy, and Adele, the little mo-ther? Oh, he could not! It was too hard! Tears rushed to Victor's eyes —

enings, and that the gallery railing lacked half its slats. The view, indeed, along his entire horizon, was one calculated to dis-courage the stoutest heart, and it was small wonder that after a few moments' study of the prospect Vic-tor's shoulders were accustomed to take on an added droop, and his countenance an increased hopeless-ness of expression. Luck, he would tell himself on these occasions, was against him, and with this comfort-less solution of his case he was ac-customed to light his pipe and ob-scure in clouds of tobacco smoke the humble elements of his discomfort. There seemed to be a foundation of truth in Victor's accusations against Fate. The little farm upon which he lived had come to him unencumber-ed on the death of his garents, which man in years. Emboldened by this masurance of future prosperity, he had married at once a dowerless neigh-bor of equal youthfulness, and start

dowerless neigh- unconscious of place or time, and ulness, and start-feeling only that every sup brought footsteps of his him nearer his little brood to whom he must break as best he could the heartrending news Then, suddenly he paused in his dismal march, and

he paused in his dismal march, and raising his drocying head regarded the gray sky with a look of mingled uncertainty and hope. His inner vision seemed to find there some satisfactory settlement of his doubts, for unmediately, with an air of greater decision, he unbutton-ed his overcoat, and after fumbling in a number of inner prockets in a number of inner pockets, brought forth a scrap of paper and a fragment of lead pencil. Dropping on one knee, he improvised on one knee, he improvised of the other a temporary table, and laying the bit of paper upon it, proceeded with infinite pains and difficulty to write a few lines upon its wrinkled surface. This done, he arose, and turning swiftly retraced his steps along the road he had just travers-ed.

ed. In a few minutes he had reached once more the half score tiny store and offices which, clustered in the shadow of the gray stone clutch, formed the quietly-beating heart of his native town. At the church he paused, and producing the n-te which he had thrust into his over-coat pocket, read it slowly and cur-fully. Then he mounted the flight of steps leading to the silent edulice, and pushing open the heavy door, disappeared from view. shadow of the gray stone church

It is strange to note how frequently Nature accommodates her moods to ours' weeping when we weep, and smiling again when s ray of happiness has dispelled when some our gloom. To Victor Lafontaine this fact

wind was blowing warm and

surrounding

receptacle. Vistor, however, smiling-ly but firmly waved them aside, and with commands for their good beha-vitor during his absence set forth for the third time on the way to town. His pace was rapid and bouyant. like that of a man bound upon some pleasing errand, but as soon as he was well out of view of his house he stopped, untied the bag with great caution, and after glancing once or twice half fearfully over his shoul-der, opened its capacious mouth and peered long and eagerly into the depths within. What he saw three seemed to fill him with astonishment and awe, for at the close of his in-spection his eyes turned devouly heavenward, while murmured ejacu-lations of wonder and thanksgiving fell brokenly from his lips. Having thus assured himself of the reality of his treasure, he re-knotted the sack and resumed his former gait to the village.

village. village. It was not the church, however, which formed the objective point of his journey to-day. He passed that edifice with only his customary re-spectful salutation, and with hurried steps made his way to the comfort-able red brick cottage beyond, where-in Monsieur Trudeau, the notaire, had so recently unravelled the tang-led skein of his affairs for him. led skein of his affairs for him.

His vigorous attack upon the bell brought to the door that gentleman himself who, with some show of himself who, with some show of surprise, invited him cordially to en-

Surprise, invited init containing to the ter. Victor accepted the invitation with the alacrity which had marked his movements during the morning, and stepping into the hall he preceded the notaire briskly into the little office, where he seated himself with obvious cheerfulness, placing his burden on the floor at his feet. The no-taire regarded him with an expres-sion of increasing incredulity and amazement. azement. 'Well, well, Victor," he said

"Well, well, Victor," he said as he took his usual place at the table and began toying with his pen. "You seem to be bearing your trou-ble better than I thought you would. To tell the truth, I felt sorry enough for you yesterday, and if I had been a rich man I would have given, you that eight hundred dolgiven. you that eight hundred dol-lars myself. But you look as happy to-day as if you had never heard of mortages or any of the bad things that go with them." Victor laughed. "Ah, M'sieu'," he

said cheerily, "I have not forgotten about the mortgage. How could I? That was a bad fix I was in yester-Aday sure enough; I never want to see Victor Lafontaine in a worse one But a great many things may hap-pen in twenty-four hours, and today, strange as it may seem, I am able to laugh, and I fear no more that great debt which threatened to ruin me

Monsieur Trudeau opened his eyes in astonishment.

"You no longer fear the mort-gage!" he cried. "What do you mean by that, my friend? Surely you are not going to tell me that you have found someone generous enough, or I might say foolish enough, to lend you the sum you require without se-curity! I know St. Polycarpe pretty well, and I cannot name a man who

well, and I cannot name a man who is able to do such a thing." Victor gazed placidly at his com-panion's perturbed countenance for a little space; then his own smile faded slowly and an expression of deep seriousness and perplexity over-spread his honest features. He drew his chair nearer to that of the no-taire and lowered his voice mysteri. ously.

ously. "You are right, M'sieu', again. There is not a man in right "You are right, M'sieu', right again. There is not a man in all St. Polycarpe, or in the wide world for that matter, who would lend me one cent this minute. And yet. M'sieu', notwithstanding this fact, there are in this cotton bag at my feet no less than eight hundred good dol,ars with which I propose this very day to wipe out all claims upon my house and lands." Monsieur Trudeau uttered a gasn

Monsieur Trudeau uttered a gasp of incredulity. Then a certain suspi-cion crossed his mind. He spoke more sharply. you are trying to play a Either

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D CATROLIO ORRONICLE
Same of the United States. How do the United States and United States. How do the United States and the United States and the United States. How do the United States and the United States and United States. How do the United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and United States. How do the United States and United States and United States. How do the United States and Unite

like that work, and it is long since I have been to school. But anyhow I make my request like this, M'sieu' :''

Victor drew a sheet of paper ward him, and with Monsieur deau's own pen proceeded once more to inscribe his brief appeal: "Grand Saint Antoine, Veillez m'accorder la que ie vous demande grace ous promet des pains pour les pau vres

'There M'sieu','' said he, putting the paper into his companion's hand. "There is the letter, just as l wrote it. As for the bad spelling do not care. I know the good St. Antoine is not going to mind the mistakes as long as I have promised him bread for his poor.

"Well, when I have finished "Well, when I have finished my note, 1 go back quickly to the vil-lage and into the church. I approach that sweet saint. I lay my petition at his feet, and then I kneel and tell him all my trouble-all my despair. I speak about my old home, and my little motherless children. I weep-yes, M'sieu', I am not ashamed to say it-I weep and sob there before that brown-robed saint, and after a my that brown-robed saint, and after a while it seems to me that he hears while it seems to me that he hears my cry, that he looks with compas-sion upon me, and bids me take courage. At any rate when I leave the church I feel much comforted and refreshed.

"As it is late, and I have been "As it is late, and I have been long away, I decide to take a short cut home across the fields by the winter roadway that leads straight to my house. And now listen well, "M'sieu", for if what I have to tell you be not a miracle, then I do not know what such things are.

"I cross the first field quickly and without adventure. I enter the sec-ond and presently I come to the brook, which cuts it about midway. The ice is beginning to thaw so that hunt out a narrow point and leap to the other side as lightly as I can. considering my big boots and coat. I slip, however, on the opposite bank, and my foot strikes something verv hard half buried in the snow and mud. I examine the place and find

notaire sat very still buried in deep thought. Thardly know what to say to you, Victor," he said at last. "Here is something which I can explain no better than yourself. The spot you speak of is a lonely one, remote from travel, and yet I feel sure, not-withstanding my faith in the power of prayer, that human hands placed this treasure where you found it. Do not despair, St. Antoine may yet help you out of your difficulty, but for the present at least, you have no claim upon this money and I could not use it for the purpose you wish. These dollars are American, and we know that the United States sends us many fugitives from jus-ing. Let me write then to the no sends us many fugitives from jus-tice. Let me write, then, to the po-lice authorities at Montreal, and fi the money is as I suspect, the plun-der of some criminal, the informa-tion will no doubt lead to his cap-

ture. "There will perhaps be also a re-ward given for the recovery of the funds or the arrest of the thieves, and if so it will of course belong to you. At any rate I will arrange that no further proceedings in re-gard to the mortgage be taken until that no further proceedings in re-gard to the mortrage be taken until search has been made for the owner of the funds and that is something gained for you already. Come and see me within a week's time and I shall surely have news for you." Victor's face had fallen dolefully during this speech. It was a dull end-ing to his bright dream, but he never thought of objecting. "Very well, M'sieu." he said meek-ly, "you know best. Keep the money and do what you please with it. I shall come again in a week to hear what you may have to tell me." But Victor did not have to wait a week to learn the history of his wonderful discovery. In three days' time not he alone, but all St. Poly-carpe was thrilling with a rush of events that wrought it to a pitch of excitement never before experienced in its century or so of existence.

excitement never before experience

excitement never before experienced in its century or so of existence. The first thrill was caused by the appearance of a trio of impressive-looking guardians of the peace, who stepped one morning from the Mont-real train, and made their way with expedition to the house of Monsieur Trudeau Ont., churn

Frudeau. Hardly had this fact become known to such citizens as were within easy reach of the news, when the same reach of the news, when the same gentlemen reappeared, and under the captaincy of the notaire, proceeded in solemn procession across the fields to the brook that made itself faintly visible amid the drifted snow. Ar-rived here, the entire party began what seemed to the on-lookers as a most incomprehensible examination of the muddy edges of the stream and the adjacent sogry ground. The and the adjacent soggy ground. The meaning of their search became clear meaning of their search became clear however, when after about half ar hour's labor a leather case was dis covered much stained and water-soaked, but which upon opening dis-closed a yet undamaged mass of pa-pers, bank notes, and gold of value only to be guessed at by the uniniti-ated.

ated. It was then St. Polycarpe heard It was then St. Polycarpe heard with a shudder a dreadful tale of murder and robbery committed in the banking establishment of a far-away 'New England town. It was then it learned that the malefactor, fleeing from his crime, had in terror or for safe-keeping deposited his spoils in this isolated spot before continuing his way to the city. And it was then it discovered, most wonit was then it discovered, most wonderful of all, that a reward of one thousand dollars had been offered by thousand dollars had been offered by the directors of the bank for the re-covery of the stolen property and the tracing of the murderer, and that as both these ends had been accomplished through the agency of their own humble townsman. Victor their own humble townsman. Victor Lafontaine, it was to him and to no other that the munificent bounty be

longed. It was not easy for St. Polycarpe It was not easy for St. Polycarpe to grasp at once all the confusing details of the case, but one point at least remained distinct and tangible in the mind of every individual — Victor Lafontaine now possessed enough money to clear his farm and to stort him once more well again to start him once more well equipped on the road to prosperity

Saturday, May 25, 1901

chine and wringer it is not a difficult. task. You will need plenty of soft task. You will need plenty of soft boiling hot. Dissolve a tablespoonful of borax in every bucketful and add enough soap to make a strong suds. The soap should be melted before it is put in. Put the blanket in the machine and pour the water over it. Use two or three waters, or enough to clean it thoroughly, having each water the same temperature, and prepare it in the same way. You will be surprised to see how much dirt will come out of an apparently clean blanket. Rinse in two or three waters until every trace of soap is removed, then run it through the sunshine, where a gentle breeze is sunshine, shaking it well to removo the wrinkles. Leave it until perfect-ly dry, then fold nicely and pack in a box or chest, putting in a gener-ous plece of camphor gum as a moth ous plece of camphor gum as a moth

a box of cleast, putting in a gener-ous piece of camphor gum as a moth preventive. Borax softens the water cleansing the blankets quickly and leaving them soft and fleecy. Naver boil a blanket and never rub soap directly upon it.

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List of patents recently granted n Canada

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of a holy life in t possession of God. So you see that r relatives in heave \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* The Drink Habit saints. Some of yo over the death of ye ther; but when you had a good father that your loved one en, your sorrow is CAN BE CURED AT HOME without pain, publicity or deten-tion from business, Even your little-br who died soon after lieaven, a saint of C you are helping to some special grace **DIXON VEGETABLE** ord and Saviour. the grantest specific on earth for the cure of Alcoholism. Dr. Mackay of Quetee, a specialist, in the treatment of ineiritate, admits that it is far superior to all the "Gold Cures" or other treatments. These interested, will do well to call and see our long list of testimonisla, or write for our pamphiet giving full particulars. Address

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est, the signing of imposing looking documents, and other solemn and mystifying details. It is needless to say, however, that this comparatively simple manner of procuring funds could not go on for-ever, even with as lenient money lenders as followed that business in St. Polycarpe, and before long Vic-tor awoke to the fact that not only could be obtain no more money of could he obtain no more money on house or lands, but that if he did house or lands, but that if he did not at once produce the sum of eight hundred dollars these posses-sions would gass irrevocably out of his keeping. The day on which he was made ac-mainted with this gaining his of

his keeping. The day on which he was made ac-quainted with this crisis in his af-fairs would have been a dismal one even if associated with more enlivenforting from the south, and the sun circumstances than the tidings of impending bankruptcy and dis-

The month was April, but spring as yet had sent but few messages to the Canadian world. Upon the area of fields comprising the township of the Canadian world. Upon the area of fields comprising the township of St. Polycarpe the winter snows still lingered with jealous persistency, and in the sunless air was the breath of many frozen rivers and ice-capped mountains. The wind blew bleak and biting from the leaden north, and Victor, stumbling blindly out of the office of the notaire, and setting his face hopelessly toward home, was conscious of a chill that seemed to penetrate his very being. His coat was thin and shabby, and his , fur cap the worse for many seasons' ill-usage; but it was not owing to the insufficiency of his garments that his heart was numb and sore, and his blood stagmant in his veins; disaster such as he had sometimes vaguely imagined, but never contemplated as an actual reality, was upon him, and the thought of it dazed and stunned him. bitering somewhere in the distance. Yet to something more tangible than this happy belief was evidently due his air of undisguised jubila-tion. A gleam of uncontrollable an-imation showed in his usually mourn-ful countenance, a sparkle of won-dering delight in his sombre eyes. Whatever his secret, it was undoubt-edly of no slight importance since it had effected in a single night such a stupendous change in his manner and appearance. But the contemplation of the distance

But the contemplation of the beauties of earth and sky was evi-dently not to be the business of Vic-tor's day, for after a few moments' enjoyment of the scene before him, he retreated into the house, reap-pearing shortly, dressed in cap and overcoat and carrying in one hand a large white cotton bag resembling a pillow-case, in the end of which was knotted something that clinked as he moved. Close about his knees crowded several of the smaller chi-dren who tugged at his garments, and demanded vociferously to be shown the contents of the unfamiliar im. Over and over in his aching brain unmmed the brief words of his lreadful sentence, resolving them-elves at last into a sort of doleful efrain to which the tread of his agging feet made a fitting accom-primetric

Eight hundred dollars or home

on the morning following the events just narrated, he threw open his cot-tage door and looked cut upon the joke on me. Monsieur Lafontaine, or you do not know what you are say-ing. Which ever the case may be I must tell you that I have no time Yesterday. surrounding country. Yesterday, when his spirit had been plunged in to-day for anything except when his spirit had been nlunged in blackest despair, the world had worn a corresponding cheerlessness of as-pect. To-day, with the wonderful change which had taken place in his own feelings, had been wrought a corresponding metamorphosis in the atmosphere, and it seemed that spring had already arrived. To be sure there was still plenty of snow upon the ground, but the

com

For answer Victor arose, and picking up the sack, dropped it heavily upon the table where it fell with a sharp, unmistakable jangle. "Indee for yourself, M'sieu'," he answer Victor arose, "Judge for yourself, M'sieu'," he said simply, beginning to fumble at tne knot; "if these are not good dol-lars then I do not know what moof snow upon the ground, but the

Hars then 1 do not know what mo-ney is." He loosened the fastening as he spoke, and with a turn of his hand sent a stream of silver coins rat-tling upon the table. Bright, shin-ing, impalpably real, they continued to mass themselves in luxuriant mounds and hillocks until hardly an inch of its dull surface remained exforting from the south, and the sun, shining clear and spring-like in the cloudless sky, had already melted the few remaining icicles about the eaves, and set dozens of tiny rivu-lets gurgling merrily down the hol-lows of the road. It may have been the melody in his own heart which deceived him, but Victor was sure as he stood there that he heard a bluebird singing somewhere in the distance. inch of its dull surface remained ex-posed to the distended eyes of the astounded notaire.

posed to the distended eyes of the astounded notaire. When the supply was finally exhaust-ed, Victor returned to his chair and waited for his companion to speak. It was some time before the notaire was able to do so. At last he found voice to say sternly: "Victor Lafontaine, where did you get this sum of money that seems to fit so well your needs. Tell me instantly, or as well as I know you, I shall think that in your despair you have been driven to some dis-honest deed." He fixed a piercing eye on his client, but Victor neither winced nor hesitated. "Ah, M'sieu'," he said humbly, "T

winced nor hesitated. "Ah, M'sieu'," he said humbly, "I do not wonder that you are surpris-ed-suspicious. How, indeed, could I procure so much money in one short night-I who am so stupid, so ignor-ant? No, I could not do it; I have not done it. This money that you see before you was sent to me from Heavon, or at least if it was not, then I do not know where it came from."

from." Monsieur Trudean frowned. Pick-ing up a handful of the coins, he ex-amined them closely. "This money that you say came from Heaven," he said with sar

mud. I examine the place and find the hard object to be a cotton bag or pillow-case filled with something heavy. I am much surprised because few people use this path except my-self and my children, so I pick up the bag and open it, and I find — what M'sien', but the very money rous see before you. And now if it you see before you. And now, if it was not sent to me by that great saint, in answer to my petition, tell me where it did come from." Victor ceased speaking, and the

**RED IN THE BLOOD** 

is the sign of life, of vital force, of the force that life has, of the

force that life is.

When the red is lacking, life is weak, the spirits are weak,

the body is weak. Scott's emulsion of cod-liver

oil puts red in the blood and

life in the body.

It's the food you can turn into muscle and bone and nerve. It gives you the mastery over your usual food-you want that. What is life worth if you've got to keep dosing yourself as an invalid?

Red in the blood! get red in

the blood!

We'll send you a little to try, if you like. SCOTT & BOWNE, Toronto,

As for Victor himself-well he had his own explanation of recent events

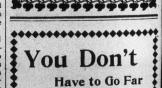
his own explanation of recent events which he was not ashamed to voice to all who cared to listen. "Who was it, Monsieur," he would say solemnly as he reached the con-clusion of his marvellous tale, "who was it that bade me go home across the fields and directed my steps without mistake to that particular part of the broad for a crossing 2 part of the brook for a cre Ah, my friends, it was not crossing anot chance

that made me do those things, it was that good St. Antoine who guided me because he had heard my

prayer. "I confess that I was disappoint-ed, that I lost my faith for a while when, having found this great gift, I was obliged to yield it up and re-I was obliged to yield it up and re-main as poor as ever. But you see it is not for everybody to under-stand the methods of those great saints. St. Antoine took his own way to help me, and now instead of eight hundred dollars I have a thou-sand. Yee, it is most strange this good fortune that has come to me; but it shows, my friends, that one does not go to that good saint for nothing. At any rate he saved me, and that you may all see for your-selves."

selves." And there is not a cynic in St. Polycarpe who has been able to pro-duce an argument with which to con-fute his belief.—J. Gertrude Menard, in Donahoe's Magazine.

WASHING BLANKETS .- Blanket need to be washed more frequently than many housekeepers suppose in fact, they should never be put In fact, they should never be put away for the summer without it, no matter how careful we have been with them. The softer and finer a blanket is, the more likely it is to retain disease germs within its fleecy folds; a solled blanket is an inviting plate for moths, and both these dan-gers are obviated by giving it a thorough washing. It is a good plan to do this work at home, and with the aid of a good washing ma-



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It is well established ; it circulates among the prosperous homes of Montreal and the various Provinces in Cauada; is a clean, reliable, family paper and occupies a field not reached by any other journal.

meanings of the word person may have about the saints. Bu have different notions ty and about what m we must all be like i we call by the special if we wish to share in ing roward. They pri-did good and avoided found the road to he kept walking right al Our Divine Lord tells straight and narrow i It cannot well be ignored in any effective advertising in-tended to influence the family trade throughout Canada.

We will be pleased to submit estimates on any proposed line of advertising.

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