OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER

ON "AN IRISH HALL."

A few timely remarks that fell from the lips of the Rev. Father Quinlivan, the zealous pastor of St. Patrick's, on the occasion of the presentation made to William Ludwig, the great Irish baritone, at the Windsor Hall, last Thursday night, caused me to seriously reflect upon the wisdom and the necessity of the Irish Catholics of Montreal having a hall of their own. I do not mean anything as extensive as had been attempted in years gone past; but something within the means of the community and yet sufficiently imposing to be a credit to our people. For the very good reason that each parish has a hall of its own, that suffices for all the parochial requirements of entertainments, society meetings, and general assemblies, it would not be advisable to incur heavy outlay in the erection of a building that might prove too costly and too vast. But, it seems to me that a good, large, and modern hall, in a central locality, is absolutely required. As Father Quinlivan showed, the immense audience of Thursday night could not find room in any other hall in the city. It may be contended that such occasions are rare. No matter; were there only one occasion of the class in a whole year, it should be provided for.

Now, I am not on any City Hall Committee, nor am I even an alderman, consequently I have no mania for construction, nor do I suppose that my suggestions are worth any more than would be those of any other "observer." If, therefore, I propose my own plan, in this connection, no harm can result, because no person is obliged to follow my plan, nor even to take a hint from it, nor yet to read it—unless willing. Such a hall as I mean would have to be in the centre of the city, would have to cost a moderate sum, and would have to be useful for other purposes than a public hall. I will briefly state what I think regarding these three points; and if what I think is "no good"—as the Chinaman says—then no person is injured, except the management of the "True Witness," whose space I shall have uselessly employed.

St. Patrick's Church occupies about the most central spot in Montreal. Beside the Church is the old brick presbytery, which has done service as a hall for the C.Y.M.S., the St. Patrick's Temperance Society, and other organizations. Portion of the building had to be made use of for sacristy purposes, on account of the lack of space and the increased necessity for accommodation between the Church and the present presbytery. Apart from the building itself there is considerable unutilized ground upon the corner of Dorchester and St. Alexander streets. Now I come to my humble suggestion.

Knock down the old presbytery, and erect a more modern and more suitably divided building, at a cost of not more than $25,000. This sum would suffice to construct a two-storey building of cut stone, so planned that it would take in all the spare ground lying between the present presbytery and St. Alexander street. The upper storey could be a hall capable of seating one thousand people, and accessible from both Dorchester and St. Alexander streets, as well as from the presbytery. These three exits would render it safe, in case of fire or other accident. The lower storey might serve as an annex to the Church and afford the priests of St. Patrick's a great deal of much-needed room for sacristy purposes.

I can readily understand that the paramount question would be one of cost. When I mention the figure of twenty-five thousand dollars, I feel confident that I am above rather than below the mark. I am strongly under the impression that there are twenty-five Irish Catholics in this city sufficiently wealthy and generous to pay the whole amount. If not, there are surely one hundred able to give two hundred and fifty dollars each. But even were it not possible to find that hundred, at least each society could contribute a certain sum, proportionate to its interests in the hall. Then if one hundred men could be found to give one hundred dollars each, the balance could easily be made up from other sources. I know that it may be said that I am very generous with other people's money; but this is an old objection that has lost all its force, so often has it been used as a hole of escape for those who are disinclined to be called upon for such purposes.

But to show that I am not talking without reason, I will simply say that if the project were taken up and acted upon in a business-like and determined spirit, I will see, for one, that one hundred dollars are contributed, from the very start, to the fund. In all likelihood such a hall would cost less than my estimated figure. In material much could be secured from the old edifice; the nature of the building would necessitate a certain outlay, but the expenses could be curtailed by a wise economy that would not clash with the requirements of the edifice.

At all events I need say but little more; I have launched my proposal, and I can afford to wait the decisions of the various Irish Catholic societies in this regard.

No time could be more appropriate for the introduction of such a project. We are about to celebrate the First St. Patrick's Day of the century, to hold a number of entertainments throughout the city; and the great religious as well as national anniversary deserves to be marked by something beyond the ordinary—and we think this is about the best means of rendering that day forever worthy of being written in letters of gold upon the annals of the institution. I have now said my say, and if it should prove of any benefit, I will consider the time well spent. I do not deem it necessary to write any more upon the subject; but, as I have much other affairs to write about, I will trouble you very little more. It seems to me that more than enough has been said to awaken an interest in the suggested plan.

THE CORONATION OATH DISCUSSED.

Ottawa, March 4, 1901.

Nearly the whole of last week was uneventful, but the closing of the sitting of the House of Commons on Friday night and Saturday morning made ample amends for the dullness of the previous days. As your readers are long since aware the now famous Coronation Oath Resolutions, moved by Hon. Mr. Costigan, were presented, debated and voted upon—and, of course, carried. The small handful of "nays" can scarcely affect the effects of the resolutions. Of course the amended form made the main resolution read a little different from the original form given to it by the mover. Your last issue contained that resolution, so I need only say that the change was to the effect that the Imperial Government should be requested to eliminate the offensive expressions contained in the oath. It would be impossible for me to give you an idea of the vast amount of historical information, which this resolution, drew forth from the members who spoke.

The mover, Mr. Costigan, confined his remarks to a brief and clear as well as dispassionate setting forth of the resolution, and a statement to the effect that it was not a party vote that was asked. Of the several minor speakers who addressed the House, there seemed to be a very general sentiment amongst them that the terms of the oath were useless, hurtful and should be removed. The Catholics who spoke did so with calmness and great courtesy; the Protestants displayed an equal degree of good sense and of honest, patriotic and broad-minded consideration for the convictions and feelings of the Catholics. I will give you some of the leading passages from the able effort of the Premier and the judicial speech of the Leader of the Opposition. But before so doing, I cannot refrain from dwelling upon the only harsh and discordant note in the whole grand chorus. Naturally it came from Mr. Clarke-Wallace. So contradictory and vindictive was that short stinging speech, that I will at once take the liberty of analyzing it. Mr. Wallace said:—

"He never knew the mover, (Mr. Costigan) make a speech calculated to advance the interests of the Dominion. From the earliest days he had been bringing up religious questions. Was he afraid the mantle of oblivion was again falling upon him? He said the Premier was the intended beneficiary of the motion. He, (Sir Wilfrid) had power enough to prevent the matter being brought up in 1900, because an election was pending. Was he not satisfied with the solidarity he had achieved in Quebec? He, himself, objected to religious questions being brought up. He had always protested, and he did so to-day. If a wrong had been perpetuated the British Parliament was strong enough, fair enough, and generous enough, to remedy the wrong. He referred to the strong language used in the declaration and said that it had already been made by the King of England."

So far there seems to be nothing in all his remarks worthy the man who occupies the high office of Grand Master of Orangeism the world over. The slap at the mover might be considered as accidental, were it not that Mr. Wallace repeats it in this silly form:—

"The King of England, said Mr. Wallace, was head of the Church of England and had to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, some of which Mr. Wallace quoted, and said that if they abolished the declaration objected to by Mr. Costigan they would have to abolish the thirty-nine articles. It would be a pretty spectacle to see the thirty-nine article revised by Hon. John Costigan."

Having been called to order by the Speaker for mentioning a member's name, Mr. Wallace returned to the charge in this manner:—

"He delighted that throughout the Empire a man's religion was no bar to his holding any position. No one had to make that declaration but the King. We in Canada were of different religions but we lived in amity and harmony; but he protested against introducing such questions. He could not get rid of the impression that the movement was intended to benefit the Premier and lift the member for Victoria, N.B., from the oblivion into which he had fallen."

I purposely give this speech of Hon. N. Clarke-Wallace, in order that it may stand out in broad contrast with the splendid addresses delivered by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Wallace got an opportunity to attack Mr. Costigan, and he seems to have been so anxious to take advantage of it, that he overlooked the grand subject of debate in order to gratify his own little spite. But it is refreshing to hear an Orange grand master, especially one of the Wallace brand, that he is delighted that a man's religion is no bar to his holding any position. He might just as well, and as truthfully, have said that he was delighted with O'Connell's success in securing emancipation. Then he tells the House, "We in Canada are of different religions, but we live in amity and harmony." If so, it is not the fault of the Order over which he presides; or rather, no thanks to Mr. Wallace. After having read this poor specimen of a speech, this baseless, meaningless, childish whine, it is delightful to turn to such an oration as that of the Premier.

THE PREMIER'S SPEECH.—Important as is every word that fell from Sir Wilfrid, yet I know your space would not allow of my giving the whole oration. However, that part which deals with emancipation and the history of Catholicity in Great Britain surely will find place in every Catholic paper in Canada. He proceeded thus:—

"But before I proceed any further, let me illustrate a point and make some comment upon it, the point which was made by my hon. friend from Victoria, in his opening speech. The object of this motion does not at all affect the Protestant succession or the supremacy of the Established Church in England or of the Protestant religion. There are two oaths to be taken by the King. In 1688, after the accession of William and Mary, the form of oath was prescribed by Parliament, in a statute passed the [illegible] r of the revolution in 1688. This is the test oath, which has been taken. Now, the motion of my hon. friend does not in any way contemplate to do away with that oath. If the motion of my hon. friend were to carry in this House, and if it were to be accepted by the Parliament of Great Britain, the Sovereign would still be forced to take the oath which I have now read. But, in the following year, 1689, another statute was passed which extended to the King, a statute which has been for some time on the statute book and which was to apply to the subjects of the King. In the reign of Charles II., in 1677, a statute had been passed which compelled all the members of the House of Lords, all the members of the House of Commons, and all the servants of the Crown,—that is to say, all those who held commission under the Crown—to take the very oath that is embodied in the motion of my hon. friend from Victoria. This oath is contained in the statute entitled "an act for the more effectually preserving the King's person and Government by disabling Papists from sitting in either the Houses of Parliament." In 1689 t[illegible] extended to the King. You see then that this declaration which was enjoined upon the subjects of the King, who happened t[illegible] the House of Lords, who happened to sit in the House of Commons, and who happened to be servants of the Crown, was extended to the King and had to be taken by him as well as by his subjects.

"Now, it is a matter of history that this oath, in so far as it applies to subjects of the King, has been long ago abolished. No peer of the realm, no member of the House of Commons, no servant of the Crown, is bound to take that oath, but it is still enjoined upon the King. Although it had been found quite consistent with the security of England to dispense the subjects of the King from taking that oath, it is still enjoined upon the King; and the object of my hon. friend from Victoria is to represent to the British Imperial authorities that this oath should be dispensed with by the King, as well as it has been dispensed with by his subjects. I may be permitted to say, as a Roman Catholic subject, that this legislation in England is not altogether according to my views, but I know too well the temper of my fellow-countrymen; I know too well the necessity in which they are in England, to even offer the slightest objection, and for my part am quite content to be a subject of the Protestant King of England.

"All the disabilities which at one time affected Roman Catholics have been removed from the laws of England; they have been removed, and let me call the attention of the House of Commons to the severe struggle against the objection, I am free to say, of many and many a man who thought that if Roman Catholics were admitted to civil and political rights perhaps the liberties of England would be endangered. It is a well-known fact, for instance, that William Pitt long entertained the hope and wish to give Roman Catholics emancipation, but it is also a matter of history that George III. would not agree to it, and that Pitt died before he carried out this wish of his heart. In 1807 came the Ministry of Lord Granville, in which Charles Fox took the matter up and attempted to bring in legislation for the emancipation of the Catholics, but the King, who, as we know, and as history tells us, was a good man, a pious man, and a moral man, thought that the dignity of his Crown and the liberties of his subjects would be endangered thereby, and he promptly dismissed his ministers. The matter was taken up again later on, and in 1829 at last an act was consummated. Catholics were emancipated; they were given civil rights; they were given political rights, and they were placed on the same footing as their fellow subjects. But we know that George IV., who was then Sovereign, hesitated a long time before he signed the act. We know that he was not like his father, either a good man or a pious man, or a moral man; still, he held the same views upon the subject, and it was only upon the strong remonstrances of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel that he finally agreed.

"Now, I would ask any man, is there amongst our fellow-countrymen of the Protestant religion, let him be ever so strong in his convictions, who would not say to-day that it was a happy day for England when the Roman Catholics were granted emancipation? Is there a man who would go back to the condition of things that prevailed up to that time? Look at the services which in this country and in this age since 1823 have been rendered to the Crown and people of England by Roman Catholics, and you have the answer. Had not the act of Catholic emancipation been passed in 1829, England would not have had the services of the late Chief Justice of England, who was a Roman Catholic. And if there is one man to-day who has done more than perhaps any other during the last twenty years for the prestige of England, in the Orient, that man is Lord Cromer, who, by his services in Egypt, has rendered imperishable services to his country; and Lord Cromer is a Roman Catholic.

"Let us look at the cause of all this exceptional legislation against Catholics, apart from the prejudices which existed at the time, prejudices which were just as common then to Roman Catholics as to Protestants and to Protestants as to Catholics. In the European civilization of that day these prejudices were common to both religions. Wherever Catholics had the power they persecuted Protestants; wherever Protestants had the power they persecuted Catholics; but if you go to the bottom of this legislation in England there is one thing which the English people had in their minds in passing all these laws and that was that they would not have the Pope to rule in England. We need not mince matters; it is just as well to go to the bottom of things.

"That was the thought in the minds of English Protestants. Time has dispelled many of the misconceptions as to the power of the Pope, and let me say here, as a Roman Catholic of the twentieth century, that the Pope had no authority or jurisdiction whatever in secular matters. His power and jurisdiction and authority are exclusively in spiritual matters and we Catholics accept him as the power which has the final authority to pronounce upon all controversy in matters of faith and morals. Beyond that the Pope has no more authority than any member of this House. He has no jurisidction over secular matters in any shape or form, and Catholics do not claim that he has.

"Then, sir, if these views are well understood, and do prevail, it seems to me that there can be no reason whatever to maintain this legislation upon the statute books of England. I may be asked why should this declaration be removed from the law. It is simply because it is offensive. It is simply because it is painful to Roman Catholic subjects who honor their King, and are loyal to him; who are ready to fight and, if need be, to die for his crown. It is painful to them that he, their King, should take such an oath against dogmas which are dear and sacred to them. That is the reason, the only reason, sir. I do not desire to approach the subject in any controversial spirit. Whether this motion pass or does not pass, whether if it is passed it is heeded in England, whether this oath is maintained or not, maintained in the law, the loyalty of Roman Catholics will not be affected thereby. They will continue to be, as they are to-day, willing and cheerful subjects of His Majesty King Edward VII. and of his successors. But it may be as well admitted that the pride and devotion which we all take in this great Empire, and which was the first refuge of liberty of conscience when liberty of conscience was still banished from the rest of the world, would be more enthusiastic if that legislation, the last remnant of persecuting ages, the last vestige of these ages of which I have spoken, were to be blotted out forever from the statute book of free England."

MR. BORDEN'S ATTITUDE.—It would be encroaching too much upon your space to ask you to publish all of that legally learned and calmly fair-minded speech of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. But the sentiments conveyed in the following passages must be appreciated by every true Canadian. He said:—

"Therefore it seems to me that it is a right thing, and a proper thing, so far as this declaration contains matter which is offensive to the religious belief of any British subject, that it should be abolished or amended, and I for one am prepared to state that in this House or before my constituents or upon any public platform in this country (loud applause.) The coronation oath which has been referred to by the right hon. leader of the Government is another safeguard. Now, it is desirable that those of us in this country who are Protestants should look at this declaration from a standpoint which would be presented to us if the Roman Catholic faith were the established faith of this country, and if the twelve million people who are now in the minority were Protestants. (Applause.) Would we not feel a sense of injustice if a King, whom we loyally served, whom we were ready on all occasions loyally to serve, should be obliged on his accession to the Crown to make a declaration with respect to the Protestant faith which contained matter so offensive as that which is found in this declaration. (Applause.) I ask my hon. friends all over this House, who are of the same religious belief as myself, to take that into consideration, and to say whether or not they would not feel like making some effort to have an injustice of that kind redressed. (Applause.) And the feelings which would animate us in the case which I have supposed are those which animate our Catholic friends throughout Canada. (Applause.) Therefore, although we may question the wisdom of introducing this matter into this House at this time, nevertheless we can well understand the feelings which animate hon. gentlemen in making this motion, and we can better appreciate the standpoint from which we should regard their actions."

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TO ERECT AN ALTAR.

According to our Catholic exchanges the last vacant chapel in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, is to be filled with an altar erected by James S. Coleman, the contractor for the great Cornell dam, as a memorial to his brother Michael Coleman, who lost his life because of illness contracted while helping his brother in that work. The design is by Henry G. Wynn, consulting architect to the trustees of the cathedral. The great door of the Abbey of Mellifont is reproduced as a huge reredos with the altar table erected under the portal. In the base of the table are embedded fac-similes of the crosses of St. Colman at Clonmacnoise.

MGR. FARRELLY.

Dr. Thomas O'Hagan, in correspondence to the "Irish Canadian," says:—

Rt. Rev. Mgr. Farrelly, the venerable, esteemed, and revered pastor of St. Michael's Church, Belleville, for more than a quarter of a century, will retire from the active service of the priesthood in a few months. Mgr. Farrelly, it is said, will reside in the future at the Bishop's palace in Kingston. The snows of seventy-five years crown his venerable brow, and the memories of half a century of priestly life and labor spent in the vineyard of the Master will sweeten the hallowed eventide of his declining years. Mgr. Farrelly belongs to the old school of Canadian priests and has all its best virtues. He has ever been a man of faith and devotion, of sacrifice and charity. The love and esteem of thousands will follow our kindly and venerable soggarth aroon into his retirment, and in these thousands may the writer of this column be enrolled as one.

OUR DUTY DURING LENT.

To keep a stricter watch over our conversation, and even to practise silence as a mortification, are parts of the Lenten spirit. To cut off food and drink, to lessen our hours of sleep so as to give more time to religious acts, such as to go to Holy Mass, to give up our ordinary amusements and recreations—these also are parts of the penitential spirit the Church wishes us to cultivate during Lent. We remember a very godly layman whose name is preserved in benediction by all who knew him, who was accustomed, as health would not allow him to fast, to give up the reading of all newspapers and profane books during Lent. He confined himself to the Sacred Scriptures, to the "Following of Christ," and some solid works of piety. It was a great mortification to him, but it showed a desire to enter into the meaning of Lent as an acceptable time and a day of salvation. We Catholics in this country have the eyes of all upon us. We hold the traditions of the fathers, and many outside look to us for example. When they, who are so much in earnest and are so strict with themselves, see Catholics making no difference during the holy season going to theatres, parties, balls and the like, it can not but make them think that the salt of manly Catholic life has lost its savour amongst us, and that we no longer live up to the spirit of Lent. It is not the question whether it is a sin to go to balls, parties, or theatres during this season, but whether it is in the mind of the Church, whether it is in keeping with the penitential spirit. And no true Catholic can hesitate in his answer.—Monitor and New Era.

AN INCIDENT IN THE KING'S LIFE.

The accession of the Prince of Wales to the throne of Great Britain recalls an incident of his visit to this country which is creditable to him, though of course much more so to an American Catholic lady. At a fashionable ball in New York the future King of England was presented to the oldest daughter of Gen. William T. Sherman, and after some conversation His Royal Highness requested the pleasure of dancing with her. But Miss Sherman's mother was a model Catholic and she had been educated in a convent. The dance was a waltz, and accordingly the young lady declined. Far from being offended, the Prince of Wales waited until a square dance was played and again claimed Miss Sherman for it. On the eve of his departure for England the future King was asked what lady he admired most of all that he had met during his visit. Without a moment's hesitation he answered: "I must say I admire Miss Sherman the most."—Ave Maria.

DEATH OF AN IRISH ATHLETE.

Michael O'Sullivan, one of the best known athletes in the United States and the all-round amateur champion of 1892, died in New York, the other day, after being operated upon for appendic tis. He was 41 years old and lived at 144 West One Hundred and First street with his wife. He was born on the southern coast of Ireland.

O'Sullivan was a policeman and a man of exceptional physique, well over six feet tall and finely proportioned. He had a chest measurement of 46 inches, when in his prime as an athlete, with a slender waist and the sinewy legs of the typical Celt. When in condition he weighed 180 pounds, and in spite of his heavy build could leap and run over hurdles with almost as great proficiency as he could sling the heavy weights. He began his athletic career in Ireland, and competed with conspicuous success at all the prominent meetings from 1880 until 1883, when he came to this country.

His career in America was equally brilliant, and for about a dozen years there were few meetings at which he was not among the prize winners. His performances include the following:

Throwing 56-pound weight between legs without follow, 24 feet 7 inches; throwing 56-pound for height, 14 feet; putting 16-pound shot, 38 feet 11 inches; throwing 16-pound hammer with one hand, 112 feet 9 inches; throwing 8-pound hammer with one hand, 184 feet; running high jump 5 feet 7 inches; running broad jump, 20 feet 10 inches; running hop, step and jump, 44 feet; pole vault, 9 feet 6 inches.

DIED.

HARDING.—In Montreal, on the 21st. Feby., 1901, Mary A. Martin, wife of Thos. Frs. Harding, of the Montreal Post Office. May she rest in peace.

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