

The True Witness

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WEDNESDAY.....JUNE 9, 1897.

WELCOME!

The visit to Montreal, on the 1st of July next, of the Ottawa St. Patrick's Society will afford our local Irish societies, the new St. Patrick's League, and Irish people generally, an opportunity for the exercise of hospitality. Such occasions for the interchange of courtesies and kindnesses are not so frequent as they ought to be. The Irish communities in our several cities and towns come too little into contact with each other in social intercourse, and take too little interest in each other's doings. For practical purposes, many of us Irish Canadians, who have been living all, or nearly all, our lives only a few hours apart, are as widely sundered as if the ocean separated us. Only now and then, when such a happy thought as that which impels our Ottawa brethren to come this way for the enjoyment of their holiday breaks in upon the monotony of our isolation, is the mournful fact of it brought pleasantly home to us. How many ties of friendship, of common joy or suffering, of mutual service, or even closer relations, may have bound the members of communities, thus parted, in the days that are gone! Some of the older people may have known each other in the old land, may have crossed the sea together, may have had the same first experiences after landing in Canada, and after sharing for a while in similar hopes or fears for the future, may have been separated and lost sight of each other, until one pleasant excursion like that of the O.S.P.S. has enabled them to call up the slumbering memories. Others may belong to a younger generation and their recollections may be all of the new land, but they may be no less interesting to those who cherish them.

Ties of this kind may be exceptional. The bulk of the people, young and old, male and female, who meet each other on the occasion of such a visit may be strangers to each other, but not the less for that reason are they united by ties that should be strong and lasting, by a common descent from Irish forefathers, by a common test preserved through many tests and trials, by the same love for the same old land, and the same devotion to the same good cause, the best welfare of the Irish race all over the world and especially in our own Canada. These are ties sufficient to make it desirable that the Irish communities of the different cities, towns and districts of Canada should cultivate the traditions and sympathies which make us all members of one great family. Cead Mille Failte.

HIS IRISH MISSION.

Mr. C. B. Devlin, Canadian Immigration Agent in Ireland, seems to be disposed to quarrel with his friends. For our own part, we are not greatly concerned about his anger, because we are not conscious of having wronged him in word or deed. On the contrary, we have, from the first day of his appointment, been well disposed towards him, and when we heard of the reception his mission had met with in Ireland, we were sorry both on his account and on Canada's. Mr. Devlin might, with conviction, have assured the people of Ireland that they had too many friends countrymen and lovers in Canada to justify the fear that any wrong was intended to be done them. He might have reminded his Dublin and other critics that Canada had sympathized with Ireland in all her sorrows and had never held back the hand of help when it was needed. Of Ireland's Home Rule cause Canada was among the first to acknowledge the righteousness and she had given that cause one of her most eloquent sons. We might say more of the grounds that Mr. Devlin had to be received as a friend, and of the utter groundlessness for treating him as a messenger of ill. We have

already stated the only reasons on which it is desirable for Irish people to seek a new home in Canada. We do not wish to drag them away and still less to entice them away on false pretences. But if in any case there be any of them who have determined to leave the Old Land and to cross the Atlantic, we naturally and reasonably desire that they should cast their lot with their kinsmen in Canada rather than on the other side of the border. If Mr. Devlin has any other instructions, less palatable to the Irish people, we are not aware of them.

THE EXHIBITION.

If there is anything that should be undertaken with an ample supply of means, it is the Exhibition. The name and purpose of it condemn half measures. An ill equipped Exhibition is a discredit to the city and it is most unfair to a gentleman who assumes the responsibility and the labor of getting it into shape to leave them unprovided with means to carry out their plans. We have had some capital Exhibitions in Canada and a certain number of them have been in Montreal. The influence of such an Exhibition of our natural products, and the best results attained by us in all the arts and industries that supply human life with what it needs for sustenance, clothing, shelter, warmth, comfort, culture and adornment, cannot well be over-estimated. It is an object lesson of the most comprehensive kind. The young people who are taken through the main portions of an Exhibition, who see the live stock, the cereals, vegetables and fruits produced from our own soil, supplemented by the edibles from other climes, who are shown the products and the methods of the dairy, whose attention is directed to the various kinds of bread, biscuits and preserved foods; to the different kinds of household furniture and the apparatus for heating and lighting; carpets, tapestry and other furnishings; the products of the loom and its modern substitutes of every material, pattern and purpose; implements and instruments of all kinds used in manufacture, agriculture and the arts, and the numberless labor saving devices, and illustrations of all these in operation and achievement; carriages, carts, sleighs, bicycles, snow-shoes, skates, boats and canoes; books and stationery; toilet articles; jewellery; toys; pianos and other instruments of music, and a host of other articles for use or ornament—it is impossible for the young to pass this multitude of objects, even in hasty review, without obtaining an impression that books or hearsay could never give. Again, such a display has a stimulating effect on business, by suggesting new forms of comfort or luxury, creating a wholesome rivalry and eliciting powers of invention and adaptation. It tends to enlighten the whole community and to add to the dignity of labor by deepening the admiration for the skilled workman. No person, however dull of comprehension, can make the tour of an Exhibition without adding to his stock of information and having his reflecting faculties enlivened. The Exhibition brings into contact with each other the sharpest intellects in the walks of industry, invention and trade. Art and applied science are also represented. The botanist and geologist cannot fail to find something to interest them and the adept in physics finds scope for his knowledge. To get up a good Exhibition, therefore, is no common undertaking, and deserves generous support. Without such support it is sure to be a failure, and it is not surprising that the Exhibition Company think of dropping the thing altogether after this year, unless the enterprise receives assistance in keeping with its character, complicity and magnitude. But such an enforced surrender would be disastrous.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR IRELAND.

The scheme of local government combined with an important readjustment of the burden of taxation that was announced a fortnight ago by Mr. Balfour, in recognition of the claims of the Irish members of Parliament, is the most striking and advantageous illustration of the power of unity that Ireland's recent history has afforded. Again and again has it been urged on Ireland's representatives that if they only massed their forces and advanced shoulder to shoulder they would be irresistible. But never was the advice given with better reason and surer grounds of triumph if it were followed than when the present session opened at Westminster. For months the overtaxation of Ireland had furnished a theme to the press of every shade of opinion in the four provinces, and Ulster was quite as eager to stand up for Ireland's rights as either Munster, Leinster or Connaught. As the time for the opening of Parliament drew near the necessity was felt for a common plan of attack and defence in dealing with the Commissioners' report, and it gave general satisfaction when it was learned that Col. Sanderson and the other Unionist spokesmen were ready to act with the two Home-Rule sections in fearless defence of Ireland's rights. The enthusiasm with which this announce-

ment was received was not immediately followed by the expected results. But ultimately their steadfast adherence to principle and determination not to be diverted from the goal, in view by any merely sectional considerations enabled the best men of all the Irish parties to win a victory by which all Ireland is the gainer. The opportunity was a grand one and had it been lost through faction or mismanagement, the consequences would have been deplorable. At the right moment, happily, the right men were in their places, and the result is one on which the Irish members are to be congratulated, and for which Mr. Balfour has been thanked and praised. Never before was the attitude of the Irish political parties so thoroughly united and patriotic.

When the House of Commons went into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. E. F. V. Knox, M.P., put down his motion demanding that half the agricultural rates in Ireland should be paid by the State. He had made like proposals before, but without result, and was not hopeful. This time, however, he had support from a new quarter—the Irish Unionist benches. Col. Sanderson, Mr. Carson and Mr. Lecky not only spoke on his side, but voted on it, and brought their Irish Tory and Liberal colleagues to vote with them. The result of this coalition is Mr. Balfour's Irish Government bill, the operation of which will, it is said, effect a diminution of taxes on behalf of the agricultural class of more than \$3,000,000. Popular representation is to take the place of the Grand Jury system, and, in other respects, the measure follows the lines of its English predecessor. In Ireland there are two separate rates, collected by two different persons and handed in to different authorities—the poor rate and the county cess—the latter being the larger. The Government propose to provide for an annual grant in relief of rates equal to half the amount of the present agricultural rates. The measure, which is intended to attain two great objects—the application of local government to Ireland and the settlement of the question of taxation, will be introduced next session. There will doubtless be criticism of details at the proper time, but meanwhile, the policy announced by Mr. Balfour has given universal satisfaction, so far as the most influential papers have voiced popular opinion in Ireland. And this satisfaction has gone some way in effacing party lines.

CIVIC TAXATION.

The state of the city's finances has for some time past been a source of anxiety to the civic authorities and to all who are more immediately interested in the city's welfare. It looks as if before long this anxiety would be shared by every wage-earner within the city's limits. The Real Estate Association's report on taxation (the work of Mr. A. Levesque and Mr. W. D. Patterson) throws a good deal of light on the financial situation and the causes that have produced it, and proposes a plan of readjustment of existing burdens. Among the causes mentioned is the policy of parting with important privileges for a mere fraction of their value, and there are other causes that need not be dwelt upon just now. According to the City Treasurer's last report, the total revenue of the municipality amounts to \$2,757,660.93—the assessed value of real estate being \$137,872,695. At the rate of 1 1/2 per cent, this yields \$1,696,565.73, and it is complained that so large a ratio (about three-fifths) of the whole revenue of the city, and \$635,470.53 more than all the other sources combined, is in excess of the city's rightful claims on the real property holders. The latter, it is urged, number only ten thousand on a voter's list of forty-two thousand. It is natural, of course, that those who possess real estate should protest against the imposition of burdens which they consider out of proportion to their numerical strength. On the other hand, there are not many of those on whom, as wage-earners, salary-receivers or tenants, they would shift a portion of their burden who would not gladly accept their position, with all its responsibilities. There are some, indeed, who hold that real estate should be charged still more heavily. Without, however, discussing any theories of that kind, we admit that some readjustment is essential and that all citizens should do their part in paying for the administration, regulation and improvement of the city. The question of an income tax is beset with difficulties, like every other plan. There again, those who are blessed, or otherwise, with superabundance, are more inclined to look at the largeness of what they have to contribute than at the fact that, whatever they contribute, they still have a surplus far above their needs. A man whose income is barely enough, or, as often happens, insufficient to support his family in comfort and respectability, would feel any rate imaginable more than the wealthy man who is far beyond the reach of poverty or any approach to it. On the other hand, there are persons who, with moderate means, indulge in moderate desires and by good management are practically as inde-

pendent as the rich. There is a lower stratum—that of the majority, with whom life is a constant struggle and who never have anything to spare. On these, even a minimum tax would be a burden hard to be borne. Yet an income tax, diminishing in the ratio of wages or salary, would be resented by many and might in some cases be unfair. The whole question is full of difficulties. The proposal is to reduce the tax on real estates and to impose a tax on incomes (without exception) and on rents, and it is suggested that the revenue from the markets may be indefinitely increased. The last part of the plan will be satisfactory to the general public, but there is likely to be resistance on the part of those concerned.

There are four classes of exempted property to which the Association's committee gave consideration—churches and presbyteries coming first, and charitable houses and schools third. With the exception of schools enjoying special exemptions injurious to commissioners or private schools, it is advised to leave these properties untaxed. We are not quite sure of the class of specially exempted schools referred to, and therefore cannot pronounce upon the justice of the exception. Otherwise we approve of this solution of a problem of great interest to Catholics. There are also some special exemptions of small value that will gradually die out and so may be allowed to run their course. The only class remaining is that of corporation and government property, amounting to \$16,226,230, and which would yield a revenue of \$202,827.88. Although this is the largest figure in the four classes enumerated it is not proposed to interfere with its exemption. The other classes have values and revenues as follows: Churches and presbyteries, \$5,817,100 (\$62,713.76 revenue); charitable houses and schools, \$13,537,280 (\$169,216 revenue); and temporary exemptions by the municipality, \$375,750 (\$467,187 revenue.) These last, it is said, will die out in time, but the public may be curious as to the grounds on which they obtained the privilege.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.

We learn from the Providence Visitor that by the will of the late Hannah McLaughlin, of Brookline, Mass., the following bequests are made: Fifteen hundred dollars to the trustees of Boston College, to establish a scholarship, the income to be applied annually to the purpose of educating a student for the priesthood; \$300 to the Little Sisters of the Poor; \$300 to the Home for Destitute Catholic Children; \$300 to the Sanctuary Society of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Boston; \$500 to the Rev. Edward I. Devitt, S. J., or whoever was pastor of the above named church at the time of the testatrix's death; \$200 to the House of the Guardian Angel; \$200 to the Free Home for Consumptives in Dorchester; all the rest of her estate, in equal shares, to the Home for Destitute Catholic Children, the House of the Angel Guardian, the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Free Home for Consumptives.

If all the beneficiaries by their pious and humane bequest give the soul of that noble woman the return of their prayers, surely she will be blessed in no common measure. We take it for granted that she was by descent, if not by birth, of our own people. And it is consoling to reflect that Irish women and men not a few have earned the blessings of the poor, the suffering, the helpless and their friends and benefactors by a similar charitable and wise disposal of their property. There are many estates in this age of millionaires from which, after all the reasonable claims of needy or deserving relatives have been satisfied, there is plenty to spare for purposes of wise charity.

There are, it must be confessed, more rich people to-day who give meagerly, or neglect to give at all, for objects of benevolence, than there are of those who give with a free hand and a generous heart for the relief of distress or the promotion of good works. Indeed, when we read of the fortunes that are amassed by all sorts of means and consider what an enormous proportion of them is either squandered in ostentatious profusion, or bestowed upon worthless heirs to be used for purely selfish ends, we cannot be altogether surprised at the angry discontent of those who lack the means of subsistence. Luxury is, it is true, no new thing in the world. It flourished ages ago, even in times when lavish expenditure failed to procure what we would regard as simple comfort. It is a vice that the fathers of the Church denounced as utterly inconsistent with the profession of Christianity and all the teaching of Christian moralists is opposed to it.

The Church is not, however, a leveller, and those who would reduce society to a dreary flat of equality would do away with all incitement to progress. It is not wealth that is wrong, but the attainment of wealth by means that are dishonest or cruel or heartless and the abuse of it for pleasures that offend good taste, moderation and the sense of human right. The wise and beneficent use of wealth is its justification, and

those who spend the money they have acquired in ways that make life more enjoyable for others—the cure of disease, the mitigation of poverty, the spread of sound education, the diffusion of a healthy press, and the support of humane, pious and charitable enterprises, have made the best of all investments with their money, for they have lent it to Him who will repay with ample interest.

Some benefactors like to see the fruit from their own planting before they die; some, again, prefer to entrust to others when they are gone the works of mercy, charity, education or general improvement on which they have set their hearts. Much good may be done by either method. It is not the way but the will that is lacking. Notwithstanding some endowments by the living and bequests by the dead that range all the way from millions to comparatively modest sums—there is still a colossal amount of wealth—some of it, perhaps, ill gotten enough—in the hands of men and women to whom their possessions seem to suggest no thought of anyone but themselves. That we have any such rich people in our Irish community we would not like to think. But for the liberal-hearted of our wealthy class there is still abundant scope for doing good.

The Shamrocks have lost their first match in the championship series, despite the generalship of such a clever veteran as Mr. Tobias Butler, who assumed the office of captain of the team for the occasion. The cause of defeat was solely due to the fact that the young Irishmen were not in form to withstand a severe struggle such as that of Saturday. The weather in Montreal has been against the home team and prevented them from obtaining the measure of field practice so necessary to secure success in a contest with an opponent.

The seventy-ninth annual meeting of the Bank of Montreal, which was held on Monday at the head office in this city, was characteristic in many respects.

The able addresses delivered by the general manager, Mr. Clouston, and the vice-president, Senator Drummond, contained a warning note which is certain to exercise a beneficial influence in the circles of business men who are inclined to speculate.

Some weeks ago we issued the accounts of annual subscriptions, and as a result many subscribers promptly responded by remitting the small amount of their indebtedness. There are thousands of our patrons, however, who have not been heard from. We would remind them of the urgency of giving the matter their immediate attention.

THE REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION.

The monthly meeting of the Real Estate Association, which is composed of proprietors of all classes and creeds in Montreal, was held on Friday last. The committee appointed to report on some method of reducing taxation on real estate, submitted their report. It contained many important features, especially those dealing with the exemptions on churches and religious institutions. We give the principal portions of the document, as follows:—

The report, which was the combined work of Mr. A. Levesque and Mr. W. D. Patterson, dealt with the question of city taxation. It demonstrated that three-fifths of the entire revenue of the city was derived from the tax on real estate, and suggested that the burden be shifted upon the shoulders of the tenants and upon those who received fixed incomes. According to a late report of the city treasurer the total revenue of the municipality amounts to \$2,757,660.93. The assessed value of the real estate of the city was shown to be \$137,872,695, which at the rate of one and a quarter per cent, produced \$1,696,565.73, or practically three-fifths of the whole revenue. The different sources of revenue were twenty-three in number, and the tax on real estate alone produced \$635,470.53 more than all the other sources combined. It is held that all who derive benefit from civic institutions should contribute their share towards their support.

A SINGLE CLASS OF CITIZENS, namely, the property-holders, who number only ten thousand on a voters' list of forty-two thousand, pay out of one source alone over three-fifths of the total revenue of the city, and besides this they pay their share of the revenue derived from the other twenty-two imposts. It has been suggested at different times to tax all exempted properties, which would produce a revenue as follows, the rate being one and a quarter per cent on each class of property, namely:—

Table with 2 columns: Description and Revenue. 1. Churches and Presbyteries: \$5,817,100 value, \$62,713.76 revenue. 2. Corporation and Government property: 16,226,230 value, 202,827.88 revenue. 3. Charitable Houses and Schools: 13,537,280 value, 169,216.00 revenue. 4. Temporary exemptions by municipality: 375,750 value, 467,187.00 revenue. Total Revenue: \$439,826.64.

EXEMPTIONS ON CHURCHES OR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS APPROVED.

It is judged advisable not to tax the properties contained in the first and second enumeration. Nor to tax schools except such as enjoy exemption from taxation by virtue of special charter, and so place the commissioners' and private schools at a disadvantage. Nor is it judged advisable to tax charitable institutions even when those corporations carry on lucrative businesses, because, there being no public charities supported by the city, these private corporations fill a want which would other-

wise have to be provided for by the citizens at large. It is also held that such private institutions are better managed and cost less than would civic houses of relief.

The fourth class of exemptions, the result of special arrangements made with different individuals, will in time die out; it is not necessary to interfere with it. Yet something must soon be done. The partially completed harbor works lie in a state of suspense for want of funds, and the city has to face an annual deficit of \$300,000, yet valuable privileges have been given away by the municipality for a title of their value. It is deemed advisable that the tax on real estate be reduced, and that the deficit be made up in the following manner, namely:—

INCOME TAX SUGGESTED.

By a tax, first on incomes; second, on rents; third, by increasing the revenue derived from the markets. In Paris, out of a revenue of 200,000,000 francs, 138,000,000 are derived from the markets. It is held that all incomes, even the smallest, should be taxed, and one good effect of this would be that all classes of citizens would feel an interest in the administration of municipal affairs. On the other hand, if the tax on real estate were reduced by say one-fourth of its present amount, the value of property would increase and the whole community would profit by the advance.

OBITUARY.

Mr. William J. O'Hara.

During the course of the present year we have been called upon at different intervals to chronicle the death of many prominent Irish Catholics. In this issue it is our melancholy duty to announce the death of Mr. William J. O'Hara, assistant collector of the Port of Montreal for many years, and one of the most efficient members of the Customs service in the Province of Quebec.

Mr. O'Hara had scarcely crossed the threshold of the prime of life when the signs of a serious illness made its appearance. Despite all that medical skill could do, both in Canada and the United States, the result was fatal. Deceased was known in every part of Canada among the commercial classes, and in social circles in Montreal he was highly esteemed for his many noble qualities. In the midst of the parishioners of St. Patrick's Church he played a prominent part in all the social and religious gatherings. On the occasion of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the late Rev. Fathers Dowd and Toupin he acted as secretary to the Executive Committee of laymen in whose hands was placed the organization of the different features of the undertaking. He also presided at the public entertainment given by the St. Patrick's Choir in the Queen's Hall at that time.

Mr. O'Hara received his primary education at McQuillan's private school and at the Christian Brothers' Schools, presided over by Brother Arnold, in the Quebec Suburbs, and completed his schooling at the De LaSalle Institute and Manhattan College, under the direction of the Order of Christian Brothers. In 1866, at the age of 18, Mr. O'Hara entered the Customs service in a minor capacity, his intention being to earn his living, while studying for the legal profession; but in 1868, the then collector, the late A. M. Delisle, having selected Mr. O'Hara as his secretary, the latter devoted himself entirely to the Customs service, gave up the study of law and has ever since been connected with the collector's office at the Montreal Customs' House.

In 1887, during the term of Sir Mackenzie Bowell as Minister of Customs, Mr. O'Hara was made Chief Clerk of the port with supervision and charge, under the Collector, of the collection branch of the establishment. In 1892, as a recognition of his many years' administrative work, the Government created the office of Assistant Collector and gave it to Mr. O'Hara, establishing his position and rank as second to that of collector at the port.

On Mr. Ryan's death, more than three years ago, Mr. O'Hara naturally stepped in for the Assistant Collector's chair into that of the Collector, and administered the office, for three years, with credit to himself and to the complete satisfaction of the Government and the mercantile community. The funeral, which was held this morning at St. Patrick's Church, where a solemn Requiem Mass was chanted, was attended by a large concourse of citizens of all classes and creeds. The choir, under the direction of Prof. J. A. Fowler, rendered the choral portion of the service in a most impressive manner. Mr. O'Hara was for years one of the leading tenor soloists of St. Patrick's, and there was a large attendance of members in the choir gallery. He leaves a widow and one child to mourn his loss.

Major Charles W. Radiger.

Major Charles W. Radiger, paymaster of the Victoria Rifles, died on Monday last, at his residence, 205 Manoe street, after two months' illness.

Born in Montreal 57 years ago, he was educated at the old High School. Early in his youth he showed signs of becoming a noted athlete, and in a few years later gave many splendid evidences of his prowess on the athletic fields of this city. He was for a long period a prominent member of the Victoria Rifles. He was gazetted captain of No. 1 Company in 1882, became adjutant in 1886, was promoted to be major in 1887, and was in 1892 gazetted as paymaster of the regiment, a position which he has held ever since. The present armory on Cathcart street was erected in a great measure by the enthusiasm he displayed in the project.

The Major, who was a good sound Catholic, has been suffering in health for nearly two years, but has only been confined to his bed for two months. He leaves a brother in St. Paul, Minn., and a widow, his second wife.

The funeral, which was of a military nature, took place this morning from his late residence to the Church of the Gesù, where Rev. Father Kavanagh, S. J., officiated at a solemn Requiem Mass. The funeral was attended by the Victoria Rifles in large numbers, thus testifying their respect for and the high esteem in which they held their late paymaster.