

The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle

Printed and Published by the True Witness P. & P. Co., Limited, 178 St. James Street Montreal, Canada.

P. O. BOX 1138.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Table with subscription rates: CITY OF MONTREAL, Delivered, \$1.50; OTHER PARTS OF CANADA, 1.00; UNITED STATES, 1.00; NEWFOUNDLAND, 1.00; GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND and FRANCE, 1.50; BELGIUM, ITALY, GERMANY and AUSTRALIA, 2.00

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TERMS, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

EPISCOPAL APPROBATION.

If the English Speaking Catholics of Montreal and of this Province consulted their best interests, they would soon make of the TRUE WITNESS one of the most prosperous and powerful Catholic papers in this country.

PAUL, Archbishop of Montreal.

SATURDAY.....FEBRUARY 24, 1900.

THE LENTEN SEASON

We desire to communicate to our readers the orders and rules laid down for the guidance of all Catholics during Lent.

REGULATIONS.

- 1st. The four last days of Holy week will be fast days. 2nd. Every Sunday will be exempt from fast. 3rd. Every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday—except the Saturday of Ember days, Holy Thursday, and Holy Saturday—Every one may eat meat at the principal meal; and on those days persons legally or reasonably prevented from keeping fast, may eat meat at all meals.

Lent is a season of penance! Forty days did Christ dwell in the solitude of the desert, preparing Himself for the terrific part He was about to play in humanity's most marvellous drama.

These forty days constitute a term of preparation for the glorious festival of Easter. Lent has its rules and regulations, but over these do not prevent the true Catholic from making other sacrifices and performing other penances, that his errors, sins and, perhaps, crimes may be atoned for, and that he may be purified to such an extent that on Easter morning he may arise from the grave of evil and participate in the splendid blessings of the Resurrection.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE.

Not frequently do Catholics receive due credit for the works they perform, and this is often noticeable in the case of priests and nuns who render inestimable services to the country.

against all who wore the Catholic religious garb was most apparent. To-day things have changed a little; and we find, for example in the present South African contest, that the Sisters—of Catholic communities—who minister to the needs of suffering humanity are being better recognized than were those of former days.

"Even when the Sisters of Mercy were gratuitously toiling and dying of cold and hunger and overwork and disease at their unpaid post of duty in the Crimea, there were to be found some inglorious varlets—even clergymen—who sat in guilty comfort in their easy chairs in England and in pamphlet and newspaper railed at and ridiculed their admitted devotion to the sick and wounded soldiers of the Queen.

"I do not presume to express praise or gratitude to you, Rev. Mother; because it would look as though I thought you had done this work not unto God but unto me. You were far above me in fitness for the general superintendency in worldly talent of administration, and far more in the spiritual qualifications which God values in a superior; my being placed over you was my misfortune, not my fault.

THE FEVER VICTIMS' MONUMENT.

Respect for the dead is one of the most profound sentiments in the nature of our people. It is not then to be wondered at, that the very mention of desecrating the commemorative stone at Point St. Charles, which has for so many years indicated the locality where the remains of the ship fever victims are deposited, should cause a feeling of deep resentment.

tiring efforts of Rev. Father Strubbe, C.S.S.R., and his colleagues, the removal of that sad reminder would have been carried out long ago. The whole neighborhood of the stone, bearing its sad inscription, has undergone a change. The ground surrounding it has fallen into a state of neglect, no one having bestowed the least care upon it, and the cry of insatiable commerce now is to do away with the reminder erected by the willing hands and pious hearts of the workmen, who had the Christian thoughtfulness to place it there.

ORANGEISM AND ITS AIMS

We do not generally take, without a grain of salt, those flaming announcements of "terrible exposures" and "astounding revelations." We have learned from long experience that when "ex-nuns" and "ex-priests"—so-called—go about revealing the terrible crimes that are claimed to be perpetrated inside the walls of Catholic institutions, they are humbugs, impostors, liars, and deceivers.

But we have come upon a series of extraordinary revelations concerning Orangeism, and from what we know of that society's history, and from the fact that the person making the statements is a sincere, and even bigoted Protestant, we cannot but accept them as genuine. The revelations come in the form of a lecture, delivered in Australia, by Mr. E. Lewis, a native of that colony, but an Irishman by parentage.

came to join the Order, how he rebelled against some of its practices, how he resigned his membership, and how his final breach with Orangeism was due to the words, works, deeds and movements of the notorious "ex-priest" Slattery.

All this matter is most highly interesting, even amusing in some instances, and always instructive. As we hope to deal in a future issue with Mr. Lewis' revelations, we will simply reproduce his explanation of how he comes to repudiate the order and to still be faithful to his agreements when he exposes the whole institution. Mr. Lewis said:—

"It may be said, indeed it has been said, that in exposing the methods and proceedings of the society I am violating certain so-called solemn obligations and promises of the Order, of which I voluntarily became a member, and that my action is in something of the nature of a betrayal. But this I most emphatically deny. I did make a compact with the society, and in making that compact I did enter into certain obligations, and would have felt these obligations binding upon me had I not, in the first place, been grossly deceived as to the nature and aims of the society, and had not the rulers of the Order violated in my regard every principle of justice and fair play.

SOMETHING ABOUT POINT ST. CHARLES.

BY MRS M. A. SADLER.

How the waves of time wash away even the deepest foot-prints of past events—once such stern and vivid realities!—Looking back into Ossian's "dark brown years," we of the generation passing away see many things that would startle the world of to-day, so strange, so weird, so solemn, like the ghosts of the long-buried dead.

One of these, a mournful episode of Montreal's chequered story, rises I refer to the awful visitation of what was then called "Ship Fever," but more correctly named "the Famine Fever," first brought to our Canadian shores from famine and plague-stricken Ireland in the dismal year of 1847.

Rumors of famine in Ireland had been coming all the winter and spring and charitable efforts were, as usual, being made here and elsewhere to relieve the suffering people of that much-tried land. Then came pitiful tales of fever, following on the famine, in many districts of that fair and most fertile island.

"The people of the plague-stricken districts began to fly in thousands and tens of thousands to the seaports of Ireland and take passage to America, hoping thus to escape the famine and the fever that were making their beautiful island one ghastly desert. Of this mournful exodus our own McGee plaintively sang in those gloomy days:—

"Where are the swift ships flying Far to the West away? Why are the women crying Far to the West away? Is our dear land infected, That thus o'er her bays neglected, The swift steals along dejected, While the ships fly far away?"

"They are flying, flying like northern birds over the sea for fear, They cannot abide in their own green land, they seek a resting here."

Alas for them, poor self-made exiles, they did not escape the plague themselves, and they brought it to those friendly shores where they fondly hoped for "a resting!"

I will pass over all the wonderful scenes of cruel and suffering of patience, of resignation, on the part of the multitude of victims who gave up their lives in the desolate fever-sheds at Point St. Charles, and the no less touching and admirable self-devotion and sublime charity evinced by the clergy and the religious communities of Montreal during those long and dreary months when hundreds and thousands of Irish men, women and children, were passing away day by day, hour by hour, on the western outskirts of our city.

One of the many priests who fell victim to the ocean-plague, Rev. Father Richards, an American convert from Methodism, and a member of the Sulpician Seminary, preached in St. Patrick's Church one Sunday, when the fever was doing its worst.

"The new member, if he be a man of observant habits, will find much to surprise, if not disgust, him on the first night of his membership. The ceremonies of the first degree do not call for much special comment, beyond the fact before mentioned as to the warnings and cautions given to the neophyte of the all-important observance of secrecy.

A few days after and the holy old man was seized with the dread disease, while ministering to the spiritual wants of the fever-patients in the sheds, and speedily succumbed to its deadly blight. A thrill of sorrow ran through the entire city when the news of his death went abroad among the people.

More than half a century has passed away since that tragic episode of Canadian history threw its shadow on the shores of the St. Lawrence. Two generations have come and are well nigh gone, and the memory of that time is waxing dim. But to those yet lingering by the way who witnessed its unspeakable miseries and horrors, it is still painfully fresh and real.

Many incidents and details come up from those long-past years, which must here be passed over. Two facts, however, I wish to place here on record. One is, the tender charity wherewith the French-Canadian people, dwelling on the shores of the great river of the North, at the suggestion of their beloved pastors, adopted the thousands of helpless orphans left in their midst by the terrible ocean-plague, receiving them as gifts from Heaven, and cherishing them as their own flesh and blood, thus bringing them up in the faith of their martyred parents;—an act never to be forgotten by the Canadian Irish.

The other fact, likewise worthy of note and of grateful remembrance, is the rude, but substantial monument erected at Point St. Charles over the graves of six thousand half forgotten victims of the plague of 1847, by

the workmen employed in the construction of the great Victoria Bridge. Surely, such facts go far to redeem the character of our fallen race from the charge of selfishness and cold indifference to the woes and miseries of others.

Respect for the dead is a well-recognized characteristic of Christian civilization. The huge sepulchral stone at Point St. Charles tells its own story—it was placed over the graves of those buried thousands of Irish emigrants to preserve their remains and their place of rest "from desecration." Surely a holy and a righteous object! It is for the Irish citizens of Montreal to see that it be carried out and perpetuated now and hereafter!

Who shall dare to outrage the most sacred traditions, as well as the most tender affections of a whole people by converting the site of the fever-sheds and the place of sepulture of the famine-victims of 1847, to any secular or commercial purpose whatever?

NOTES FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

The following information gleaned from different sources, especially the "Missionary Record," may prove of interest to all our Catholic readers. It is well that we should have an idea of the situation of Catholics in that far off land, so recently brought before the eye of the world by the terrors of a protracted war.

The following letter from a Right Reverend correspondent (evidently His Lordship Bishop Jolivet, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of Natal, appeared in the "Weekly Register" of Dec 23, 1899:—

Durban, Natal, 24th Nov., 1899. I will send you no news of the deplorable war which is causing such havoc in Natal, the electric cable will let you know all about it. The cable, however, is likely to say little or nothing of what would most interest some of our readers, that is how our missions, our convents, and our schools are faring, and I venture to address you a few words on that subject.

Our losses will be heavy, if not irreparable. At Newcastle the Dominican nuns had flourishing schools; they had just taken possession of their new Community House; their success was great, greater still their hopes; now their work is destroyed, their property ruined, their hopes dashed. They had to leave their convent at a moment's notice, and to seek a shelter in their smaller establishment at Dundee. They had scarcely had time to settle there when they were again ordered away by the British authorities. Imagine thirty nuns, and twenty-four children boarders who could not return home, flying for their lives, and arriving tired, destitute, and heart-broken at Pietermaritzburg. Here they managed to hire a small house where they live crowded together, nuns and children, in a most miserable state. And what will be the fate of their establishments at Newcastle and at Dundee? Poor Sisters! ruin and desolation will face them when they return.

Now let us come to Ladysmith. Here the Augustinian nuns had a private hospital and schools, and when the Boers invested the town they remained bravely at their post, nursing the sick and the wounded, until they were ordered to retire to the "neutral ground camp" four miles away, with the women, the children, and the invalids, to avoid the shells of the Boer artillery. They, too, when the war is over, will have to face ruin and desolation.

At Estcourt the Augustinian nuns have a beautiful establishment, consisting of schools and hospital. The school children have nearly all been sent home, and the good nuns, sleeping on the floor in an old building, have cheerfully given up their own apartments, the school rooms, the dormitories, and even their chair, to be used as hospital wards for the sick and wounded soldiers. They are indefatigable in their care of the patients, and their services are highly appreciated by the army doctors. But whilst I am penning these few hurried lines I hear that the Boers are in possession of Estcourt also: "Quousque tandem!"

Our Catholic soldiers are provided with chaplains everywhere. I myself, went to Estcourt last week and helped Father Follis there in preparing a number of soldiers for Holy Communion. Twelve soldiers were confirmed on the same day, and about 600 were present at Mass. It was a beautiful sight, and most edifying.

A word about Bishop Jolivet, who is supposed to be the writer of the foregoing letter, may be timely.

A writer in the "Natal Mercury" thus happily mingles the name of good old Father Sabon, O.M.I., who is gone, with that of one who is still actively at work:—"Bishop Jolivet is one of those who have witnessed the growth of the Colony, and, bearing the heat and burden of the day, have helped in its development. His Lordship marked out a straight course and kept it, with the result that he is able to point to most gratifying achievements in various parts of his immense diocese. Reading of his work, I could not help remembering one who was closely associated with him, both in Natal and Zululand, and who will always be affectionately remembered ways be affectionately remembered in Durban. I refer to the late Father Sabon, a self-denying priest and zealous in his work. Bishop Jolivet, by reason not only of his long and faithful service in Natal, but also because of his genial and kindly disposition, has won the esteem of large numbers who do not belong to his church, but who recognize his fruitful labors. May he be spared many years to behold the fruition of his toil."

PERSONAL.

Mr. Lewis E. Curran has been appointed a Commissioner of the Superior Court for the district of Montreal.