

# NEWFOUNDLAND AS A MISSIONARY COUNTRY.

Written by a Newfoundland Friend of the "True Witness."

As Mr. R. L. Cuddihy, the talented and energetic Newfoundland correspondent to the "True Witness," is at an early date to contribute an essay on the "Church in Newfoundland," to the pages of the "True Witness," it may serve as a prelude to that contribution to give a general idea of the peculiar conditions which confront the Catholic missionary in doing Apostolic work in the "Ancient Colony." A glance at the map of the country, and at the history of its settlement will show that the carrying on of the Catholic mission must have been (especially in the past) attended with many difficulties and no small amount of danger. The stories of the adventures and hairbreadth escapes of the "old priests" especially—would fill volumes. They are preserved as "folk lore" in the memory of the people; they have also been embodied in historical work, and they make up as thrilling a story of heroism, self-defence and zeal—as may be found in the history of the American Church. How often at this day do we hear from the "old folks" of hardship endured by Fathers Forrestal, Ryan, Walshe or Hennebury—or some other pioneers of the faith in these parts—in attending such and such a sick call at such a time of year. The people will tell how they would be "out for days"; how they would have to cross such and such a bay in a hurricane, with only a small boat between them and the waves; how at another time they would have to cross a sea arm on bad ice, or again be caught out on the trackless barrens in the midst of a snow blizzard, wandering about all night, and only escaping with life by a narrow chance, and the hand of Providence. Then the cold and exposure to wet; the dreary drive, or oftener still the walk, and the reaching their destination all but exhausted, and yet enduring all with philosophic cheerfulness, making their trial and difficulties afterwards subject for humorous narration, and ever buoyed up by the great thought, that it was all in the way of duty. Duty! loyalty to Church and souls which has ever been the grand guiding star of the Irish Catholic missionary, and of none more than of those who for the past two centuries have been building up the Church in Newfoundland, hereby such men as these were worthy the name of Apostles.

I have said that a glance at the map of the country and at the history of its settlement will give an idea of the difficulties of the missionary. Newfoundland a triangular island, has a coastal measurement of about three hundred miles each side, estimating from the head or cape of one bay to another. But when we consider that the coast is indented on all sides by immense bays, running from twenty to ninety miles inland; and that within these great gulfs lie smaller bays, "bights" and arms, the latter often seven or ten miles in length; and that all these openings into the shore are dotted with islands, many of which are settled, 'twill be seen that the real length of Newfoundland is from three to four thousand miles; the island thus presenting more front to the ocean than could be thought of by judging its area of 42,000 square miles. Such variety of coast line, now bending into long arms flanked by sloping hills; again rising in granite cliffs straight from the foundations of the deep; and yet again sending its bold capes out to meet the Atlantic "swell," and opening up a broad gateway of thirty to forty miles, between the opposite heads of the bay, to allow the ocean to roll in, presents its own grand, terrible or beautiful features of interest to the summer tourist. Into the arms flow rivers teeming with trout and salmon; the salt water rocks are gay with the plumage of the water fowl; the hills around and the plains are the natural haunts of every variety of game. The summer breezes that blow over the shores are laden with health and vigor for the invalid, and the countless and varied beauties of that noble panorama of ocean, sky and shore, the coast of Newfoundland forms an everlasting subject for the artist, but we are now considering that coast not from the point of the summer tourist, but from that of the Catholic missionary, the heaviest part of whose work was to be done not in the choice parts of the year, but in the depths of winter.

The difficulties of the missionary priest were immeasurably increased by the peculiar settlement of the country. Newfoundlanders have been essentially a seafaring people, hence in settling they lined the shores of the country, to be near the fishing grounds. In this country you have not as a rule communities concentrated in one place, but ranging along

the water front. Hence the ordinary Newfoundland parish is a bay or a harbor, with settlements on each side; and very often islands, intervening, also inhabited, especially if located near prolific fishing grounds. The breadth of such a harbor would be from 4 to 10 miles; its length an average of 10 to 20 miles, and its whole circuit from twenty to forty miles. Considering the number of separated settlements in each parish, it will be evident how difficult it has been to hit upon an exact centre for churches; convents, presbyteries and schools. As an old resident said to an old priest that consulted him as to a fitting centre for a school, "You'd want geometry, your Reverence, to know where to build it." Two or three such bays or harbors, and sometimes a half dozen go to make up a single parish. In the larger bays, such as Placentia and Fortune, the number of distinct communities, placed about on these islands and in the countless minor bays and inlets, is something beyond reckoning and the difficulties of organizing church work through such scattered localities is proportionately great. In olden times, the first fifty years of this century, the whole length of the Newfoundland coast line was spiritually ministered by a band of priests scarcely exceeding the number of the first Apostles, and in point of work and zeal these men were truly Apostles. Their voyages were appalling; for days and nights and weeks touring about on the great ocean like bays, or toiling on foot through the then trackless forest, and so they spent their lives that Newfoundland might have the faith. The first Irish missionary priests came to Newfoundland in the midst of the "Penal Days." To carry on their mission they had to adopt the dress of the people, and celebrate Mass only under the severest penalties. Men who harbored a priest or allowed Mass to be celebrated on their premises in those days, suffered confiscation of property and banishment from the colony. More than one instance is on record of that brutal sentence having been carried into effect. But the Soggarth Aroon kept on all the same, and planted the faith deep and strong.

However it is not with the actual history of the Newfoundland mission I am now dealing, as that shall form your correspondent's subject in a future issue of the "True Witness," but rather with the natural peculiarities of the country in which that mission was carried out.

Catholic Emancipation freed the Church on both sides of the Atlantic, but still our mission remained a trying one. Railways, steamers, or even roads were still in the future, so the old priests had to carry on the work "rough and smooth," "taking it as it came." One instance will serve to illustrate the difficulties of the pioneers of the Gospel. It is that of Father Forrestal. He died about 3 years ago and was the last of the "old priests." He passed away within five months of his golden jubilee. He was a man of great culture, of wit such as is given to few; and of experience derived from nearly 50 years of missionary life. He knew Newfoundland "like a book," and as for his stories, what a book of reminiscences he could have written. In later life he had been honored with the title of Archdeacon, and the late Bishop Power would often say to him: "You know enough to write a book of missionary experiences." "Enough my Lord?" With a shrug of the shoulder all his own, "Tis too much I know, the book wouldn't be popular." And truly the caustic wit of the Archdeacon, illustrating a book, would be possibly a trial, especially as his local knowledge was from "generation even unto generation." As a missionary Father Forrestal knew Newfoundland in all its phases. His first mission in this country was Placentia, about 84 miles from St. John's. Now Placentia is connected with St. John's by a railway, and before the railway by a carriage road. When Father Forrestal went there first a trackless forest, prairie like barrenness and swollen unbridged rivers, had to be crossed, and he performed all that 84 miles on foot, and for years afterwards he had to travel in the same manner. Since that time, I need not say, Newfoundland generally has advanced centuries in means of communication.

At that time, Father Forrestal had to attend "Cape Shore," a promontory extending about forty miles along the eastern side of Placentia. His experience in riding or walking over the hills, and along the moors of that territory would furnish many an article. This veteran priest ministered in every part of the country, and his perils and labors were the ordin-

ary lot of the priests of the day. It was a time of great missionary efforts; priests dared all to erect the Church. Personal hardship did not seem to worry them, and the case of Bishop Fleming may be proof of that. As related by Right Rev. Dr. Howley, in his "Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland," Bishop Fleming crossed the Atlantic five times in a sailing vessel, to procure the necessary site for the St. John's Cathedral; and in getting stone for the building he "camped out" on Kelly's Island in Conception Bay, to direct the work. Not to go into historical dates and facts, a task which I remit to your esteemed correspondent already mentioned (Mr. Cuddihy), I may state that two classes of missionary work call forth the special difficulties of our Newfoundland mission. One "holding stations" in the various settlements; the other attending "sick calls." The stations have to be held by crossing water in a sailing boat, but as the priest can choose his own time for that, it comes comparatively easy; but the "sick call," that comes in at all seasons and hours; the sick call, when owing to stress of

weather the priest may be out of his home, any length of time, from three days to three weeks; when he has to confront the snow, the frost and the rain and all the other discomforts of travel, it is the sick call that makes the Newfoundland missionary (especially in former days) not need monastic discipline for his spiritual training.

I have endeavored to show in a sketchy manner the peculiar difficulties of the Newfoundland missionary, another pen will trace for you the result of their labors, and on some future occasion I may send some few additional notes on this prolific subject. As I write there rise before my mind thoughts and memories of the hero priests of this country, and look out through my window a great sea arm solidly frozen over, extending for miles, lined on either side with the homes of the people seems to me an epitome of the Newfoundland mission; whilst the church with its spires rising, amidst the dark groves of spruce, and its sanctuary lamp gleaming through the windows, a symbol of faith tells me that the missionary has not labored in vain.

## The Dangers of Mixed Marriages.

In the course of a Lenten Pastoral, read some Sundays ago, throughout the diocese of Salford, Eng., the Right Rev. Dr. Bilsborrow expressed himself as follows, regarding the important question of mixed marriages:—

"In our Lenten pastoral addressed to you about six years ago we felt ourselves constrained by duty and by charity to warn you against the dangers of mixed marriages. We then assured you that such marriages 'were widely prevalent in this diocese, were weakening religion, perverting many to heresy, and still more to indifference,' and we added the solemn words that 'the welfare of the faith, the salvation of innumerable souls, the responsibilities of our office, and the anguish of our conscience compelled us to address you on this painful and delicate subject.'"

We rejoice to know that that pastoral letter, by God's grace, was blessed with abundant fruit. Many justly took alarm. Parents who had been indifferent awoke to a sense of their duty, and forbade such dangerous unions, and their children in many instances either obediently broke off their engagements, or steadfastly refused to marry until the non-Catholic had been instructed and made his submission to the Church. And thus the number of mixed marriages in our diocese was in a comparatively short time reduced by more than one-half. Of late, however, to our grief and dismay, the applications for dispensations for such marriages have certainly not been diminishing as we could have wished, and in a few congregations they are nearly as numerous as ever.

What is more deplorable still is that we have too grave reasons to fear that cases are by no means unknown to Catholics—unworthy of the name—marrying Protestants in the registrar's office, or even in Protestant churches, and this without consulting sometimes without the knowledge of their pastors, or even taking the trouble of applying for a dispensation. Unless, therefore, we neglect our duty, and allow the disease to spread like a cancer, and souls to perish, we have no alternative but to raise our voice once more in all earnestness against the continuance of this great evil and scandal.

Let us, then, remind you, in the first place, that God Himself, as the Holy Scriptures relate, has condemned mixed marriages in no uncertain language. . . . The Catholic Church detests mixed marriages, because, they bring untold miseries upon their children, whom she loves with more than an earthly mother's love, and in countless cases rob them of their most precious inheritance, the price-

less jewel of the Catholic faith. She has therefore always, and throughout her wide domain, so strictly forbidden such marriages that they cannot, without grievous sin, take place without dispensation. And this dispensation of the Church's universal law, so anxious is she to check the evil, can be granted by no one but the Pope, as the supreme shepherd of the flock of Christ."

All this, and even more, is read once or twice yearly from the Catholic pulpits of the ecclesiastical Province of Quebec; but the words of the Bishop of Salford to show how universal and how similar, in all lands is the law of the Catholic Church on this subject. We have no desire to imply the warning of His Lordship of Salford, but we feel that it can only serve a good purpose to reproduce it.

There is one great danger in mixed marriages which has always come home to us whenever we have had occasion to write on the question; it is the great advantage that the Protestant consort generally has over the Catholic one. And this is proven by facts, unhappily too numerous; for in the majority of cases the Catholic loses in the inevitable contest between the adherents of two different religions, especially regarding the faith of the children. We explain this truth in this manner: When a Catholic is sufficiently weak in his religious connections to hazard his future—or her future—and the future of the children to be born, by drawing the line of ecclesiastical toleration to its utmost point of elasticity, he (or she) is eminently unfitted to sustain a part in the subsequent struggle between husband and wife. By struggle we do not mean a vulgar quarrel, but the constant and effective exercise of an influence that ultimately bears its fruits and triumphs over the weaker party.

It is true we could cite examples—even here in our city we know of one in particular—in which the Catholic contracting party declined to carry to its serious and binding close the engagement of months, and even of years, unless the Protestant party joined the Catholic Church. But it is not often that this stability of principle and solidity of faith are made manifest; too often is it the contrary story that must be told. In any case there is a great danger, not only to the faith of the Catholic, but also to the peace and happiness of the united life to be led after marriage. Volumes might be written on this, and yet volumes could not detail all the miseries that human beings have endured on account of ill-advised, ill directed, and especially mixed marriages.

## Commercial Education.

Mr. Bryce, M.P., speaking at the formal meeting of the School of Commerce in connection with Liverpool University College, said that the movement in regard to commercial education arose from two phenomena that have marked the present age in a very striking degree. One was the general development and specialization of every branch of science to a great many subjects that they hardly thought years ago were capable of scientific treatment, and the other was that the commercial competition between the great trading and producing nations of the world had become more keen, strenuous, and exacting than it ever had been before. Those two causes co-operating had brought the importance of commercial schools to be recognized in Europe

and the United States to an extent that showed that hitherto our country had been behindhand in taking an interest in that great subject.

Let them consider for the moment what was meant by a commercial education. The first thing that struck him was that commerce was not like other professions because of the varieties of its branches, which were infinite in their variety. In commerce there were three different kinds of classes. There was the education of boys for clerks and shopmen. They generally left school at about fourteen years of age, having received an elementary education only. There was a second class, composed of the sons of better-off parents, who could afford to keep their boys at school to

sixteen or seventeen years of age, and then put them into offices, where they would obtain an extended education; while a third class consisted of the sons of merchants, who had received a complete secondary education at the age of about nineteen, and they required, to become merchants, a different and a higher kind of commercial education. All these classes required different commercial education. So they would see that the promoters of this movement were brought face to face with a problem far more complex than was the case in regard to the other professions.

The term commercial education, in the sense in which they used it in that night, meant a specific preparation for the business a youth was to follow. It would have two aims, one to sharpen the wits of the student, in a particular and given direction which would make him succeed in business, and the other to impart some particular knowledge in the same way that particular knowledge was imparted, for example, to medical students. All great Continental countries were in favor of giving commercial education. Germany, France and Belgium had all had their commercial academies established, in some cases as much as forty or fifty years ago. Furthermore, modern commerce had made commercial education more necessary than it was in past years.—London Times.

### OYSTERS AND DISEASE.

Fresh oysters cannot develop typhoid fever, is the verdict of Prof. Herdman and Boyer after a three-years' investigation of the British Oyster. Even when the bacilli of the disease get into the bivalve, the sea water destroys them in a few days. When taken out of the water, however, and kept in shops the oysters deteriorate rapidly, and may easily convey all kinds of germs.

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT.  
Dame Emma Dufresne, of the City and District of Montreal, has this day instituted an action in separation as to property against Albert St. Martin, of the same place.  
Montreal, 28th February, 1890.

BEAUDIN, CARDINAL,  
LORANGER & ST. GERMAIN,  
Attorneys for Plaintiff.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC,  
DISTRICT OF MONTREAL,  
No. 202.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT.  
Dame Alphonsine Chouinard, of the City and District of Montreal, has this day instituted an action in separation as to property against Louis Honore Daseyva dit Portugais, of the same place.  
Montreal, 28th February, 1890.

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