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THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1895.

Calendar for the Week.

May 24—Our Lady, Help of Christians.

25—St. Gregory VII., P.

26—St. Philip Neri, P.

27—St. Magdalen de Pazzi,

28—St. Augustine, Bp.

29—St. Maximus, Bp.

30—St. Felix, P. M.

Present Political Conditions

It is worth while enquiring into the efficacy of our political institutions and the part that Catholics, particularly Irish Catholics, are playing in them.

If we begin by considering the composition of the electorate, we shall at once discover diversities so great as to perhaps explain many things otherwise inexplicable. To take an extreme case, we may learn why it was unanimously conceded that Mr. Edward Blake would be able to display his great abilities to better advantage in the British House of Commons than in the service of his own people here at home.

It is just over a century since English Parliamentary government was established in Upper Canada. The principles, the settled admissions, the concessions as to individual liberty, the agreements as to individual responsibility upon which that system is based are essentially English. Magna Charta is all English. Wars and struggles established the English Parliament and the confidence of the people in their Parliament at a time when in the rest of Europe the people yet agreed that they existed for the benefit of the King, not he for their service; when France might be hurled into war at the bidding of the King's mistress; when Venice was governed by secret and arbitrary councils; when Germany was an aggregation of large or small privateering armies; when Spain was passing through her stages of Oriental magnificence, the end of which was Oriental lassitude; when Ireland was sending generation after generation, century after century of her people along the narrow way of martyrdom.

Constituting, therefore, the mass which we are required to look upon as homogeneous, and which is to work out its destiny under our institutions, are the English, whose every fibre is tempered with the Parliamentary idea; the French, who came to this country while yet the Kings held France, whose fellows in Mirabeau's time were incapable of governing themselves by the English method, and whose fellows to-day in the old land will leave the senate house in droves if a new tribune appear on the corner or a man on a black horse ride through the streets; the Scotch, who accept English methods only when thereby they can

control the matter in hand, and who as they took control of the mother Parliament in Chatham's time, now take control of the offshoots in the colonies; the Irish, who, by English misgovernment for centuries, were forced to hold the seat of English power in execration and were by the withholding of natural liberty and education rendered to a degree unfitted for the Parliamentary system. To these must be added a generation, an admixture of all these perhaps, but still primarily and earnestly Canadian, and yet another class holding views resultant upon the study of American practices.

As between French Canadians and English-speaking Canadians the lines of divergence and the lines of assimilation, such as there be, are pretty clearly defined. It is among the other races that a common language is made, by interested persons, to obscure serious diversities of thought and existence; and the Irish Catholics suffer most by it.

In this country the day when a reputable public man would charge Irish Catholics generally with lack of genuine patriotic spirit, is happily past. Attacks upon Catholic priests and Catholic institutions are likewise abandoned. George Brown adopted that policy from the Orangemen and to them he returned it; the Orangemen put forth their Sovereigns to speak, and the Sovereigns have forgotten their instructions; from them the mission descended to the preachers for notoriety; from them to the hoodlums of the bye streets; from them to the P.P.A.; from them to Mr. Dalton McCarthy; but he too has discarded the mantle and appears in armor against the French, taking Marlborough for his prototype rather than Titus Oates.

Still, Irish Catholics are a long way from enjoying full citizenship, a long way from participating fully in the Governmental institutions of Canada.

To receive, or to repel Irish Catholic support, as expediency may dictate, has come to be a part of the plan of operations of almost every candidate or party. Seven centuries have taught English, Irish and Scotch Protestants that the part of the Irish Catholics is to hew the wood and draw the water. Unfortunately the same seven centuries, and the single Canadian century have confirmed in the Irish Catholic himself an acceptance, unexpressed perhaps, but tacit and resentful, of this condition. The Scotchman will in person demand a public position as his right; an Irish-Catholic will shame-facedly and suppliantly proffer his perhaps superior abilities. There are counties where the ranters shout loudest for common Canadianism, and where at the same time an Irish Catholic speaker would scarcely be listened to, and the ablest Irish Catholic in the Dominion could not receive a party nomination. Do we not all remember the quiet self-sufficiency of the Ontario Government when demonstrating that Catholics were not represented according to their population either in number of official positions or in remuneration for public services. Whose is the greater shame is perhaps a debatable question.

Is it any wonder that with so important an actual, though unrecognized, re-division of the enfranchised population, there should be the evils which attend our administration, and that a man like Mr. Blake should shrink from coping with him. Incapacity, false views, expensive and ineffectual civil service, corruption by wholesale and in detail, bribery to persons and to Provinces, how, if these things exist, can they be overcome when voters can be classified into herds and driven this way or that by arguments addressed to each? Quebec has an uniform electorate, and we know what happened there when evil doings were made plain to the people. It may be doubted if the Dominion could show so clear an account with conscience on such an occasion.

What is the remedy for the grievance as it exists among Irish Catholics?

To participate in all public affairs; to insist upon so doing and to be not deterred by the stare of others. Representation is but a delusion and a makeshift unless it be backed by active participation. The best way to meet the appeals of others for community of thought and of endeavour is by demanding of themselves the recognition of the common citizenship, of its rights as well as its duties.

Florence Nightingale.

The press in general is brimful of laudations of the many virtues and heroic character of the great and good woman, who forty years ago left home and friends in England to nurse the wounded and dying in the hospitals of Scutari during the Crimean war. She has now reached her seventy-fifth birthday, and hearty congratulations have reached her from many eloquent lips and pens in the British Empire. No woman's deeds of true philanthropy and self-sacrifice are better entitled to national recognition. During the painful progress of the war protracted during two severe winters, English and American journals were filled with praise of the noble woman "who lamp in hand, walked each night through the long lines of sick or wounded soldiers; and who with a few assistants ministered to the wants and assuaged the sufferings of 4,000 patients. One of the private soldiers, as reported in the Times of that exciting period said: She would speak to one and another and nod and smile to many more; but she could not to all you know, for we lay there by the hundreds; but we could kiss her shadow as it fell on the wall at night, and lay our heads on our pillow again content. On her return from her field of labour, with peace universal proclaimed, the Queen presented her with a magnificent jewel attached to which was the inscription "To Florence Nightingale, as a mark of esteem and gratitude for her devotion towards the Queen's brave soldiers. From Victoria R., 1855."

While the highest and most deserving encomiums are now lavished on the meritorious life and deeds of the heroic lady, and no one grudges her all the praise she may receive, it must appear strange that not even mention is made of others equally deserving. Long before Miss Nightingale reached the

scene of conflict French Nuns had been attending to the sick and wounded of the allied armies. After the Battle of Alma, the first engagement of the Crimean War, it was found that no provisions had been made for the sick and wounded. There were no doubt surgeons and their assistants in plenty ready to probe and amputate. But there were no female nurses to assist the regular doctors and administer sedatives or tender those soothing cares and attentions, which alone can give hope and bring back life.

French Sisters of Mercy however were no respectors of persons or nationality. They gave all the assistance in their power in the British hospital until the arrival of Florence Nightingale. The latter was accompanied by several lay nurses and a body of soldiers' wives who did very well for a short time. Insubordination and frequent neglect of duty with other matters of complaint caused Miss Nightingale to dispense with the services of the greater number of them, and to request of the authorities to send out to her as many Sisters of Mercy and Charity as Cardinal Cullen would dispose of. With the aid of a large number of Catholic Nuns, Florence Nightingale succeeded in her mission of heroic benevolence. But while her praises are trumpeted forth to the ends of the earth, the devotion and sacrifices of the humble followers of St. Vincent de Paul are recorded in Heaven. The very names of the Sisters of Charity who earned crowns and jewels equally with Miss Nightingale are known only to God. And it is a fact worth mentioning that some of those nuns belonged to most noble and distinguished families both in Ireland and England.

At a banquet held in Edinburgh after the war in honour of Miss Nightingale a poem was read by the Poet McNeil, of which the burden ran thus:

Oh! earth but once heard such a tale
So heavenly and so human,
As that of Florence Nightingale
The angel type in woman.

The soldier dreamt of home and sleep
Beneath the drooping willow;
He woke, she pass'd, her shadow fell,
He kissed it on his pillow.

The Catholic Citizen, at that time printed in this city, had comments similar to those we make to-day on the utter neglect and silence of the British press in regard to the great services rendered at that time by the Irish Sisters of Mercy. A correspondent sent to that paper a few lines as a set-off to McNeil's ditty:

We oft and oft hear such a tale,
As Heavenly and as human
As that of Florence Nightingale,
Proud Albion's only woman;

And every day and every night,
The orphan and the widow
May kiss such shadows as alight
With blessings on their pillow.

Speaking of the Emperor of Germany, M. Jules Simon says: "He speaks French like a Parisian. Napoleon III., who knew a great deal about literature, had a strong German accent, and Napoleon I. spoke with an Italian accent. Emperor William of Germany could have given them both lessons in French. He is also a fine English and Italian scholar."