

NOTES FROM ESTERHAZY

On the 17th of December there took place in the village of Esterhazy a well attended meeting of Catholics to consider the advisability and possibility of building a church there.

It might interest some of your readers to know in what part of the Northwest Esterhazy is situated, as this is the first time I think, this name will appear in your valuable paper.

Esterhazy is one of the stations on the new Kirkella Branch, built and operated by the C.P.R. during the past year. This railway, as its name indicates, branches off at Kirkella, the last station in Manitoba west of Winnipeg on the C.P.R. Main line. It runs from there in a northerly direction until it reaches the beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley a few miles beyond Rocanville. From there it winds its way down the banks of that valley in a westerly direction, having a station at Tantalion, right by the Qu'Appelle river, where the valley has a width of about a mile. Continuing its way, the railway, after a few miles reaches the Little Cut Arm Creek, a small river, if it may thus be called, one of the tributaries of the Qu'Appelle.

Following the course of the Cut Arm, a siding, Hazelcliff, is soon reached, from where the ascent up the banks of the Little Cut Arm is commenced. For about ten miles the traveller follows the very romantic scenery of this little creek, and at the top of the bank there becomes visible the prosperous little village of Esterhazy.

This village experienced such rapid growth that but four months after the first building was put up, it was thought expedient by its enterprising business men to have it incorporated as a village according to the statutes of the N.W.T. (Village Ordinance).

An overseer was elected at a most enthusiastic meeting and the resolution passed to issue debentures to have the necessary improvements made in the way of grading the principal streets and laying sidewalks.

To-day Esterhazy, which within a year has grown from babyhood to manhood, can show up close to 300 inhabitants. There are four fine elevators with a storage capacity of 150,000 bushels, four large general stores, two hardware stores, a three storey hotel, two fine livery stables, a barbershop, a townhall, two churches, two butcher shops, three implement shops, a physician, real estate agent and several other minor business places, as well as a number of private houses.

The surrounding population is about the most cosmopolitan in the West. There are first of all Hungarians, then Bohemians, English speaking people, French Canadians, Swedes, Slavonians, Germans and Belgians.

But now, I think, that after this long digression I should commence speaking about the principal object of this communication.

As can be easily guessed from the enumeration of the different nationalities, Catholics are to be found here in great numbers and representing many races. This fact shows once more the catholicity of our Church which embraces peoples of all tongues, but also presents a difficulty which, though not insurmountable, nevertheless requires some tact and skill, so as to have each one get his share of ministrations from the Parish Priest in charge. After considering for some time the best means to be taken for the spiritual welfare of all nationalities concerned, the conclusion was reached that nothing better could be done, in order to satisfy all and also to ensure the expansion of the parish, than to prepare a division of the present parish of Kaposvar, four miles south of Esterhazy, and to decide on building a church at Kaposvar for the Hungarian Catholics, who are about 50 per cent. of the population, and one in the village of Esterhazy for all the others.

I should therefore add that the former decided, two days prior to the meeting at Esterhazy, to build a church by themselves.

The meeting at Esterhazy, as well as that at Kaposvar, was most enthusiastic and unanimous. Though of the possible number of about 50 paying members, there were only 27 present, all the same the most prominent ones were there and the meeting could be called a most representative one.

Rev. Father Woodcutter opened the meeting with a few introductory and explanatory remarks and called upon those present to express their views on the matter. The first two points discussed were the advisability and possibility of the building of the church in question. It was unanimously resolved that the building of a church in Esterhazy under the circumstances was quite feasible and most necessary.

The meeting then proceeded to elect a committee charged with conferring with the parish priest about all details

concerning the construction of the church. To do justice to all parties interested, it was decided to have all nationalities represented on the committee and consequently four men were elected.

The next step was to find out how much each one present was willing to contribute towards the building fund and within a few minutes the sum of \$1310 was secured, leaving about 25 members, not present at the meeting, who are to be visited by the different members of the committee with a view of giving them an opportunity of also recording their subscriptions.

The next point, and perhaps the most difficult one to decide, was, whether it would be advisable and necessary to build a church not only for the actual number of members belonging to the new parish, but also to calculate on the most probable increase in population in the near future. After several had expressed their opinion on the matter, it was almost unanimously resolved to build a church larger than what would be necessary for the present population, without incurring any risk whatever, and that the committee be instructed to spend about 50 per cent. more than the ultimate subscription list would indicate towards spring.

Thus, judging from the unanimity of this first meeting, we may expect to be able to build a fine church that will be a credit to our Catholic population and an ornament to the village of Esterhazy.

Another benefit surely to be derived from the energetic stand taken by our people will be the increase of Catholic business men here and also of Catholics wanting to go into farming, as there is still a great deal of good farming land to be had in the immediate neighborhood of Esterhazy at reasonable prices.

Vivat, Crescat et Florescat!

ANCIENT AND MODERN MIRACLES
(The Casket).

The Presbyterian Witness compares the cures at Lourdes with those said to be wrought by Dowie and the Christian Science people. So far as we are aware, however, neither Dowie nor Mrs Eddy has set up a medical bureau where all the cures are subjected to a most rigid examination in which those who do not believe in the pretensions of the founder of Zion City or of the Mother of Christian Science are invited to take part. Such a medical bureau is established at Lourdes, and even infidel physicians cannot deny the severity of its tests. Like Dr. Berillon they simply call certain cures inexplicable on any principle known to science. In this their judgment coincides with that of the eminent English doctor, J. R. Gasquet, who said after studying the reports most carefully and examining personally in the matter as closely as he could, that while many of the cures might be explained in a natural way, there were many others that could not be so explained. As to the case of Pierre Delaunoy, which the Witness never fails to refer to when Lourdes is mentioned, it is well known that locomotor ataxia can be shammed, and therefore its cure can be shammed. There are professional beggars on the streets of New York who are experts at imitating all kinds of nervous attacks. But no shaming is possible in the case of ulceration of the stomach, cancer, or the last stage of consumption. And all three of these diseases have been cured at Lourdes, as unfriendly physicians have been forced to acknowledge.

"The whole system of holy wells and shrines and bones, and scapulars, and medals and pilgrimages, is rather to be condemned than commended. It is a system that comes to us Christians from dark ages and dark lands. Christianity is neither strengthened, nor promoted, nor purified by these 'human devices.'" Thus speaks the editor of the Presbyterian Witness. Surely he must be forgetting his Old Testament. Naaman the Syrian thought it absurd that Eliseus should bid him wash himself in the Jordan, but God had willed that the cure of his leprosy was to be effected by that washing. The non-Catholic who scoffs at the supposed difference between a holy well and any other well is a sceptic of the same sort. God willed again that a dead man should return to life at the touch of the bones of the same Eliseus. Is the editor of the Presbyterian Witness so deep in the councils of the Most High as to know that He does not will that cures should be wrought by the touch of the bones of St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin? God willed that some of His people should be cured of snake-bite by gazing on a piece of

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brass, set up by Moses in their sight; why call it superstitious to believe that marvellous effects may be produced by the wearing of a brass medal which has been blessed with the prayers of the Church? There was greater danger of the Israelites adoring the brazen serpent than there is of any Catholic giving divine honors to a miraculous medal. A scapular certainly has no more virtue than the hem of our Lord's garment or the handkerchiefs which had been in contact with the body of St. Paul. Yet these bits of wool and linen cured people who touched them with the proper dispositions. Even Newman, while yet a Protestant, thought the woman who kissed the hem of our Lord's garment was guilty of superstition. It did not occur to him then that Jesus said: "Thy faith,"—not thy superstition,—"hath made thee whole."

Christianity is most emphatically strengthened, and promoted, and purified by all these things which the Witness condemns. The proof is that where these things are discarded, there is no Christianity except among the few who have no need of these things. They are always a few, always a minority. The majority of men must be reached through their senses, and that is why Protestantism has no hold on the masses of the population in any land. Many bodily cures have been wrought at Lourdes, but their number is insignificant in comparison with the spiritual cures of those who have had their faith in God revived or strengthened by what they saw and heard there. We have personally known only one man who went to Lourdes seeking a cure. He came home to die, but his wife said: "I am glad he was able to make his great act of faith." That is the proper spirit of pilgrimage and shrine visiting. Any Catholic who feels no need of scapulars or medals is at perfect liberty to do without them. All that the Church demands from them is that they do not condemn the use of such things in general, and do not sneer at those who use them.

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A FEW POINTERS

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There are districts that have been settled for many years in which land can be purchased. Some of this may be unbroken prairie which still possesses all the richness and productive powers of our virgin prairies. Other lands, cultivated and having comfortable farm buildings, are ready for immediate possession.

There are Provincial Government lands, Dominion Government homesteads, and railway lands to be secured.

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Location with respect to railways, towns, timber and water determines the price of land.

For information regarding homesteads apply at the Dominion Land Office.

For purchase of Provincial lands apply at the Provincial Land Office in the Parliament Buildings.

For C. P. R. or C. N. R. lands apply at the land offices of said railway companies.

For lands owned by private individuals apply to the various real estate agents in the city.

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