

STRATFORD'S SHRINE

St. Joseph's Church Consecrated.

Most Rev. Dr. Carbery, O. P., Consecrator.

Eloquent Discourses by His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto and the Bishop of London.

Masterly Effort of Rev. Dr. Kelly, of Detroit, Treasurer of the Irish National League of America.

Not since that glorious morning of the lovely springtide of 1874 when the Very Rev. Peter Francis Crinon, Priest of Holy Church, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman, and Vicar General of London issued from the consecrating hand of His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto to take rank and place in the Christian hierarchy as Bishop of Hamilton, has the beautiful city on the Avon witnessed such an imposing gathering of bishops and clergy as that which assembled within its walls on Sunday last. The word had gone abroad that St. Joseph's Church having been entirely released from debt was to be consecrated and that a multitude of the faithful and their non-Catholic friends gathered to witness this impressive ceremonial as has never upon any occasion met in Stratford. The tidings too that the pulpit was in the morning to be filled by the Rev. Dr. Charles Reilly, of Detroit, Treasurer of the Irish National League of America, and in the evening by the eloquent Bishop of London and the intimation that His Grace of Toronto might also for a few moments address the people of Ontario's "Garden City" contributed not a little to bring together the vast concourse of people that filled this majestic temple morning and evening. So great was the crowd on both occasions that standing room was not obtainable at either service and many had to leave through inability to catch even a glimpse of the altar. The following is a correct list of prelates and clergy in attendance:

- ARCHBISHOP Lynch, Most Rev. John Joseph... Toronto
BISHOPS Carbery, Most Rev. Jas. Joseph O.P. Hamilton
Walsh, Most Rev. John, D. D. London
BAYARD, Rev. Joseph... Sarnia
BRANNAN, Rev. P. J. ... St. Mary's
GERARD, Rev. Joseph... Belle River
KENNEDY, Rev. Joseph... London
KILROY, Rev. E. B., D. D. Stratford
LENNON, Rev. P. J. ... Brantford
MURPHY, Very Rev. Dean... Irishtown
NORTHGAVES, Rev. George... Stratford
O'CONNOR, Very Rev. Dean... Sandwich
O'CONNOR, Rev. John... Maidstone
QUIGLEY, Rev. Joseph... Stratford
O'NEILL, Rev. John... Kinkora
REILLY, Rev. Charles O., D. D. Detroit
WAGNER, Very Rev. Dean... Windsor

Though we have already given an historical sketch of the church of Stratford our readers will know peruse the following taken from the London Free Press of Monday, June 7th, with much interest:

"Stratford, although the youngest in the bright sisterhood of Canadian cities, occupies by no means the least prominent position, and its rapid progress reflects credit upon the enterprise and energy of its citizens. But although its growth has been so marked the development in its midst of Catholicism has proved even more notable. It is a remarkable fact that, since the very inception of the village from which has arisen the fine city that now constitutes the centre point in the county of Perth, the Catholics have held a leading position in the community, and their onward movement has been identical with its best interests. Upwards of half a century has elapsed since the first emigrant settlers from the Old World found a lodging place on the banks of the placid river. When Stratford was selected as the proper designation for the burgh, its founders, in memory of the illustrious birthplace of the immortal Shakespeare, chose for the river the appellation of Avon, and so it has remained ever since. The original settler was John Sergeant, an Irish gentleman from Tipperary, and he was followed in the same year—1827—by several others. In their struggles they were sustained by the

POWER OF THE FAITH, and amongst the first arrangements perfected was a movement for the holding of regular service and the due administration of the rites prescribed by the mother church. In the fall of 1832 Father Dempsey traversed the dense wilderness then existing between the new village and St. Thomas, and celebrated the first mass there, while in the following year he solemnized the first marriage and baptized the first white child within the environs of the place. For some years the settlers were blessed only with occasional services, until 1841, when Father Gibney was given the church of Guelph and Stratford for three years. It was during his priesthood that the first church was built. It was an unpretentious frame structure not worthy of the slightest comparison with the beautiful edifice that now serves for the sacred purpose. In 1843 the first confirmation was held, but it was not till 1856 that a priest took up his residence permanently in the then thriving place. Father Conney continued in the pastorate until 1858, when he was succeeded by the good, pious and lamented Peter Francis Crinon. The ministry of

FATHER CRINON proved productive of incalculable benefit to the Catholic portion of the community. Possessed of great strength of purpose he threw himself heartily into the work, and the church made wonderful strides in advance. He established the first separate school—there are at present two fine educational institutions of the kind—built two churches, and finally

succeeded in having constructed the church of St. Joseph, which even to-day remains beyond all question the most ornate, substantial, commodious and beautiful of the entire diocese of London, with the exception of St. Peter's Cathedral, while its altars and ornaments most certainly surpass anything in Western Ontario. Father Crinon continued in charge of the church until April 19th, 1874, when he was consecrated Bishop of Hamilton. Upon the departure of Bishop Crinon to his new sphere of labor

REV. EDMOND BURRE KILROY was appointed to Stratford, and still remains in charge. His high mental attainments are testified by his elevation to the dignity of D. D., and his eminent ability for the position he occupies is abundantly shown by the great success that has attended his ministry. When he assumed his holy office in the town he found the church deeply involved in debt, but this proved no deterrent to him. Imbued with the most indomitable energy and steadfastness of purpose, he resolutely undertook the task of wiping off the entire debt. His efforts were ably seconded by his flock, but he proved a whole host in himself. Casting himself zealously into the breach he struggled and persevered amidst trials and darkness, and overcame every obstacle that presented itself, while at the same time he performed earnestly his church work, was ever foremost in endeavoring to promote the progress of the community in which his lot was cast, and to contribute in the utmost degree to the temporal and spiritual welfare of those under his charge. And to-day he has the proud satisfaction of realizing

THE MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS that has crowned his efforts. The sacrifice, the self-denial, the rigid adherence to duty involved in the task are all forgotten, as he can gaze complacently upon the monument, grander, more noble and more enduring than any mere form of stone or metal, that will long remain to endear his memory to future generations, and to prove a shining example of what can be accomplished through energy, zeal, piety, perseverance, and a resolute determination to be deterred by nothing. Most palpably in Dr. Kilroy's vocabulary no such word as fail can be found. The spacious and beautiful church, two fine schools, a convent and residence now stand within the precincts of the city, and all are completely out of debt. While the parish is in a highly prosperous condition and with every possible encouragement for the future the outlook is most auspicious. No cloud dims the horizon, but in the effulgence of perfect success always the worthy, untiring and accomplished priest can lay the proud pronoun to his soul, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." The most sincere congratulations, the most hearty plaudits can scarcely suffice to render a fitting tribute to the good priest whose elegant church was solemnly consecrated yesterday.

THE CHURCH. Before speaking of the consecration it may not be amiss to give a brief sketch of the church itself. It is a substantial, well built edifice of brick, and presents a pleasing appearance to the eye, more particularly through the lofty entrance, the neat, trim and handsome character of the surroundings, and the manner in which the front of the building and the approaches thereto have been recently repainted and adorned. But if the exterior be attractive, what can be adequately said of the interior? Lofty ceilings rising to a great height, wide windows, spacious aisles, comfortable seats and gorgeous furnishings combine to form a beautiful picture and the total ensemble of the whole is elegant beyond compare. The structure is 164 feet in length, by 60 in width, and is provided with three aisles—the main and two side—all of which are quite ample. Seven heavy gilded pillars, finely fluted, support at each side the three lofty ceilings, which are beautifully grained in plaster, while light is afforded by twenty-one elegant stained glass windows. The vestry is also finely finished and well furnished, reflecting credit upon the energy of the pastor and the liberality of the congregation, who undoubtedly possess perhaps the handsomest and most finely furnished church edifice in the Province, and one to which they may well turn with pride. To

DESCRIBE THE ALTARS, three, would be a matter of extreme difficulty, especially if it be sought to convey an accurate impression of the reality. They are beyond question magnificent samples of workmanship, finished in exquisite style, and adorned in a manner that has never been equalled in the west. Occupying the entire central position of the sanctuary is the main altar, standing forty feet in height and soaring aloft to the very dome of the building. It is constructed of walnut and ash, elegantly carved, and is surmounted by a truly magnificent statue of the Sacred Heart. As accessories to this are eight other handsome statues, four each being placed upon the side altars. Formerly,

THIS MASSIVE STRUCTURE stood close to the wall, and appeared almost to merge into the rear wall, concealing in a great measure the beautiful window at the rear, upon which is pictured a vivid representation of the solemn scenes of the crucifixion and the fondly anticipated conception of the glorious resurrection, when Jesus, the Son of Mary, shall come with His infinite Father to reward the just and punish the unjust. The window is a beautiful work of art, and it is finely to be seen in the present position of the altar. The work of moving out the ponderous structure was a most prodigious task, and was undertaken with much fear and trembling upon the part of the priests for the altar, but with perfect confidence by Major Henry A. Gray, whose valuable services were tendered gratuitously, and under whose indefatigable supervision all the extensive alterations and improvements have been successfully executed. A great tribute of praise is certainly due to him for the manner in which the duty has been fulfilled. In consequence of this being in a large degree a missionary country, the altars are very often made temporary—as is the case with the smaller ones here—in order that they may be



ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, STRATFORD.

moved as required, but in view of the consecration the main altar has been RENDERED A PERMANENCY. The being solidly rebuilt of brick and stone from the foundation to the coping. It is surmounted by a very ornate and handsome slab of polished marble imported from Rutland, Vermont. Upon this stone are marked five crosses, one in the centre, and one at each corner, and near the front is a small aperture, wherein during the consecration ceremony was deposited a silver casket containing the sacred relics, after which the aperture was covered and sealed up. Twelve iron plates with crosses have been inserted in the walls at intervals, each having a candle above it, and these were also duly blessed yesterday.

THE EPITHE SIDE. Upon the right, or epistle side, stands the altar of St. Joseph, which is another most beautiful structure of walnut and black ash, and was donated by the late Catherine Corcoran, wife of James Corcoran, Esq. In the apex at the back of this altar is placed a very handsome statue of St. Joseph, which was imported direct from Munich in Germany, and is a fine piece of workmanship.

THE GOSPEL SIDE. The left, or gospel side, is devoted to the altar of Blessed Virgin, and it is also built of ash and walnut, picked out in gold, so are its companions. It was the gift of Patrick Bonnon, and is surmounted by an elegantly designed statue of the Virgin Mary, bearing in her arms the infant Jesus. This was also imported from Munich expressly.

THE SANCTUARY. The sanctuary is very large and commodious, and has been carefully furnished and carpeted. Suspended in front of the main altar is a magnificent and costly ornamentation, which has been moved several feet, and conveniently arranged, so that it may be raised or lowered at pleasure. The walls of the sanctuary are paneled in oil, picked out in two pretty tints of blue, imparting to it a pleasing appearance. Two thrones are also placed in the sanctuary, and in rear of the main altar is a passage-way and a series of repositories for the storing of the vestments, altar linens and sacred vessels appertaining thereto.

THE ACCESSORIES. The crosses placed around the church are inscribed with the names of persons who have been prominently identified with the history of the church, and whose record will thus be transmitted to posterity. At intervals around the sides of the church are the usual fourteen stations—the way of the cross—each of these being magnificently painted in oil, and forming a very artistic picture. The choir gallery has also been remodelled and rendered more comfortable, and everything possible done to improve the edifice in all respects.

THE SEATING CAPACITY has through an ingenious adaptation of the existing circumstances been so enlarged as to accommodate fully one thousand persons, and the success achieved in this respect furnishes another triumph for Major Gray. There is one piece of furniture that most decidedly should not be overlooked, and that is the pulpit, which stands in front of the left altar. It is circular in form, elegantly carved and embossed, constructed of black walnut and ash, and delicately tinted in gold. It is a most ornate piece of workmanship, is a perfect facsimile of the pulpit to which the highest premium was awarded at the Centennial Exposition, and in thorough harmony with the furnishing of the church throughout.

THE CONSECRATION. Sunday last dawned beautifully and a more auspicious time could not have been selected for the solemn ceremony which has rewarded Dr. Kilroy for all his struggles and earnest efforts. Shortly after four o'clock in the morning, masses began to be said by the visiting clergy in the Convent and School House adjoining the building; but the impressive ceremony of the consecration was not inaugurated until 7 o'clock, when the customary procession moved thrice around the church, and the edifice was solemnly consecrated by Right Rev. Dr. Carbery, of Hamilton, the proceedings acquiring much more brilliancy through the august presence of His Grace Archbishop Lynch and His Lordship Bishop Walsh, of London, who appeared in full Pontificals. The altar, the central point in the material portion of Catholic worship, was next consecrated, the silver casket containing the sacred relics deposited in the aperture prepared for it, and the whole sealed up. This ceremony was of a very impressive and dignified nature throughout, and was carried out with all due solemnity, during the morning.

A VERY LARGE ASSEMBLAGE. Gathered in front of the church and anxiously awaited the opening of the doors, which were thrown apart at 10.30 o'clock, when the procession, composed of the acolytes, cross-bearer, attending priests, bishops and archbishops, passed the por-

tal, and after reaching the sanctuary assumed the seats assigned for them. The public were then permitted to enter, and in a short time every seat was filled, and chaises had to be brought into requisition. Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Dean Murphy, of Irishtown; the Officers of Honor were Dean Wagner, Windsor; and Rev. Dennis O'Connor, President of Sandwich College; Deacon and sub-Deacon, Revs. Joseph Bayard, Sarnia, and P. J. Brennan, St. Mary's; Masters of Ceremonies, Revs. G. Northgaves, Stratford, and Joseph Kennedy, of London.

THE CHOIR was under the direct management of Mr. O'Loane, assisted by Mr. Duggan, Mr. Gray, Mr. Trainor, Mr. Young, Miss Tibbs and Miss Hurley. The soloists were Miss Ford, St. Mary's; and Miss Chute, of Stratford.

DR. REILLY'S SERMON. "I have sanctified this house which thou buildest, to put my name there forever, and my eye and my heart shall be there always."—1 Kings, ix, 3. "My eyes also shall be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of him who shall pray in this place."—Ezek. viii, 15. Words taken from the book of Solomon, from the King and the Paraphrase; words beloved brethren, well calculated to inspire us with those sentiments of reverence which are due to the house of God as the vestibule of His immensity, a witness of His covenant and the temple of a worship which is the highest divine attributes. I say it is the vestibule of God's immensity. How profound the reflection, how vast the conception which acquaints us with the omnipresence of God! God present intimately and always to all creatures in the universe, whether living or inanimate, organic or inorganic. His conservative presence is the support of our material existence; by our intellectual and moral being is His presence as the temple of a worship which is the highest divine attributes. I say it is the vestibule of God's immensity. How profound the reflection, how vast the conception which acquaints us with the omnipresence of God! God present intimately and always to all creatures in the universe, whether living or inanimate, organic or inorganic. His conservative presence is the support of our material existence; by our intellectual and moral being is His presence as the temple of a worship which is the highest divine attributes. I say it is the vestibule of God's immensity. How profound the reflection, how vast the conception which acquaints us with the omnipresence of God! God present intimately and always to all creatures in the universe, whether living or inanimate, organic or inorganic. 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