

The Catholic Record

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THE MAGNA CHARTA

June 15th, 1915, was the seven hundredth anniversary of signing of the Magna Charta by King John.

It is still the keystone of English liberty. All that has since been obtained is little more than an confirmation or commentary.

Thus writes Hallam whose judgments carry the greater weight when we remember that he was the author of the Constitutional History of England.

Commenting further on the Great Charter Hallam says: "An equal distribution of civil rights to all classes of freemen forms the peculiar beauty of the Charter."

But much as is due to the Barons it is not solely, nor even chiefly, to them that we owe the Great Charter of our liberties.

Says Professor Green: (John) returned from defeat (in France) to find the nobles no longer banded together in secret conspiracies.

As Primate of England, Cardinal Langton was the recognized spokesman and champion of the people's rights.

THE VERY REV. DENIS O'CONNOR, V. G.

To the scholarly, zealous and capable Rector of St. Peter's Seminary has come a new honor and responsibility.

"Far, however," continues Green, "from being satisfied with resistance such as this to isolated acts of tyranny, it was the Archbishop's aim to restore on a formal basis the older freedom of the realm."

Langton was more than a freedom-loving Englishman, more than a fearless and conscientious Primate, he was the statesman of the movement which he directed until on June 15, 1915, the Great Charter of Liberties was signed at Runnymede.

Picturesque and illuminating are the glimpses we have of life and its conditions at this time in Catholic England.

At a meeting in St. Paul's the great Cardinal so infused the gathering with his own dauntless spirit that he was able to swear every man present to "fight for their liberties, if it were needful, even unto death."

At another secret meeting, under pretense of observing a saint's day, Langton, standing at the altar in the Church of St. Edmund, read the statement of the rights to be demanded from the King.

It is unfortunately impossible, here, to do more than indicate how intimately the Catholic Church in those far off times entered into the life of the people and into the civilization and political development of England.

Though happily passing almost entirely from historical scholarship, there is a surprising vitality in the popular and ignorant superstition that the Reformation marks the beginning of the era of personal and civil liberty.

Yet, speaking of the century of England's history which gave us the Magna Charta, Freeman says:

"In the root of the matter in our law and constitution itself those changes have been made which wrought the body politic of England into a shape which has left future ages nothing to do but to improve in detail."

It cannot too often be insisted upon that the liberties which we enjoy, the institutions of which we boast, the constitution in which we glory are all rooted deep and firm in those formative centuries when England was Catholic.

On this 700th anniversary of Magna Charta there is in progress a mightier struggle than that which culminated in wresting from a despotic king the Charter of our liberties.

Now a danger threatens of a different kind but equal in magnitude to Luther's revolt and the despotism of Henry and Elizabeth.

As St. Peter's Seminary becomes the Alma Mater of an ever growing proportion of the clergy of the Diocese it will be a holy home influence over the lives of its graduates.

It is fitting that the able young Rector of St. Peter's, whose industry and accurate scholarship are known to all, should be brought into that relationship with the whole diocesan clergy which will follow his appointment as Vicar-General of the Diocese of London.

The CATHOLIC RECORD congratulates the Very Rev. Father O'Connor, the clergy and the Bishop of London on this appointment which we feel sure will be greeted by all as most appropriate and most welcome.

THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT

We have before us a copy of the Bill introduced in the last session of the Ontario Legislature respecting the Superannuation of Teachers and Inspectors.

Briefly it proposes to establish a fund for superannuation of teachers from the following sources:

- (1) Every teacher shall contribute two per cent. of total yearly salary received. (2) Every school board shall contribute one per cent. of salary paid to every teacher employed.

Existing local funds are to be merged into the Provincial fund.

Provision is made for those who have been employed as teachers or inspectors for forty years or more for a suitable pension, also for those who have been thus employed for fifteen years if physically incapacitated.

There is no reason at all to doubt that the financial provisions are actually sound and adequate.

The Bill defines the term "Teacher" as follows: "Teacher" shall mean a person qualified according to the regulations of the Department of Education to teach in a public school, separate school, high school or collegiate institute, Provincial, normal or model school or a school to which The Industrial Education Act applies.

Section II. reads thus: If the salary of any teacher or inspector for any year is less than \$550, it shall be taken as being \$550 for the purposes of this Act.

This section would materially and chiefly affect Separate schools staffed by religious teachers. We take it, however, "for the purposes of this Act" means that \$550 would be the basis not only of the assessment of contributions to the Superannuation Fund but also of the distribution of the benefits.

Let, however, undue importance be given to this provision of the Act it may be well to consider the fact that the apparent remuneration—the real salary paid out of school taxes—of religious teachers is not the whole cost of maintaining religious teaching communities.

But Catholics give these communities something more than money, whether paid directly or indirectly. They give them their best blood, the zealous young women who consecrate their lives to the work and who alone make possible the perpetuation of the religious teaching orders.

Now, also, we have the Christian Brothers. In sympathy, in training, in qualifications they are now of and for Ontario, free to develop along such lines as will meet Ontario's special educational needs.

The interests of our teaching Sisters and Brothers are our interests; they are one, inseparable, identical.

Religious teachers as well as lay teachers become incapacitated. They must be maintained, somehow; sometimes at the double cost of re-

taining their services after they have become unfitted for their work.

We are given to understand that the Separate school boards are soon to consider the Superannuation Act. It may be well to point out that the boards pay into this fund one fifth of the total contribution.

Should Catholics ask that religious teaching communities be exempted from the operations of the proposed Act there is little doubt that their request would be easily granted.

It is our firm conviction that it is in the interest of the schools, in the interest of the religious communities, in the interest of the Catholic people that we should bear the burden and share the benefits of the proposed Superannuation Fund.

THE LATE ARCHBISHOP LANGEVIN

Though not in robust health for some years Archbishop Langevin quite recently appeared to have recovered his old time vigor and energy.

Louis Philippe Adelaire Langevin was born at St. Isidore, Quebec, in 1855 and was educated in Montreal, being raised to the priesthood in 1882.

There with his usual energy he worked for his people, and consecrated a magnificent new cathedral in 1908.

With regard to the larger question of Catholic education for the Province of Manitoba he never ceased to protest against the double school tax imposed on the urban Catholic population.

The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of St. Jerome's College at Berlin, on Tuesday and Wednesday of last week, was one of the most important semi-public events of the year.

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF ST. JEROME'S COLLEGE

The festivities in connection with the celebration gained particular prominence through the presence of the Papal Delegate, Mgr. P. F. Stagni, from Ottawa, together with the Archbishops and Bishops from Ontario, and hundreds of priests, as well as very many of the Alumni of the College.

His Excellency the Papal Delegate reached Berlin on Tuesday noon, and in the evening was welcomed to the city by His Worship Mayor Hett.

Here, then, from the pen of Canon Sheehan we have the Fenian's apologies. They were not soldiers, but preachers, prophets, and martyrs.

The "Rising" took place just as Halpin had predicted. Halpin himself was shot after a three hour battle single handed against the entire forces of the crown.

"THE GRAVES AT KILMORNA"

This posthumous work of the beloved Canon Sheehan is not a clerical story on the lines of "My New Curate," nor is it a study of social conditions, as is "Miriam Lucas."

Both Canon Sheehan and Monsignor Benson have shown that an intricate plot is not essential to the making of a capital story.

The Fenian Brotherhood, as everybody knows, was condemned by the Church as being a secret, oath-bound society.

"You and I will be shot. Our bodies will lie stretched out on Irish heather; our blood will have soaked back into our mother's breast."

"But that is not all," said Halpin stoically. Then a strange light came into his eyes.

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life in an English convict prison. In the portrayal of some of these stirring events we see Canon Sheehan at his best.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

OUR FRIENDS of the Presbyterian have had another bad outbreak of the "Romanism" fever.

It would perhaps be too much to hope that the reverend editor of the Presbyterian could so efficiently divert himself of hereditary bias to correct-ly appraise the situation.

A MUCH MORE honest type of Presbyterian utters in the same issue of our contemporary a warning of another sort.

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Presbyterian antecedents, Mr. Taylor is right. But could he not begin with the travesty of the Mass and other Catholic ceremonies which, in defiance of ordinary decency, Canadian Presbyterianism has adopted in its efforts to deceive the Ruthenians of the North West.

A THIRD Presbyterian sign of the times! A contributor to the Edinburgh Scotsman, the leading organ of public opinion north of the Tweed, indulges in some woful reflections upon the falling birth rate in Scotland.

THIS IS the situation as it is viewed by one branch of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. It should be borne in mind that Presbyterianism is there divided into several rival organizations.

1908, Scottish births, 133,525, or 29 1/2 per 1,000. 1913, Scottish births, 120,549, or 25 1/2 per 1,000.

In regard to baptisms: 1897, Total births, 125,877. Established Church baptisms, 40,478. United Free Church baptisms, 23,490. 1914. Total births, 123,923. Established Church baptisms, 31,978. United Free Church baptisms, 16,880.

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IT IS to be hoped that such exhortations will be of service. But one cannot but feel that where the aim and end of a nation is material prosperity, without reference to any supernatural end, and when the Sacramental character of the marriage tie is scoffed at and repudiated the one motive which alone can safeguard the proper end of matrimony is wanting.