

WILD RICE.

A Model French Canadian Parish in North Dakota.

Few Canadians are aware that there is, near Fargo, a thoroughly French Canadian parish, founded about thirty-five years ago, and now in a most flourishing condition.

The farmers around the church of St. Benedict, Wild Rice, are all French Canadians, and all of them come from the same district, that of Three Rivers. This probably accounts for the oneness of spirit that animates them. Among the eighty families that make up this model parish, not a few number as many as eighteen children. Besides the public schools, which are open during the five months of the summer and autumn, where the teachers and pupils are all Catholics, there are two exclusively Catholic schools, open generally during the winter, where the teachers are paid forty dollars a month by voluntary subscriptions. There is question of establishing in the parish a convent of teaching sisters, who would certainly find splendid work to do in Wild Rice; five thousand dollars have already been promised for the purpose.

Not one of those who attend Mass at St. Benedict's fails to make his Easter duty. On Sundays, before Mass, many well-dressed young men may be seen going through the stations of the cross, a devotion earnestly recommended by the Redemptorist Father Vermeiren, who preached a retreat here two years ago.

The Catholic Order of Foresters numbers sixty members, who are very faithful to their duties. The "Dames de St. Anne," founded on the Feast of St. Anne, July 26, 1902, by Father Vermeiren, number 75 members. These societies have contributed generously to the adornment of the parish church. In particular this year the Christmas crib, at which the Mayor, Pierre Legare, and others worked during three days, is a very tasty affair.

Although the Church edifice is one of the best Canadian Churches in the diocese of Fargo, the ambitious parishioners contemplate a new building, the construction of which, however, will probably be put off for four or five years.

The soil of Wild Rice is extremely fertile. The result is that the poorest farmer in the parish is worth at least ten thousand dollars. Land sells at about \$45 an acre.

This parish was founded by the late Father Genin. Among the many priests that succeeded him were: Father F. A. Bernier and Father E. Sevigny. Father C. A. R. Fournier, formerly of Oak Lake, Man., was requested by Bishop Shanley to take charge of this parish and did so during Easter week of this year. He found the priest's house a spacious, two-story residence, with twelve large rooms. As Wild Rice Church is three miles from the station of that name, on the Chicago, St. Paul & Milwaukee railway, Father Fournier had to buy a horse and the animal he chose was a very fine bay horse, costing two hundred dollars, rising six. On Christmas morning, this valuable horse, the finest in the parish, was accidentally killed. The parishioners immediately, of their own accord, promised to make good the loss and to present their popular pastor with a steed as spirited as the lost one.

One curious feature of this parish is that, although the parishioners have kept up all the good old Canadian customs, they are thoroughly loyal citizens of the United States, taking great interest in municipal and political affairs. French is the language of the Church, all sermons and announcements being in that language, and yet every man, woman and child speaks English fluently.

Rev. Father Fournier, whose illness was mentioned some time ago in this paper, is now, we are happy to say, completely restored to health, though a little thinner than he used to be.

As Father Drummond and he are united in the ties of a friendship dating from the time when Father Fournier was a professor in St. Boniface College, the latter invited the former to come and preach in French on Christmas Day. Starting on Tuesday, the 23rd, Father

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Drummond reached Fargo at midnight. Putting up at the Waldorf hotel, which may perhaps be equalled some day, but certainly is not yet, in Winnipeg, he left by the 7 a.m. train, which, however, did not pull out till 8.20 owing to the blizzard then raging. Good Catholics at Wild Rice Station tried to dissuade him from braving the storm; he might get lost on the prairie; you could not see anything ten yards off in the blinding whirlwinds of snow; but he wanted to say Mass on Christmas eve, and he found a doughty Scandinavian who piloted him safely, with one upset into a soft snow drift, to Father Fournier's hospitable home. Midnight Mass is not allowed in this diocese. At High Mass, which Father Fournier sang at 10.30, the music was of the grand old Canadian stamp, "la messe du second ton harmonisee," with local orchestra. Father Drummond preached on "the tidings of great joy," exhorting his hearers, who have been so blessed with this world's goods, to sit loose from them and seek the joy that is eternal. In the evening at Vespers, which he sang, he preached from Acts, 7: 22, "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and in his deeds." There was an evident correlation in the sacred text between the learning and the power of Moses. Education is a great lever in our day. Parents should not be content with a mere public school or elementary training. If they have clever children, they should give them the inestimable advantage of higher education under the guidance of the Church. This they would find in St. Boniface College, where the staff of professors is equal to any in Canada or in the United States. Learning combined with virtue and the true faith yields an irresistible power. No doubt learning without virtue—the usual product of godless education—was chiefly a curse, but with the combination of the two makes the perfect man, the man of influence in municipal, political and commercial circles.

Two former students of St. Boniface college, Alfred Richard and Joseph Prenovost, called on Father Drummond. They are both engaged in agricultural pursuits. The memory of Saint-Arnaud and Joseph Lajoie, both distinguished students of St. Boniface College, is still green in Wild Rice. The old friends of the latter are glad to see that his merit has been recognized by his admission into the Society of Jesus.

"GOD BLESS OUR DAD."

We happened into a house the other night and over the parlor door saw the legend, worked in red, "What is Home without a Mother?" Across the room was another brief desire, "God bless our Home."

Now, what is the matter with "God Bless Our Dad?" He gets up early, lights the fire, boils the egg, wipes the dew off the lawn with his boots, while many a mother is sleeping. He makes the weekly handout for the butcher, the grocer, milkman and baker and his little pile is badly worn before he has been home an hour. He stands off the bailiff and keeps the rent paid up. If Johnny needs a pair of new shoes, dad goes down in his hip and comes up with the price of a hard day's sweat. If Mary needs a new ribbon for her hair, or mother yearns for a wrapper and baby yowls for a rattle, down goes dad again and up comes

the chink. But if he buys a new pipe for a quarter, because the old one is getting strong, he is warned that smoking is an expensive habit, and that men have smoked up blocks and farms and happy homes.

When a show strikes town, dad comes with the price and ma goes out with a neighbor, and Mary sparks her beau in the parlor, dad's clothes are none too good, and grime will stick so he sits in the kitchen with the kids.

If there is a noise during the night, dad is kicked in the back and made to go downstairs to find the burglar and kill him. Mother darns the socks, yes, she does; but dad bought the socks in the first place, and the needles and the yarn afterwards. Mother does up the fruit, well, dad bought it all—and jars and sugar cost like the mischief. Dad buys the chicken for the Sunday dinner, and carves it himself and draws the neck from the ruins after every one else is served. "What is home without a mother?" Yes, that is all right, but what is a home without a father. Ten to one it is a boarding house, father is under a slab, and the landlady is the widow.

Dad, here's to you; you've got your faults—you may have lots of 'em, but you're all right, and we'll miss you when you're gone.—Davenport News.

COLORED PRIEST'S EXPERIENCE.

Father J. H. Dorsey, one of the only two colored priests in the whole United States, in a recent sermon at New Orleans, spoke a few words about his own experience:—

"I am a priest of the Holy Roman Catholic Church," said he, "and there is only one other priest of my race in the whole United States. This is not a question of social equality with me, but simply of being recognized as a priest of the grand, noble and enlightened Roman Church. In all my travels I have met with ovations. In Boston, Philadelphia and New York I was received by the colored people and by men of prominence of the white race, and was warmly congratulated. The white people vied with the colored people to do me honor. In Washington a leading Catholic put his private team at my disposal. In Boston I said High Mass in the Boston cathedral before a congregation three-fourths composed of white people, and at the conclusion of the Mass they pressed forward to ask my blessing. Just think of it, my Christian friends. The white ladies of Boston kneeling before a colored priest. Of course they did not recognize me as a man, but were reverencing the priestly character I bore; and this shows the respect to which the priesthood is entitled."

CLOSING OF JUBILEE YEAR.

Pope Leo XIII. had not been in better health for years, and within the last week he has personally sanctioned the arrangements for closing function of the Jubilee year on March 3, 1903. The occasion is to be marked with extraordinary solemnity. When the Papal procession enters St. Peter's the Holy Father will be surrounded by some forty cardinals. All the members of the Sacred College residing in Italy, Cardinal Kopp, of Germany, and Cardinal Coullie, of France, have expressed their intention to be present, and the number may also be swelled by the presence of other princes of the Church.

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