

The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle

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EPISCOPAL APPROBATION.

If the English Speaking Catholics of Montreal and of this Province consulted their best interests, they would soon make of the TRUE WITNESS one of the most prosperous and powerful Catholic papers in this country. I heartily bless those who encourage this excellent work.

PAUL, Archbishop of Montreal.

SATURDAY.....DECEMBER 1, 1900.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

A writer in "M.A.P." gives a peculiar account of Lord Lansdowne, the newly appointed Foreign Secretary in the Imperial Government. Amongst other things the writer traces His Lordship's lineage, on the mother's side, to General Flahault—an officer under Napoleon. To say the least, the story of the famous Hortense reflects but slight credit upon any descendant of that peculiar family. But this is not the point. It is claimed that Lord Lansdowne's French blood showed itself in Canada, when called upon, during his term of Governor-General, to address an assembly of Canadians in French. It appears that he spoke such good French and with such a perfect accent that his French strain was at once recognized.

Without wishing to detract from His Lordship's merits, or acquisitions, we cannot quite agree with the writer in "M.A.P." He says that Lord Salisbury will have, at least, one man in the Cabinet who can speak French. Well, Canada has had many governors-general, and the majority of them were conversant with French; some more, some less. At all events, according to our idea, Lord Dufferin spoke French much more fluently than Lord Lansdowne; Lord Aberdeen spoke it more correctly; and the Marquis of Lorne had a much better accent. We do not make these remarks, by any means, in disparagement of Lord Lansdowne's knowledge of that beautiful language; but simply to let the writer know that the blood of a race, flowing in the veins, does not always impart a national accent to the tongue.

THEY SAW A CHANCE. — Whenever our brilliant evening daily, the "Star" sees a chance, a plausible opportunity, of pouring out some of its bottled-up sarcasm upon men and things Catholic, it rarely allows the occasion to go past unimproved. In Saturday's issue we find a very much illustrated article—illustrated by means of a cut, and equally by means of pen-picturing—in which a great deal is sought to be made out of the unique history of a once prominent Catholic prelate who has long since passed off the public stage and from before the eyes of his contemporaries, but who is only now approaching the end of his earthly career. Common Christian charity would dictate to any person of ordinary fine feeling, the duty of leaving such a personage in the oblivion that time has mercifully flung over his name and his deeds; but such would not harmonize with the sensationalism that has taken unfortunate possession of a certain class of publications, nor would it be in accord with the spirit that animates them on all occasions when the Catholic Church is the subject for consideration. Beautiful the sentiment of Longfellow that asks of man to "Let the dead past bury its dead"; but the fever-distracted living of our day are not inclined to follow such a precept—possibly on account of an inability to appreciate it. The real lesson that may be drawn from the

"Star's" article is to the effect that the Catholic Church knows no distinctions—whether as to ability, or even past services—when a matter of principle is at stake. But, unhappily, this is not the lesson that our contemporary would teach.

WRECK OF THE "ST. OLAF."

From time to time we are confronted with the terrible news of some great marine catastrophe, and on each occasion, while lamenting the sad fate of the victims, we cannot but feel grateful that such events are not more frequent. The latest addition to this mournful list, for the year 1900, is the entire loss of the steamship "St. Olaf." The doomed vessel was a coasting one, that plied between Quebec and the coast of Labrador. When she left Quebec, a few days ago, she carried seven passengers, and a crew of nineteen, headed by one of the most experienced, successful, and heretofore fortunate navigators in Canada—Captain Lemaistre.

The story of the wreck is soon told—not one of all who were on board escaped. They all went down during the blinding snow-storms of Wednesday or Thursday, to their premature deaths. There is no survivor to say how the terrible event took place; captain and crew, servants and passengers, one and all—met their doom out on the broad bosom of the St. Lawrence. The captain, who was a native of Jersey, had spent a goodly portion of his life in Quebec, but of later years his family lived in Westmount. He was a careful and experienced man, and one of those who inspired great confidence in all under his charge. How did it happen? Not one can tell exactly. It is sufficient for us to know that in a solemn hour Death's Angel "spread his wings on the blast," and, without warning, every one who had gone aboard the fated "St. Olaf" was summoned into the presence of God. It is a solemn, a fearful thought—the contemplation of such an event is well calculated to make men pause and to so inspire the world that, in the language of Tomson's "Seasons":

"Vice, in its high career, must stand appalled,
And heedless, rambling impulse learn to think."

THE POPE'S LAST ENCYCLICAL.

Last week we made a brief reference to the most recent Encyclical of the Holy Father; in this issue we furnish our readers with the text, or rather with a careful and complete summary thereof. The document is sufficient of itself without the necessity of any comment from us. Still there is a point, which the Pope accentuates, and upon which we would draw the attention of our non-Catholic friends. Most distinctly does the Holy Father—in harmony with Catholic teaching and practice—make it known that Our Lord is the only source of our salvation, and that through Him alone can we attain our final end. Other aids may be invoked; but when it comes down to a question of merits, there is no other pathway to perfection save that which passes through the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. The consideration we desire to establish is a splendid refutation of the old time argu-

ment that Catholics depended upon the Blessed Virgin and the saints for all they desired to obtain, even that they adored these privileged creatures of God. Let such people carefully read the Encyclical, and they will discover that we "adore" God alone, and that we simply invoke the saints that they may exercise their influence—being near to God—in our behalf. It is wonderful to consider the aged Pontiff sending forth such an important document at the close of a century, and almost at the sunset of his own career. We behold in it the realization of our dream—a quiet and glorious policy that has so far saved the Church from a million dangers that threatened her, and which will go on, in some form, as long as time lasts. We cannot too strongly recommend not only the reading, but also the study of this admirable gem, fresh from the priceless treasure-house of an old man, whose liberty is circumscribed, but whose infallible spirit soars beyond prison walls and penetrates even the remotest corners of earth.

THEY SHAKE HANDS.

A wonderful thing has taken place in the "Land o' Cakes"; the Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, and the Moderator of the United Presbyterian Church have shaken hands. This event occurred upon the Waverley Market, and in presence of six thousand people—possibly three thousand belonging to each of the churches. The accounts published all over the United Kingdom of this great act, would recall to our mind exaggerated descriptions of the battle between the Horatii and the Curiatii; except that this was a peace-making. In a word, this shaking of hands is the exterior sign by which it is made known that the two churches are to be henceforth considered as one.

All along we had never been able to discover what was exactly the difference between these two denominations—or rather sections of a denomination. However, we are now enlightened upon the subject. It appears there never was any doctrinal difference between them; it was simply upon points of administration that they could not agree. Perhaps it was a question of funds and their distribution; may be a question of patronage. No matter; questions of discipline and government are of small consequence in comparison with questions of doctrine. Henceforth, we are told that the two churches will continue to agree as long as no serious difference arises, and that, in the future, as in the past, they will have no quarrel as to doctrine.

This must be all very consoling for the adherents of the two long-divided churches; and this ceremony of hand-shaking must have been the signal for a new era in their career. How long they will go on before any serious difference occurs is more than we can say. But we see no difficulty in their union upon a doctrinal basis—for the very good reason that, unless predestination be considered as a doctrine, or dogma, they have no such thing as any defined doctrine in their entire system. What is even more positive, they would deny all authority, authoritative teaching, and dogma, were you to question them upon the subject. It is not difficult for two churches, both devoid of doctrine, to have no doctrinal differences. We must conclude, therefore, that once this interesting ceremony over and its immediate effects gone—like the nine days' wonder—the Free Church and the Presbyterian Church will proceed upon the very same lines as heretofore. They will clash, more or less, upon subjects of administration, and they will agree to admit no doctrines, no dogma, no fundamental principles. The world will survive the shock, and the attention thus attracted for a few days will soon be turned towards newer and fresher sensations, while the two churches will drop back into religious insignificance, the monotony of which was, for a moment, broken by this unique and spasmodic effort.

THE BOY PRODIGY.

"The Boy Orator has, for years, been playing his part in the arena of the world's affairs; he was always a good drawing card. The boy musician, whose marvellous intuition has enabled him to confound and astonish the best masters and the most critical audiences, has had his day. It is now the turn of the Boy Preacher. He has come amongst us, heralded by lengthy press notices and large-sized street placards. All his wonderful acquisitions have been detailed with theatrical effect. He has appeared, has preached, has gone away, and has left not even a faint impression, as a souvenir of his existence, behind him. In the present instance it seems to us that it demanded no small amount of the specially American quality of "cheek"

to set up a youth, crammed with disjointed, incoherent and frequently meaningless phrases, as an exponent of the sacred word of God.

Even had the "Boy Preacher" delivered a series of sermons, displaying either tact, or knowledge, or ordinary elocutionary powers, there might be something remarkable in the performance. But when the method is to have the audience suggest texts of Scripture and for the Boy to deliver an impromptu sermon upon each of them, the whole performance savors very much of the juggler's system of creating surprises or the magician's methods of deceiving the senses. That Barre and Ronaldo should strive to astonish an audience with their prowess and feats of strength is perfectly legitimate; they make use of the enormous strength which they possess to amuse the world, both for their own profit and for the pleasure of all interested in their achievements. But when the Word of God is made the basis of like tests and competitions, we find that the whole affair tends to cast ridicule upon that which is sacred, and to bring down to the level of the sensational stage that which belongs to the temple and the pulpit.

The object of preaching is to instruct in the truths of God's revelation, to awaken fervor in the practice of religion, and to make known the grand life-imparting principles—be they moral or dogmatic—which Christ left to man as a means of salvation. In this case we have no preaching at all; not one who went, as all did, through curiosity and to be amused, came away one iota more informed upon the teachings of Our Lord, than before attending the sermons (?) of the Boy Preacher; not one could say that he (or she) felt any deeper emotion, in the religious sense, than before; not one imbibed any principle that would be lasting and grace-imparting. Many were pleased at the deception, not a few were dissatisfied and disappointed, and all could have heard better and more telling sermons any Sunday in their own churches. The "Boy Preacher" is a failure; a pigmy seeking to imitate giants.

RUMORS CONCERNING THE POPE.

Times out of number have we warned our readers against rumors from Rome, Paris, London, and other large centres, concerning the Pope's health. This week the Associated Press sent out the point blank report of his death on Tuesday. We have no doubt that the Holy Father is feeble, nor can the world expect that, at his very advanced age, he can be expected to last a very long time more. Yet the care that he receives, the regularity of his life, the magnificent and unimpaired constitution that he possesses, and, above all, the indomitable spirit that animates him, all give fair ground for belief in his prolongation of life. It was only the other day that he wrote the splendid encyclical, which we publish in this issue, and on the very day that he was reported dead he gave audience to a Prince.

It is possible that the severe tax on his vital powers, consequent upon the fatigues of the great jubilee, or Holy Year, may have effects that are at times more or less alarming; but for several years back prophets of ill-omen have been engaged in predicting his demise, and yet they all failed in their sinister calculations. It certainly would be a wonderful coincidence were the greatest Pontiff, that for long generations has sat upon the throne of Peter, to pass away with the going out of the century. It would be still more marvellous were he, with his extraordinary weight of years, to accompany the coming century in its first marches along the avenue of Time. In any case, we may expect these periodical and sensational reports—for it is the business of journalistic correspondents to fabricate such material.

Since we are on the subject of the reigning Pontiff, we may remark that outside of the Catholic Church—of which he is one of the most illustrious Popes—the whole world will experience a void, when it pleases God to close the magnificent career of Leo XIII. In almost every domain he is an acknowledged leader. In literature, science, poetry, history, statesmanship, diplomacy, and every other branch of human attainment he has been not only the equal, but generally the superior of all the greatest men of the nineteenth century. No other living man exercises such a world-wide influence. This may be due, in part, to his position as Vicar of Christ, which brings him into contact with the whole of civilization; but such could never be the case were he not personally endowed with talents, gifts and qualifications that amount in their aggregate to genius. A sublime figure, indeed, is that venerable Pontiff; and may it

please God to grant him a goodly number of years yet on earth to continue his glorious work and to add to the world's improvement by his genuine talent for elevating and beautifying everything that his consecrated hand rests upon.

TRADE IN HOLY THINGS.

Trafficking in Holy Things is one of the most despicable as well as sinful acts that man, in his mad rush for wealth, can commit. As a rule, the truly pious, the really virtuous, the practically religious people in the world are easily imposed upon. It doesn't require a very clever trickster to play upon their credulity; consequently they are very liable to be imposed upon in life. The reason of this is quite obvious. They look upon the world from their own high standpoint; they believe in men, because their faith is great; they are not suspicious being devoid of all evil-intent themselves. These are characteristics well known to the faithless exploiters of sacred things, and almost every one of these heartless creatures has learned to play upon the sympathetic chord in the heart of the virtuous.

Of the truth of what we here advance we have a striking illustration in the recent warnings of certain European bishops, who found it necessary to inform their clergy, that the latter might inform the faithful about persons who are making a profitable trade with pretended waters from the grotto of Lourdes. It appears that some of these people are actually organized into companies and carry on their business in a most systematic manner. They issue small leaflets, in which all the virtues of the water of Lourdes are detailed. These sheets are frequently printed entirely—the episcopal imprimatur and all. Some of them bear forged signatures of ecclesiastical dignitaries. In a word, they are mere advertising circulars, informing the pious reader that at such or such a place quantities of the blessed water of Lourdes may be had, for a very small sum. No doubt water is sold by these people; but not water from Lourdes. Possibly, for precaution sake, they do keep a few bottles of the genuine article; but, as a rule, they simply sell common water to the poor people who, with one object or another, are anxious to possess water from the Grotto at Lourdes. Needless to say that this is a fearful imposition on the public. Besides being guilty of the sin, in the eyes of God, they are guilty of the crime known to the State as taking money under false pretences. If the law of the land does not reach them, most certainly the justice of God shall.

OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER

On "Winter Thoughts."

As the snow came down in big flakes, upon the feast of St. Catharine, and gradually covered over the earth in a manner that indicated the arrival of winter, I was led to reflect upon the many changes that the years have wrought in the characteristics of the approaching season. I miss not a few of the old time attractions which once made winter a most pleasant period of the year. Looking along Sherbrooke street I noticed several sleighs, containing pleasure parties, dashing along. I could not but perceive the fine finish of the robes, the elegance of the harness, the fantastic and queer shaped little gongs that ornamented the shafts, or the saddles of the horses. Did I miss anything? I did. The old-fashioned string of bells that frequently encircled each horse, or at least surrounded his neck, or went from trace to trace over his back. There was a merry jingle in these bells; there was a familiar sound in them, that told of the keenest enjoyment. Were Poe alive to-day, and were he to have his "Bells" unwritten, it is not likely that our literature would ever have been enriched with his—

"Hear the sledges with their bells,
Silver bells;
What a world of merriment, the melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
On the icy air of night!
While the stars that over-sprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of rhymic rhyme,
To the tintinnulation that so musically wells,
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells;
Bells, bells, bells, bells;
From the ringing and the jingling of the bells!"

I merely point out this one little lack as a sample of the hundreds that our modern progress and great improvements have created. There is the Christmas Tree. It is now to be found, as of old the shop signs, in departmental stores, covered with toys and other objects that are there for sale. But in the homes, by the firesides, where the children gather around the parents to celebrate the holy feast of Christmas, the traditional tree is but too frequently absent. Nor is old Santa Claus any

longer a real personality for the precocious youth of our day. He no longer rides on the wind, gallops his deer over the snow-covered roofs, descends, at midnight, by the way of the chimneys, and fills the stockings that for hours the sleepy eyes of little ones sought to watch as they hung suspended at the bed-posts. The boy or girl of this closing year of the century can tell you all about the benevolent old man, with his long white beard. They are not to be imposed on by any fairy tales, or imaginary beings of fancy's creation. It is sad; but it is even too true. I have observed the change, year in and year out, gradually increasing and broadening, and I felt a pang of regret each time circumstances led me to such reflections.

It was only the other day I was reading Macaulay's "Lay of Horatius," and I felt strangely as I perused the two descriptive stanzas:

"In the cold nights of winter,
When the lone north wind doth blow,
And the loud howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow;
When the oldest cask is open,
And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow on embers,
And the kids turn on the spit.
"When the young and old in circle,
Around the fire-brands close,
And the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows;
When the old man mends his armor,
And trims his helmet plume,
When the good wife's shuttle merrily,
Goes flashing through the loom."

The picture of home life and its enjoyments flashed up and across the mind. Then, looking around me, on a society of to-day, I asked myself the very pertinent question: "Where are our homes?" Alas! the home is rapidly vanishing. It is disappearing with the sleigh-bells, the Christmas tree and Santa Claus.

This does not mean that people have not more luxuries than had our fathers. It is not the hard lots of the pioneer generations that I lament; it is the "homes" of the people. The modern flat, the overcrowded tenement, the boarding-house, or even the grand hotel can not surely be classed as homes. Men are too much abroad now-a-days; the improved facilities of travel are such that the whole continent is as if it were a small parish, and men, who formerly would spend almost the whole year at home, now live on railway trains and in hotels. As to the women, it is still worse. They places, on public platforms, working places, on public platforms, working for the conversion of savages, the propagation of Christianity, the improvement of social, educational, laboring and other conditions, on their bicycles, or on their feet—it matters not—they must be anywhere, and everywhere except at home. Domestic life has lost its charm for the thousands; the divorce court is an institution that fattens upon this as well as other conditions. It would make one cry out, from the heart, with Gerald Griffin, for the return of "Old Times."

Nor is this all! Life has grown shorter; men die younger. There are infants yet in the world, but no boys and girls. Youth is become an unknown stage in human life. There is no transition from babyhood to manhood. Children in their teens are men and women now; what used to be youth, is now maturity; what was formerly maturity, is now age; and what was considered as age in the days of our fathers, exists no longer—the years that might have been, after fifty, or sixty, are spent in the cemetery. Truly did a learned priest once say, "the world is improving, but man is degenerating." Possibly no one will thank me for these "observations"; however, I am not looking for thanks. They are based on truth, and I feel inclined to give them expression.

PERSONAL.

Whenever we hear of the progress or promotion of a young Irish Catholic we feel a legitimate pride in his success, and we experience great pleasure in recording the same, as an encouragement and an example for others. We are glad to learn that our esteemed fellow-citizen, Mr. J. J. Flynn, has been appointed superintendent of the Bell Telephone Company's system in Quebec, St. Roch's and Lévis, with headquarters at Quebec. This is a decided promotion and a credit not only to the young gentleman whose ability and integrity have won him the high post of confidence, but also to his father, Mr. J. F. Flynn, of the City Hall, and to all his relatives and fellow-countrymen. May success attend him in his new career.

FATHER LECLAIR HERE.—Rev. Father Leclair, so well known in St. Patrick's parish, with which he had been long associated nearly a couple of decades ago, and for the last fifteen years connected with the Canadian College in Rome, has just returned to Montreal. In 1886, the Rev. Abbe Leclair, who was then in charge of the Oka mission, was sent by his superiors to superintend the construction of the Canadian College in Rome, and when this work was done, he was named assistant superior of the institution. Three years ago, at the death of the Rev. Abbe Pallin, Abbe Leclair became superior, and held that position until September last, when he had to resign on account of his delicate health. It is said that Father Leclair will now remain in Montreal, and for the present will be connected with St. Patrick's Church.

It is stated on what is apparently good authority that the Sisters of Mercy, who have now been in Aberdeen for over forty-seven years, are about to close their convent and leave that city.

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