

## A TIMELY WORK.

## MEMOIRS OF BISHOP EDMUND BURKE.

A Volume that Contains Historical Information of Great Importance—

A Glance into the Pioneer Days of Nova Scotia—

A Charming and Instructive Book.

There is no name better known in the annals of Canadian literature than that of the Right Reverend Cornelius O'Brien, D.D., the distinguished and scholarly Archbishop of Halifax. Great or humble, no matter what work Archbishop O'Brien undertakes, it is sure to be complete, highly polished, scrupulously exact, brilliantly attractive, and sincerely patriotic. In every branch, poetry, romance, history, criticism, philosophical reasoning or theological research, the eminent prelate has attained success; because he is a student, a careful and impartial judge, and the possessor of a brilliant and inimitable style. The last addition to our literature, from the facile and eloquent pen of the learned churchman, is a gem of its class, and will sparkle brightly in the cluster of precious works which go to make up the crown of literary fame that this country owes him and that future generations shall recognize as his by all the rights of merit.

The "Memoirs of Rt. Rev. Edmund Burke, Bishop of Zion, First Vicar Apostolic of Nova Scotia," is a volume of about 150 pages, neatly bound, well illustrated, printed on the finest of paper and in a large and readable type. Externally the book is attractive, but its value lies in the contents of its pages. There is, perhaps, no period in the ecclesiastical history of our country so much neglected as the close of the last and commencement of the present centuries. In doing a splendid act of justice to the memory of the zealous missionary, the learned bishop and the erudite pioneer, whose years of life took in that special epoch, the author has also opened out a fresh avenue, almost untrodden heretofore, for the careful students of Canadian history to follow. In the preface we find these remarkable but wonderfully truthful expressions: "But our history is yet to be written; and, so far as we know, biographies in the English language of any great men are rare; although autobiographies, paid for at a certain rate per page, are not uncommon. In many superficial sketches of our history that does exist, poor missionary priests are not honored by much mention, and yet they, more than generals or admirals, laid strongly and well the basis of society, and moulded, in no small measure, its opinions, and shaped its actions. We believe that a perusal of the pages of the Memoirs will confirm this assertion."

And having carefully perused those pages we can say that the Archbishop is perfectly correct in his surmise; no person can possibly read those memoirs and close the book without feeling a current of new ideas, on the subject, gliding through his brain, and a pulsation of noble and, perhaps, heretofore unexperienced sentiments thrilling around his heart. It has evidently been a work of love—none the less is it one of true patriotism. We know not which to admire the most,—the piety and labors of the great Vicar Apostolic, the devotion to the interests of the Church which he displayed, the undying love for his native land, the unreserved sacrifice of a life in the interests of Canada, or the spirit and Catholic-Canadian sentiments of the eloquent biographer.

The reader opens the pages of this volume with the intention of glancing through it; the very first chapter, "From Ireland to Quebec," in which an account of Bishop Burke's arrival in 1786 is given, rivets the attention; the rapidity with which the panoramic pictures succeed each other, the glow of diction that lights them up—each brighter than the one before it—and the wonderfully interesting details of a most romantic yet serious career, all mesmerize you, and the moments lengthen into hours; at last you find yourself reading the closing chapter, and only then awakening from the entrancing vision of the far away past.

The account of Father Burke's life in the Quebec Seminary, and then his years of missionary work amidst the

great forests of Upper Canada, his zeal for souls, his thirst for the salvation of the Indian, the colonist, the woodsman, his toils, sufferings, privations, his stupendous efforts in the cause of Faith, is given in a style that is at once fascinating and inspiring. Before giving the details of Father Burke's first work in Nova Scotia, the reader is presented with a chapter on the history of the Church in Acadia. Apart from the biography this chapter is, in itself, a priceless addition to our sources of historical information. The author points out a fact, that is too often ignored, that Nova Scotia was the cradle of Catholicity in Canada. As early as 1604 two missionaries planted the cross on the shores of the Bay of Fundy, and in 1611, Fathers Biard and Masse "came to cultivate the missionary field."

It would be impossible for us to quote from the work in such a short review as our space will permit; moreover, we do not wish to mar the delight and satisfaction of the readers who will take up this volume and go on from summit to summit, bounding like antelopes, along its mountain range of solid historical information and often towering majesty of expressions. There is nothing dull, nothing commonplace, nothing weak in the "Memoirs of Bishop Burke." The history of the Church in Halifax is replete with facts gleaned from the most authentic authorities and glitters with dew drop expressions, through which the rays from the sun of the author's genius shoot prismatic combinations of thought. The characteristics of Father Burke are brought out in a most striking manner; the days of his short but vigorous and fruitful episcopal labors are presented in broad, but perfect lines; the whole biography is an historical painting of a much neglected period, and the grand central figure upon the canvas is the good Bishop, whose Memoirs are embalmed for all time by the skill of his distinguished successor.

We cannot refrain from quoting a few lines from one of the closing chapters. It is worthy the pen of Bossuet and the pencil of a Raphael; it is a combination of the deepest sentiments, noblest impulses, brightest images, strongest truths and choicest expressions, that alone might serve as a worthy monument to perpetuate the memory of the great and good prelate whose death inspired its composition. "It is appointed unto all men once to die," declares the Apostle, and weak human nature, taught by every day events, and warned by its own consciousness of decay, practically takes up the refrain and sounds it down the centuries. A stern reality is this death, whether borne on angel wings to kiss into unconsciousness a lovely child, or whirled in a chariot of fire to smite a vigorous youth, or carried slowly forward in the wallet of time to gently garner the ripened fruit of a long and well-spent life. A dispeller of illusions, too, in this restless pursuer of the human family. In the dim light of his presence all artistic groupings of deeds, all dramatic action, all fictitious presentments of our own importance, are ruthlessly shorn of the glamour that ennobled them in our eyes; and we see them only as well or ill done duties, and perhaps wasted opportunities. The setting sun throws out a shadow startling in its lengthened outlines; and the decline of life's fitful day carries the soul back over its span of years, shadowed too often with phantoms of forgotten misdeeds of giant-like proportions. The mind is no longer held captive in a network of complex subtleties, such as bias our judgment, or produce indecision during our life; it sees only the yea, yea, or the nay, nay—the systole and diastole of conscience. Death, the pursuer, at length overtakes the pursued, and, fight bravely as he may, the latter is to all human seeming invariably conquered. Yet is there a triumphant ring in the dying cry of the vanquished. "Non omnis Morior"—not all of me shall die, is the challenge the expiring Christian throws down to victorious death, as he calmly passes to a life and a state more real, though less material, than the present."

There is not a Catholic family in Canada that should be without a copy of Archbishop O'Brien's "Memoirs of Bishop Burke," upon the table and at the hand of each member of the household. It would be an admirable book for prizes in the schools, colleges and convents. Our space will not permit of any further remarks; we have, however, said enough to give an idea of the esti-

mate we place upon the work. We can find only one fault with it—and that is certainly due to the countless duties that his responsible position imposes upon the author—we find it too short. In an age when the press is pouring out tons of trash—chaff worse than useless—it is a God-send to meet with some good wheat; here we have a handful of it—we would like if the Archbishop could have given us a bushel.—EDITOR TRUE WITNESS.

## A SOUVENIR.

[The following lines were addressed to a lady friend of the TRUE WITNESS, on the reception of an Easter gift, by the late lamented orator, poet and general litterateur, Rev. Father Graham.]

Thanks for the gift; the lesson deep,  
Of mortal life it sweetly teaches,  
That we must struggle up the steep,  
Whose thorny heights to heaven reaches;  
We, too, our Calvary and Cross  
Must stern endure 'mid passion's scorning,  
Its Glory's light should crown our loss,  
And we achieve our Easter morning.

O wondrous life of Love Divine!  
In lettered light on human pages,  
Writ in the soul of Adam's line,  
The heritage of endless ages!  
Two thousand years are nearly sped,  
And, yet, grey Time, the tale adorning—  
Gives to our love the thorn-crowned head  
Of the first glorious Easter Morning!

The victory of life in Death,  
Is ours in Him, of passing beauty;—  
Be patient till the last worn breath  
Drops at Love's feet the yoke of Duty.  
So speaks the oracle again,  
To hearts in mercy's kindest warning,  
Bear bravely on thy rugged cross,  
If thou wouldst have thy Easter Morning.

## GLADSTONE AND THE VATICAN.

THE MONITEUR DE ROME GIVES AN ANALYSIS OF HIS CAREER; THE ONE CLOUD ON THE HORIZON.

With Mr. Gladstone there disappears the latest of statesmen who knew how to pursue an ideal of justice without losing sight of the conditions of the age in which they live, of the temper of their people or their instincts. A philosopher and a consummate tactician, Mr. Gladstone has united in his person at the same time the idealist and the realist, the theorist and the practical man. The true leader of the people is he who has dipped his spirit in the deep springs of philosophy and history, who unites an austere culture to the contemplation of eternal principles with the knowledge of the evolutions of humanity, and who in applying principles takes into account the conditions under which he works; who, whilst never forgetting the supreme end in view, tempers his ideas, adapts them to new needs, and extracts from current events all that there is in them that is good and just; who, in a word, takes as his motto, "to recognize that which exists, to do all that he is able, to direct his aims to that which should be." Mr. Gladstone belongs to that class of men, a pre eminent orator, a true magician of words, a classical and facile writer, a savant, literary critic, theologian, moralist. Gladstone has been one of the completest natures of our epoch, where so often unity and synthesis are veiled and genius itself but fragmentary. He lived a life for humanity. His disappearance makes us wish that his last acts should move others to imitate him. Our age has created four types of sham statesmen: the doctrinaires, like Rousseau, the sectaries of Voltaire, the cynical opportunists of the Bismarck class, and the Gambetta Conservative school, who know only the ideal and maintain it at the risk of losing all. At once Conservative and progressive, imbued with the ideal of justice, and with a soul open to the feelings and voices of the century, Gladstone has pursued a career where noble works and generous influences hold the rank of honor. In the evening of his life, we have seen this old man, this optimist after twenty falls, this lover of humanity and of true evolution, we have seen him espouse the noblest and most arduous of causes, the cause of the autonomy of Ireland. Public opinion, Conservative and English prejudice, racial hatreds and opposition of every kind he has faced, that he might enrich the patrimony of liberty, of tolerance, and of justice. All honor to this old man and his moral grandeur! He has fallen at the door of the temple, but the songs within will immortalize and ever glorify this act of redemption. Let him retire! He bears into his solitude and to the tomb the "certainty" that justice will carry through every opposition a definite triumph. The Conservatives have becomingly protested; they

themselves, if God grants them the power, will be constrained to put into realization the ideal of the Grand Old Man. Thanks to these same inspirations, Gladstone has marked in politics the point of division between yesterday and to-day, between the ideas of long ago and the aspirations of the present. Ever watchful, Gladstone has understood the democracy, has moderated it, and has saluted it as the natural heir of past generations, the dictator of the future in all things that belong to the Government and the positive programmes that will lead the people. He has been one of those rare old men—much greater in this respect than Bismarck—who have perpetually renewed their intellectual possessions, always active, always progressive, never walled within narrow and interested conceptions, never retrograde and reactionary. This is why he has aroused such envious opposition; the old could not understand this eternal young man. What they called his audacity frightened them; they were blind who did not perceive that this audacity was one form of wisdom, one of the conditions of the art of Government. It is not at this moment that we can indicate our reserves and the limit to our eulogies. History will do that. But one blemish marks this noble life, so pure; he erred. One day he forgot himself, he broke away from his ideal, in writing his *Vaticanism* and in preserving to the door of eternity the remembrance of this difference and irritation. His soul, charmed with the beauties and grandeurs of the Catholic Church, was on the point of following Newman and Manning, men of spirit and character, but Dollinger—that adorer of himself and his intellect—withdrew Gladstone into the ways of error and rebellion. The nearer he approached the sanctuary the more violently did his temper break forth into billows of corrosive recrimination. What would have happened if Gladstone had embraced Catholicity. Would he have formed a school and renewed the atmosphere of his country? Would he have undertaken this crusade in favor of the independence of Ireland? Delicate questions which God alone can solve. That which is beyond doubt is that this crisis of his life—for which Dollinger is responsible, who should have been his safety—has lowered the height of his greatness and prevented his collaboration (co operation) in the solution of the great social questions with Pope Leo XIII. If this barrier had not separated these two lives what work would not these two old men, eternally young, have performed? —*Moniteur de Rome.*

## PERSONAL.

The following Canadians had the honor to receive invitation to attend the Mass celebrated by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII in the Ducal Chapel at the Vatican, Rome, on Easter Sunday: The Baroness Macdonald, Ottawa; D. Parizeau, M.P.P.; Mr. Charles Hebert, Mrs. Hebert, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Louis Loranger, D. V. Parizeau, and the Rev. Pere Renand, S.J., Montreal; Mr. W. J. Maguire, Mr. George Doyle, and Mr. Ed. Doyle, Quebec; Mr. Arthur Arand, Ottawa. There are quite a number of Canadians in Rome, and many priests are at the Canadian College.

## ST. ANN'S T. A. &amp; B. SOCIETY.

The regular monthly meeting of the St. Ann's T. A. & B. Society was held in St. Ann's hall on Sunday afternoon, Mr. P. Flannery, president, in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer and a short instruction by the Reverend Father Banart, C.S.S., P. P. of St. Ann's. Some new members were enrolled as regular members of the society. The following resolution was moved:

WHEREAS; It has pleased Almighty God, in His wisdom, to remove from amongst us, by the hand of death, one of our oldest and most faithful members, Mr. Michael Connors, and also the wife of our respected assistant-collecting Treasurer, Mr. Jno. Ryan,

Be it resolved: That this Society do extend their heartfelt sympathy to Mr. Jno. Ryan and family, and to Mrs. Connors and other relatives in their sad bereavement.

The Secretary was instructed to communicate the same and to publish it in THE TRUE WITNESS.

J. MCGUIRE,  
Secretary St. Ann's T. A. & B. Society