

**Chronicles of An Old-Timer**

**Some Pioneer Catholics of Upper Canada—Bishop Macdonell and His Great Labors—Vicar-General Macdonald, the First Catholic Editor—Fathers Gordon and Hay, Graduates of St. Raphael's, the First Catholic Seminary—Men That Old-Timer Knew and Served.**

763 West Madison street,  
Chicago, Oct. 24, 1903.

Dear Register:

We hear a great deal of talk these days of ours about the anglo Anglo-Saxon race, but let it be remembered that it is the Celts that have planted the milestones that have marked the progress and made the gains of the British Empire. And not the British Empire alone, but also the great American Republic. I can easily prove that the latter is a Celtic product, an assertion that I may make good some other time. What particular breed of Saxons is it, I would like to know, that is making history or is strenuous in achievement in our day? What marks do they exhibit, what names do they bear, what line of effort do they pursue that we may know and recognize them? Be they of the Kentish, Sussex or Essex stock? We cannot tell because they are unmarked by any particular designation or distinction of effort. Not so the Celts; you may know them by their names, their features and their achievements. What would the English-speaking world be to-day without its Macs, its O's and its Ap's? And especially the Macs, that have left their footprints on the sands in every part of the earth. And by no means do I mean the Irish Macs alone, because I have now an eye to their Highland Scotch brethren, who have been almost equal sufferers from the severity of English rule. This thought has been suggested to me by reading in an American newspaper an account of the establishment of a Highland colony in the eighteenth century in North Carolina by Flora Macdonald, the heroic Highland lassie that rescued Prince Charlie. The Macdonalds and Macdonells are doing lots of things at the present time. They are leaders in every field. But there is a class of Macdonells and Macdonalds that have long been associated with Canadian affairs, but more especially the Catholic Church, that I wish to make particular reference to just now. Remember, that McDonald, like McKenzie, is a name that is interchangeable between Scotch and Irish. We have a number of the Macdonalds here in Chicago. William Lyon McKenzie, of rebellion fame, who was a well-known Scot, once told me that his remote ancestors were Irish.

No matter, I am now coming to what every one of your readers ought to know. The first Catholic bishop of Upper Canada was a Gleggery man and a Macdonell. The first Vicar-General of Hamilton was a McDonald, and the first Vicar-General of Kingston was a Macdonell. The race was not all massacred by King William at Glencoe, although there was a determined effort made to exterminate it.

Among my many old friends in Toronto that are now numbered with the dead was William J. Macdonald, a gentleman of rare scholarship, piety and philanthropy. To a limited extent I was at one time associated with him in business. He was the first president of the Toronto Savings Bank and for a number of years filled the position French Consul. He was a man of unswerving integrity, and the strictest punctuality in all business affairs, while a large portion of his time was at the service of the church. To this Mr. Macdonald was indebted for an account of the Hon. and Right Rev. Alexander Macdonell, the first Catholic Bishop of Upper Canada and in his time the only Catholic bishop, with the seat of his see in Kingston or Regiopolis.

Bishop Macdonell was a Highlander and was born in Glen Urquhart, on the borders of Loch Ness, Inverness-shire, July 17, 1762, and was destined for the church. He was an early age sent to the Scottish College in Paris, and subsequently to the Scottish College at Valladolid in Spain, where he was ordained priest on the 16th day of February, 1787.

Between the years 1780 and 1790, a system of converting small farms into sheep walks was established by the landowners in the Highlands and many of the tenants were evicted. Mr. Macdonell was their pastor. He endeavored to find employment for them among the manufacturers of Glasgow, but the Lord George Gordon riots broke out there and the Catholic chapel and the priest's house were burned in that city. In 1794 he raised a Catholic regiment among the Highlanders called the Gleggery Fencibles, the services of which were accepted by the King. In 1795 the invasion of the Island of Guernsey was threatened by the French and the Fencibles were sent there for its protection, and was subsequently sent to Ireland, for it was then in a state bordering on rebellion. Father Macdonell, in his character of chaplain, endeavored to prevent the excesses practiced at that time by the soldiers of other regiments, and more especially by the Orange Yeomanry. During the peace of the Gleggery regiment was disbanded and the members reduced to great straits for making a livelihood.

The first emigration from the Highlands of Scotland to North America took place in the year 1772, from the estate of Lord Macdonald, the Earl of Skye and of Lord Sealoch, from Kintail and Loch Broom. Those emigrants were all Protestants and went to North Carolina. Other emigrations followed this to various localities, such as Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

The first colony of Catholic Highlanders to enter Canada were led by an Irish missionary priest named McKenna, to the number of 300. The next priest to lead a colony was the Rev. Alexander Macdonell, missionary at "New Johnson, Upper Canada," in 1796, who was prominent in the early annals of the Church in Upper Canada. There were twenty Macdonells and McDonalds who were on the mission in various parts of the Province from 1788 to 1866. It seems that the desire of this particular brand of Macs was to be either priests or soldiers.

In March, 1803, Rev. Alexander Macdonell, (the subsequent bishop), obtained a grant of land for every officer and soldier of the Gleggery regiment whom he brought to Upper Canada, and they settled in the part of the province subsequently known as the county of Gleggery. (Father Macdonell was himself appointed to the mission of St. Raphael. Here he remained for twenty-five years, ministering to the spiritual wants of the Highlanders. When he arrived in Upper Canada he found but three Catholic churches in the whole province and only two priests, one a Frenchman and the other an Irishman. Mr. Macdonell subsequently travelled from Coteau du Lac to Lake Superior performing all of the arduous duties of a missionary priest and under the most distressing circumstances. He was created Vicar-General in 1806.

In 1816 Bishop Plessis of Quebec paid his first episcopal visit to Upper Canada. He found Catholics only in Gleggery, Kingston and Sandwich. Kingston had 75 Catholic families, of whom 55 were Canadians, and 20 Scotch and Irish. Sandwich had a Catholic population of 1,500, while there were 450 at other points on the river Thames and St. Clair flats. After a number of years had passed and a number of negotiations had been entered into with regard to the division of the diocese of Quebec, Father Macdonell was, on the 12th day of January, 1819, nominated Bishop of Resina and Vicar-Apostolic of Upper Canada. He was consecrated on the 31st day of December, 1819, in the Church of the Ursuline Convent in Quebec. In 1825 he went to England and to Rome and returned in 1826. He was afterwards admitted to a seat in the Legislative Council of Upper Canada and secured for his church a share of the Clergy Reserve lands originally designed for the support of a Protestant clergy, but whether this donation made him a Protestant clergyman or not was never questioned. Bishop Macdonell was a strong royalist and conservative and family compact man, which brought him occasionally into conflict with some of his co-religionists of other political belief, especially Rev. Father O'Grady who was pastor of St. Paul's Church in Toronto, whom he silenced. It was then that the latter entered journalism and published the Correspondent, a vigorous reform journal of Upper Canada, which was a full-fledged paper by Leo XII. on the 14th of February, 1826, and Bishop Macdonell was made its first bishop, with the title of Regiopolis or Kingston. His diocese comprised the whole of Ontario. His coadjutor, Bishop Weld, and Englishman of distinction, was afterwards created a Cardinal.

After Bishop Macdonell returned the last time from Europe he resided for some years in York, now Toronto. The house is still standing on the southeast corner of Jarvis street (then Nelson), and Duchess street, which was then the most prominent part of the city. He went back to Kingston in 1836 and remained there during the remainder of his stay in Canada. On the 16th of February, 1837, Bishop Macdonell celebrated his jubilee, having fifty years previously entered holy orders. It was at St. Raphael's, Gleggery, where 2,000 people were assembled on the occasion to witness the ceremony. Nineteen priests were in attendance, as well as the leading Catholic and Protestant gentlemen for many miles around.

Bishop Macdonell spoke Gaelic, of course, and in his day there was such an institution as a Celtic Society in Canada, what there is not to-day, but ought to be. The good bishop made another visit to England in 1839, and before departing was given a farewell dinner by the Celtic Society of Upper Canada at Carmichael's Hotel in Kingston. He visited London, after which he passed over to Ireland, where he visited for some time, and unfortunately caught a cold from which he died in Scotland, Jan. 14th, 1840. Of course, in this hasty outline it is impossible to give you readers a correct idea of his vast labors, the privations he endured and the confidence he enjoyed. Bishop Macdonell was like most men of his race, stalwart and strong. There is no doubt that he evinced great influence on those around him and indeed on the Provincial governments of the time.

What one at this day can hardly understand was the devotion of the bishop and his Catholic Highlanders to English royalty, to ultra-conservative, and the family compact, an oligarchy that ruled their adopted country in the most illiberal manner. However, Bishop Macdonell was a wonderful pioneer character, whose life, as far as we have the knowledge of it, is well worth knowing and studying. The town of Alexandria, in Gleggery County, is named after the bishop.

I had no personal knowledge of Bishop Macdonell, who had died before I reached Canada, but I did have considerable knowledge of his Vicar-General, Very Rev. William Peter Macdonald, who was my parish priest in Hamilton for several years. How many Hamilton, Kingston or Toronto people are there now alive who remember the "dear old vicar?" Very few, indeed, I trow. He came to Canada in the year 1836 to take charge of Bishop Macdonell's seminary for ecclesiastics at St. Raphael's, Gleggery County. He went through the same course in securing his ecclesiastical education in foreign countries as the bishop himself. He had perfect mastery of both the Spanish and French languages, as well as English. The college, it appears, was not then begun, and he was located at Kingston as Vicar-General. Being a scholar, a poet and a renowned controversialist, he commenced the publication of the first English Catholic paper in Canada, Kingston, in 1830. It was named simply *The Catholic*. What year he was removed to Hamilton or whom he succeeded there I do not know, but he was the parish priest there when I first saw the ambitious little city in 1842. There he resumed the publication of *The Catholic* in 1841, and continued its publication until 1844. It was printed on eight pages, set up in long primer. It had a continuous poem in long measure on "The Power of Money," written by the Vicar himself. The paper had 600 subscribers, about 150 of them in Hamilton, a good many in Toronto and Kingston, and the rest scattered throughout Upper Canada. It did not have but little Irish news, but printed the State trials of 1841, when O'Connell and was not without interest in the trials of the British Government. Shiel's speech for the defense, I remember, was published in it in full. At that time the Canadian postoffice was yet managed from Downing street, London, and had its headquarters in Quebec and was managed by a functionary named T. A. Stayner. Postage on newspapers was not paid for by the publisher, and was not by weight as now, but by numbers, and was very exacting, and I think the Vicar must have lost money by the paper on this account. The *Catholic* was changed into *The Liberal* and continued by the printer, John Robertson, for a short time, but not paying, was given up by him. Vicar-General Macdonald became too old for the permanent duties of further clerical duties, and moved to Toronto, where he lived at St. Michael's Palace with Bishop Power, the first Bishop of Toronto, until his death, which sad event took place Good Friday, April 2nd, 1847. I well remember the grief caused by the news of the sad event in Hamilton, when women not only shed tears, but made lamentations that could be heard on the streets.

The beloved old Vicar was succeeded in the pastorate of Hamilton by the Very Rev. Edward Gordon, who was removed to Niagara. Father Gordon succeeded to the vicarariate. He, I judge from his name, was a Scotchman, too, but by his accent you would take him to be Irish. The seminary at St. Raphael's was called the College of Iona after that celebrated institution established by St. Columba on the western coast of Scotland and from which missionaries went forth for the conversion of the Picts of Scotland and the Saxons of England, but long since has become a ruined lane. Among the well-known priests who received their education in St. Raphael's were Very Rev. Father Gordon, Rev. George Hay, who became Bishop Power's Secretary in Toronto, and Rev. Michael Brennan, of Belleville.

Bishop Power, the first Bishop of Toronto, came from Halifax. He was a grand man, lucid, generous and gentle. He did not enjoy his episcopal dignity long and he a victim to the emigrant fever that was so destructive to Irish immigrants in the year 1847. I saw himself and his secretary, Father Hay, make their first entry into Hamilton, I think in the year 1844. It was a very humble and informal ecclesiastical event, and they walked unattended from the James Street Wharf to the parochial residence, a small stone, one-story cottage situated west of the little rough-cast church, which was long since superseded by the present cathedral edifice. Those were the days of the long ago, when people were simple, faith ardent and hopes high.

WILLIAM HALLEY.

**The New Papal Secretary of State**

The announcement of the appointment was made in a letter presented by the Pope to Mgr. del Val. The nomination, however, will not be made officially until the next consistory, when, it is said, that the Monsignor will also be made a Cardinal.

Mgr. Merry del Val was on July 21 last appointed by the College of Cardinals as Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation and acting Secretary of State, a position he has held ever since. In the former position he succeeded the late Mgr. Volpini, who died a few days before Pope Leo XIII.

Only a few years ago Mgr. Merry del Val was "Cameriere Segreto Partecipante," or Participating Private Chamberlain, to His Holiness and domestic prelate. He is the son of the ex-Ambassador and Holy See Secretary of State, the Hon. Sr. Sr. Merry del Val and Señora Merry del Val, the latter of whom is a member of the well-known family of De Zulueta. His English family connection and his education at St. Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, as well as his course at an English school when a boy, together with frequent visits to England and constant contact with English people in Rome, have given Mgr. Merry del Val a very high consideration with English people and a strong interest in English affairs. He performed his higher studies at the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics in Rome, and attended the course at the Gregorian University, where he graduated. Before the end of his studies he, with Mgr. Zaleski, now Delegate Apostolic in India, was deputed to go with Mgr. Rufino-Scialoja (the deceased Cardinal) to the celebrations of the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria. He then acted as secretary to Mgr. Rufino-Scialoja, who had the standing of Papal Ambassador Extraordinary. At the end of his studies he was appointed to his position at the Vatican. It is no secret that his piety and humility, not to say his zeal, urged him to go on the mission in England, but Leo XIII. preferred that his valuable services should be retained in Rome. Mgr. Merry del Val did not, however, forget the desires of his sacred superiors, and he was regular confessor for the English Church, and was constantly preaching in English churches and chapels in Rome. It has been said that he also desired to enter the Society of Jesus in England. Retaining his high position of dignity, confidence and influence at the very side of the Pope, Mgr. Merry del Val was able to manage many important services for England and for its spiritual advancement. He delivered the Pope's reply to the English pilgrimage some years ago on the occasion of the second jubilee. He also acted as secretary to the special commission on Anglican Orders.

Shortly afterwards Leo XIII. decided that he should go to Canada as Delegate Apostolic, or rather as Visitor Apostolic, to study the school question. He was then raised to the rank of domestic prelate, and thus fitted to deal with Archbishops and Bishops of that country. A few months after his return the Pope published a letter on the question. Returning to Rome, the Monsignor kept his title of domestic prelate and resumed his duties as Special Private Chamberlain. This was an unusual combination and served well to show the extraordinary merits of the youthful prelate. He also refused a prebend, or rather a canonry, in St. Peter's.

It was within the possibilities that he might be sent as permanent Delegate Apostolic to Canada, or that he might be appointed to succeed Mgr. Zaleski as Delegate Apostolic in India. His name was spoken of at the time of the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, and some expected that he would represent the Pope in England on his way to Canada, but Mgr. Sambucetti was sent because of his greater age and his standing as an Archbishop. This dignity, with the title of Nuncio, was conferred upon Mgr. Merry del Val a couple of years later, and he was appointed president of the Noble Academy. His name was mentioned a good deal of late in connection with the vacant see of Westminster, since filled by the appointment of Archbishop Bourne.

Mgr. Merry del Val is about forty years old, and in Rome he was regarded as one of the cleverest and most promising of the younger diplomats. He speaks English, Spanish, Italian and French.

**Fire at the Vatican**

Rome, Nov. 1.—Fire broke out at 8.30 this evening in that portion of the Vatican containing the Hall of Inscriptions, where the Pope gives his audiences, and which is adjacent to the famous Pinacoteca, or gallery of pictures. The alarm caused much confusion and excitement in the Vatican. Strenuous efforts were made to control the flames, and the firemen of Rome were called to lend their help. At 11.15 the fire was under control. No lives were lost. No idea of the damage can yet be obtained.

The Pope came to the scene in person, and remained until the arrangements to fight the fire were completed.

In addition to the damage done by the flames, the entire Museum of Inscriptions, the rooms of Father Ehrle, part of the library and the printing houses were flooded with water. It is impossible to give even an approximate idea of the extent of the damage. Many things that escaped the flames were injured by water, especially the precious priate library of Pope Leo, which Father Ehrle arranged in accordance with the wish of the late Pontiff.

**Holland Solving School Problem**

Queen Wilhelmina Announces Bill to "Subsidize Private Schools of Secondary Education."

The Dutch Parliament has been opened again by a very interesting speech of Her Majesty, Queen Wilhelmina. The speech from the throne was very important especially because it shows clearly that the Christian government does not swerve for a moment from the line of conduct it prescribed to itself at the very outset. When in the beginning of this year the country was for a moment almost entirely at the mercy of the striking syndicates, or, rather, a handful of socialists who were at the bottom of the trouble and who threatened to paralyze all intercourse and trade, the home Minister, Dr. Kuyper, proved by his cool but irresistible suppressions of the great strikes that he was not to be intimidated into hasty concessions. This law against the strike, and the creation of the military brigade destined to protect our railways and replace at once the striking employes in case of new trouble, struck at the very root of the matter. The only thing to be feared then was that his off-hand suppression of the socialist designs which Her Majesty the Queen so justly called "nefarious attempts against the social order" might prove to be an unsurmountable mutual understanding.

His after conduct, however, has satisfied every one (except a few hot-headed socialists) that he will do his utmost to better understand and remedy the evils of the working classes. As we have written in a former letter, he immediately created a committee of inquiry into the grievances of the strikers. Members of all parties were to sit upon the questions of wages, hours of labor, insurances against bodily injuries, etc. The result was a decided falling off of laborers from the socialist party. The ordinary workman has had his eyes opened and now prefers the calm promises of our government to the noisy declaration of the socialist leaders.

Her Majesty the Queen declared that "the steadiness displayed by the greater part of our working people during the days of the great trouble" gave her "good reasons to hope for a healthy development of the social actions among our laborers, to the success of which Her Majesty pruned to co-operate by new social laws."

Among other bills which will be brought into Parliament she announced the very momentous bill of subsidy for private schools of secondary education. Any one who knows how long and how violent a struggle preceded the grant of the same subsidy to primary education schools will rejoice at the prospect of seeing this last vestige of inequality removed.

**A BOON TO CATHOLICS**

This law when passed will open a grand future for our Catholic secondary education. We have only to compare the flourishing state of our Catholic schools for primary education at present with that of the same schools some years ago to see the great changes brought about by the subsidy. This State assistance entailed, of course, inspection by State officials and the passing of the State examiners, qualifying teachers to give lessons in schools endowed in this manner.

These things, though odious in themselves and sometimes heavy burdens, have at the same time been the most effectual means of raising our schools to the intellectual level of the State schools; yes, in many cases where equal knowledge is joined to the self-devoting cares of religious Brothers and Sisters, a much higher level is attained than any State school can aspire to.

Our Catholic secondary education is only in its very beginning. Two schools, it is true, of secular priests and the other of the Jesuit Fathers, are crowded with boys. But these two schools are by no means able to satisfy the demand of our Catholic countrymen. The subsidy of the State will, it is hoped, give the means of developing our system of secondary education to the full.

Other bills included one to enforce a stricter observation of the Lord's Day. The public sale of spirits has been subjected to severe control. This law is also wished for by the better part of all Holland with an eye to the drunkenness rather common among the poorer classes in our country. Add to these bills still another for assuring injured working people against want with a revision of our poor laws, and we must confess that our present ministry, instead of being belittled by disturbances of the beginning of the year, seem only to have taken greater courage to go on with their useful social work. No wonder then that the present Minister, Dr. Kuyper, is deservedly popular among Protestants and Catholics and respected even by the Opposition party.

May the wish of our gracious Queen, "that the blessing of Almighty God rest upon the labors of this year's session," be fulfilled, and then will this year be a blessing for the whole country.

Every individual life exists as a separate and distinct entity, filling its own place in the universe, and continuing its own career. There is something in awe-inspiring in the thought of human personality in its isolation, its individuality, its responsibility, its independence of other personalities while touched by them on all sides. Thousands of other people may be close about us, sharing their life with ours in many ways, and yet in a deep sense each one of us really dwells apart and alone. The heart nearest to ours in love cannot live for us, cannot take our place before God or among men, cannot enter into the inner experiences of our life. Each one must bear his own burden.

**The Third Order of St. Francis**

At the last monthly meeting of the Third Order of St. Francis, Rev. Father Christopher, O. F. M., preached an eloquent sermon on the dignity and power of the Blessed Virgin. He took for his text, "For behold from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed, because he that is mighty hath done great things to me." (St. Luke, chap. 1, verses 48-49). "There is," said the preacher, "a deeply rooted and widespread devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the Catholic Church. The statue of Mary has its place in every Catholic Church near the Sacrament of Her Divine Son.

"Catholics have devotion to Mary because she cannot be wrong to love, honor and esteem the whom God Himself has loved and honored, and surely God has honored Mary making her the Mother of His Only Begotten Son.

"In dignity her intercession is powerful. No one can doubt this from the example of the Marriage Feast of Cana. Eve was used to destroy the human race, but Mary to restore it. When God called any one to a certain state of dignity, He conferred grace in proportion. Mary was not only chosen, but prepared for the office of Mother of God. St. Bernardine of Siena, says, 'That it is a certain rule in theology, that when God calls a man to a certain state, He dispenses to him, the gifts needful to that state.'" Here the preacher showed how St. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and the apostles were all prepared for their calling, and likened Gideon's fleece which was left untouched by the dew to the Blessed Virgin, who escaped from the stain of original sin.

Moses built the Ark of the covenant, which was so beautifully decorated within and without. This was a figure of the Blessed Virgin.

"In danger," says St. Bernard, "in the winds of temptation, look upon the Star. In danger, trials and doubts look up to Mary. If she holds you, you will not fail."

After the sermon, solemn Benediction was imparted, during which the choir rendered a choice programme of sacred music. A new feature of the choir was the introduction of English hymns as sung in all the Catholic Churches of England. Prof. J. A. Fowler presided at the organ.

Owing to the growing needs of the English-speaking Catholics, Rev. Father Dominic, the Irish Franciscan, will be recalled from Quebec to labor in Montreal.

At Christmas meeting about thirty members will be pressed in the Third Order.

Montreal, Nov. 2, 1903. FELIX.

**Bishop Conaty Explains Papal Office**

The Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Conaty, D. D., Bishop of Los Angeles, addressed the Friday Morning Club at its regular meeting at the woman's Club House on October 9. Madame Modjeska and her friend, Madame Tuholsky, were also guests of the club. Mrs. Roy Jones, the president, introduced Bishop Conaty, who has a clear and interesting presentation of a subject often misunderstood by non-Catholics, "The Papal Office—Its Origin and Scope."

The distinguished speaker held the closest interest of his audience. His argument was so convincing that the Papal power is not built on arrogance, neither is it spiritual usurpation nor despotism. It is a spiritual authority with credentials warranted by Scripture and covered with the Christian traditions of twenty centuries. It proudly traces its lineage in unbroken succession to Peter who looked on the face of Christ and heard from His divine lips the great commission to teach all nations. Its history is a field for the research of students seeking the truth. It asserts nothing it cannot prove. It has been misrepresented. It has been and still is misunderstood. Its scope is limited only by the designs of Christ in establishing His Church and it lives solely to make known the truths of the Divine Redeemer that all men Christ who has one with the Father, may be brought into the unity of God speed the day of a more perfect Christian unity which will bring into the fold of Christ all the children of the Heavenly Father until as St. Paul says, "We all meet unto the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and one church, His Spirit without spot or wrinkle." God speed the day.

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