

The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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FORMALISM IN RELIGION

(WRITTEN FOR THE REGISTER)

Night Reverend Dr. Sullivan inaugurated the Lenten exercises in St. James' Cathedral by an historical account of the great feast, its antiquity, its reasons and fitness; and announced that for the forty days the church would be open for instructions and devotions proper to the season.

We congratulate him upon the resolution, and wish him and his audience an abundant participation in the Lenten spirit.

Not very long ago it was considered peculiar to Catholics to set more store by one day than another, and various very offensive and silly things were said against us in consequence. But a more common sense view is rapidly gaining ground, and people feel that if the merchant is wise in taking some time every year to look sharply into all the details of his business, with a view to strengthening the departments that pay, and cut off the sources of loss; and if the housekeeper, worthy of the name, in addition to daily carefulness, sets apart a week every season for the more useful than agreeable work of putting everything in its proper place, so, and for better reason, the Christian needs his periods of extraordinary effort to make up for the daily fallures.

The wisdom of an annual Lent is as easily shown as the wisdom of annual stock-taking for the merchant, or annual house-cleaning by the tidy matron; and we are glad to see how people are finding out that in this, as in everything else, the Church has always followed the right course. St. James' open for Lenten exercises is an admission of this.

The Right Reverend Rector, amid much good advice, warns his hearers against the danger of mere formal observance of Lent, and herein he is timely. Formalism in religion, as in everything else, is a most blighting thing, never to be too carefully guarded against. It is the death of all spiritual effort, as St. Paul has expressed with his usual energy of language and figure: If I should distribute my goods to feed the poor, and deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. The same truth is set forth in the words: 'Tis the spirit quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

All are agreed here. Formalism, which is the absence of the spirit, when, indeed, it is not worse, is simply cant in action, dishonest, hypocritical, and deeply condemned by God. But let it be born well in mind that not everything which has the look of formalism, is therefore wrong. We see only the outside of things, but before we pass judgment, always try to estimate what is within. It would be a queer world if we didn't. What is the human body but a mass of incongruous materials, chemically opposed, and when left to themselves, ready to fly into corruption and ruin. We know this very well, yet do not therefore, when we meet some one, shut our eyes, and hold our nose, and run off as from a corpse. It will be a corpse some time, fit only for the coffin and the grave; but now there is something within, which holds the parts in order and harmony, and quickens them into a nature and a life not their own, and makes this heap of clay one of the lords of creation.

The difference between the friend whose presence thrills us with delight, and a loathsome corpse, who is fit only to be thrown into the gutter, is not, as most of us have had occasion to discover some time in our experience. And so Formalism and genuine deep-seated piety look much alike on the surface, and may easily enough be mistaken for one for the other. To discriminate, then, as they must look within, and find the spirit which makes them. According as that is faith on the one hand, or pretension and sham on the other, the very same visible conduct will be either true penitential endeavor, or a ghastly mockery of God and man. The same set of religious exercises will do for both.

Hence it is not easy to distinguish the true spirit from the false, in a given instance, and clearly requires that we look to the matter view whenever possible. Many may begin in carelessness, and Formalism, going to church, and carrying out Lenten rules merely because they see others around them doing the same; but—supposing the absence of hypocrisy—they are therefore in a condition to inspect more than they do if they did not go to church at all.

There are cowards and traitors in every army; yet whilst their presence is deplorable, a blot and a stain, it is seldom much of a weakness. The gallantry of brave companions often shames them out of their baseness, and makes them true soldiers. Why should it be otherwise in a troop of Christians? If the majority are in deep earnest, bewailing their sins, and striving to amend their lives by joint public exercises of religion, it is hardly possible that the "Formalists" can fall to be caught up and carried forward by the

Pre-Historic Placentia.

LECTURE BY BISHOP HOWLEY.

To all who heard Bishop Howley's lecture on Placentia lately given in the Temperance Hall, St. John's, Nfld., or read the reports of it in the daily press, there was conveyed a vast and varied amount of information, gathered from reliable French documents in Quebec, concerning the ancient Capital of Newfoundland, and a great revival of interest has taken place amongst the people of the Metropolis, in this ancient and historic strong hold, for the having of which France and Britain contested even to the extremity of war. The Right Rev. Lecturer paid high tribute to the Magnan Opus the great historical work of Judge Prowse and also to the immortal lectures of Bishop Mullock. Speaking of the name "Placentia" his Lordship maintained that it was not of French but of Portuguese origin; there being Placentia on the banks of the Tagus in Portugal. However, whether of French or of Portuguese, bestowing the name Placentia is as a tribute to the rare beautiful surroundings and situation of the place. Placentia proper is a peninsula being joined to the southeast main land by a narrow isthmus called the Block House. Local tradition and an ancient map go to show that this neck of land was formerly an inlet of the sea; so that pre-historic Placentia may have been an island. A spacious beach perfectly level, save for certain undulations, (marking the rolling of the sea in pre-historic times) and a range of hills towards the south-east side, rising to the high ridges of Dinon's Hill, and at the western end, a narrow neck of land, and terminated by the "Quarry." These are the physical features of Placentia.

From the "Quarry" was excavated the stone used in the building of the Presentation convent of Placentia. Regarding the Block House, local tradition on certain old charts as being open to the sea, the amusing anecdote was told by His Lordship of a certain old French captain who ran his vessel according to a chart which showed the neck as being open to the sea, and on the morning of the skipper, the gut was long since filled with solid ground. The pilot on board said to him: "That gut is closed." "No matter," said the skipper, as he ran right ahead. "At about the same time," he said, "the vessel was wrecked on the opposite side of the island. However, the logs of accomplished facts is stubborn, and five minutes afterwards the too confident captain was aground. Placentia is surrounded by a complicated system of hills, the highest and the most picturesque effect of the town, as viewed from the railway station on the North side, from Mount Pleasant, opposite the town, or from Dinon's Hill within the town. From any of these points of view, the picture is a most beautiful one. Mount Pleasant rises in green slopes and drif groves over the town River. It is a favorite place for sight seeing. From here you have the level town full in view, and the hills, the towers, the dwellings, the old Court house, and its adjoining burying ground, the graceful Romanesque Catholic church, the presbytery, the convent and the Star of the Sea Hall. From Dinon's Hill no man has had excellent views of the place, and from Ferry Side Hill, near the railway station, the tourists eye is enchanted by a prospect of silvery beach, dotted here and there with made ground disposed in fields and trees, and the buildings, the towers, the hills and encircling waters. This view is pronounced by all to be unique.

A certain tourist remarked that he had visited the world and seen nothing so surprising and very few places to equal it. Such is its amazing effect at first sight. The approach to Placentia by sea is through a roadstead which narrows into a channel running in swift current between the towers, the towers to proper. The channel bends off towards the south-east in one direction and continues on into the famous north-east arm in another. The south-easterly bend of the water passes through the Salt Water River, between the town and Mount Pleasant; opens out into the sea; narrows again to a channel at the rear of Dinon's Hill, and extends into the south-east arm to a distance of several miles. This arm of the sea is so placid and so beautiful, that it is to be a great lake. Its surface is calm, and a more beautiful picture cannot be imagined, than the reflection which it gives back of the rich changing foliage and bluff heights;

"All rocks and tufted knolls, their face
Cool as the lake's dark mirror trace."

This arm is interspersed with islands. The water is of surpassing fertility. When cleared it yields the best farming results, though up to the present the great forests of birch and spruce have not been much encroached upon by the settlers. However, the anglers, the camera-holder and the pleasure-seeker generally find "up the south-east" a happy hunting ground. Into the arm empties a river called Kelly's River. It seems with trout, and hundreds go there every summer to fill their baskets. Kelly's River recalls the name of an old resident of the place; a man who carried the mails over the road between Placentia and St. John's. He is well known in

THE MISSION AT ST. MARY'S.

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The mission in St. Mary's parish conducted by the Jesuit Fathers closed on Sunday last. After the High Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. William McCann, His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to over one hundred adults, men and women, among whom there were many converts to the faith. Father DuVin S.J. preached impressively on the great blessing of possession of the faith and the loyalty and duty of its possessors. The church was crowded. At the conclusion of the Mass the Archbishop addressed the people from the sanctuary railing. After expressing his own pleasure on account of the success of the mission, he went on to say that it was a cause of great joy for the church to see such a spiritual resurrection as had been witnessed during the past fortnight. "Oh my dear brethren," he said "there is reason to rejoice in this. Your homes have been brightened; the peace of Christ has entered them; the peace of Christ has entered your souls; you have been made friends of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. It is now for you to preserve those graces, to develop those happy experiences in your souls during your future lives. It is for you to preserve the treasures that God has given you. What would you think of a man who, having amassed a large amount of worldly treasure, should go down to the lake and recklessly throw it all away? You would think him mad. But the greatest worldly treasure is as nothing compared to the spiritual treasures you have received; therefore it is your duty as well as your interest to preserve them, that you may walk along the path of virtue that leads to the kingdom of heaven. He that perseveres unto the end shall be saved; he that perseveres not shall be lost. The man that puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven; and if a man or woman here who, having put hands to plough, who being reconciled to God and made heirs of heaven, will look back again to sinful ways: Such a one is not fit for the kingdom of heaven; and I am not sure that you are doing this. You are not in harmony with God. But remember that without God's grace you cannot persevere; remember that God has left to his church all means to enable you to persevere unto the end. First of these means is prayer. Oh, my dear brethren, prayer is the golden key that opens to you the kingdom, that admits you to the treasure-house of God's grace. Prayer will lift your souls above the field atmosphere of this passion into the pure atmosphere of God's grace, and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. In the favor of God we are indeed beggars, and it belongs to us to ask and to knock at the door of His graces, and your prayers. Oh, what a happy sight it is to see the Christian family on bended knees! Say the Rosary; beautiful prayers by which your forefathers preserved their lives and gave it to their children born in this country. Reverence the old habits and traditions that made your fathers what they were, good, devoted, honest, loyal Catholics. The Catholic household assembled in prayer to invoke the aid of God. Where two or three are gathered together, I am there in the midst of them, said our Divine Lord. And he will with you, blessing your family, sanctifying your home, making you happy and contented, because the hearts of the children of children having turned out badly. And why not? What example did those children receive in the home? What means did the parents adopt to sanctify their homes, to have the children fear and love the Lord, to honor the father and mother? I say to you fathers and mothers set an example to your children. Be careful to say the family prayers, earnestly and punctually morning and night. You who are fathers and mothers, how can you expect to surround yourselves with the affection and respect of your children if you do not regularly pray in their presence to the Father in heaven? Say the "Our Father." It is our Father, as early as the dawn of time in Him we live, move and have our being. Then again as the missionary said to you, be careful to go to confession. My dearest brethren, if there was only one man in all the world in every church, because this blessing of being loved from sin is as common almost as the air you breathe, do you despise it? God is infinite mercy and He has ordained that his greatest blessings shall be infinite. The water you drink, the food you eat, the blessing of God's mercy and neglect to be reconciled to him—your father—because he has made his blessing of forgiveness free to every sinner. Therefore go to confession. The missionary father said to you that a man should go to confession at least four times a year. The church lays down once a year as the limit; beyond that the guilt of mortal sin is incurred. Experience teaches you one and all that

In Aid of St. Nicholas Home for Boys.

On next Sunday evening, at vesper, the Rev. Father O'Bryan, the eminent Jesuit priest and missionary will lecture on St. Nicholas' Home for Boys. Special musical Vespers for the occasion will begin at 7 p.m., during which a collection will be taken up in aid of the Home. Tickets may be obtained at St. Nicholas' Cathedral, or at the door of the Cathedral, on Sunday evening. It is seldom that the public have been asked to further the object of a more deserving institution than St. Nicholas' Home. The present appeal is all the more worthy of the kind and generous support on account of the increasing numbers of young boys who have their home in this institution, and the lack of funds to furnish them with a suitable refuge against the evil temptations of a great city.

The Home is under the charge of the good sisters of St. Joseph, who, from the time of its inception under the late Archbishop Lynch, have spared no pains to make the institution what it is now. It is a beautiful and comfortable Catholic Home for honest, industrious working boys. Some of the boys residing at the Home are working in the city, but the larger number are either too young to work or else are unable to find any suitable employment. What they become of so many young souls left along to battle for existence amid the waves of this stormy, sinful life, if they were not taken care of by the charitable ladies of St. Joseph's Religious Order, would be a sad sight to behold. It should ask of himself who realizes that he is, indeed, his brother's keeper.

Some of these boys have been left at an early age without a father or a mother, and are living in the streets, and the religious ladies of the Catholic Church, who have grown up honest, upright, self-reliant Catholic men, who are to-day a credit to the institution and an honor to their religion. For the last few years, the boys have been in the winter months the good Sisters, with the assistance of the gentlemen of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, have been able to procure an excellent instructor, who teaches all the elementary branches of the sciences, and the boys who have not had these advantages in early youth. At 6 a.m. every day they have morning prayer, and in common the Rosary every evening before retiring is recited, at which all the Catholic boys of the district are engaged. If they have Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, with a short catechetical instruction taken from Butler's Catechism. The boys have an excellent choir, which would do credit even to the city streets. It is a pleasure to listen to these strong, vigorous young voices swelling out the notes of the "Auntum Ergo" at Benediction of a Sunday afternoon. There are at present over forty boys in this institution, with six Sisters, and the good Sisters, in charge of the good Sisters take charge of all the domestic arrangements themselves. The menial duties of scrubbing, washing, cooking, house-cleaning are not left to servants, for there are none with the institution, and the boys are all to be performed by all the good Sisters, who have become lowly for the sake of the Master and His little ones. In fact the strictest economy is practiced in every department. The benevolent intention of aid of which the good Sisters are now making an appeal to the public for the necessary funds, without which they will be unable to continue the useful and blessed work in which they are engaged. If we have lost so many Catholic children in Toronto in the past, and statistics are ready to vouch for it, it was owing in a large measure to the apathy of Catholics themselves, who apparently were not concerned in the welfare of the children of Irish Catholic parents should be provided with a home or not, or whether they were taught the religion of Christ or brought up to despise the country and the creed of their fathers. It is our hope that the ladies in charge of St. Nicholas' Home will not be in vain to the charity of the Catholics of Toronto.

Kiosklike Outfits.

Parties bent on seeking their fortunes in the gold regions of the Yukon must be well prepared with suitable outfits before entering up a journey involving many hardships peculiar to a country wrapped wholly in the frigid zone. A glance at the advertisement of Oak Hall, which appears in to-day's Register, furnishes a catalogue of items that are indispensable in the make-up of the voyager to the golden land; and intending purchasers, by leaving their orders at this establishment, can do so at considerable saving in the outlay.

THE HOLY FATHER AND CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS.

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The Directing Council of Catholic Journalists in Italy having forwarded an address to the Holy Father, the following letter has been addressed to the association in the name of His Holiness. I have received with much pleasure the letter relative to the Association of Catholic Journalists in Italy. I have not failed to place it before the Holy Father, and I am pleased to be able to inform you that His Holiness has given his approval, and his satisfaction at the happy idea, but to praise highly the zeal with which those who proposed it are animated. He has nothing more at heart than to see harmony reign amongst Catholic journalists, and to know that they give their best attention, not merely to avoid all discord and all harmful disputes, but also to render each other mutual assistance in order to better attend to the defence of the holy cause of religion and of the Papacy. The august Pontiff is aware that the purpose of the association is mainly to attain these ends, and he accordingly praises those who are willing to devote useful exercises thereto. In order that the desired fruits of the association may prove concrete and continual, His Holiness heartily accords his Apostolic Benediction.—M. Card. Rampolla.

A. O. H. Concert.

The committee on the joint concert of the A. O. H. of York Co., have completed all arrangements for their annual concert in Massey Hall, March 17th. The committee have spared no expense to make this one of the grandest concerts ever held in Toronto. The following high class artists will take part in the concert: Mrs. J. O'Leary, accompanied by Miss A. Foley, Miss F. X. Marceller, W. E. Ramsay, Jas. Farr, Eddie Pigott. There will also be a grand organ recital from 4.30 to 5.15 by Miss Fanny Sullivan, of the Toronto Conservatory of Music. Mrs. D. J. O'Leary, accompanied by Orator by Rev. J. R. Teely, L.L.D. The Rev. Doctor needs no introduction to any audience in Ontario. He is known as a man of ability and great oratorical power. All those who attend Massey Hall on this evening will not go away without value for their money. The admission fee has been placed very low 25c to all parts of the house. Ticket holders can reserve their seats on and after March 12th.

Irish Catholic Benevolent Union.

At the regular meeting of Branch No. 1, of the Union, held in J.B.U. Hall, corner King and Jarvis streets on Tuesday March 1st, 1898 a resolution of condolence was unanimously adopted on the death of the mother of Brother Charles Quinn.

THE LONGER YOU STAY AWAY THE GREATER AVERSION YOU HAVE TO GOING TO CONFESSION.

Why not go regularly. That Catholic is not loyal to his convictions who will not seek the friendship of God. And oh the joy and strength of receiving the Blessed Eucharist. The food of the strong, the food of the soul, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ! and oh my dearest brethren, remember God here upon your altar. The early ages of the church Christians were known as Christ bearers. Is there a Catholic living to day who would be ashamed of the same name? And if you are loyal to your faith, although you are not called upon to lay down your life for the early Christians did, remember that you are called upon to show the courage of your convictions. You do this by avoiding the occasions of sin. Avoid all places where experience has taught you there is danger. It may be drinking places, or it may be dance houses. Shun them, shun all the occasions of sin if you would save your souls, for he who loves the danger shall perish therein. Listen to the words of the Lord. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; for it is better to enter into heaven with only one eye than to go down into hell with two. This my dear friends is the advice I would address to you to-day. These honestly and simple lessons do not fall to the ears of the few, but to the many like milk stoles along the journey of your life. Let the memory of this day and the abundant graces you have received remain with you like a perfume of the loving Saviour leading you unto salvation.

The candidates for Confirmation then came forward and the Archbishop administered the Sacrament to them. He afterwards addressed to them words of encouragement and congratulation. They must remember that they were soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, ready at all times to profess their faith openly, brave at all times with the courage of conviction. He pointed to the primitive Christians as an example of strong Christian faith and as those who were possessors of the faith suffered three hundred years ago in the old land. To-day the Catholic has not such trials to endure. In Canada we live in a free country, and as for professing our religion, where is the Catholic who would be named of the Church of the saints and the martyrs? If there is one institution in the world to be proud of it is the holy Catholic Church. The Archbishop spoke of the Holy Sacrament, and gave his blessing to those confirmed, and to the congregation.

In the evening the church was again crowded. Vicar-General McCann and vespers assisted by Fathers Dollard and Conway. The preacher was Father O'Bryan, S.J.