

MONTREAL GOSSIP.

All Protestants, and some Catholics, who entered the Church of the Jesu on the third of this month, were probably much exercised to understand the meaning of what the former would term the "goings on" therein. From an early hour the faithful assembled to receive the blessing attached to the devotion to St. Blaise upon this special day. The candles were blessed at the early masses, and it was then that the largest number presented themselves at the communion railing to have the mystic sign made over their throats between two lighted tapers, held in the form of a St. Andrew's cross. It was rather funny to notice the different modes in which the people prepared for the reception of this grace—the outward and visible preparation, I mean. As a rule, the lords of creation found themselves sufficiently bare in the region of the larynx, but for some of the "devout female sex," with the high collars, ribbon ties, etc., that are *de rigueur* this winter, it was a veritable tug of war. One bronchially-afflicted spinster in the pew in front of your correspondent, divested herself first of a "cloud," secondly of a veil, thirdly of a silk handkerchief, fourthly she unfastened her ulster, fifthly she unbuttoned her dress bodice, sixthly she removed her collar, after which "this deponent knoweth not." In point of fact, these precautions were quite unnecessary—except, indeed, the removal of the veil, for one unlucky dame, who allowed a drapery of filmy gauze to protrude in a decorous, but unnecessary manner beyond her countenance, to her horror, saw it ignite—and had it not been for timely aid the consequences might have been serious. Not only was the blessing of the throats imparted at the masses, but also every hour throughout the day, Rev. Father Jones having said in his sermon on the Sunday morning previous: "There will always be some Father in the house, who will be ready and willing to come out and perform this service."

It is only four years since the devotion to St. Blaise was formally established in Montreal. The Papal Brief, authorizing its promulgation by the Fathers of the Church of the Jesu, hangs, together with a relic of the saint, in the little side chapel dedicated to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Very decided benefits to weak throats have already been granted here, through this annual blessing. For those who, though "of the Household of Faith," are disposed to cavil at what they call "this new devotion," it may be well to quote a paragraph from the London *Tablet* of January 7. Says the Roman correspondent, Mr. Weld:—"A remarkably cordial and respectful letter, from the Duke of Cumberland, which might have been written by any Catholic prince, explains that the rich reliquary sent by His Royal Highness is an exact copy of the one which contained the relic of St. Blaise, *long venerated in the Church of St. Blaise, at Brunsvick*, of which the Princes of the House of Guelf were the patrons and benefactors, and that the relic which the original reliquary contained has been, by the duke's desire, enclosed in the reliquary destined for His Holiness by Cardinal Ganglbauer, Prince Archbishop of Vienna, and is conveyed to Rome by a religious of the Cistercian order."

Despite the efforts made by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Murphy to keep the twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage a profound secret, the news somehow penetrated beyond the limits of their Dorchester Street mansion. The "Father of Home Rule in Canada" and his amiable and benevolent wife are too much beloved in this city, wherein they hold so prominent a position, for so important a family festival to be allowed to glide by without recognition.

On the morning of the 16th Mr. and Mrs. Murphy had a special Mass at St. Patrick's Church, which was offered by the venerable Father Dowd, who had married them twenty-five years before. The Church was richly decorated for the occasion, and Professor Fowler and his choir rendered appropriate music during the service. Throughout the day Mr. and Mrs. Murphy were repeatedly called upon to acknowledge the receipt of handsome souvenirs in silver, and in the evening a deputation from St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society waited upon Mr. Murphy with an address, which was read by Mr. J. J. Curran, M.P., Q.C., and conveyed to the recipient (who has been their vice president for forty-eight years) their best wishes and heartiest congratulations, as well as to Mrs. Murphy, whose many deeds of charity and loving sympathy will be for ever remembered among God's poor in Montreal.

Lent is upon us with all the many graces and awful responsibilities which it affords to Catholics in this most Catholic city. That Père Mensabré was to preach the conferences in Notre Dame has turned out to be a *canard* pure and simple. The first retreat in that Church is being given by L'Abbe Proulx, curé of Ile Bizard. In St. Patrick's a retreat is going on for young men, preached by Rev. J. A. McCallen, who is a man of talent and eloquence. At the Gesu Rev. Father Connolly is conducting a retreat for ladies—or, if the *beau sexe* will forgive me—for women. Surely, the term "lady" and "gentleman" is out of place in connection with the services of our most Holy Church, who, with her arms open to all, looks never to the exterior but always to the heart—and is mindful of the time.

"When Adam delved and Eve span."

The Holy Father gives us a good lesson in that regard—by his especial courtesy in the acceptance of a brown paper bag of candies from an old peasant woman, at one of the audiences recently accorded to Italian pilgrims, when His Holiness, taking the poor old soul's humble offering, handed it to a chamberlain and gave orders that it should be placed in his room, remarking, as he glanced at a diamond ring, the gift of a lady of rank: "The other is possibly the more brilliant."

What expression have you in your language for what in English we call a social wet-blanket, or kill-joy? I asked one of the officers of the French flag-ship "La Minerve," last summer. "When we are in Quebec," he promptly replied, "We call them *empêcheurs de danser en ronde*." The expression was apt, notwithstanding the Carlyle-like coinage of a word I doubt if many of the guests of Lieutenant Governor Angers at His Honour's brilliant ball, given on the 9th inst., in the Parliament Buildings of Quebec, would have so translated my idiom, and yet there was not a round dance on the programme, except those inevitable to the *cotillon*. All accounts accord the highest praise to the decorations, arrangements, supper, and music. Cultivated taste, and the thoughtful care of a truly hospitable host made the ball a brilliantly successful affair. Was it, think you my readers, shorn of any of its éclat because the Catholic gentleman, who gave it, in his official capacity, as head of the State—showed deference to the wishes of a still higher power—my Lord Cardinal Taschereau, head of the Catholic Church in Canada. Religious circles in Montreal are much pleased with the example set by the new Governor of Quebec.

A very charming pictorial tale was that entitled "A Short History of a Troublesome Girl," which appeared in the Christmas number of the London *Graphic*. Quite as charming and infinitely more naughty was a little Montreal maiden of seventeen, who not long ago, and to the great and enduring wrath of her mamma, "came home one day with a wedding-ring upon her finger, she having married Jack." The parallel is perfect for "Jack is very nice, but he is only twenty, and has not a penny, so they will have to live on love." By way of a good beginning, this reprehensible young couple took a small house in a small street, dispensed with the assistance of that abject adjunct to genteel poverty, a general servant, and set to work to face the responsibilities of life.

The other day I went, with one or two other favoured beings to lunch with the matronized "troublesome girl." It was strange to see her, the petted baby of a wealthy family, open the door to her guests. After a few moments' chatter in the drawing-room, she excused herself and disappeared for a short interval, and then summoned us to luncheon. Such a pretty table! Inexpensive ware, but tasteful in form and colour, and a profusion of lovely flowers, for our "troublesome girl" is a favourite with all, and comes in for many a donation of ferns and blossoms. And then the *menu*! And mark well, my young lady readers, she had prepared it all herself and alone. First, a clear soup, then chops done to a turn, and piled in a pyramid surrounded by tomatoes, potato chips, raspberry tart, "Floating Island," wonderfully light rolls, and good coffee completed the cosy little repast, and I wish some gruff old bachelor who has never on the degeneracy of the young woman of the period, could have tasted my little lady's puff pastry and light rolls, made by her own clever hands. Moreover, her dainty gowns, which fitted her to perfection, and seemed tinged with her own individuality, had been fashioned by those same fingers. In a distant