The True Witness

AND

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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AT

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M. W. KIRWAN—EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19.

CALENDAR—DECEMBER, 1877.

WEDNESDAY, 19—Ember Day. *Fast.*
Victoria Bridge, Montreal, opened, 1859.

THURSDAY, 20—Vigil of St. Thomas.
Napoleon III. elected President, 1848.

FRIDAY, 21—St. Thomas, Apostle. Ember Day. *Fast.*

SATURDAY, 22—Ember Day. *Fast.*
Death of General Michael Corcoran, in Virginia, 1863.

SUNDAY, 23—FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.
Washington's resignation as Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, 1783.

MONDAY, 24—Vigil of Christmas. *Fast.*
Treaty of Peace between the United States and Great Britain concluded at Ghent, 1814.

TUESDAY, 25—CHRISTMAS DAY.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

ST. JEAN BAPTISTE VILLAGE INFANTRY COMPANY.

The members of the above Company will assemble at the QUEBEC GATE BARRACKS, Dalhousie Square, THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING at 7.30, *sharp.* The Fife and Drum Band will attend.

M. W. KIRWAN,
Captain Commanding.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"R. C."—Next week.

"A. S."—We have engaged one.

"W. B. OSCEOLA."—Postponed for a considerable time.

"D. M. BROCKFIELD."—One has been engaged.

"OTTAWA."—A marked paper was sent to us from Ottawa. It came too late.

"REGULAR HOURS."—We think it better not to notice the circumstance about which you write.

A lady sends us an extract from a Californian paper, but we regret that the "lecture" to to which she refers has escaped our attention.

"IRISH AMERICAN."—Your letter received. You should have sent your name. We think you must have been mistaken.

"330 OTTAWA."—The Abbe' MacGoeghegon's with a continuation by John Mitchell, is from an Irish standpoint, the best. They are published together, by Sadlier & Co., New York.

OUR BOYS.

It is, we believe, customary for the city subscribers of newspapers to remember the messengers during the festival season of Christmas. This year our messengers may have an additional claim upon the kindness of our city subscribers, for the fact of our having reduced the price of the TRUE WITNESS from $2.50 to $2.00

VOTES.

The time is now fast approaching when it will be necessary for every man to pay his taxes, or else he will be deprived of his vote. We must urge upon our readers the necessity of attending to this important duty. If the taxes are not paid before the first of January, then the vote is lost, and the taxes will be collected afterwards with costs.

ST. PATRICK'S BAZAAR.

One of the most pleasant features in connection with St. Patrick's Bazaar is, the cordial manner in which many Protestants helped to swell the list of contributions. The Bazaar has, we are informed, been a great success, and considering the trying times through which the people have passed, we have all reason to be pleased at the result.

REFORMERS AND CONSERVATIVES.

Some people have expressed surprise at the short article we wrote last week about the "Reform Party." We thought our position with reference to political issues was well understood, but it appears that it is not. Let us then settle it. Once more we repeat that we are, in Dominion politics, neither Reformers nor Conservatives. We see no reason why we should connect ourselves with either side. Both have been the enemies to Catholic interests and both have been friends to Catholic interests, just as it answered their purposes. It is their party *first*, our affairs afterwards. Where were either the Reformers or Conservatives when the Church at Oka was laid in ashes by an incendiary mob? Did not both side *against* the Church and *for* her enemies? Are our memories too short to forget *that* lesson. Where were they again when Orangemen insulted the Catholics of this city by playing "Croppies lie down" in the public thoroughfare? What Reform or Conservative paper sided *with* the Catholics and *against* the orangemen *then?* Both abandon us, and both insult us just as it answers their own purposes. The Reform *Globe* insulted us years ago, and the Conservative *Citizen* of Ottawa insulted us the other day by publishing as coarse and as vulgar an attack upon the Catholics of Quebec as ever we read. They are we repeat all the same There is no issue yet before us which would warrant us in Dominion politics, to fix our faith in either, and we can conscientiously exclaim, "a plague on both their houses."

THE FIRE BRIGADE.

At a meeting of the Committee appointed to enquire into the Fire Brigade, a gentleman said that we made charges without having previously instituted the necessary enquiries into their authenticity. He said too that we only published a portion of the returns from the various Fire Stations, showing the relative number of Catholics and Protestants in the force. About the first charge we must remind the gentleman to whom we refer that if the press refused insertion to letters which directly effect the interests of the public it would stifle complaint.

Everyone must know that the insertion of letters in the public press has always been a rule of journalism, although we would prefer that all correspondents should sign their names if such a policy could be made practicable. With reference to the second charge we shall now remedy it by publishing returns from *all* the Fire Stations. Here they are:—

No. 1,	11 Men.	10	Protestants.	1	Catholics.
No. 2,	7 "	6	"	1	"
No. 3,	5 "	2	"	3	"
No. 4,	4 "	—	"	4	F. C.
No. 5,	5 "	4	"	1	Invalide,
No. 6,	5 "	—	"	5	F. C.
No. 7,	4 "	1	"	3	"
No. 8,	5 "	—	"	5	F. C.
No. 9,	5 "	5	"	—	"
No. 10,	4 "	4	"	—	"
No. 11,	4 "	—	"	4	F. C.
No. 12,	5 "	3	"	2	one F. C.
Three Chiefs		2	"	1	"

This leaves 37 Protestants, 20 French Canadian Catholics and only 9 English speaking Catholics in the Fire Brigade of Montreal. We do not guarantee the correctness of the above statements but we do guarantee the respectability of the person who gave it to us. And what does it reveal? Well before saying any more we shall allow the figures to answer and we shall pause for a reply.

THE NATIVE TRIBES OF NORTH AMERICA

AND THE CATHOLIC MISSIONS.

Of late non-Catholics have admitted that their missionary enterprises have not been as successful as they ought to be. This admission has been made in Montreal as well as other places. Catholics however have no reason to complain of the success of their missionary work; on the contrary they have reason to be thankful. If we look into the past ages of this continent we will see that it was mainly through the missionary enterprises of Catholics that the country was brought under the influence of Christianity. Whatever we know of the history of the various tribes that inhabited the Atlantic seaboard is principally due to the Catholic Missionary.

A sufficient study of the Red Indian will prove that he was not only a pagan, when the first Catholic missionaries came—not only a degraded savage, but in appearance totally unfit for a *settled* life, either as an agriculturist, a fisherman, or even as a hunter, the wildest of all the pursuits of inferior tribes. Before a pagan can become a thorough Christian he must be made, to a certain extent at least, a man of steady habits, or his new religion will be exposed to extraordinary temptations. But it is literally true that no race of men had ever before been met by the messengers of God less apt to follow a regular course of conduct. The barbarians of the north of Europe, when they swooped down on the Roman Empire, and destroyed all its institutions, were undoubtedly poor subjects as future converts, and they gave immense trouble to the Church to polish and convert them, Still they were capable of a high degree of culture, as they proved afterwards, and in a short time furnished a great number of saints to our calendar. People say that the reason is that they were of Aryan stock, and the Red Indian is not. It may be so; we will not discuss the question. Our object is first to represent the Indians as they were when Europeans began to colonize North America. The reader will then be able to judge what kind of task the Catholic missionaries undertook, and if their success was not on the whole surprising.

The present sketch will embrace both the tribes of the North, herein Canada, and the northern part of the United States, and those of the South, as the frontier of Mexico. In the first of these, French missionaries, in the second, Spanish religious, carried on during nearly two centuries a holy warfare against savagery and paganism.

The Indian tribes of the vast northern territory—the special field of missionaries—must come first for description; and our object being mainly to reach the history of the noble efforts made to convert those northern tribes, the great number of the petty nations which scarcely come within the circle of Catholic proselytism, must be described cursorily and with scarcely any detail. The chief object of interest must bear on those tribes only in which the faith made sufficient progress to deserve attention.

Who were the first inhabitants of North America? It appears to be now to a great extent admitted that the Red Indians known to history were not. The stupendous remains of antiquity which are still found all over this vast territory; the mounds scattered profusely over a large part of the United States in the North; the fortifications, earth work, &c., which have been in great part excavated, and prove that the race by whom they were erected was a great military race; the numerous relics of art which now fill the museums of the country, seem to intimate that before the Red Indian flourished on the banks of the Ohio and its tributaries, of the Mississippi and its affluents, these regions must have been the dwelling of a far more powerful and civilized people, for the later remains, also unearthed in abundance, show a far inferior degree of material civilization. But with this we are not concerned. We have nothing to do with this achæological difficulty.

When the Spaniards landed on the coast of Florida; the French Huguenots on that of Carolina; the Dutch and English on the seaboard of the present Middle States; and finally the French Catholics here in the valley of the St. Lawrence, the European colonists found themselves face to face with a great number of tribes whose languages differed a great deal from each other; whose dress and exterior appearance offered numerous points of divergence but who belonged evidently to the same ethnological stock. The features of the face, the complexion of the skin, the long hair and the want of beard, social habits, cruelty in war, inclination to plunder, the pursuit of hunting as the great means of sustaining life, a wretched system of agriculture in a most fertile and favoured country, the way of bringing up their children the independence of all under nominal chieftains, religion finally, or what took the place of it, proclaiming that they belonged originally to the same family of nations.

Had the missionaries ever crossed, at that time, the chain of the Rocky Mountains they would have seen that in the immense territory embraced within the high ranges of this extensive plateau, and beyond, in the plains which extend from this backbone of the continent to the distant shores of the Pacific, the same savage state existed among men, and the same habits of life, and social institutions obtained among people whose languages were as diversified as those which are spoken in and around the Caucasus, according to the reports of ethnographers.

BUT BEFORE GOING ON LET US TAKE THE NORTHERN TRIBES.

These are the most important for the history of the missions, and are comprised almost altogether within the Algonquin and the Huron Iroquois families. The Algonquins are the more remarkable of the two, because of their being spread over a far larger territory, so as to surround the Huron-Iroquois. But this last family of tribes had by far the greater political and social influence over the whole country, as they were constantly involved in war with nearly all the other tribes of North America between the Mississippi and the Atlantic Ocean, and were almost invariably victorious.

The nations immediately allied ethnologically together, so as to form the Algonquin or Algic branch of the Red Indians occupied more than half the territory east of the Mississippi and south of the St. Lawrence. They had possession mainly, though not exclusively, of an area extending along sixty degrees of longitude and more than twenty degrees of latitude. Some of them dwelt on the Ottawa river in the north, and others on the frontiers of Georgia in the south. The chief of them were, going from east to west, the Montagnais still inhabiting as far north as Labrador, contiguous consequently to the Esquimaux of Greenland; the Gaspesians and Mic-Macs occupying the actual provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; the Algonquins, properly so called along the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa; the Nippissings still dwelling around the lake of the same name; westward yet, the Ottawas and Chippewas, not far from the outlet of Lake Superior; a little further south-west, the Menomonees; the Sacs, the Foxes, the Kickapoos, and the Mascontens; around the southern curve of Lake Michigan dwelt the numerous clans forming the confederacy of the Illinois, on the Miami river: Going back to the point of starting, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, there dwelt south of the Gaspesians and Mic-Macs, called by the French Souriquois, the tribe of the Abnakis so well known from the labours of Rasles their apostle. Some remains of it still exist on Penobscot river. The territory they occupied forms now a part of the State of Maine. A little further south, around the head waters of the Connecticut river, lived the Sokokis, a nation long extinct and scarcely known to history, even at the time of the settlement by the first European colonists. Not far from the Sokokis lived the Narragansetts and Peguods, with whom the settlers of Connecticut waged so long and disastrous a war. At the same latitude, but a little further west, on the Hudson river, the Mohawks dwelt, rendered more illustrious by the pen of Fenimore Cooper than by all the dull historians of colonial times. Further south still, the Lenni Lenape roamed along the Delaware and the Susquehanna; and all over the actual State of Virginia were settled the Powhatans, among whom Pocahontas shed a halo of sweet joy. The Shawnees, in the west, roved on the banks of the Ohio; and, finally several tribes of the Algic family had long before settled as far south as the Carolinas.

The Huron-Iroquois, though originally of *the same extraction as the Algonquins,* differed from them in many respects when the French first colonized Canada; and several proofs of it will come naturally on record as the narrative proceeds. The history of both peoples—Algonquins and Iroquois—previous to the arrival of the European colonists, is almost completely unknown. For a long time already they had been at war; and the Huron-Iroquois, having so far occupied a region central with regard to the Algonquins, carried on their expeditions against their enemies, as far south as North Carolina, as far west as the Mississippi, and in the east and north reached often what is now the middle of New England and the lower shores of the St. Lawrence, not very far from its mouth. But of this there will be occasion to speak later on. The subject immediately on hand regards the Huron-Iroquois themselves. The compound expression just used has to be explained more thoroughly. Both nations belonged undoubtedly to the same stock. All *the traditions of either of them pointed to this* fact. Originally they were brethren, They had come together from the great West, after having wandered along the Mississippi, as far south as the present state of Tennessee, if not further. When they reached the country where the Europeans found them on landing, the Hurons occupied the Province of Ontario. The Iroquois had taken possession of the north-western part of the actual State of New York. These last formed then a federacy of five nations, having their council-fire in the neighborhood of Seneca Lake, north-west of the Mohawk river.

The Hurons, however, must be considered the first; because it seems that originally they were the most prominent in this group of nations. The French word Huron was a nickname given them by the Canadian French, probably with a view to express their uncouth physiognomy.

What was the cause of the enmity which sprung up between the two main branches of the Huron-Iroquois family of tribes, and when did it occur? A few words are required here on the subject. According to Schoolcraft it happened about the time the French arrived at Quebec, and when the Wyandots entered into an alliance, for the first time, with the Algonquins of the lower St. Lawrence. The Wyandots or Hurons never seem to have shared in the violent hatred of the Iroquois for the Algic race. From the *Jesuit Relations,* chiefly from the detailed particularities written by the Fathers Lejeune and Charles Lallement, the Wyandots of the Lake Huron on the one side, and the Algonquins of Hochelaga or Montreal of Three Rivers, and of Quebec, appear from the beginning, to have lived on friendly terms, to have traded together, and their respective hunting parties do not seem to have given cause to quarrels ending in general wars. When the French arrived they soon interchanged with the Algonquins, particularly with the Monagnais of the neighbourhood of Quebec, the most friendly relations. This was the origin of the intimate acquaintance which grew up between the new European colonists and the Wyandots who came every year, in their bark canoes, all the way from Lake Huron to Three Rivers and even to Quebec, a distance of three hundred leagues, according to the calculation of the French.

The names of the five Iroquois nations in English were, the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas. The Tuscarora tribe was the sixth which joined the confederacy later on, and came then from Carolina, where it had formerly migrated. The Mohawks are supposed to be, according to Schoolcraft, the "eldest brother" in the symbolical chain of the six nations. Their own traditions assigns them this rank, and it appears to be consonant to other traditions. As to the north, they often crossed the St. Lawrence, and roamed freely in the extensive possessions of the Algonquin tribes. They became, in course of time, the most attached of all the Iroquois to the English colonists of New York and Massachusetts, through the influence obtained over them by Sir William Johnson, who, during a period of at least thirty years may be said to have ruled over them.

The Oneidas are said to have been originally an off-shoot of the Onondaga stock, which will presently come under consideration. The Mohawks, their neighbours east, called them *Oneota,* from which came the English proper word Oneida.

The Tuscaroras, however, differed in this from the other Iroquois tribes that they did not believe the Oneidas to have been an offshoot from the Onondagas, but thought they were as ancient as the other tribes, and that thus the name "Younger Brother" could not be applied to them. From the first contest of the American colonies against England, the Oneidas sided with the revolutionists, or Americans, and remained faithful to them, even during the darkest period of the war, until the final triumph. They even induced a part of the Tuscaroras, whom they had been mostly instrumental in bringing back from the south, to take also the American side. All the other Iroquois fought constantly in the English armies; but at the end of the war the Mohawks followed the English Tories who came to Canada.

These Indian traditions, of which the book of Schoolcraft is full, may excite the smile of the reader, as the traditions of the ancient Romans, kept faithfully in the great work of Livy, have became a jest for many modern critics. But we do not share, in recounting them, in that unseemly hilarity. The traditions of primitive peoples are always respectable; they often contain the truth, although covered with the veil of a myth, and at any rate, as they suppose the intervention of some supernatural agent, they become a firm foundation for the fundamental institutions of nations. Had not the Iroquois believed in Atotarho and his "living serpents," their league would probably have been entirely forgotten by them when the Dutch penetrated into their country. Henceforth, however, the Onondagas had the right of furnishing a presiding officer for the league, and it is said that the thirteenth *Atotarho* reigned at Onondaga when America was discovered. The officer of war captain, in general expeditions, belonged, they say, to the Mohawks.

The history of the *Cayuga* tribe, settled immediately west of the Onondagas, is entirely void of any prominent events, though several of their war captains obtained *a great renown* by their bravery. The beautiful lake around which they lived, was separated from that of the Senecas, by a range of forest, little more than sixteen miles broad. Yet, in spite of the almost unconquerable inclination of the red Indian for plunder, scarcely any quarrel ever occurred between these two tribes, who always lived on the most intimate terms. This fact alone would prove that peace might have been possible among the American native races if some powerful institution, like that of the Christian religion, had been firmly established among them. As it was, the largest tracts of wild and uncultivated territory, stretching between nation and nation, proved often ineffectual in preventing fearful wars between them. Still the Cayugas and Senecas lived constantly at peace together, though only sixteen miles intervened between the two lakes which bore their names. And the cause of that remarkable harmony between them was only that they had sworn to observe the articles of agreement dictated by Atotarho. The reader can draw the consequence.

The *Senecas* never gave themselves that name, which must have originated with their European neighbours. *Nundowaga* or People of the Hill, was the appellation they acknowledged as their own. This was derived from a tradition whose meaning can scarcely be found out, although Schoolcraft attempts an interpretation of it. This tribe, always the most numerous and powerful of the Iroquois *confederacy,* settled round. Seneca lake, and east of the Geneseo river. It is one of the most fertile tracts of the state of New York.

After all the wars of the last century, after the migration of all the Mohawks, and a part of the Tuscaroras, to Canada, and the partial transfer of many Cayugas, Oneidas, and even Senecas to other States and to the west, the reader will easily conclude that a century and a half ago, when the Iroquois league was in a high state of prosperity, the total number of the five nations, exclusive of the Tuscaroras, who had not yet come back to live with their former brethren, must have amounted to many souls, although it is impossible at this time to state the exact number. Some writers, however, reduced it to fourteen thousand.