

The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY The True Witness Printing & Publishing Co. (LIMITED) 4455 St. James Street, Montreal, Canada. P. O. Box 1189.

MS. and all other communications intended for publication or notice, should be addressed to the Editor, and all business and other communications to the Managing Director, True Witness P. & P. Co., Ltd., P. O. Box 1189. The Subscription price of The True Witness for city, Great Britain, Ireland and France, is \$1.50. Belgium, Italy, Germany and Australia, \$2.00. Canada, United States and Newfoundland, \$1.00. Terms payable in advance. New subscriptions can commence at any time during the year. Money for renewal and new subscriptions should be sent to Managing Director, P. O. Box 1189. You may remit by bank cheque, post office money order, express money order or by registered letter. Silver sent through the mail is liable to wear a hole through the envelope and be lost. We are not responsible for money lost through the mail. Discontinuance.—Remember that the publishers must be notified by letter when a subscriber wishes his paper stopped. All arrears must be paid. Retaining your paper will not enable us to discontinue it, as we cannot find your name on our books unless your post office address is given. The date opposite your name on the margin of your paper shows you up to what time your subscription is paid. We recognize the friends of THE TRUE WITNESS by the prompt manner in which they pay their subscriptions. Always give the name of the post office to which your paper is sent, your name cannot be found on our books unless it is given. When you wish your address changed, write us in time, giving your old address as well as your new one. If you fail to receive your paper regularly, notify us at once by letter or postal. All communications for publication must be written on one side of the sheet only, otherwise they are liable to rejection.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1895.

THE SCHOLASTIC YEAR.

This week the various schools of the city recommence their operations, the classes are open and the work of another term begins. We trust that for teachers and pupils the two months of vacation have passed pleasantly and profitably. Fresh from the prolonged recreation all should be ready to enter upon the duties of the new term with zeal and spirit. It is but right that we should give a few words of advice that may not be out of place at this particular time. As far as the teachers are concerned we have little to say. They know better than we do the path that is before them. Many a time have they gone over the same track, and if there is one thing more than another to render difficult the work they have to perform, it is in the fact that each year it is the same story, the same routine, the monotony of commencing with a fresh set of pupils at the foot of the hill and toiling upwards to the point at which they parted with last year's graduates. Still there is something in the advent of a younger batch of pupils and in the consciousness of reaching another milestone upon that highway of their vocation. It is more to the parents that we desire to address a few remarks. In the first place we cannot too strongly impress upon the parents the great necessity of sending their children on the very first day that the school opens. It is a duty they owe the teachers and the pupils. By so doing they greatly facilitate the work of the whole term and give a fair opportunity to both the masters, or mistresses, and the students, to commence a good and successful year. Circumstances that cannot be controlled always cause more or less regrettable delay at the commencement of the term. It remains, then, with the parents to obviate as much as possible a great number of the difficulties that must otherwise arise. At the beginning of the year the teachers have considerable work to perform in the organization of the classes. A pupil arrives and it is necessary to know to what class he belongs, in which grade he is likely to accomplish the most. Consequently that pupil must be examined as to his acquirements and to his capability. Even if he had attended the school during the previous year he may have lost much during the months of vacation and may not be in the exact same state of proficiency that he enjoyed when carrying off prizes in June. Apart from all this there is the general discipline of the school that must be explained, the regulations given out, the rules read. Once the classes are organized and all those preliminary steps taken it is very tiresome and very unfair to oblige the teachers to recommence all the necessary explanations for each pupil that comes in late. Moreover, it retards all the others, clogs the machinery and tends to curtail the work that might otherwise be done by those who have come on time. Therefore, the teachers are given much unnecessary trouble and the pupils are unjustly prevented from going ahead with their studies—and all this to please a whim, or perhaps a desire to keep the children at home for a day or two after the school has opened. In the next place it is unfair to the pupils. A boy or girl who comes in a few days after the others cannot be expected to have heard the rules given out, to be able to take up a task that the others have long since completed, and to make up, by extra study and labor, for the lost time in the beginning. Starting, thus, behind the others in the race, it is very seldom that a pupil ever catches up before the end of the year. If one does succeed, it is by dint of over-exertion and very injurious and unnecessary work

Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that the parents should send their pupils on the very first day. It is also well to remind parents that their children feel a certain pride going in amongst numerous companions, and that they feel still more any humiliation that may be caused them. A great deal can be done to make the school days of a boy or girl happy by giving the young person all that is required for the school. Let the pupil be neatly and cleanly clothed and have the necessary supply of books and other requisites. Many a poor lad is disheartened in the commencement simply on account of the thoughtlessness or negligence of his parents in fitting him out in a decent manner for the school. Then, again, it is not only necessary to send the pupil on the first day, but also to see that he attends most regularly throughout the year. What applies to the beginning equally applies to the remainder of the term.

One more little piece of advice to parents and we have done for this week. Do not be too prone to listen to all the complaints that your children will make during the year. We thoroughly understand that there are occasions when a pupil has reason to find fault; we also know how dearly parents love their children and how anxious they are to have them well treated, but we must remember that the pupil who is always complaining must in some degree be in fault at times. Whenever a pupil comes home with a story about the teacher, with an account of the injustices done him, listen calmly, but neither approving nor discouragingly to his complaint. Then quietly go to the teacher, or principal of the school, and politely state the case as you received it from the pupil. In nine cases out of ten the teacher will be able to convince you that your child has been carried away by feeling or imagination, and has magnified a little molehill of trouble into a mountain of sorrow. In all cases do not allow yourself to be excited or angry in presence of the young complainant. If you desire to retain your paternal authority over your child you must commence by respecting, and causing your child to respect that of the teacher. It should not be forgotten that the teacher assumes a parent's responsibility, not only over one child, but over all those confided to his, or her, care. If the parents often find it difficult to guide and control one or two children at home, they can readily imagine the trouble and worry that the teacher must have to instruct and control, to educate and form a score or more of young people. Mutual assistance is necessary for success in school matters.

We trust these few remarks will be carefully read and acted upon, and that the coming year will be fruitful of great blessings to teachers, pupils and parents.

THE OTTAWA SEPARATE SCHOOLS.

The report of the Commissioners appointed to examine the state of the Separate Schools of Ottawa has created considerable comment. Our readers will doubtless pardon us for adding a few more words to what we have already said in last week's issue.

As to the origin of the Commission: It appears that a motion was brought up at the Ottawa Separate School Board, to investigate certain charges said to have been made by Rev. Brother Flamin, Visitor of the Christian Brothers of the Province of Quebec, against Inspector White, concerning the report, which he gave of his official inspection of the Ottawa Separate Schools. Some members of the Board, desiring a further investigation, suggested that the Ontario Minister of Education be requested to appoint a Commission to investigate the said charges, to examine the city separate schools, and to report thereon. The Honorable Minister of Education, G. W. Ross, J.L.D., according to the request, appointed as commissioners Rev. J. T. Foley, Mr. D. Chenay, and William Scott, B.A. The first two having resigned, were replaced by Edward Ryan, M.D., and J. J. Tilley, Esq.

On presenting themselves at some of the Brothers' Schools, the Commissioners were told that they would not be received. It appears that the orders not to receive the Commissioners came from the Assistant Superior-General, then in Montreal, and were directed, not against the Government, but against the trustees, who called for an enquiry a few weeks after the Brothers had bound themselves by a written agreement to teach these schools for a year. Besides, the Commissioners were evidently not called to vindicate the Brothers, but to condemn them. The nature of the report was, therefore, a foregone conclusion. This is evident from an item that appeared in a Toronto paper at a time when the Commissioners had barely commenced their work. The item alluded to contained in a nutshell the whole report as far as it refers to the Brothers. The report is a sweeping condemnation of the teaching of the Brothers in Ottawa, but any impartial reader can see that it is one-sided throughout. The Brothers may have been wrong in refusing to accept the

Commissioners when they first presented themselves, but the Government officials should have been satisfied with the kind attention they afterwards received.

The report is unfavorable in many respects. Some classes, especially of the Brothers' schools, gave, according to the Commission, a poor account of themselves. It seems to us quite remarkable that the Commissioners have not mentioned an important fact affecting the schools at the time, and which, in a great measure, must have been the cause that better results were not obtained. We refer to the diphtheria which for many weeks had been prevalent in some parts of the city, and which at the time of the Commission was still unabated, thereby reducing the number of pupils in some classes to one-half, or even less. If the Commissioners had in view to do justice to all concerned, they should, unquestionably, have noted this drawback and made due consideration for the same in the report which they have given to the public. Another obstacle to better results, and to which the report does not allude, was that in one of the English schools quite a large proportion of the pupils were French, yet they were subjected to the same examination as the English-speaking pupils.

The schools of Ottawa may be somewhat weak in comparison with other schools of Ontario, but this may be no fault of the teachers. Here in Montreal we know well what difficulties our teachers have to contend with in schools in which the two languages have to be taught side by side. An inpector of experience does not expect to find the pupils of such schools as proficient in either English or French as if only one language were taught. Nor will he be disappointed if he find such pupils weaker in history, geography and mathematics than in schools in which the teachers and pupils have to deal with one language only.

These gentlemen of the commission express themselves surprised to find teachers not knowing English. Now, we doubt that there is even one teacher in the Catholic schools of Ottawa who does not know both languages; but the teachers alluded to may have felt some bashfulness in speaking English before Ontario professors. The commissioners speak of the progress the pupils should make in six months, yet our same worthy commissioners, though they must have been studying French more or less during the whole of their high school and university courses, did not, so far as we can learn, once open their mouths to put a question in French.

As the great object of the commission was to investigate the teaching of English in French schools, let us here give some attention to the English used by the very gentlemen who composed the commission.

- (See report, page 19.) "On arriving at this school the next morning, Brother Director Mark informed them, etc." "Who arrived? Brother Mark, or the commissioners?" (Page 21.) "The boys counted their fingers." "Did the boys count their fingers or count on their fingers?" (Page 21.) "The boys were apparently taught nothing, etc." Is "apparently" in its proper place? (Page 43.) "Pick out the adverbs, etc." What do the commissioners mean by "pick out?" Is it a dignified expression? (Page 43.) "Give the boundaries of the different zones and account for the position of the Tropic of Cancer and the Arctic Circle." Is "Arctic" spelled correctly? (Page 43.) "I have never seen his brother before." I never properly used? Is "have seen" the correct tense? (Page 43.) "Give three ways by which words are made to denote more than one, etc." What words? Nouns, prepositions, conjunctions, or what? The commissioners say (page 33): "The written examinations showed that the pupils were deficient in power to grasp the meaning of the questions, etc." This is not at all surprising if we judge from the above quotations. (Page 33.) "The inadequate knowledge, and the frequent mistakes of even the English-speaking teachers, showed that in many cases the literary qualifications of these teachers was not what it should be." Is "was" correct in number and tense? What noun does "it" represent? Does it agree with that noun in number? Do the many mistakes in grammar, composition and style, throughout the report of Commissioners, show that the literary qualifications of these Commissioners are what they should be? It cannot be said, in palliation of the many glaring literary blunders, that they were mere slips, since these gentlemen spent six or seven weeks at the report, had all the aid they needed from the Education Department, including the Honorable Dr. Ross himself, and had, of course, clever proof-readers to see that it came from the press exactly as the press received it. Surely the Commissioners themselves would be ashamed to ask the public to call their blunders slips, when we find in their whole report no excuse for the slips of either teachers

or pupils, intimidated, as we might naturally suppose them to have been, by the presence of a Government Commission of examiners.

Whatever may be thought or said of the proficiency of the Ontario schools in mathematics, they must be, judging from the grammar and style of the Commissioners' report, sadly deficient in the very English a knowledge of which they flatter themselves to possess in an eminent degree.

Let our readers mark well that these gentlemen of the Commission were selected from the galaxy of Ontario's literary lights, for the purpose, in part, of examining the literary attainments of others, and behold, in the report which they present to the public, the inimitable excellence of their own literary production.

Leaving this very grammatical report and its splendid literary style as a monument to the proficiency attained in English by the critics of the Ottawa schools, we desire to quote a paragraph from the last issue of the Liverpool Catholic Times on the "Collegiate Education" imparted by the Christian Brothers in the old country. We quote the following in support of our contention, expressed in our last issue, that the Order throughout the whole world holds a foremost place in the ranks of educationalists, and the wholesale condemnation of the Ontario Commissioners is most unjust and malicious.

"In proportion as Ireland has lost, England has gained by the transfer to this side of the Channel of one of the foremost educationalists of the Sister Island. The placing of the established Catholic College of St. Peter and Paul, at Prior Park, Bath, under the Irish Christian Brothers, besides being a remarkable recognition of their position as a teaching Order, has led to the appointment of one of their most distinguished brethren, Bro. W. A. Swan, to the presidency of that college. Bro. Swan has a brilliant record. His long connection, extending over forty years, with the North Richmond-street Schools, Dublin, which he raised to a very high standard of efficiency, was coincident with the later development of the admirable teaching system of the Christian Brothers, which now comprehends, in addition to the elementary instruction it was primarily designed to impart to the children of the poor, an extensive higher grade education adapted to the needs of the middle classes. To the brilliant success at public competitive examinations which has followed this new departure, Bro. Swan largely contributed. As a rule, the O'Connell or North Richmond-street Schools headed the list at the Royal University examinations and led the way for all the other Christian schools in Ireland joining in the intermediate competition with uniformly successful results. A better selection for the office of president of a college like Prior Park could not have been made, and we shall be much surprised if Bro. Swan does not soon add fresh laurels to those he has already won in the educational contest. Bro. Swan, we may add, is no stranger to England, having years ago taught in London and elsewhere in this country with the same efficiency which he has always displayed."

We would advise the Hon. G. W. Ross, when next he finds it necessary to appoint a commission to investigate charges made against our Catholic separate schools, to select men who are capable of presenting a report couched in good English. The Christian Brothers are actually Christian in practice as well as in name, and we are confident that, for the sake of the gentlemen authorized to condemn their methods, they would gladly send one of their members to correct the proof-sheets and to render the precious document more presentable.

IN A CLOISTER.

If ever the language of Minister Coboorn came, like a nightmare, in all its viciousness and hideousness to our mind, it was on the afternoon of last Thursday as our feet trod the sacred floors of the ancient and consecrated cloister of the Ursulines of Three Rivers. It was a very special privilege, and thanks to the kindness of our dear friend, Bishop Lafitte, we received the rare permission of visiting the old—and ever new—monastery, through which we were guided by the genial and kind-hearted Vicar-General Rhault. To describe it would require the pen of Newman and the genius of a Chateaubriand. Simplicity in all its cleanliness and holiness—in all its attractiveness seem to be the two grand features of that "quiet home of sanctity and learning." Several times—like the howling of an evil spirit upon the troubled waters of a sinful world—came the memory of the words used by the Toronto preacher. For a moment, like a passing temptation that an Ave Maria drives away, did they disturb the perfect enjoyment of that visit. Would to God that men, calling themselves Christian but reckless of that charity which Christian truth ordains, could only see, with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears, the pictures of noble sacrifice and the expressions of happy devotedness that people the corridors of a Catholic cloister. It is but natural that one should feel a kind of pity for the inmates of a monastery when seen from without the grated doors. But all such sentiment is lost in one of admiration and pardonable envy when the threshold is crossed and the interior is thrown open to inspection. On entering we passed through a

building that dates two centuries back and that still presents all the evidences of its great antiquity. Out through a narrow passage into an enclosure we find the large and beautiful monastery garden stretching its attractive length before us. At one end is a little chapel; the nearest, most delicate, most gem-like oratory we ever beheld. Capable of containing about a dozen people it is neatly carpeted and has an altar surrounded by Stations of the Cross and a number of chairs for those who go there, during summer recreations, to offer up their fervent prayers for the world outside. At the other end of the garden is a small, square, sandy enclosure. In this rest the remains of the departed members of the community. Each mound is carefully tended and the flowers, that love and devotion have planted, grow bright upon the hidden graves, and creep up and entwine their leaves and tendrils lovingly around the white crosses that bear the names of the departed. The last grave was dug in May of this year, and still the others, even the oldest of them, are as fresh and as beautiful as the most recent one.

This garden is a true picture of the spiritual life of the nun. A parterre of beauty, with the perfume of sanctity around it; at one end the solitary shrine of sacrifice and prayer, at the other the grave, where all earthly labor ends and beyond which the true life of the religious commences. What attention and affection shown to the departed. The sisters of to-day love to pray over those graves, while watering or planting the flowers, even as a mother would cling to and adorn the mound where her child lies sleeping.

And yet we must not imagine that this devotion to the dead and their memory has any depressing effect upon the living. Rarely have we ever met with truer light-heartedness and happy contentment than inside those great, grey walls. It would seem as if the members of the community had grown to their full age on the day of profession, and forever after drank of the spring of perpetual youth. The old sisters—one in her eighty-first and the other in her seventy-eighth year—seemed as lively, as happy, as active and as young as the smiling, jubilant novices, whose only anxiety was to change their white veils for the black. One of them very wittily remarked that she was anxious to be professed so that her head-gear would not need so much washing and care. In every move, expression and word one could not but note the perfect contentment—rather the repose and happiness that are the share of those pure and holy women. Instead of feeling anxious to see the world, they rather shrink from its contact; for in the routine of their respective duties is their real recreation and in the pious intercourse of their community life is their earthly enjoyment.

We will not attempt any description of the interior of the community, the refectory, the cells, the chapels. Suffice to say that all that cleanliness could demand is there, but nothing beyond the absolutely necessary. The tables are simple deal boards, very narrow, covered with an oil-cloth, and containing little drawers in which are the spoon, knife, fork, goblet and napkin of each nun. The cell consists of a small room—very small—with bare floor, a wash-stand, a prie-dieu, and a little iron bedstead covered with a straw mattress, and a clean, but rough pair of blankets. Well indeed did Gerald Griffin picture the scene when he wrote of the Sister of Charity:

"Her down-bed a pallet, her trinket a bead, Her tapers one taper that serves her to read, The delicate lady lives mortified there, And fasts are forgotten for fasting and prayer."

We might also, in his words, address a certain class of low-minded and ignorant detractors:

"Ye lazy philosophers, self-seeking men, Ye fire-side philanthropists, great with the pen."

what, indeed, is all your eloquence and your pompous assertions when compared to the virtues of that glorious type of womanhood that occupies the humble cell in the sacred cloister? During a terrific storm in the north we saw a moose rush from the woods and stand on the open prairie while the lightning shattered the pine-tree under which he had been resting; when the storm was over this noble sample of the brute creation returned, with confidence, to the shade of the blasted pine. He seemed to instinctively know that the monarch of the northern forest had attracted the fiery bolt and saved him from death. The malicious and un-Christian defamers of convents and nuns have not even the instinct of the wild animal to teach them that, by prayer, sacrifice, and perpetually renewed deeds of sublime virtue, these sacred monasteries are the lightning-rods that arrest the thunders of Divine wrath and save the creatures of the world from annihilation.

We speak only of the monastery; another time we will tell of the splendid educational institution that is attached thereto.

—REV. EDWARD GIBSON, at the invitation of the Methodist Bishop Vincent, president of Chateaugay, celebrated Mass there

on August 4. Is it possible that Bishop Vincent is turning his steps Romeward? Yet, we would not be surprised; some of the greatest converts have been, in their time, the most deadly enemies of the Church.

READING THE BIBLE.

Two weeks ago we wrote an editorial on the subject of the "Reading of the Bible," in which we most conclusively demonstrated the great fallacy of the assertion that the Catholic Church is opposed to the Holy Scriptures. Not only the words of the different Popes, of the Fathers and of the various saints prove most emphatically that the Catholic Church has been the guardian and protectress of the sacred volume, but the history of the ages is there to show that were it not for that Divine institution the Bible would have never come down to us, nor would Christianity of to-day possess a single page of the "Book of Books." When the Latin ceased to be the universal language of the world, and became one of the dead languages, when numerous dialects, or languages, sprang into existence upon its basis, it was the Catholic Church that translated the Holy Scriptures into the various vernaculars. In 142 the first German Bible, bearing the arms of Frederick III., appeared in Metz. In the Senatorial Library at Leipzig are preserved two copies of an edition of 1466. We quote from an article in the "Monitor," from which paper we drew the subject-matter of our former editorial. In continuing the subject and furnishing authorities we find the following in its last quotations:

"In the best biblical collection known," says Dr. E. S. Hall, "that of the King of Wurtemberg, at Stuttgart, there were when the learned librarian, Dr. Adler, published his great catalogue, twenty-different editions of the Bible in German printed before Luther's independently of the two in the library at Leipzig." Many of these, as Cardinal Wiseman has remarked, are not merely different additions but different versions. The Church Times of July 26, 1878, speaking of the List of Bibles in the Caxton Exhibition, among other things says: "There were actually nine German editions of the Bible in the Caxton Exhibition earlier than 1483, the year of Luther's birth, and at least three more before the end of the century." In the Athenaeum of October 6, 1883, Mr. N. Stevens writes: "By 1507 more than one hundred Latin Bibles had been printed, some of them small and cheap pocket editions. There had been besides thirteen editions of a translation of the Vulgate into German and others in other modern languages."

We could not do better than to reproduce the data given by our contemporary regarding the Bible in Italian.

"In the year 1471 there appeared three editions of the Bible printed in the Italian tongue. No fewer than eleven complete editions of these versions appeared before the year 1507. In 1522 a new and complete Bible in Italian was published by Anthony Brucioff, who professed to have translated direct from the original Hebrew and Greek. More than forty editions of the Bible in Italian are reckoned before the appearance of the first Protestant edition (which was moreover little more than a reprint of Brucioff's version) printed at Geneva in 1562."

In Spain, in 1405, Boniface Ferris translated the whole Bible into that language. It was printed at Valencia in 1478 and in 1515 was reprinted with the formal consent of the Spanish Inquisition. Speaking of the Belgian, French, Dutch or Flemish and Bohemian versions we learn that:

"Ambrosio de Montesina in 1544 translated the Gospels and Epistles, which work was printed at Antwerp in 1544, at Barcelona in 1601 and 1608, and at Madrid in 1603 and 1615. A French translation of the New Testament was published in Lyons in 1478. In the Public Library at Leipzig is preserved a copy of this version. In 1487 a new edition of the French Bible of Gulars de Moulins was published at Paris under the auspices of Charles VIII. Before the year 1547 it passed through sixteen other editions—four at Lyons and twelve at Paris. The Protestant version appeared at Neuchâtel in 1535. Besides the above-mentioned many other versions of the Bible were published.

"Numerous Dutch or Flemish versions of the Sacred Text were published towards the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century. A Bohemian version of the New Testament was published at Prague in 1478 and 1488. At Cracow in 1556, 1577, 1598 and 1619, a Polish version of the Bible was published. An Ethiopic Bible was published at Rome in 1548."

It is obvious, from these facts, that even had Protestantism never appeared the Bible would have been given to the world in every tongue, and that, with the advent of printing and the improvements of the succeeding ages in that art, the Catholic Church would have scattered the Holy Scriptures—as she has done—wherever her countless missionaries carried the light of the Gospel and the Word of Christ. It is, therefore, only blindness, ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation that can—in our enlightened century—attribute to the Catholic Church an antagonism to the volume upon which she depends so confidently for the salvation of souls and the success of her own mission.

Dr. A. C. Macdonnell was, on Tuesday last, presented by the Ladies of the Hotel Dieu with a beautiful oil painting, floral and emblematic, designed and executed by one of the Sisters, as a token of gratitude on the occasion of his 25th anniversary as physician to the hospital.