

THE CANADIAN

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Members are invited to send us items of news or information that will be of benefit to the Association. Communications upon subjects of interest to C. M. B. A. members will always be welcome, but anonymous letters and letters which the Manager does not consider for the interest of the Association will not be published.

Correspondence will be given an interval that copy must reach us before the first of the month, if intended for publication in the following month's issue and, but a few days in advance of the date of publication. Address all communications to:

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PRIEST AND SOCIETY PROGRESS

Whilst we distinctly disavow any intention of reflecting upon the zeal of our Spiritual Directors, it will not, we trust, be considered out of place to remark upon the great value of their beneficent presence at every branch meeting, or inferentially to urge scrupulous attendance whenever at all possible. We all know that the priest is a busy man, so busy indeed that every moment of his time is fully occupied; and were it not that C. M. B. A. work might be very properly called ministerial, we would be loath to suggest that he occupy himself with it at all. Since, however, the avowed primary objects of this association are in a line with all sacerdotal efforts—to make its membership in the true sense of the word Catholic—any extra sacrifice made in its behalf must assuredly be recognized as in the proper sphere of priestly endeavor. The C. M. B. A. was organized to give our Catholic people the advantages of cheap and safe insurance, it is true, but this was not its sole, nor was it its most important mission. To remove the young man from the dangerous occasion which a non-Catholic or unbelieving association over present, and thus to save him to the faith in a purely Catholic society, where morally, socially and intellectually he is uplifted, were certainly its primary objects. To make sure of this principal end, to carry on the work to its ideal perfection, any one can see how necessary it is to have the form's exponent of such faith constantly at hand, demonstrating by his untiring efforts the value of the organization for good, and its thorough adaptability to Catholic purposes. The non-Catholic fraternal association has received its quietus, as far as Catholic membership is concerned, at the hands of the Supreme Pontiff. Those Catholics who are members are held to be ready to relinquish such membership at the bidding of their confessors; and all others are deterred from entering it at any cost. The Church wishes to clear the way for her priests to visit her children gathered together fraternally at all times and without any restraint,

so that there may be no risks run to faith or morals by them. Since the matter, the presence of the priest, then is a sine qua non recognition as a society, it naturally follows that such presence is ever important from a formal point of view, while practically its value cannot be over estimated. With the books of the whole organization in Canada before us, and without any local understanding of the circumstances whatever, we can point to those branches wherein the priest's presence is continued. The business is done promptly and well: the absence of contention and difficulty is marked; the adoption of a vigorous plan of action for the betterment of its membership is a feature; the approved calls for aid are responded to more generously and in better time—in a word, the spirit of our splendid organization is perfectly taken up and once understood it informs the work in all its various details. We are certainly pleased to state that in general these characteristics are applicable to the work of our Canadian jurisdiction. The priests of the Dominion have made and are still making great sacrifices for the C. M. B. A. wherever it is known and established, because, as we have said, it is a formally Catholic work, and will repay their every effort. In some particular instances, however, there is need of a deeper and more abiding interest on the part of pastors, so that men reclaimed from the influence of dangerous societies may understand the value of the clergyman's presence by the clergyman's own appreciation of it; and we hope that it will be no longer withheld, as upon it a great deal assuredly depends. Whether eligible for insurance or not, it is to be hoped the parish priest will not neglect the parish C. M. B. A. branch. Our Bishops have time and again, in special terms, approved and commended this association, entering it themselves wherever the conditions permitted, and doing active service for it. The priests have built it up with us by noble sacrifices until it is the grand Catholic organization of Canada to day. May we hope that the splendid priestly efforts which gave us our present position of prominence will not diminish, but be ever increased to send us upward and onward to greater attainments for Catholic Canada.

A Meeting of Branch 230, St. Boniface, Man.

Prior to the consecration of His Grace, Archbishop Langevin, the members of the C. M. B. A. in St. Boniface had already presented him the expression of their feelings of respect, submission and devotion. On the 17th of June last they once more desired to show him how they understood their duties as Catholics, and the position they intended taking in the great campaign against error. But let the President himself speak; we would only weaken his words in

not reporting them as they were said. To His Grace Louis Philippe Adelard Langevin, O. M. I., D. D., Archbishop of St. Boniface:

My Lord—Your condescension this evening towards our branch brings us a great deal of joy, and will leave on the records of our Society an everlasting souvenir.

You have been so kind as to greet the first anniversary of our organization, to raise the splendor of this meeting by your presence, and to bring to us with your sound advice the treasures of your paternal benediction. Although very high in the sacred hierarchy, you have deigned, my Lord, to attend our meeting, to encourage us to remain faithful to our mission. Thanks, thousand thanks, my Lord, for this signal favor.

We wanted this evening to show ourselves to you as we are, and have you attend a meeting of our branch. It is the father of the family who comes in the midst of his children. The table will be served as usual, and if the dishes are not rich nor varied, they will have at least the merit of being offered with a good heart. In order to make our method of working better known to Your Grace, we have endeavored to follow the rules of order as prescribed by the constitution and to conform ourselves in every respect to the spirit and letter thereof. May it please God that all constitutions have the same fate. It is but just, My Lord, that we explain to you the principles which guide us, and the work to which we devote ourselves. The ideas which prevailed at the formation of this society were essentially Catholic. We have planted the standard of charity and of mutual assistance under the shadow of the Cross, emblem of our unalterable faith in the divine teachings of the Church, and under the safeguard of an affectionate submission to our pastors.

This faith is the principle of life which animates every society that does not want to be in danger. It is faith which must inspire its actions, and it is faith which enables us to keep order and unity in our midst. In fact, what are the works from the hands of old paganism or from the modern philanthropist? The most abject servility, the most shameful slavery, the man degraded to the rank of the working beast, being used for the pleasure of unmerciful masters, given as food to lions and tigers, for the amusement of the crowd, and when death was ending his miseries, his body thrown out with contempt among the dirt of cities; such is the statement of paganism.

That of the philanthropist of our century, although not so cruel, offers but a very desolate spectacle. This intended philanthropist, upon whom are based all secret societies, has been unable yet to find a word to dry the tears of him who weeps and to penetrate that part of the soul which needs the most consolation. It is that the cold theories of that school offer nothing which can touch, warm again, and cure the exasperated heart. Neither have done anything worthy of man or anything which can elevate him in his own eye. In taking off his forehead the glorious ray of the reflection of divinity, in pulling out of his heart the sweet hope of a better world, they deprived him of his noblest character and most legitimate and comforting sentiments.

The action of Catholicism in penetrating multitudes, restored him his former dignity and transformed society.

Veritas liberavit vos. Truth has given to the world true liberty. That liberty, however, is not license, and is limited by the Divine wisdom. If it possess rights, it has also duties assigned to it.

My Lord, the domain of faith, as that of liberty, needs to be guarded by defendants, generous and jealous of their treasure. Experience shows that when we allow ourselves to be carried away by compromises on matters of this kind, we prepare for the future more evils than we at present avoid. To day we also embrace the opportunity to again assure you our absolute devotion and entire support in the struggle you so courageously direct for the conquest of the inalienable rights of religious teaching in our schools. This unity of Catholics with ecclesiastical authorities seems to astonish many who do not take the trouble of studying the constitutive elements of the Catholic Church. How many odious calumnies could have been avoided if people had remembered that we Catholics have but one Credo, one Supreme Chief, and the unity of faith naturally carries with it the harmony of thoughts and adhesion of minds. In all well-organized societies every one cannot command. Obedience is the condition of all human beings, for all have a superior. For us, instead of submitting our obedience to the always variable opinion of men, we give it to those whom God has established to direct us.

Our obedience, far from being blind and unreasonable, is on the contrary noble and superior, because it is lighted by rays of the Divine Son and relates to God Himself, speaks to us through the Pontiff of Rome and our Bishops. If sometimes we silence our reason, it is only to follow the road indicated to us by the infallible guide who represents Him who said: "I am the life, the road and the truth."

Faith and obedience hold each other by the hand, as two inseparable sisters, in our society. Another sister has equally a place of honor in our branch. She presides at all our meetings, smiling on all the members and inspiring them with the most beautiful works of our society. This is charity, which is nothing else, after all, than love for our brother and the desire of alleviating his misfortunes. We call ourselves Brothers, and we are such in fact by more than one title. This fraternity does not consist merely in a general designation, which reminds all of their common origin, and of the blood of the Saviour coming down from Calvary to regenerate all the children of Adam, but it has for us more imperative duties and closer bonds. Let us offer you a striking picture of what those bonds of fraternity are productive of in our society. Do you see this paltry bed of pain on which tosses feverishly a man who, no longer than yesterday, was crossing our public squares, the smile on his lips and the eye full of life. Look, now, how that proud ardor became extinct. His languishing eyes hardly see the objects which surround him. From his window, he hears the quick steps of the agitated crowd. The noise of feasts and their joyful termination reach his ears. He sees the working population, under a febrile excitement, relating to each other with a common joy the events of the day. For him, suffering alone wakes at his bed-side; not a friend has for him a souvenir. Who thinks of those who are suffering, especially when they are poor, besides the priest and the nuns? Who? Follow this man who went only