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# The Arme AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE. Witness

Vol. LVII., No. 48 MONTREAL, THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1908. PRICE FIVE CENTS

## Bishop Laval's Double Anniversary.

(Rev. T. J. Campbell, S. J., in American Missionary.)

In old Quebec they never did things by halves. The Governors were as gorgeous as could be got; the first bishop was none other than Francois de Montmorency-Laval than Montigny. The name alone is awesome. Henry IV. used to say that if the Bourbons were ever extinct in France, the Montmorencis should rule in their stead. Perhaps there are some who think that such an arrangement might have been made with advantage.

The Montmorencis go back into the mists of history. Some ancient chroniclers have it that the first of the line was baptised with Clovis by St. Remi, and others not satisfied with that, maintain that he was the host of St. Denis when that great apostle came to Gaul, and for his hospitality merited the martyr's palm. But whatever clouds history or romance may have gathered about the beginnings of the race, there are at least no breaks in the line after 950, when Bouchard Sire de Montmorency basked in the glory of being the greatest warrior of the realm. Even in those days, a peered himself Sire de Montmorency par la grace de Dieu, which would imply la grace de Dieu, which would imply that he had many a forbear. So that taking it all in all, there is scarcely anything older in France than the illustrious family of Quebec's first bishop. Nor has it any rival in the glory that crowned it, by the brilliant alliances it formed, the important offices it held, the ability of many of its representatives, and even the sanctity to which some of them attained. No less than six Montmorencis wielded the baton of Constables of France, which meant that they were styled "noble prince" and "princes of the realm," and had the privilege of putting their sign manual to all the State papers. In the course of time one of them married a daughter of Henry I, of England, though, sad to say, there was a bar sinister on the lady's escutcheon, but he did better in a second alliance, when he espoused the widow of Louis le Gros, becoming thus the step-father of Louis VII. When that Prince went off to the Crusades, Montmorency, though a warrior, remained behind, and with the famous Suger administered the realm. Another, who was called le Grand, helped Philip Augustus to wrest Normandy from England when John Lackland was king. He was also in the crusade against the Albigenses, and was commander of all the armies of France, and subsequently guardian of St. Louis, who was a child when Louis VIII, his father, died. This particular Montmorency never called himself anything else than "The Baron," though he was burthened with the relationships of grand uncle, uncle, brother-in-law, nephew, and grandson of two emperors and six kings, and was allied in one way or another with all the sovereigns of Europe. It was this third marriage that bound the family with that of Laval, and a grand-daughter by that union became the wife of Louis de Bourbon, which made her the great grandmother of the king whom the French are most fond of, Henry IV. The result was that all the rulers of Christendom could at one time trace back their origin to the great Constable de Montmorency. So that one can well imagine the splendor that dazzled Quebec when a Montmorency arrived there as bishop in the summer of 1659. It goes to show, also, how much account was made of Canada by the mother country. Unfortunately, however, the mother was so busy at home that she did not do much to defend her illustrious daughter abroad.

Laval was born in the castle of Montigny-sur-Avre, on April 30, 1622. When a lad he was at school with the scions of all the great and noble races of France in the royal college of La Fleche. We refer the reader to other histories for their names. What interests us now is the fact that among the surveillants of the college was Pierre Bujart, a future missionary far out on the French river that empties into Georgian Bay, and better yet, there was Gabriel Lallemant, who hurried off to Canada to die a martyr at the stake with the glorious Brébeuf. Among the scholastics studying there at the time was René de Gamache, who was to found the College of Quebec. Claude Dablon, whose splendid missionary career was to cover the whole territory from Lake Superior down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay almost to Hudson Bay, was also there. Besides these three there were Buteux, who was to meet a bloody death on the upper waters of the dark St. Maurice, which rushes furiously into the St. Lawrence at Trois Rivières; de la Plaque, and Bonnin and Dolbeau, all of them future American missionaries, and notable even among these heroes the splendid Simon Le Moyne, who was a companion of all the martyrs of the Northwest, and subsequently a great

ther because it did not suit his purpose just then, or because the influence of his spiritual guides restrained him; but the very reverse might have happened. Perhaps it was the remembrance of this fight for freedom that gave courage to the Jesuit priests, Plowden, Sewall, and Martigny, much later, to upset the plans of Barbé Marbois and Franklin to make everything ecclesiastical in the United States depend on a bishop in France. Both stories are illuminative as to how the establishment of hierarchies is sometimes delayed. It can rarely be laid at the door of the missionaries.

Bishop Laval's reception in Quebec, in 1759, was enthusiastic, externally, but there was a current of bitter opposition to him, both ecclesiastical and civil, which he could not fail to perceive. Possibly the splendor of his family connections instinctively gave rise to a spirit of jealousy in the heart of the civil rulers; but it was clear that the trouble in the Church came from the persistent endeavors of the famous Abbé de Querilly, who claimed to be the Vicar-General of Rouen while Laval was merely a Vicar of Quebec, but was of the same title, by the way, which Archbishop Corrigan had when he was Coadjutor of New York. The opposition in both Church and State was a determined one, and was backed up by mighty influences in France. A smaller man would have lost heart and taken the next ship for France, but the bishop was a Montmorency. He set to work heroically. Parishes were established; schools for Indians and whites were opened; the seminaries were organized, and the missions taken on a new life, which they needed sorely for the slaughter of Brébeuf and his companions had taken place a few years before. In a word, the bishop's energy made itself felt everywhere throughout his vast diocese.

We need not consider the minor troubles of this great prelate's career—the ever recurrent question of the tithes, in which he seemed to have measured the extent of other people's generosity by his own and overstepped the mark; the dependence exacted of the secular clergy which was that of religious on their superior; and other things of that nature. We can dismiss all that and consider the other happenings which cut a wide swath in the history of the Church of Canada.

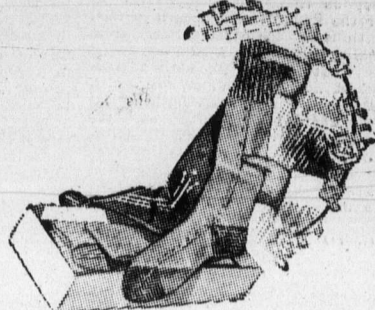
First and foremost were the contests with the governors, who always seemed to have had a itching for meddling in ecclesiastical affairs, though perhaps the blame may not have been all one-sided. The quarrels began with d'Argenson, who was recalled; then d'Avignon, who had his own ideas in opposition to the general policy of the French Government, but Laval chose his own Governor, and he selected de Mézy, which was of the bishop's great errors of judgment, and reflects upon him to some extent, but it is hard to see how it could have been avoided. De Mézy was his intimate friend, and though a layman, had been associated with him in the Solitude of Caen. What more likely than that this devout Christian and experienced man of the world should have proved an ideal Governor? The very reverse happened, and de Mézy was recalled, but died before the ship arrived to take him back to France. Then came Talon and others, of the Governors in early Canadian days is bewildering. But abstraction made all the minor differences which caused or occasioned what seems, when we look at it from a distance, one long series of disagreements, there was one great reason for this battle royal, which was waged by Laval against successive governors: a battle which places him among the great champions of humanity, viz., his fight against the liquor traffic. He is the Las Casas of the North American Indians. The cases natives in the Spanish colonies were being crushed out of existence by the cruel labor and slavery imposed on them by their masters, so the savages of the north were being rapidly exterminated by the rum and brandy furnished them by the Dutch, French and English traders. It was not an occasional fit of drunkenness that Laval complained of, but there was a universal descent among the aborigines into conditions which transformed the villages into what Dongan himself, who was an advocate of limited liquor, describes as "theatres of hell." As many as 100 barrels of brandy could be found at one time in a single wretched hamlet of savages, with the result that every man, woman and child would be reeling drunk, chewing off each other's noses and ears and devouring their mothers and children and perpetrating indecencies in their orgies which were too horrible to describe.

Against this condition of things Laval thundered from the pulpit, and when entreaties and threats were ineffectual, he hurled his execrations at the traders, who laughed at him to scorn and pursued their traffic. But he would not be stopped, and he dared the dangers of the At-

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timately and esteemed him. But from the time of his coming and through most of the years of his episcopate, Quebec was in turmoil and confusion. There was peace only when he was absent. Laval asked for his recall, and even Louis XIV. requested him personally to resign; but without avail, and the old bishop saw many of his cherished institutions changed or swept away, and for twenty years had to live in resignation and retirement in the midst of the wreck.

Such are the main lines in the personality of this magnificent churchman. "The judicious Ferland," as Gilmary Shea styles the historian of Canada, thus sums up his life:

"Laval," he says, "exercised a great influence on the destinies of Canada, both directly through his own moral acts, and indirectly through the institutions which he founded, and the spirit which he breathed into the clergy of his immense diocese. All those who have spoken of him agree in according him a lofty piety and the most beautiful qualities of mind and heart. Based on profound conviction, his firmness in stamping out evil in its birth in order to give life and development to great and noble projects, never recoiled before the suggestions of friendship, or the menaces of hate. Some have reproached him with being firm even to stubbornness. But no virtue is perfect on earth. Though he may have erred sometimes, it is better that the founder of a society should sin by excess of firmness than fail through feebleness, and it was of the highest importance that a vigorous hand should lead in the right path the people that was just beginning its existence on the banks of the St. Lawrence. If he had permitted it to take a wrong direction at the outset, it would have gone farther and farther from the path of honor and duty, and perhaps would have had to be led back again by one of those great chastisements by which Providence purifies the nations."

The Church which he founded is commemorating this year the 250th anniversary of his consecration as a bishop. One of the features of this celebration is the unveiling of a magnificent statue of the prelate, in the erection of which the entire French-Canadian people have been only too willing to co-operate. Very fittingly the work has been entrusted to a son of the soil, who has already given proof of his great ability in the other splendid monuments with which he has adorned the great cities of his native land, and who must have labored with more than usual affection upon this great memorial which teaches a great lesson and marks an epoch. It stands at the head of the precipitous street which descends from the hillside to the river, and which must have been often marked by the footsteps of the great bishop. Back of it are the Basilica, the Archbishop's House, and the Great Seminary, while above it on the right towers the statue of Champlain.

Singularly enough, while the city is celebrating these two anniversaries, a third, the 200th anniversary of Laval's death, likewise occurs. He died on May 6, 1708.

In the civic celebrations of this Catholic city, Catholics everywhere must necessarily feel a great interest, but in those of Laval it amounts almost to a personal concern for the Catholics of the United States. For, as Gilmary Shea notes: "On May 6, 1708, Bishop Laval died, surrounded by his loving children, the clergy, the religious, and the people. He died as a saint and was venerated as one; many sought his intercession with God, and for nearly two centuries frequent miracles have been ascribed to him. The Church of Canada has petitioned for his canonization. As by his authority the Church was established in New York, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin, and the cross borne down the current of the Mississippi, the Catholic Church in the United States cannot be indifferent to the cause which may exalt to the honor of the public suffrages of our altars one who exercised episcopal jurisdiction over so vast a part of our territory." We accept the old historian's admonition with gratitude, and rejoice in the glories of our brethren of Quebec.

## The Church Bereft of Her Property.

I have worshipped in Canterbury and York; in Winchester and Salisbury, in Lincoln and Durham; in Ely and in Wells, writes William Winter in the New York Tribune. I have stood in Tintern, when the green grass and the white daisies were waving in the summer wind, and have looked upon those gray and russet walls and upon those lovely arched casements—among the most graceful ever devised by human art—round which the sheeted ivy droops, and through which the winds of heaven sing a perpetual requiem.

I have seen the snows of heaven slowly gather and softly fall over the giant tower, the roofless nave, the gable pillars, and the shattered arcades of Fountains Abbey, in its sequestered and melancholy solitude, where ancient Ripon dreams, in the spacious and verdant valley of the Skell. I have missed upon Netley and Kirkstall, and Newstead, and Balton and Melrose and Dryburgh, and at a midnight hour, I have stood in the grim and gloomy chancel of St. Columba's Cathedral, remote in the storm-swept Hebrides, and looked upward to the cold stars, and heard the voices of the birds mingled with the desolate moaning of the sea.

With awe, with reverence, with many strange and wild thoughts, I have lingered and pondered in these haunted, holy places, but one remembrance was always present—the remembrance that it was the Roman Catholic Church that created—those forms of beauty, and breathed into them the breath of a divine life, and hallowed them forever; and, thus thinking, I have felt the unspeakable pathos of her long exile from the temples that her passionate devotion prompted and her loving labor raised.

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## Miracles at Lourdes.

His Eminence Cardinal Andrieu, Bishop of Marseilles, has published a decree establishing as miraculous, after all the due canonical formalities had been complied with, the cure of Sister Maximilian, of an enormous cystic tumor of the liver, complicated by a grave and painful pleuritis of the left lung. Her state was so dangerous that the doctors declined to attempt an operation. Brought to Lourdes, she was suddenly cured on May 20, 1901, and since that date has suffered no recurrence of either of the maladies with which she had been afflicted.

His Eminence Cardinal Lucons, Archbishop of Rheims, has just given canonical judgments affirming the miraculous character of the cure of Marie Therese Nohlet, afflicted with Pott's disease. She arrived in Lourdes in a most alarming state, and suffered most atrocious pain. On August 30, 1907, she was suddenly cured at the entrance of the Hospice of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. His Eminence attests that this cure was accompanied by all the circumstances required by Pope Benedict XIV. for pronouncing it miraculous.

