

# THE CATHEDRAL.

ST. JAMES THE LESSER, OF MONTREAL.

A MAGNIFICENT EASTER SUNDAY CEREMONY.

The Opening of the Grand Edifice—The First Mass—Vast Concourse of People—Splendid Music—Eloquent Sermon—Imposing Scene—An Account of an Event that will become Historical.

On Easter Sunday, amidst pomp and ceremony worthy the important occasion, the new Cathedral of Montreal was opened to public worship. On Saturday evening the edifice was blessed by His Grace Mgr. Fabre, the Archbishop of Montreal; but the ceremony was entirely private. This most imposing structure—the grandest on this continent—has been dedicated to St. James the Lesser, under whose protection it stands. Owing to its being an exact reproduction of St. Peter's in Rome, it has been wrongly called, by the public, after the greatest Basilica in the world. It is the third cathedral edifice that Montreal has had since the advent of Catholicity.

## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL

stood upon the present site of St. James Church on St. Denis street, between Mignonne and St. Catherine, and was destroyed in the great fire of 1852, which swept the Quebec suburbs. For some years after Mgr. Lartigue, the first Bishop of Montreal, lived at the Hotel Dieu, where he died. His successor, the late Mgr. Bourget, the second Bishop, erected the Bishop's Palace and adjoining chapel upon its present site, which was then far removed from the centre of the Catholic population. His Lordship, however, seemed satisfied that Montreal, like every other city, would grow westward and that the Cathedral would soon stand in the very heart of the metropolis. When the present chapel was erected it was well-known that it would be only a temporary edifice, so that on July 25th, 1857, Mgr. Bourget planted a cross on what was then known as Mount St. Joseph and where to-day stands the imposing Cathedral of St. James. His Lordship after turning the sod declared that the Cathedral to be erected to the glory of God on the spot would do honor to Catholicity, to Canada and to Montreal. It was not, however, until August 28, 1870, that the first stone was laid by His Lordship, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Bayle, Superior of the Seminary, and Rev. M. Gagnon, of Berthier, and in the presence of a large gathering of the clergy and faithful. Twenty-four years have elapsed since that date, and though the edifice is able to receive worshippers, the interior is far from being complete and much work still remains to be done. The building has been put up wholly by voluntary subscriptions, which were raised by the clergy, headed by Mgr. Bourget, and after him by Mgr. Fabre, and by donations, collections and bazaars. For many years, however, after the laying of the foundations work had to be stopped owing to financial considerations. Mgr. Fabre had greatly at heart to finish the work, and he has energetically kept appealing to the faithful, with great success. The Cathedral has been

BUILT UPON THE PLANS OF ST. PETER'S at Rome, and is about one-third of the size of the latter. The dimensions of the Montreal church are: Exterior, 338 ft. long; interior, 295 ft.; 150 ft. width in its widest part; 114 ft. in its narrowest part; 216 ft. width in the transept; the facade of the portico is 176 ft., and its width 30 ft. The extreme height of the dome and cross is 256 ft. Owing to its many wings and subdivisions it will not be able to seat as many people as Notre Dame, but will rank second to it among the Catholic churches from that standpoint. Three statues have been placed over the portico, but there is room for many more. As is known, the remains of Mgr. Lartigue and Mgr. Bourget and several priests lie beneath the Church.

All week extensive preparations were made for this feast. The situation of the altar and the sanctuary is such as to add to all the grandeur of the ceremonies. The sanctuary is situated immediately under the large dome, and extends from one side of the church to the

other. The clergy will sit behind and beside the altar, but no one will be seated in front, as in other churches. This will permit a good view of everything that takes place, for there is no altar railing surrounding the sanctuary, as is the case in many Italian churches, especially St. Peter's of Rome. The sanctuary forms a semi-circle, the convex being towards the entrance. When the ceremonies are in progress, the eclat of the gold vestments of His Grace and the chaplains will be enhanced. The altar is not completed, only the base being erected at present, and it will not be finished for some time yet. The only other altar in the building is the altar of the Blessed Virgin, situated at the extreme end of the church. It is intended that the Cathedral, when completed, shall contain thirty marble altars. One thing worthy of notice in the sanctuary is the throne of His Grace. It is a magnificent work of art and looks beautiful. It was presented to the Archbishop by the young priests of the Archdiocese some time ago. It stands on the left-hand side of the altar, in a niche of the wall, and it partly faces the worshippers and partly the altar. It is made of walnut, with sculptured ivory, and surmounted by a statue of St. James. Beneath this is the escutcheon of Mgr. Fabre, consisting of a cardinal's hat and cross, under which is a shield of gold and blue; in the blue field are three silver stars. A lamb appears in the gold field.

the walls. Next year the doors will be opened for daily worship. There will be, however, ceremonies during the month of May.

## THE MORNING CEREMONIES—PONTIFICAL MASS AND SERMON.

Long before the hour of High Mass the vast temple was filled, the throng extending in all directions—a regular sea of faces. The musical portion of the services consisted of La Messe de Mehl, composed for the coronation of Napoleon the First in 1804 (first time in America), with organ and orchestra accompaniment. At the Graduale, "Adagio," by Bizet, for strings. At the Offertory, Handel's "Alleluia." At the close of the service, Th. Dubois' "Fantaisie Triomphale," for organ and orchestra.

We might as well at once mention the musical portion of the afternoon services, all of which was really grand. The magnificent organ filling the immense edifice with its rich volumes:

At Vespers (at 3.15 p.m.)—"Interludes," by Gigout, arranged for strings by R. O. Pelletier; "Magnificat," by Mozart. Antiphons, "Hæc dies," by Riga; "Regina cæli," by Rheinberger.

At Benediction—Handel's "Alleluia;" "Ave Maria," solo, by C. M. Widor, arranged for orchestra by J. J. Goulet; "Tantum Ergo," by Wagner, adapted to the Pilgrim's Chorus; "Laudate," by

miniature, yet immense, reproduction of the decorations in the mighty temple by the Tiber.

## THE SERMON.

After the Gospel the Rev. Canon Racicot made the usual announcements. Then the Rev. Canon Bruchesi ascended the pulpit and delivered the sermon of the day. It was a splendid piece of oratory and equal to the importance, solemnity and grandeur of the occasion. He took for his text the words that were suspended across the church, "Hæc dies quam fecit Dominus," "Behold a day that the Lord made." Combining the event of Easter with the opening of the Cathedral, the preacher delivered one of those discourses that are difficult to reproduce and impossible to translate; sparkling with bright ideas, filled with noble conceptions, couched in language of the choicest, and delivered with a characteristic ease and power we would not attempt to convey to our readers even a remote equivalent—such sermons must be heard to be appreciated.

Easter, he said, was the triumph of Christ over hell, Satan and sin. Men had their day of success, and they imagined that they had conquered the Almighty. They sold Him, dragged Him before the tribunals, scourged Him, nailed Him to a cross, as they would the worst of criminals, and they said to themselves that this prophet was silenced; they called upon Him to come down and prove that He was God. But He heeded not; He died, was buried, a stone was rolled against His tomb, a seal set upon it and picked guards were ordered to watch over it. But their day was about to close, the sun had gone down on their triumphs; they were impotent to check the approach of God's day of glory. From out the heavens an archangel came; and this ambassador of the Most High rolled away the stone. Had the prophecy of Christ been unfulfilled, the gospel that He preached and the Church that He built would have perished with Him. But the cry went forth—"Resurrexit sicut dixit." He had arisen: the sorrowing women, the doubting Thomas, the apostles, the disciples, the lives and deaths of thousands of martyrs, nineteen centuries of the Church's glory, all attest the fact of the resurrection.

Infidelity, the cold and heartless, proclaims through its funereal oracles that the Church is dead and that its last Easter is in the tomb. These prophets of death merely play the role of the pharisees, the scribes, the doctors, the haters of Christ; but like these enemies of old these modern croakers of dismal tidings, are mistaken. Man's hour is over; that of God's Church has come. Ever young, ever strong, ever beautifully, year after year for centuries has she sung the same canticle, "Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluia!"

That canticle of joy is in our hearts to-day as we come into this temple to assist at the first Holy Sacrifice ever offered from its altar. Here again is another resurrection. In 1852 the Cathedral and Palace of Montreal were destroyed by the flames, so also was a large portion of the then young city. The venerable Bishop wept amongst the ruins of his home and the crumbled walls of his temple. He vainly asked himself how all this disaster was ever to be repaired. Like the holy man Job, he submitted to the will of God and left the future in the hands of an Allwise Providence. Nor was his faith misplaced. To-day the answer comes, in the form of one of the grandest cities in America springing up before the eyes of the world, and in the eloquent, if silent, voice of the most imposing temple upon this continent. It is a resurrection from the ashes and ruins of the past, and a sublime, a glorious one. Here is an exact reproduction—except in size—of the wonderful Church of St. Peter in Rome. Many a person present at this ceremony has visited the Eternal City. What memories must not this occasion awaken. How the days and scenes that cluster around the centre of Catholicity must come forth to greet us again! The blessings of the great Pontiff, the pilgrimages to the tombs of the Apostles, the wonderful ceremonies, the hours of calm, of admiration, of adoration, of delight, all flash back upon us. See, yonder in that southern transept was the consoling dogma of the Immaculate Conception proclaimed; there, on that western arm of the temple, the Council of the Vatican was held; off to the front—where such numbers are congregated at this moment—behold the place where



HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP FABRE.

Beneath the whole is a scroll, bearing the inscription *In fide et caritate*, (in faith and in kindness). Above the whole are the words *Honor sed onus* (the episcopate is an honor, but also a burden). The chair appears in the same part of the sanctuary as the throne of the Pope in St. Peter's of Rome, and it presents very much of the same appearance. The cost of the chair was \$1,300. The radiators have been placed in position at the sides of the church, and they are of the latest pattern, enhancing the beauty of the Cathedral. All week men have been placing chairs in position for Easter, for the number of pews is limited, the middle aisle alone containing them, whilst the nave is empty. The pews are of the finest material and finish, very much in keeping with the church. The pattern of these benches is very nice and they are larger than the generality of pews in Catholic churches. The proportions of the edifice are so magnificently kept, that it is almost impossible to conceive the exact size. It was not sought to make room for crowds, but to build a monument that would lose in space what it would gain in beauty. Generally it is sought to make churches hold as many as possible, but this was not an object in the Archbishop's. The organ is also ready for the great occasion, and it has proved itself one of the finest on the continent. It was played on Sunday for the first time since its inauguration by Mr. Guilmant last autumn. St. James is very bright and has a cheerful appearance. The painting and gilding relieves the whiteness of

Mozart. At the close, Th. Dubois' "Fantaisie Triomphale."

Soloists, Messrs. A. Fortier, G. M. A. Destroismaisons, P. Gagnon, J. E. Guilmette, R. Bourdon, C. O. Lamontagne. Organist, Mr. R. O. Pelletier. Choir master, Mr. G. Couture.

At ten o'clock the procession entered the sanctuary from the south side, or rear of the grand altar. His Grace the Archbishop, with gold and jewelled mitre, gold crozier and clad in sacerdotal robes for Mass, over which hung the sacred pallium, was accompanied by the Vicar General as priest of honor; Rev. Canons Archambault, Savariat, Leblanc, and Vaillancourt as deacons and sub-deacons, and the crozier, cross, mitre, and missal bearers, clad in gorgeous vestments followed the acolytes and the thurifer with the golden censor. The Mass commenced. The scene was one of the most imposing ever witnessed in this city. All the ceremonials peculiar to the Roman Basilica of St. Peter were observed. There were the military officers in their rich uniforms and clashing swords; the ushers with their golden colors and neat evening dresses; the light, lofty, brilliant, vast appearance of the temple. The High Altar in the centre under the dome; around it the hundreds of surpliced clergy; the magnificent throne on the gospel side; the pulpit on the epistle side—looking down the body of the church and into the two arms of the great cross, each a large church in itself. The four evangelists, the arms of the late and those of the present Pontiff, the inscriptions, all the