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AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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WEDNESDAY.....MAY 17, 1893

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

SUBSCRIPTIONS must be paid strictly in advance in future, otherwise we shall have to stop paper when time expires. We would request our subscribers to bear this in mind and remit the amount before expiration of time subscription is paid to.

THE ASCENSION.

On Thursday last the Church celebrated the Feast of the Ascension, the last of the glorious mysteries in the life of Our Divine Lord. It is unnecessary for us to relate the story of that memorable event; all Catholics know that Christ, having collected his disciples around Him, went up to a mountain top, and there, having promised them that He would again return, slowly ascended from their midst into the blue empyrean and disappeared beyond the portals of the vault above. Between the day of the Resurrection and that of the Ascension He had calmly but forcibly rebuked St. Thomas for his want of Faith, and in so doing He said that "happy are they who not having seen, believe." In this great mystery of the Ascension we are bound by our faith in Christ to absolutely believe. We know that the glorified body of the Son of God went up from earth and that, according to the Creed, he took His seat at the "right hand of the Father." There upon a throne of eternal glory, co-equal in His Divinity with the First Person, He sits in power and majesty, the Ruler of the universe and the One who is to come, at the end of time, "to judge the living and the dead." Thousands are the lessons that are to be drawn from this event in the history of man's redemption. There is one thought, however, that we will strive, in a few words, to develop, and in so doing we will be as concise and clear as possible.

If Jesus Christ is God, He is none the less man; He combined in Himself all the perfections of the Deity and all the attributes of the Human. While His soul was Divine His body was mortal and similar to that of the most perfect of human being. He came into this world in the ordinary way of all the children of men; a weak child, subject to every misery and "all the ills that flesh is heir to," He developed, in the usual course, into a youth, and thence into manhood. During His manhood He suffered all the pangs that the spirit is capable of and all the tortures to which the body could possibly be subjected. Even the universal law of death He did not escape; He need

not have died, for as God He could have avoided the tomb; but He wished to fulfil the law, to go the ways of all flesh, to cross the portals of the grave, to undergo the separation of body and soul, to submit to the condemnation that was the immediate consequence of man's disobedience. Moreover, He wished to show that if, as God, He could burst the bondage of the sepulchre, as man He was prepared to undergo all the ills that fall to the lot of humanity. Thereby has He identified Himself with our race, has He declared Himself human, has He united Himself, as a brother, to each of us in the acceptance of our nature.

On the day of the Ascension it was the glorified body, arisen—as shall arise the bodies of the just—that went up into heaven and took possession of the seat at the right hand of the Father. In this last act of the Redeemer He conferred upon mankind an inestimable boon, one that we are too prone to forget and the significance of which we are too apt to underestimate. By His glorious Ascension Christ translated humanity (in His own person) from the sphere of miseries and tribulations to the realms of undying happiness and unfathomable beatitude. There in the mansions of God, in the palace of the Eternal, at the right hand of the Creator sits humanity: not humanity weak and miserable, but humanity triumphant and powerful. In wiping out original sin and in opening the gates of Limbo Christ restored to our race the great prerogative of children of God; but in ascending, with a human body into heaven, and taking possession of the place next only to the Father, He lifted our nature into a domain that should have been our own had sin not destroyed our rights to such privileges, and which must necessarily be the lot of our nature, should we walk in the foot-prints that He left for us to follow. Since the Ascension there is nothing spiritually impossible to man: with the necessary graces and with corresponding action upon our part, it is ever within the range of possibility to enjoy absolute glory and peace in the bosom of God. From earth humanity can now look aloft and contemplate glorified humanity—at the right hand of God. It is thus that Christ consummated His mission of love and mercy, and in a manner that only a Divine Person could conceive.

The lesson that we should draw from the mystery of the Ascension is one full of deep consolation. Like Christ, in the act of departure, we should detach ourselves from the things of this earth; we should rise gradually higher into the atmosphere of Christian perfection; we should finally ascend beyond the range of worldly vision into the regions of spiritual perfection. If a child of the human race can but do these things during life, in Christ's presence at the right of His Father, he has a guarantee of the ultimate entry of humanity into the unending splendors of a perfect existence.

CONSIDERABLE noise is being made regarding the investigation that has been ordered in the matter of the "Curran Bridge" over the canal at Wellington street. No charges of wrong doing have as yet been made against any individuals, and we do not think that any real scandal (as these transactions are now styled) exists. Anyway, the affair is in the hands of the proper authorities, and it would be both premature and unjust to rush to conclusions. Still we believe in a thorough investigation, as much in the interest of the parties immediately concerned as in that of the public. The principal lesson that we find can be drawn from the whole matter is to the effect that it is a mistaken course, on the

part of the Government, to cause works of such magnitude as the one in question to be undertaken, otherwise than through general public tender. The proper and safer way to proceed is to call for tenders, to accept the lowest—provided all other conditions are equal—and to hold the contractor responsible for the fulfilment of his work, under the stipulations of time and manner of its performance. Until this course is taken the public can expect nothing else than difficulties, disputes, exorbitant outlays, endless extras, and a host of unforeseen miscalculations. Moreover, general public tender is the only fair and honest way to secure the doing of proper Government work. Political partizanship should have no influence in matters of such general interest.

MICHAEL DAVITT.

A cable despatch of last week announced the fact that Michael Davitt has actually applied for the Children Hundreds, which is the British Parliamentary form of resignation. This it to be regretted, and the causes that have led up to such a course, on the part of that staunch and devoted patriot, are to be deeply deplored. Mr. Davitt has ever been one of the purest and most unselfish soldiers in the ranks of Ireland's cause, and by his present action, which we deem ill-advised in more than one sense, he has given positive evidence of his manly character and unselfish disposition. Let us take a hurried glance at what this man has been forced to go through, as a Parliamentary representative; the lesson is fraught with instruction.

Three times has he represented Irish constituencies in the British House of Commons, and three times, by force of unjust circumstances, has he been deprived of his seat. Eleven years ago he was elected to represent the County of Meath. At the time of his election he was in prison, and of course a "felon" according to the law that crushed the Irish people. A resolution was passed unseating him—it read as follows:—"Resolved, That Michael Davitt, returned as a member for the County of Meath, having been adjudged guilty of felony and sentenced to penal servitude for fifteen years, and being now imprisoned under such sentence, is incapable of being elected or returned as a member of this House."

The second time that Davitt was elected was at the last general elections when he defeated Pierce Mahony, the Parnellite candidate for North Meath. He was unseated by the courts upon the ground of "clerical intimidation." Last week we published lengthy extracts from and comments upon Bishop Nulty's pamphlets which so clearly explain the absence of any kind of "clerical intimidation" in the pastoral letter which formed the ground work of the judgment. As the judges found, despite all evidence to the contrary, that this pastoral sufficed to annul the election in South Meath, in order to save unnecessary costs, and knowing that the both cases would terminate in a similar manner, Mr. Davitt offered to resign his seat.

But this the opponents of Davitt would not accept. They were not merely actuated by a desire to secure his seat, but they sought to drive out of public life one of the most powerful supporters of the very cause they pretend to have at heart. They proceeded with the case, unseated Davitt, piled up costs upon costs, and took every advantage that the law afforded them to ruin a man who had given his youth, and the vigor of his manhood to the service of Ireland. They unseated Davitt; but they did not gain the constituency. Davitt refused to pay the costs and refused to allow any per-

son to pay them for him. His enemies (for they evidently are both his and Ireland's enemies) took bankruptcy proceedings and last week he was adjudicated a bankrupt. The costs of the election trial mount up to £1800. Being a bankrupt Davitt is unable to retain his present seat in the House of Commons. He will not pay nor allow the amount to be paid, and as a consequence he had to resign his seat.

The reason given by Mr. Davitt for refusing to pay, is that he is not justified in paying the amount when he had offered to resign his seat before the costs were incurred. His reason for not permitting any of his friends to settle the amount is one of, what we would call, mistaken patriotism: he looks upon the petition trial as a piece of personal spite and the whole affair as his own private business. Gifts of money have been pressed on him from all sides, but he has ever refused to accept even a cent. The Westminster Gazette says: "He (Davitt) is stoutly resolved never to take any public money for his private concerns, and to all these offers he has given a positive refusal."

There is an example of disinterested patriotism on the one hand and the very opposite spirit on the other. We ask, in the name of all common reason, how can men have the brazen audacity to call themselves lovers of Ireland, friends of Home Rule, followers of any great leader's principles, when they thus carry petty spite, low jealousy, mean selfishness, and unnatural vengeance to such a degree that they would deprive the Irish people, at this critical juncture, of such a man as Davitt? Such a man: yes, a man who has worked, written, spoken, fought, suffered, and gone through every conceivable personal misfortune, and all for the sake of his fellow-countrymen and their legislative liberty! But we must disagree with Mr. Davitt upon one point. This bankruptcy business, the election petition that led to it, the resignation of his seat which follows it, are not his "private concerns." Mr. Davitt is not the only one interested in this matter; the whole Irish race, the world over, is concerned in the ultimate result of these unfortunate events. As the Irish World says: "Davitt is not in Parliament to promote his 'private concerns.' It was not for private objects he consented to be a candidate for Meath. His struggle with Parnellism was for Ireland, not for himself and it is for Ireland to decide what ought to be done in the case of the bankruptcy which the Parnellites have forced upon him. * * * * * He has already by one grand speech in the House of Commons done service of inestimable value to the cause of Home Rule. That cause still needs his services in the same place. We hope the Irish party will be able to take means to secure it."

We contend that the electors of North-east Cork, who gave Mr. Davitt their votes last year, should be consulted before such an important step as that of his resignation be consummated. He has six months grace, from the time of being declared bankrupt until he is obliged to abandon his seat in Parliament. We fervently hope that Mr. Davitt will yet reconsider his decision, allow the Irish people and his own constituents in particular to have a voice in the matter. He is too important a factor in the House to-day to be allowed to drop out on account of any mistaken sentiment of patriotic unselfishness. His opponents can never efface the cruel wrong they have done to the Irish cause.

President Cleveland has made the following appointments: Consuls, Edgar G. Givens of Arkansas, at Winnipeg; Frs. X. Belleau, Maine, at Three Rivers, Que.