

The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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WEDNESDAY,.....MARCH 20, 1895

OUR SOUVENIR.

We are most highly gratified with the manner in which our St. Patrick's Day Souvenir number has been received on all sides. It has sold in a most satisfactory manner, and we feel it now our pleasant duty to strike off a second edition for all persons outside Montreal who have sent in or may soon forward us their orders. To mention all the praise that has been showered upon us and the marks of appreciation bestowed would savor, perhaps, of self-laudation. The only thing we can say is that the management of THE TRUE WITNESS promised a first-class Souvenir Number, that we went so far as to state that one of the most complete, elevating and original artistic and literary issues ever published in the country would greet the public on this anniversary of our Patron Saint, and we can add that we have fulfilled that promise according to the judgment of all who have read our Souvenir.

While this is most gratifying to the directors and management of the paper, it can be none the less so to the Irish Catholics of this city, of the Province and of the whole Dominion. All our friends outside Montreal who are anxious to have one of those splendid numbers will do well to send their orders as soon as possible. The sum of twenty-five cents is so small compared to the value of the publication that we might actually say it is "sold for a song."

The second edition will be ready for delivery on Monday next.

OUR NATIONAL FEAST.

Once more have the children of the "Ancient Race" celebrated the anniversary of Ireland's patron saint. Each year, on the seventeenth of March, a wave of deep enthusiasm sweeps over every land where dwells a Celt. It is felt in far off Australia, the land where Irishmen have risen to the foremost positions in Church and State; it sweeps over the Pacific and dashes against the Rockies, amidst whose stupendous grandeur the exiles of Erin have climbed with the advance-guard of civilization; it touches the fair Dominion from end to end, and passes across the face of the great American Republic; in the countries of Europe it produces a magical effect; and, at last, returns, like the tide, to the centre whence it started—to "the Emerald Isle" of the West.

Here, in the city of the Royal Mount, where many Irishmen have found happy and prosperous homes, the patriotic fervor of the race is kept alive, and the children of a younger generation are taught, by word and example, to love the land of their forefathers, to weep over Ireland's sorrows, to exult in her glories, to perpetuate her traditions and to pray for her future. As Ireland has had a marked mission amongst the nations of the world, so have the Irishmen of Canada a special one amidst the different races that go to make up our young country's population. Let us, then, on this anniversary of St. Patrick's Feast, recall, in a few words, the work that Providence cut out for Ireland in the great movements and mutations of the different peoples of the civilized earth; and then point out, in as brief a manner as possible, the all-important position that the same All-Wise Ruler has assigned to the descendants of the Irish race upon the free soil of our great Dominion. It is difficult to write an editorial on St. Patrick's Day and to say something absolutely new; but we can at least tell the old story in a form that may be novel in its construction.

The mission of the Irish Race seems to have been the teaching of the world, both by precept and example. When the night of barbarism hung over Europe, Ireland was, in the language of Dr. Johnson, "the quiet home of sanctity and learning." Her monasteries and schools were the refuge of scholars from all sections of the continent. Her teachers went forth, and in the universities of Europe taught the sciences, philosophy, rhetoric and letters. Coming down through the centuries we find, in every sphere, in the military, the literary and the religious, many of the leaders of thought and action—the men whom history recognizes as great—springing from Ireland. As Israel of old preserved the knowledge and faith of the true God amidst the almost universal paganism of the world, so Ireland, that small country, at the extreme West of Europe, played the important part of preserver and propagator of the true Faith during the Christian era. Israel suffered, was defeated, crushed, exiled, stricken with plagues; yet, in His own good time, the Almighty awakened a leader, in the person of Moses, and commissioned him to free His people from the land of bondage, to guide them through the great desert, to give them His decalogue, and to conduct them to the land of promise. The Irish race underwent centuries of persecution, famine, exile, bondage and misery; through the desert of suffering it has been led by the fiery pillar of Faith; from St. Patrick it received the all-saving laws of Christianity; and as surely as Israel crossed the Jordan, so certainly must the Irish race enter the domain of reward and liberty—when it shall please

Providence so appoint. It has been a mission most effective in its results. The world has been saved more than once through the contemplation of Ireland's fidelity. There is not an existing country in Europe, or America, that does not owe part of its triumphs, its glories, its successes, its honors to some child of the Celtic race. It would be a long story to recount all that Irishmen have done for France, Austria, Spain, Italy and other European countries. These services in Australia, the United States and Canada would require many volumes to enumerate. Their efforts and successes in every land indicate most clearly what they could do at home under even the ordinary circumstances that surround other peoples. And British triumphs, on sea and land, in the domains of literature, legislation and diplomacy, are in a great measure due to the Irishmen who took the lead and who arose, despite all obstacles and by force of native ability, to the foremost places amongst the great ones of the Empire. If there were thousands of Lyndhursts to style them and treat them as aliens, there were hundreds of Shielts to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of the oppressor and to assert the equality, and often superiority, of the race.

Turning from this hurried contemplation of the real greatness of the race in the past, we feel that it is right to indicate, even though briefly, the stand that our people are called upon to take in this new land. Amongst the descendants of the different peoples of Europe the Irishmen in Canada have the same mission to fulfil that the Irish race performed in the great movements of the nations whence these descendants spring. To preserve the faith and to teach; a two-fold apostleship.

All the world over, and here as well as elsewhere, there are rivals of our people, men who are jealous of their success and who are anxious to crush all ambition in them. It is then our duty, while proving in our individual lives, as well as in our national existence, that the Faith which has been transmitted to us throughout the long centuries, is as dear to us in the hour of prosperity as it was to our forefathers in the era of misfortune. Apart from this fidelity to the teachings of St. Patrick, we must remember that socially, politically, nationally, the higher we aim the greater success we can attain. There are enough of people, of organizations and of influences in the world that strive to keep us back, to check our rise, to hold us down, without that we should lend them a hand by under-estimating our national importance, or allowing a single opportunity of improvement to escape.

There was a time, as Phillips says, when, amongst those opponents of our people, "there existed a prejudice, predominant above every other feeling—inveterate as ignorance could generate, and monstrous as credulity could feed." That prejudice may still exist, but the upward tendency of our people renders it less apparent. "Was there an absurdity uttered—it was Irish! Was there a crime committed—it was Irish! Was there a freak at which folly would blush—a frolic which levity would disown—a cruelty at which barbarism would shudder—none could hatch or harbor it but an Irishman! Ireland was the Ribald's jest and the Miser's profit—the Painter sold her in caricature, the Ballad-singer chanted her in burlesque, and the pliant Senator eked out his stupid hour with the plagiarism of her slander."

To those who could, in our day, be guilty of such treatment of our people, we adduce no argument—their ignorance is too prejudiced to be taught and their

prejudice too contemptible to be combated. In the past the virtues of our people were sicklied with the hue of suspicion—their liberality was called rebellion—their candor, craft—their piety, polemics. To-day we have to struggle against the remnants of those long existing prejudices. To do so, let us use the arms best suited for the contest. Let us stamp out from stage and literary arena every caricature of our race; let us strive for the highest attainments in the domain of education; let us not allow party to brand the name of patriotism; let us draw closer our ranks and defy the influences of passing events to divide us into sections; let us secure the very best, ablest and most gifted to represent us; let us merge the partisan in the Irishman; let us consider Ireland as a parent and Canada as the mother of our adoption; let the monster of disunion be crushed. If we but take this stand we shall see who will dare refuse us a just right or offer an unexpiated insult.

Our mission here is a great and glorious one—for Faith and for the good of this country; Irishmen of Canada, let our motto be *Excelsior!*

AN EPOCH MARKED.

St. Patrick's Day, 1895, has come and gone. It has been a grand and successful celebration in every acceptance of the term. For the Irish people of Montreal it has brought a great degree of credit; for the Irish societies that took part in the procession and the different concerts it was a glorious seventeenth of March. For the TRUE WITNESS this year's feast of Ireland's Patron Saint marks a period in the history of the good old organ. Never before, in the forty-five years of its existence, did this Irish-Catholic paper make such a giant stride forward. Our Souvenir number has met with a reception and an appreciation far exceeding our most sanguine expectations. It is true that it cost a great outlay of money and a corresponding amount of work; but we feel that the reception it has met with fully compensates for all. By the press of the country and by the public at large our Souvenir Number has been pronounced the most unique and important publication of its kind that ever appeared in Canada. We can only say that we are gratified, for we have attained one of our many objects, and that is to show to the world abroad that in the journalistic sphere, as well as in others, our people are in the vanguard, and that we keep pace with the times and are able to outstrip, in many fields of emulation, our fellow-countrymen of other races and creeds. We believe that the future of THE TRUE WITNESS is henceforth secured, and from the Seventeenth March, 1895, it can date its upward and onward course.

Good Friday, this year, falls upon the 12th April. On that day the stars will be in the same position in the firmament which they occupied on the day of Our Lord's death on the Cross. It will be the first time, since the commencement of the Christian era, that this has happened. Many centuries must roll past before the same circumstance again takes place. When next the heavenly bodies occupy that special position, where will the nations of to-day be? A question that none can answer. How will the Church be? If time still exists, she will be exactly as she is to-day and as she has been since the dawn of redemption.

A decision handed down Monday by the United States Supreme Court sustains the Arkansas law of 1877, limiting passenger fare on railroads to three cents a mile.