

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

A Plea for the Rising Generation of Young Irish Canadians.

Our Old Man Signs for a Few Reforms.

CHRISTMAS comes to us this year clothed in its mantle of snow. Down through the centuries comes the story of the Nativity, as mysterious and as absorbing to us as it was to the Magi and Shepherds who humbly adored in the stable at Bethlehem. To-day as then there are unbelievers, but on Christmas night, despite infidelity and unbelief and cynicism and self-love the whole world is girdled with devout worshippers celebrating at Midnight Mass the birth of the Redeemer. There is to-day, as there ever has been and will be, the unending struggle between good and evil, between our higher nature and our lower, but with Catholics especially how much greater is the moral force of resistance. Take a city, it is, and compare it with the condition of mankind here in Christianity, and one can see, when all our drawbacks, how much better we are than the heathen world. If we are Christians, we are not evil, we are not the prey of the devil, and the tyranny of the strong, but we exist, not because of our infidelity but in spite of it, and were tenfold more intense in ancient times. The honest hardworking mechanic and tiller of the soil who to-day boldly deports his ballot in the urn and decides the fates of Governments and rulers, was on the polling days of ancient Rome and Greece, a mere slave, not even credited with an immortal soul.

THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY that all men are equal in the sight of God each with an immortal soul to save which no human enactment can reach, operated a revolution compared with which all other human events combined sink into insignificance. Here in this Canada of ours we have much to be thankful for. We enjoy the most complete liberty that an intelligent, self-governing people can desire, and a prosperity the enjoyment of which is only intensified by the snows and frosty air of our winter months, and which is denied the inhabitants of more sunny climes, who are oppressed by the burden of grinding taxes and huge standing armies. Peace on earth to men of good will is the yearn that resounds at this season with redoubled strength from one pole to the other, before which the discordant cries of anarchy and discontent are for the moment stilled. To the children of green Erin especially, our country offers a field where they can far from the disabilities which afflict their energies in the old land. Here we enjoy the blessings of Home Rule which we so ardently desire for those who have left behind, and here in this city especially, we are making strides onward in every path of life which we look to with pride and which fill us with hope for the future. In a humble way and at the cost of a penny's sacrifice it can ill afford, the TRUE WITNESS has undertaken the task of

CONCENTRATING THE SCATTERED EFFORTS of many patriotic English speaking Catholics to improve our position as one of the elements of our Canadian nationality and thus benefit in some degree each one individually. To do this what is required above all is unity of effort, and to this end an appeal at this season cannot be out of place. There is abundance of example all around us. Look at the magnificent institutions founded by the generosity and public spirit of our Protestant merchant princes. We need not mention McGill University, the Victoria Hospital, the schools for women, the Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations. Look also at the Laval University and the numerous other public institutions founded by our less wealthy but equally generous French Canadians. What have the English speaking Catholics to point to as founded distinctly by them? One particularly long list was in an institution founded by the Y. M. C. A. where our young men many of whom are at the front, to profitably spend their evenings, and who are consequently all the more exposed to the temptations of the billiard room and the saloon, would find themselves in a congenial and healthy atmosphere with all the incentives to

SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND HEALTHY RECREATION. of a well stocked library, light classes and well equipped gymnasium. We have a number of national and provincial organizations which are doing noble work but they are necessarily restricted and local in their character.

This is not owing to the lack of wealth or of good will but rather of initiative. Let some of our men of wealth set the ball rolling and very soon others would emulate their example, and we would have a centre where all our energies could meet and which would afford an improvement in the moral and social tone of our youth. I throw out these suggestions in a non-envious spirit but simply with the view of awakening an interest in certain matters which to my view have been too long neglected. I might, in conclusion, recall the story of the founder of the R. Schields, who, when death was near, called his sons around him and handing each in turn a bundle of sticks asked him to break it. Each tried, his stick broke and failed. Then uniting the sticks he handed them the sticks separately, which, of course, he broke easily. Thus it will be with you, he said. "If you stick together no one can break you, but if you do not, you will be broke

as easily as those separated sticks." Let the English-speaking Catholics take this illustration to heart, and it will be the better for each and every one of us.

OLD MAN.

NEWFOUNDLAND STAMP ISSUE.

The late government of Newfoundland may claim to have originated the idea of the new stamp issue for the "Ancient Colony," but to their successors, the present incumbent, belongs the credit of carrying it into execution.

What Newfoundland has done in this particular others may find it to their profit and credit to imitate. Why should not every country change the design and even the shape of its letterstamp at stated and frequent intervals, and why should not each succeeding issue be the very model of artistic elegance the age can command? Theoretically it is next to nil, as compared with the certain and handsome revenues of the Post Office and the people are fond of novelty and variety even in such matters as postage stamps. This is not an affair of sentiment but a simple matter of business enterprise which will enable governments to please many with little outlay and much profit to themselves.

THE BURKE CENTENARY.

The Marquis of Dufferin and Ava recently presided at a meeting held in the Royal University Buildings, Dublin, in connection with the Burke Centenary. The gathering was splendidly represented and included the most distinguished Prelate of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, the most eminent professional men of the city, the leading journalists, prominent business men and well known citizens of every rank and creed. The great feature of the occasion was an address from the Rev. Wm. Barry, D.D., which was one of the most eloquent ever heard within the University halls and riveted the attention of his hearers from its opening to its closing sentence. In the course of his address he read the following letter from Mr. Gladstone: "I regard Burke as regards Ireland and America, with fervent and unstinted admiration; as to France and the revolutionary war, with grief; and throughout with the reverence due to that noble combination of character and genius. As regards Ireland, it is indeed painful to me to see her bleeding from wounds inflicted by her children; but neither my faith in her eventual destinies nor my anxiety for their accomplishment are in the smallest degree lessened by the unfortunate circumstances attending the efforts being made in her behalf.

Dr. Barry was followed by the Most Rev. D. Healy, Bishop of Clonfert, who paid a splendid tribute to Burke's efforts in the cause of Catholic education. If, said the Most Rev. Gentleman, they mean to solve the question at all, it must be done on Burke's principle of doing the Catholics full justice in the matter of endowment but without in any way tampering with their consciences or attempting to make the endowment a bribe to induce them to sacrifice their principles.

AMERICAN TIN PLATE INDUSTRY.

A special report has just been published on the American tin plate industry and it shows that it has increased twenty five fold in seven years, and incidentally its development and expansion there has been a large increase in the canning business of the United States, which now amounts to \$75,000,000 in a year, requiring nearly 2,000,000 boxes of tin plate, and keeping at work more than 2,000 canneries distributed throughout the country. The sale of canned goods is subdivided in the United States into four branches. There is, first, the canning of food preparations of all kinds, except fish, fruits, vegetables, and oysters. In it are included meats, cereals, and soups, and this branch of the American canning business gives employment to 5,000 persons and represents a capital invested of some \$7,000,000, while the business amounts in a year to \$15,000,000. It is largest in New York. The fruit and vegetable canning business of the United States is very much more extensive, representing an invested capital of \$15,000,000, an annual trade of \$30,000,000, and employes to the number of more than 60,000.

The Madcap Set at St. Anne's is the suggestive title Miss Brunow has given to her latest literary effort. The plot of the story is full of interest for all who know anything of school life within the convent walls, though it is one in which the authoress has given a free rein to her imagination and can hardly claim that it is founded on fact. Instances do occur, it is said, of young ladies entering as boarder pupils, after years of day-school attendance, who know a little too much of the world and its vanities to accommodate themselves readily to convent discipline, and it is quite possible there are young ladies of this class who indulge in using slang terms. It creates somewhat harshly upon Canadian Catholics ears and must be regarded as a little exception of which the authoress, in this exceptional instance, has availed herself.

The "Set" system prevails no doubt to some extent in educational institutions as well as elsewhere, but the "Madcaps of St. Anne's" have given it a local habitation and a name it never previously had on the public mind, in so far as convent history is concerned. The book is interesting in other respects and well written. It is published by Buziger Brothers, New York, in excellent form, for fifty cents.

the public good demands that they at the least do not continue to drag down the public taste. If the press beyond the border is debased, it is not for us to follow suit.

FROM OLD STADACONA.

Some Impressions of the Improvements Made During the Past Two Decades.

The Proposed Sweeping Reforms in the Administration of Education in the Province of Quebec—A Minister of Education, Whose Powers Will Be Far Reaching, to Hold Sway.

[SPECIAL TO THE TRUE WITNESS.]

QUEBEC, Dec. 21 — Considering that twenty-one years had elapsed since I last set foot in this good old city, I did not expect to find it the same when I landed here the other day. But owing to the staid character of the Ancient Capital I hardly expected that the spirit of modern progress had taken such a deep hold upon it. On approaching it in the darkness of the night I could see the lights gleam from its elevated streets and Citadel heights, and then I knew that its unique position and rock foundations had remained the same as nature had formed them but when I viewed the new erections I saw that the hand of man had been busy in the intervening years planning and devising as to the kind and number of buildings best suited to the progress of the age and the special needs of the Ancient City itself, and while the antiquarian may quarrel with the ruthless invader who destroys the old landmarks, the live business men of to-day will clap him upon the back for the progressive work he has wrought. The first change and improvement that caught my eye, on landing from Montreal by the Canadian Pacific Railway, was the fine equipped station of that famous railway system which has done so much for the

RE AWAKENING OF COMMERCIAL LIFE

here and in so many other parts of the Dominion. Quebecers especially feel thankful for the enterprise that placed a splendid railway at their very doors, whereas under former conditions to reach the old pioneer road, the Grand Trunk, travellers had, and still have, to cross the St. Lawrence to Point Levis. Then, as we go onward centrally situated C. P. R. offices are passed and in a moment later we find ourselves housed in the Hotel Frontenac, on Dufferin Terrace, than which no more picturesque view can be had in any part of this New World. But what of the hostelry itself? Is it adequate to the needs of the hosts of American visitors and European tourists who frequent Quebec in the summer season? It is an immense hotel and has sheltered thousands of delighted guests since it opened its doors a few years ago, but to meet the increasing demands a new wing is being added. This place has been devised by the C.P.R. for the comfort of the public and the influx of travel caused by the increased facilities offered by that enterprising system. On the very ground once occupied by the venerable Jesuit College (Barracks) now stands beautiful municipal buildings and farther on towards Louis street is the splendid new Court House and on the Grande Allée is the magnificent parliamentary buildings, and also in that favored residential quarter new mansions have lately gone up that denote renewed thrift and mercantile prosperity among the business and professional men of the city. St. Roch, wherein French Canadian influence abounds, has

ALSO WONDERFULLY DEVELOPED

within the past twenty years. But the thing that has perhaps done much to impart a new feeling and aspect to the renewal business life of Quebec is the system of electric cars which run throughout the city and suburbs. This new element of modern commercial progress gives to the city an entirely changed appearance and brings it into line with the pushing municipalities that can still boast of the vigor of youth.

THE NEW EDUCATION BILL.

In social and educational quarters the theme most discussed at present is the proposed new Educational Act. If passed into law and given effect in all its clauses, it will produce sweeping changes. Its main object is to supersede the office of Superintendent of Education by the creation of a Minister of Education who will have a seat in the Cabinet, and will assume responsibility to the Government and the province for the full control and direction of all matters belonging to the scholastic and educational culture of the rising generation in Quebec province. It is claimed for the Act that it will place a power in the hands of the responsible minister that will enable him to act promptly in trying circumstances, and in a way to perfect and advance the sacred cause of education and useful arts and sciences. It is alleged that the superintendent, however capable a personality he may be, is a functionary whose hands are tied at critical moments, and that he often feels himself unable to exert his official power when promptly he is most called for. The Minister of Education will be supreme in his own domain, without being an autocrat, however, because the Council of Public Instruction is to be retained in its advisory capacity. Then again, Inspectors General will be appointed at salaries not over \$3,000. These two restraining forces will stand as a guarantee for additional efficiency in administration, while preventing arbitrary or partisan conduct on the Minister's part. Thus such official acts, it is hoped, will tend to smooth and adjust the relations between the Council of Education and the Legislature. Under the provisions of the bill it is asserted that the working

capacity of the Council and School Boards will rather be augmented than otherwise.

In the scope of the Act two deputy ministers are called into existence, and these same are to act as secretaries to the Council, which retains supervision of inspectors and teachers. Absent laymen may delegate attending colleagues to vote for them. Members of religious orders will not be required to hold certificates, but each Committee of Council of Public Instruction may at any time cancel exemption. School Commissioners must be able to read and write, and School Boards shall have power to exact uniformity of text books in their municipality. Government may fix minimum salary of teachers, and will also insist that the School tax must be one-third higher than the Government grant. In elementary schools the monthly fee must not be less than 5 cents nor over 50 cents. Drawing shall be taught in all schools and agriculture in rural municipalities. These are some of the salient features of the proposed measure which, if it becomes law, is destined to make important changes in educational affairs in the province. The promoters of the Act hope for remedial and beneficial results from it, but the opposition and holders of the old regime regard the innovation with some apprehension, alleging that the minister may eventually reduce his subordinates to a civil impotence and give a political tinge to his official acts. Under the present system the Superintendent is presumed to steer clear of all political bias. Again it is hinted in some quarters that the Athlete tendency of the times may drive the lay element in the Council to undo the good work of the clerics and thus pollute the pure moral educational stream that has nourished so many illustrious scholars in the past. Quebec is rich in historic lore, and under that aspect may afford a theme for future articles.

WM. ELLISON.

The Congress of the United States is shortly to consider a bill calling for the establishment of a National Department of Public Health. The cause of the bill is the recent yellow fever outbreak in the southern States. The investigation in connection with the plague developed a state of sanitary affairs in the sunny south which is unprecedented in the history of the continent. The most ordinary sanitary precautions have been neglected, and instead of trying to prevent the spread of the epidemic several cities of the south seemed actually to invite it. The most important clause in the whole bill is the following:— "That the department shall, when in its judgment it may deem it necessary and proper, make such additional rules and regulations as are necessary to prevent the introduction of infectious and contagious diseases into the United States from foreign countries or into one State or Territory or the District of Columbia, from another State or Territory or the District of Columbia, and when said rules and regulations have been made they shall be promulgated by the approval of the advisory council and the President of the United States, and enforced by the sanitary authorities of the states, territories, municipalities, and local boards of health, where the state, territorial, municipal or local health authorities will undertake to execute and enforce them; but if the state territorial, municipal or local health authorities shall fail or refuse to enforce such rules and regulations, the President of the United States shall execute and enforce the same and adopt such measures as in his judgment shall be necessary to prevent the introduction or spread of such diseases, and may detail or appoint officers for that purpose.

A bill introduced in the United States Senate one day last week brings to light a romance of the late civil war, and the sacrifice of a man to save a family honor. The bill asks that the military record of Harman Francis shall be changed so that the name will read George Francis, and that an honorable discharge shall be granted to George Francis. Harman and George Francis were brothers. When the war broke out Harman enlisted in Company K, Ninety-seventh Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers. His experiences the first few months were so severe that he surprised his family by walking into the home and telling them that he had grown tired of fighting and was not going back to his company. In vain the home folks argued with him and pointed out the fate of a deserter. Harman was determined. At home he was going to remain. It was then that George made up his mind to save the family name from dishonor. The resemblance between the two brothers was great and George went to the front as Harman. George served all through the war. In the battles of the wilderness he was wounded. The wound was a serious one and the name of Francis Harman was placed on the pension list. Since the war the pension has been regularly drawn by arrangement between the two brothers. A few months ago Harman died. The pension is still being paid, but George wants to appear right before his neighbors. He thinks the honor of rebellion is due to his children. Harman left no family, and George feels that he has kept quiet long enough. So he asks that the record may be changed.

Now the very small boy, and girl too, begins to wonder if Santa Claus has got the right address.

Don't flatter yourself that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into a relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

OUR OTTAWA LETTER

OTTAWA, Dec. 22.—The students of Ottawa University have celebrated in right regal style the success of their football team, by a most successful banquet. The refectory of the institution, where the function took place, was lavishly decorated with flags and bunting, while in the center of the hall, in the place of honor, were placed on a raised trophy the Citizens' Cup and the Quebec Championship Trophy. Rev. Father H. Hault presided, and among the others present were: Rev. Fathers Fallon, Antoine and Lejeune, Messrs. F. P. Clancy, R. J. McCredie, Thomas B. Ucher, E. P. Gleason, J. Murphy, F. O'Garra, J. M. G. E. O. Lefleur, J. McGuckin, A. Smith, P. Murphy, J. O'Reilly, E. A. Bigger, R. Murphy, E. Murphy, J. Fahey, W. McCarty, H. Myers, T. Murphy and M. A. Foley.

After the banquet, Rev. Father Fallon made a strong congratulatory speech on the success of the team, and did not utter his language.

THE RELATIONS WERE STRAINED.

Father Fallon said for sixteen years matters between the College and Ottawa have been strained. Many a time in student days had he been called to the prior to confer with Ottawa delegates who with all sorts of soft, sweet words, would promise eternal friendship and then quietly stab the College in the back. Whenever the College played at home the Ottawa men met their opponents at the Russell House and gave every information that could possibly be obtained. Then, when the team went away, letters of advice to the opposing teams preceded the Varsity fifteen, and in many cases accompanied them, but in spite of all this Ottawa University was victorious. No, he would not wish the College to offer any apology for their action in Montreal; they did what was right and he was proud of them. He was never prouder of anything in his life than of the team who stepped off the field at the Metropolitan grounds when the score was 8 to 8. He did not approve of fighting, but those words of Shakespeare were in his mind: "Beware the entrance to a quarrel, but when it has begun be sure you do not stop it."

THE OTTAWA HOLOCAUST.

No doubt the readers of the TRUE WITNESS are already familiar with the main facts of the terrible tragedy which cost six lives on Friday morning last. There is little doubt but that the unfortunate Patrick T. Leahy and his five children met their death from dire accident. Mr. Leahy himself was ever a good husband and a good father and the horrible occurrence which swept so many lives away was none of his work. He died with his children after awaking his wife and warning her to flee with the baby. Mrs. Leahy has so far recovered as to be able to give her experience. She said: "I woke up with a start shortly before three o'clock. My husband, who was in night attire, was standing at the bedside. I cannot say how I was awakened, but when I opened my eyes I found the room full of smoke. My husband was yelling to get up and save myself, as the house was on fire. I jumped out of bed and hurriedly rushed into the children's room, which adjoined mine. I picked up M. Leahy, aged seven, and Frankie, aged five, and in an instant started back to my room. I opened the window, which was only a few inches above the roof of an adjoining shed. Through the opening I forced little Frankie, and thereby saved his life. In the meantime little Mammie, who did not understand the danger, returned to her own room in the darkness, likely enough to go back to bed. Then I became frantic, and ran in after her. I was almost overcome with smoke now, and the fire was spreading in all directions, threatening my life. I attempted to enter the room a second time, but had to relinquish my desire and allow the little one to look after her own safety. I clambered through the window on to the roof of the shed and screamed for help. Mr. Joseph Boulez came to the yard and put up a ladder and assisted me and my child to the ground. THERE WERE NO LAMPS BURNING IN THE HOUSE

at the time to my knowledge, but there had been a good wood fire in a small stove when I retired for the evening. When my husband stood beside my bed he seemed perfectly calm and self-possessed, and not at all hurried by the danger of the position in which he and the family were. After warning me, he walked calmly from the room to the next, where in the dense smoke he probably met his end. He made no effort to either save himself or his family. Had he been in his right senses there is no doubt that all lives would have been saved. I have no idea how the fire started."

The public in Ottawa are not at all pleased with the Fire Brigade in its conduct of the fire, there being an interval of fully twenty-five minutes before its first discovery and the arrival of Chief Prevost's men. Chief Prevost believes that the whole six were dead before the alarm was even sounded. Mr. Leahy was born in 1852 and entered the Post Office Department of the Civil Service in 1883. He was a member of the C. M. B. A. and also of the Civil Service Benefit association. He was insured for \$2,000 in the former and for \$250 in the latter. He was a man of huge proportions, tipping the scales at about 225 pounds. He was married by Rev. Father McGovern on September 19th, 1888, at the Basilica. Mrs. Leahy's maiden name was Miss Mary Agnes Barlow.

A MESSAGE FROM WINNIPEG.

Rev. Father Guillet, formerly Prefect of Discipline at Ottawa University, but now of Winnipeg, has issued an appeal for subscriptions for the maintenance of Catholic schools founded in Manitoba. Rev. Father Guillet is the superintendent and parish priest of the Church of St. Mary's of Winnipeg.