

any scene in the salon to the council chambers. As he stepped into the room every knee was bent, and when he had acknowledged the customary salutation a sigh of relief passed from the lips of the councillors as they proceeded to their places around the central table. They were all old men, silver-haired nobles of great learning, men eminently worthy of the high offices they occupied. One alone in the room was not a councillor. Young and handsome, tall and broad of shoulder, the Count of Bolshoy was there, by right of his position as captain of the Czar's bodyguard, to stand between his royal master and the dangers of secret enemies. And after a few whispered words from the Czar he left the room and took his stand in the dark hallway.

Nihilists were strong in Russia, and the pale young nobleman who sat apart from the crowd in the gay salon was the Count of Kharikov, of all the Socialists the most powerful, fearless and dreaded. There was a wild, unattractive light in his eyes that seemed to tell of strange workings in his mind. He smiled to himself, but it was a dark, forbidding smile that boded no good. He was evidently waiting for something, for as minutes after minutes passed he sat tapping his foot impatiently on the marble floor.

Finally he arose, and with forced calmness, quietly walked towards the half hidden door that led to the left wing. He entered unnoticed and waited in the darkness. Presently the door opened. A form entered noiselessly. Again and still again the door opened, and each time a new figure silently joined him, until two men were gathered there in the gloom.

Not a word was spoken; quietly the little band started down the long, dark hall that had so lately echoed to the footsteps of the Czar. Up the stairs and down another hall, up the stairs again, and still no sound.

Suddenly the sword of the watchful captain of the guard rings from its scabbard, and a stern, commanding "Halt!" echoes through the narrow passageway. For a moment all is still. Then the sound of quick footsteps and that dreaded cry of the Nihilists, "Down with the Czar!" With a loud warning cry the captain kneels low and lunges at the dim figure that is almost upon him, and with a wild shriek the Count of Kharikov staggers and falls.

But the fight is not ended. Scarcely has he raised his steel when the hall is crowded with armed men. With his back against the door he lunges once again, with a grim determination to save the Czar from the hands of these furious men—and there is one less to fight. Again and again he strikes. Fate seems to favor him in that unequal strife, for the brave soldier holds his own in the dark hallway. There is no nervousness in the steady parries and quick thrusts. Death looks him in the eyes, and he dreads it not. Already there is blood on the rich uniform, and a half-met thrust has laid open the broad forehead. His strength cannot stand the furious onslaught much longer.

Suddenly there is a signal from the room. It tells him that his master has escaped, and with a rapid thrust he clears a momentary passage through that circle of swords and is gone. Down the long hall, down the stairs, out into the chill night air he flees with two of the bearded swordsmen at his heels. A sad smile passes over his bleeding face as he hears the hoarse cries of rage and disappointment from the room above. The Czar is safe and he is content.

Down the deserted streets the death chase continues, the stricken, bleeding man who colors the fresh white snow with his life-blood at every step and the two furious pursuers. Through street after street he flies. He cannot last long; his eyes are growing dim, but with a final effort he dashed down a narrow side street and turns to meet his death. He listens. Nearer come the pursuing footsteps. He shrinks into the darkest shadow of the houses. For a moment he scarcely dares breathe. Two panting men dash past and are gone. His mind becomes a blank; he reels and falls heavily upon the pavement.

The clock in the church in the great public square has struck three, and the city slumbers on, unconscious of the great tragedy that has been so narrowly averted. The salon in the palace is empty and dark; the festive guests have gone to their homes all in ignorance of the fierce contest that had occurred in that very building an hour ere their departure.

In front of a plain, unimposing house in a quiet street of the city a dark figure lies prone in the snow. It is the body of the Count of Bolshoy, captain of the royal guard; the hand still grips the trusty sword; there is a crimson blot on the snow at his head, but he is alive.

And a dream comes to him as he lies there bleeding and unconscious. He is no longer the stern captain of the finest troop of warriors in Russia. He is a little curly headed lad, lisping soft prayers at his mother's knees. It is Christmas eve, and he is imploring with innocent lips the Sacred Infant to watch and guide his steps through life.

The dream changes. Now, in the vigor of early manhood, he kneels with downcast head before the throne of the great Czar. Peter is speaking: "Count Bolshoy, consider well what thou sayest; I offer thee the captaincy of my guards; accept and it shall be thine. One condition, thou shalt renounce thy foolish fancies of Romanism forever." There is silence for a moment. Then with trembling lips he utters: "Sire, thy will is mine."

And the dream ends.

But there is a movement in the house before which he lies. Someone is descending the stairs; the door is opened, and there is a cry of dismay as the prostrate man is seen lying at the very doorstep. Strong hands are ready to carry him into the house, and tender, ministering fingers are soon washing away the blood and applying restoratives to the wounded officer.

Over him bends a gray haired man,

who seems to recognize the handsome features. The officer is breathing more freely, and finally the large dark eyes open to stare vacantly into the face above. "Quiet yourself, my son," says the old man. "You are safe, but can you recognize an old friend?"

The eyes of the wounded man rest for a moment on the kindly face, and with a groan of shame and grief he mutters in a half-choked whisper, "The Abbe Nonnary."

"Aye, son," answered the priest, and with a quick sign he motions to his attendant to withdraw, and he is alone with the dying man.

"Father," the pale soldier whispers, "you know my sin?"

"Aye, my child," the old priest answers: "nor is it too late to repent. Some unknown cause has brought you wounded and dying to the door of God. Ah, it grieved me greatly to hear that you had preferred the honors of the world to the true faith, but repentance can make you once more a friend of the all loving Father."

The stricken man was silent for a long time. A great struggle was going on in his soul; grace was fighting for the mastery. The old man saw it and said nothing. The minutes crept on. Then slowly the young soldier raised himself on his knees and, with a contrition born of newly awakened love, he made a true and fervent confession at the foot of the old priest.

The strange pair, the white haired priest and the handsome, dying officer, talked on through the night. They talked of the deadly assault at the palace; of other and happier days; of the great festivity of the morrow, and of the heaven that seemed so near to both.

Death hovered over the little room, and as the first bright rays of the sun peered in through the frosty panes the head of the poor young officer drooped, the weak hand fell and his noble soul went forth to spend a joyous and a happy eternity in a holier land.

Days passed; there was a great funeral, for all Moscow had turned out to honor the remains of the Count of Bolshoy, captain of the royal guard. Strange stories were told of his death. The people coupled it with the slaying of the Nihilist leaders who had been killed, but for political reasons Russia never knew the real story of his bravery. And of all the people that followed him to his grave, one only, a gray-haired priest, could tell of the brave acts and the brave death of the dead hero.—Catholic Fireside.

#### THE PREMIER OF CANADA.

AN AMERICAN OPINION OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER.

We doubt not our subscribers will read with interest the following article which we take from the Messenger of the Sacred Heart, New York, a monthly magazine published by the Jesuit Fathers. All Canadians know that the words of praise bestowed upon our first commoner are well deserved. One of the very greatest assets any country can have is men whose lives are above reproach, whose aims are honorable, straightforward and sincere, and whose ideals serve to bring prosperity and glory to the country in whose service their lives are being spent.

Though not the first Catholic to reach that position, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is the first French Canadian Premier of Canada. When one considers that only forty-two per cent. of the people of Canada are Catholics, that only about one-third are French, and that the Protestant majority has none too much sympathy for the racial or religious susceptibilities of the minority, one realizes that Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not drift to the Premiership, attain it by chance or a happy turn of fortune's wheel. Born in rural Quebec, with French for his mother tongue, he had to acquire the language through which he has made his impress on the English speaking world. There has been nothing meteoric in his career. His progress towards eminence was slow enough, but his ascendancy has been proportionately enduring. His success is due to native talent, developed by persistent, strenuous though silent endeavor. The result is a character of varied and brilliant talents, a man of mature judgment, dominated and controlled by reason and rectitude and unmarred by the defects and weaknesses that often accompany great abilities. He is the finest product of the French race in America, one of the most picturesque figures in the world's politics to-day, and though his energies have been confined to the somewhat circumscribed political stage of Canada, he has manifested political sagacity and parliamentary abilities that would evoke admiration and constitute a valuable political asset in any nation of free people.

Wilfrid Laurier was born on November 20, 1841, at St. Lin, L'Assomption County, Quebec. St. Lin is a quiet country village on the north shore of St. Lawrence, about thirty miles below Montreal. His father, a land surveyor by profession, was a man of intelligence and energy, of fine stature, and gifted with a personal magnetism that drew to him a large circle of devoted friends. His grandfather was a farmer with a marked inclination for mathematics and technical science. His mother, who was Marcelle Martineau, was a woman of artistic tastes, and refined and delicate temperament. She died when Wilfrid was four years old. His father subsequently married Odeline Eblor, who had been a nurse in the family and to whom Wilfrid and his sister, who died in early girlhood, were much devoted. Though in his youthful environment there was little to stimulate ambition, there was much that is infinitely more valuable in the plastic period of youth, namely, wholesome simplicity, domestic felicity, refined manners, and the deeply religious and strictly moral atmosphere that is characteristic of rural Quebec. When a mere child the future Premier was noted for his good manners, and it is

related that the good women of the village, seeing him pass, would say, "There goes the little gentleman."

His early education was received at the elementary school of his native parish, and when he was eleven years old his father sent him to an English school at New Glasgow, eighteen miles distant. There during leisure hours, in order to learn English by conversing with the customers, he served behind the counter in the store of Mr. Morry, a friend of his father's. When twelve years of age he entered L'Assomption College, where he remained seven years. As a student he was industrious and persevering, and showed a disposition not to accept anything he did not understand. He took little interest in athletics, but he was noted as a fluent speaker in the debating club and a writer of thoughtful and finished compositions. From the first he seems to have exercised remarkable sway over his fellow students, many of whom pre-ferred for him a brilliant career, though possibly in every case realization has exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

The youthful Laurier seems to have been strongly attracted to the law courts and the hustings, and it is said that during his school days he was more than once punished for stealing away from classes to attend the courts or listen to the orators of a political meeting. So for him the choice of a profession was an easy matter. But unfortunately he could no longer depend on the pecuniary assistance of his father and was obliged to shift for himself. Going to Montreal, he became a clerk in a law office, where for doing routine work he earned enough to enable him to take the law courses at McGill University. So industriously he studied that he was able to take the lectures in that language. He was graduated with high honors in 1864 and was made valedictorian of his class. The theme of his address on the occasion was the desirability of closer union of the races in Canada and the fostering of a truly national spirit. To advance this cause he has since given the best energies of his life.

After practising law in Montreal for two years, he was obliged on account of sickness to relinquish his practice and seek rest and health in a change of scene. Shortly afterwards, he located at Arthabaskville, the county seat of Drummond and Arthabask. Here for a time he edited a paper as well as practiced law. But his health continued to decline, he became seriously ill and for a time his life was despaired of. These were perhaps the most sombre days of his life. His slender means were exhausted, and just when he had most need of health and strength, a disease of the lungs threatened to end his career. Gradually, however, health and vigor returned, his law practice became extensive, and the following three or four years, spent in attending courts, in reading and study, and in communion with nature, were, he avers, the happiest of his life. When asked if at that time he had any expectation or ambition to become Premier of his country, he replied that he had not in the least, that he was happy amongst his books, and that his only aim in life was to develop his talents that he might be able to discharge faithfully the duties of any position to which he might be called. This lofty and unselfish conception of life and its duties has been his guiding star throughout, and has kept him from the pitfalls that ambition sets for her insatiable voracity.

In 1868 Mr. Laurier married Zoe Lafontaine, whom he met during his law course in Montreal. The union has been a singularly happy one. Lady Laurier is a worthy helpmeet for her distinguished husband. With unceasing solicitude she has looked after his health, accompanied him on all his journeys, discharged with credit to herself many social duties devolving upon her, and has in no small measure contributed to her husband's success. Having no children of her own, she has lavished her care and attention on the children of others, and delights in helping talented girls to obtain an education in art or music.

In the provincial elections of 1871 Mr. Laurier was the Liberal candidate for Arthabaskville, and though the province went strongly Conservative, he was elected by a large majority. His first speech in the Legislature was a notable success. His party associates were not slow to recognize his remarkable equipment for the public service, and, believing that his natural field was federal politics, they induced him to seek election for the Commons in 1874. He was elected and has since been a member of the House, of which for the past ten years he has been the dominating figure. But the period from the time he entered the House, in 1874, to his accession to the Premiership, in 1896, was a long, unceasing struggle against great odds. This hard school, however, served to develop and refine his character, and made possible a longer supremacy than would probably have followed an earlier and easier victory.

To conceive adequately the difficulties he surmounted in his progress towards the premiership, it is necessary to review briefly the political conditions in Quebec province at the time of Mr. Laurier's entrance into the political arena. Previous to 1840, Canada, which then included only Ontario and Quebec, was ruled by a governor and a council appointed by the British government and in no way responsible to the wishes of the people, as expressed by the legislative assemblies of the two provinces. The revolt against this autocratic system Liberal party, the government being supported by a Tory clique known as the Family Compact, composed of men who were selfishly interested in perpetuating the abuses of the time, and of those who looked askance at all forms of political innovation. The leader of the Liberal movement in Quebec was Papineau, a man of fiery eloquence and extreme principles, one of those men who, in fighting against the heavy yoke of conservatism, are themselves beguiled into advocating the untried and chimerical

theories of radicalism. The agitation, which had its counterpart in Ontario, finally drifted into the insurrection of 1837, insignificant from a military point of view, but very fruitful in that it was followed in 1840 by a concession of truly responsible government, in which the two provinces were united under one parliament. The new regime was accepted by all save a few young radical Liberals, who, on Papineau's return from exile in 1848, rallied round him and drew up a programme which called for out and out republicanism and a number of political, social and religious changes. The exponents of the new doctrines exhibited much of the extravagant enthusiasm and effervescent optimism of the European revolutionaries of the time. As may be expected, the Catholic Bishops warned their flocks against the dangers that lurked in the proposed innovations, and urged their people to desert a party that exhibited such dangerous tendencies. Likewise, the Prot stants of the province, anxious for stability and order, declared against the radical movement. As a result a great majority of the people joined the Conservative party exclusively. In these conditions the Liberal party dwindled to a mere remnant and was regarded as an enemy of Church and State.

But though the conditions of the time justified the people in thus ranging themselves under the banner of the Conservatives, it is not, under a system of representative government, a healthy condition in which the work of government must be entrusted to one political party exclusively. In these conditions the party in power, secure in its tenure of office and knowing that the people have no recourse, tends to become autocratic and unprogressive; while despair of attaining power paralyzes the best efforts of the opposition. Such was the condition of affairs in the native province, when Mr. Laurier entered the lists to fight for the rehabilitation of the Liberal party.

It is a remarkable fact that, though at the beginning of his career he was affiliated with men of extremely radical views, his native strength of character, his keen political intuition, his close study of history and contemporary politics, always kept him from identifying himself with the extreme policies of his associates. To British, rather than to French Liberalism he turned for his models and his inspiration. In England, under Gladstone, the great Liberal party was sweeping away a horde of venerable abuses, without tumult or civic strife; and in this he found proof that true Liberalism, instead of being an enemy of Church and State, was the conservator of religious liberty and political stability. He resolved to do his best to rescue the Liberal party of his province from the discredit into which it had fallen, and to demonstrate in Canada that there was room and need for a party modeled after that of Fox and Gladstone. His ultimate success along these lines is perhaps his best service to his country and his Church. To the Catholics of Canada it has brought full political liberty by relieving the Church of the unwelcome necessity of expressing a preference for either political party; to the country it has brought healthy political conditions by a needed readjustment in the relationship of the opposing parties; and to the Liberals of Quebec it has proved a sure road to an honorable and lasting success.

To accomplish this was not an easy task; but for years he labored assiduously to make known the principles of true Liberalism and to dissipate that feeling of distrust with which the party was regarded. His most important pronouncement on this subject is a speech he delivered in Quebec City in June, 1877. Though he was then only thirty-six years of age, this deliverance was a remarkably able one, and is by many regarded as his best speech. With characteristic courage, he squarely faced the issues then confronting the Liberal party. He censured the extravagances of the early Liberals, which had placed the party in a false position before the people, and he pleaded youthful enthusiasm and inexperience in attenuation of their fault. He declared that under representative government the party system was an instrument of progress, and that if the Catholics of Canada were obliged to range themselves under the Conservative banner, they would lose their legitimate influence in the government of the country. Thus the constitution they had striven for would be a dead letter in their hands. Then, going to the heart of the subject, he pointed out that the Liberal and Conservative ideals were as old as the world, that they existed in every branch of human endeavor, in art, in science, in literature, and so it would always be, for some men are ever attracted by the charm of habit; others by the charm of novelty. In the political sphere the action and reaction of party upon party

would ever constitute the chief agency of progress, and in Canada as elsewhere there was room for improvement and need of an aggressive Liberal party.

This speech attracted much attention and was very favorably commented on throughout the country. But one speech, however able, delivered by a young man, who, after all, might be speaking for himself alone, was not sufficient to change the political complexion of Quebec. No doubt, however, it hastened Mr. Laurier's entrance to the Cabinet, which event took place three months later. The Conservatives, under Sir John Macdonald, had ruled Canada from confederation down to 1874. In that year the Pacific scandal wrought the downfall of the Conservative ministry, and Mr. Mackenzie became the first Liberal Premier of the Dominion, and in 1877 he asked Mr. Laurier to enter his Cabinet as Minister of Inland Revenue. Quebec was still strongly Conservative, the Mackenzie government was unpopular owing to the protection sentiment in the country, and when the new minister returned to his constituents for re-election, as every member of the Canadian Parliament must do when he accepts a portfolio, the Conservatives made a determined effort to compass his defeat. On the platform he was vigorously attacked on the record of the government; in the private canvass he was misrepresented and calumniated. It now seems strange that such a campaign should succeed amongst the people who knew him so well; but when the ballots were counted he was found to be in a minority of twenty-nine. It was perhaps the severest blow that has ever been dealt him throughout his career but he was not discouraged thereby. A few weeks later he found a safe seat in Quebec East, which he has represented ever since. At a reception given him in Montreal a few days later, he declared, with a determination that is characteristic of the man, "I have unfurled the Liberal standard above the ancient citadel of Quebec, and there I will keep it waving." How well he has kept his word to the Conservatives of Quebec answer.

Next year the Mackenzie government met overwhelming defeat, and the Liberals entered the dark shades of opposition, where they were destined to remain for eighteen long years. Some time afterwards Mr. Blake, who is now the Nationalist member for South Longford in the Imperial House of Commons, succeeded Mr. Mackenzie in the leadership. Mr. Blake made assault after assault on the Conservative stronghold, but in vain. At length, grown weary of the unequal strife, he resigned the leadership in 1887. His resignation was deeply regretted by his followers, who were greatly embarrassed to find a suitable successor. In this dilemma Mr. Blake himself suggested Mr. Laurier as the man who, in his opinion, was best fitted for the position. Perhaps no one was more surprised at this than Mr. Laurier. With unaffected sincerity he pleaded against the move to make him the leader of the party. He felt that the burden of leadership would tax his strength, exhaust his slender means and deprive him of that leisure he desired for study and reflection. These being personal considerations, he could perhaps have put them aside, but he believed that his race and religion were insuperable obstacles to the success of the party under his leadership. Again, since the Liberal party derived its greatest strength from Ontario, he felt that the leader should be chosen from that province. But all his objections were overborne by the almost unanimous desire of the caucus. A few, however, believed that, owing to the racial and religious tension of the time, it was unwise from a party standpoint to elevate a French Catholic to the leadership, and the subsequent discussion over the Jesuits' Estates Act gave a momentary color to this contention.

When the Pope suppressed the Jesuit order in 1873, their estates in Canada were escheated to the crown, and had been used subsequently to promote public education in Quebec. By the Act of Confederation these estates became vested in the provincial government and subject to the control of the legislature. Under the old French regime such property would have reverted to the Catholic Church, and on those grounds the Church had always claimed these estates. When the Jesuits were incorporated in the province in 1887, they, too, filed a claim. As these persistent demands prejudiced the estates, which by this time were valued at over one million dollars, Mr. Merrier, the provincial Premier, resolved to settle the question at once. He had passed a bill giving the Jesuits \$400,000 in settlement of their claim. This sum was to be deposited till the action and reaction of party upon party

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX.

#### Educational.

#### Assumption College

SARASOTA, ONT.  
THE STUDIES EMPHATICALLY THE CLASSICAL AND COMMERCIAL COURSES. Terms, including all ordinary expenses, \$150 per annum. For full particulars apply to REV. REV. H. McBRIDE, C.S.B.

#### FARMING MADE PROFITABLE

by taking a course of instruction at the

#### NORTH BRITISH Business College

Owen Sound, Ont.  
and obtaining a knowledge of book-keeping and kindred subjects. Three complete and thorough courses of study—Business, Shorthand and Typewriting, and Preparation. Students admitted at any time. Winter term commences Wednesday, Jan. 2nd, 1907.

Full particulars sent to any address free of charge.

C. A. FLEMING, Principal.

#### St. Jerome's College

BERLIN, ONT.

Commercial Course

Latest Business College Features.

High School Course

Preparation for Matriculation and Professional Studies.

College or Arts Course

Preparation for Degrees and Seminaries.

Natural Science Course

Thoroughly equipped experimental Laboratories.

Critical English literature receives special attention.

First-class board and tuition only \$150.00 per annum. Send for catalogue giving full particulars.

REV. A. L. ZINGER, C. R., PRES.

WINTER TERM OPENS JAN. 2nd.

#### CENTRAL Business College

STRAFFORD, ONT.

This school is recognized to be one of the leading Commercial Schools in Ontario. Our graduates are in demand as Business College teachers and as office assistants. Write for free catalogue.

ELLIOTT & McLACHLAN, Principals.

**THE GLOBE FURNITURE CO. LTD.**  
WILKINSON, ONT.  
FURNITURE, CARPETS, CURTAINS, BEDDING, LINENS, ETC.  
CASH PRICES. CREDIT ADVANTAGEOUS.  
PHONE 100. C. R. 100. C. R. 100.

**BELLS**  
CHURCH BELL FOUNDRY CO., BALTIMORE, Md., U.S.A.  
GENUINE BELL TONGUE  
CHIME, ETC. CATALOGUE PRICES FREE

**Church Bells**  
CHURCH BELL FOUNDRY CO., BALTIMORE, Md., U.S.A.  
GENUINE BELL TONGUE  
CHIME, ETC. CATALOGUE PRICES FREE

**Just Out**  
**The Catholic Confessional**  
and the Sacrament of Penance.  
By Rev. Albert McKeon, S. T. L.  
15 cents post-paid  
CATHOLIC RECORD, LONDON, CANADA

**JUST READY!**  
Better than Ever. Colored Frontispiece.  
**CATHOLIC HOME**  
**ANNUAL**  
For 1907

Profusely & beautifully illustrated  
Price 25 Cents

CONTENTS:  
His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons—Reminiscences of the Cathedral of Baltimore. Illustrated.

Katherine Tynan—Queen's Rose. A Poem.  
Marion Ames Taggart—The Island Priest. A charming story.

Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy—The Blessed Virgin in Legend. Illustrated.

Jerome Harte—in the Niche at the Left. A story.

P. G. Smyth—A Breath of Irish Air. A graphic description of interesting spots in Ireland. Illustrated.

Grace Keon—The Blessing of St. Michael. A touching story in the author's best style.

Rev. Martin S. Brennan, H. M. So. D.—What Catholics Have Done for the World. Worth the attention of every Catholic.

Mary T. Waygate—Adrift. The story of a wanderer's soul.

Rev. W. S. Kent, O. S. C.—The Suffering of Souls in Purgatory. Illustrated.

Anna T. Sadlier—in the Dwelling of the Witch. A tale of the days of persecution.

The Blessed Julie Billiart. Profusely illustrated.

Maud Regan—A Hole in His Pocket. The story of a devoted priest.  
Some Notable Events of the Year 1905-1906. Illustrated.

Every Child Should Have its Own Copy.  
**Little Folks' Annual**  
For 1907  
Stories and Pretty Pictures  
Price 10 Cents  
**Catholic Record,**  
London, Canada

Girlhood and Scott's Emulsion are linked together.

The girl who takes Scott's Emulsion has plenty of rich, red blood; she is plump, active and energetic.

The reason is that at a period when a girl's digestion is weak, Scott's Emulsion provides her with powerful nourishment in easily digested form.

It is a food that builds and keeps up a girl's strength.

ALL DRUGGISTS: 50c. AND \$1.00.

