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A FREAK.

The Rev. Thos. Harrison, who was known some years ago as "the Boy Preacher," and who is sometimes still called by this name, although he is now of mature age, makes use of some novel methods of gathering a crowd to attend his revival meetings.

CHURCH PROGRESS.

The great progress made by the Church in all parts of Europe is well illustrated by the change which is taking place in Switzerland in favor of the Catholic religion.

TRYING ANOTHER FOLD.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been recently endeavoring to negotiate terms of intercommunion with the schismatics of the East, usually known as "the Greek Church."

ANOTHER CHAPTER TO THE "DAYS OF AULD LANG SYNE."

It appears likely that the heresy trial of the Reverend John Watson, known in literature as Ian MacLaren, will take place at the next meeting of the London Presbyterian Synod, though it was supposed that the matter had been indefinitely postponed.

CHURCH PROGRESS IN QUEBEC.

We have several times had occasion to point out that the boasts uttered from time to time by divers ministers of several denominations, to the effect that their sects are achieving great success in converting the people of the Province of Quebec, and especially the French Canadians, are but empty vapourings.

THAT FOREIGN ELEMENT.

In view of the fact that the preachers and the anti-Catholic press of the United States are always endeavoring to make it appear that the foreign population is responsible for most of the crimes which are committed in the country, it is interesting to note that in the new State of Washington, which is on the high road to the newly discovered gold fields of Alaska, gambling houses and drinking saloons of most elaborate character have been opened in several cities to entice prospectors and those who are returning with fortunes from the gold country to put their earnings into peril in these establishments.

THE SISTERS AND THE WAR.

The Sisters of Charity of New York State have announced that they will be ready to send three hundred nurses to the seat of war to take care of the sick and wounded. The Mother Superior of the Hospital of Mount St. Vincent on the Hudson says:

"Nursing the sick and wounded is the first duty of our order. All of our Sisters, except the young novices, are trained nurses, and many of them hold diplomas as physicians. We have a regular school of medicine attached to Mount St. Vincent academy. One of the first requirements is that each nurse must have hospital experience. After they have acquired this experience they are assigned to other duties which fit them for the whole round of duties which may fall to their hands. Our system of training is such as to give them some experience with every kind of disease."

This is practical charity, at the sight of which the maligners of these devoted ladies, who are feted and otherwise encouraged by bigots, should hang their heads in shame.

The Lady Superior of the Convent of Mary Immaculate at Key West has also offered to the Government the convent and the school buildings to be used for an hospital, and the Sisters will act as nurses. Admiral Sampson, Commander in chief of the Navy, has accepted the offer, expressing his thanks for this "most generous and patriotic tender."

IT WAS BUT A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING.

The Sacred Heart Review mentions that one Dr. Wales, who desired to show that the Apalists of the United States are true patriots, sent to the editor of that paper a newspaper clipping which states that one thousand Apalists of Pennsylvania have volunteered to serve their country in the event of war being declared. The Review then invites the doctor to scan the list of those who were blown up on the battleship Maine, a large percentage of whom were Catholic communicants, much larger than the Catholic percentage of population. Thereupon the Haverhill Gazette remarks that the crew of any of the United States battleships, whether Protestants or Catholics, would be ready to lay down their lives for their country, but it adds that the large percentage of Catholics who are actually serving their country should silence forever the cowardly aspersions which have been made (by the bigots) against our Catholic fellow-countrymen. It adds that the heroic conduct of the Catholic chaplain who attended the dying sailors of the Maine was described by the officers as being "beyond praise." We are glad to notice that the Government has rewarded the Rev. Chaplain Chidwick by raising his rank to that of a lieutenant in the navy.

CHURCH PROGRESS IN QUEBEC.

We have several times had occasion to point out that the boasts uttered from time to time by divers ministers of several denominations, to the effect that their sects are achieving great success in converting the people of the Province of Quebec, and especially the French Canadians, are but empty vapourings. We have again cause to call the attention of our readers to this matter.

The Quebec Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches held its regular annual meeting in Montreal on Tuesday the 12th ult., at which a paper was read by the Rev. F. Day, of Sherbrooke, treating of the progress of Congregationalism in that province. Considerable research was manifestly bestowed upon the preparation of this paper, which was de-

clared by the ministers present to be a very valuable document, on account of the copious statistics it gave; and one of the ministers present, the Rev. W. T. Gunn, said that the progress of Congregationalism has been even greater than Mr. Day's statistics would indicate.

The statement of the Rev. Mr. Day quoted below, we must say, is certainly somewhat encouraging to Congregationalists, if it be strictly true, but there is good reason to believe that the favorable figures are greatly exaggerated, though perhaps not designedly so, on the Rev. Mr. Day's part. On the other hand, while it is certain that Congregationalists have really increased more rapidly than the general population of Quebec, it has been at the cost of the other Protestant denominations, and not of the Catholic Church. The reason for this is probably to be found in the fact that the somewhat elastic and semi-Latitudinarian constitution of Congregationalism gives more freedom for the rejection of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity than is permitted by the other denominations, and this fact makes Congregationalism more attractive than the other forms of Protestantism. Perhaps, also, there have been some local influxes of Congregationalists, which in so small a denomination as the Congregational is in Quebec would have considerable effect in raising the percentage of increase.

The Rev. Mr. Day makes the following statement:

"There was a gain in membership in the past ten years of 38 per cent.; in the Sunday schools of 51 per cent., an advance in the foreign missionary contributions of 18 per cent., college contributions of 30 per cent., and a total increase of all contributions of 3 per cent."

It is worthy of remark that notwithstanding the natural increase in the wealth and prosperity of the province of Quebec, the total increase of all contributions for denominational purposes should be but 3 per cent., while the increase in membership is claimed to have been 38 per cent. This, surely, gives room for the suspicion that the estimated increase of 38 per cent is imaginary, or is at least founded upon a very doubtful foundation.

There are no public statistics to show what the actual increase of Congregationalism has been during the last ten years; but the official censuses of the Dominion show what the increase was during the ten years between 1881 and 1891.

In 1881 there were 4,294 Congregationalists in Quebec, and in 1891 there were 5,244, the increase being 950 persons. This put into the form of a percentage, certainly appears to be a remarkably large increase, being 22.1 per cent., not 38 as stated by Mr. Day for his decade; but as we have already said, the influx of a very few persons would make a very showy percentage in so small a denomination.

On the other hand, there is very good reason to believe that whatever may have been the increase among the Congregationalists, independently of immigration and natural increase, it was from among the other Protestant denominations that the increase by accessions or conversions took place, and not from the Catholic body.

The total increase of population in Quebec during the decade was 9.5 per cent. As nearly the whole population of the province is Catholic, the Catholic increase could not be either very much greater or very much less than the same percentage. It was really 10.3 per cent., being considerably over the percentage of increase of the whole population.

The non-Catholic population increased during the same period from 1883-309 to 196,566, being an increase of 8,257. From this number we must deduct the increase of 1,714 Jews and 19 Pagans, so that the actual increase of the Protestant population was only 6,524, being only 3.3 per cent., the increase of the Congregationalists being over one-seventh of the entire Protestant increase. This makes it clear that the large Congregational percentage does not indicate any gain from the Catholic body, but rather from the other Protestant denominations, which may or may not be the case.

It is evident from these official figures that the Catholics of Quebec, French and Irish, though they are not flaunting their steady progress, nor boasting of the accessions to their ranks by conversions, are nevertheless holding more than their own in that province, and that the Catholic Church is becoming more and more the religion of Quebec, notwithstanding the bragadoceio we have so frequently read in some of the Protestant religious

papers to the effect that the French Evangelization societies of the Presbyterians and others are rapidly bringing over the French-Canadians to Protestantism. For these boasts there is absolutely no foundation.

THE MARYLAND ACT OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

The Legislature of the State of Maryland has passed a measure providing for the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Maryland Act of Religious Toleration. This Act was passed in 1649, and the celebration will take place on 21st April, 1899, at Annapolis, which city dates its origin from two years earlier than when the Act of Toleration was passed. Baltimore and other cities and counties of the State are invited to take part in the celebration.

The charter under which Maryland was settled was given by Charles I. to Cecilus Calvert, Lord Baltimore, as Lord Proprietary, in 1632. The territory was named Terra Mariae or Mary's Land, in honor of Henrietta Maria, the Queen of Charles I.

The expedition consisted of about two hundred gentlemen of fortune who were nearly all Catholics, seeking in the New World a refuge from the oppressive penal laws under which they were suffering in their native land.

In 1634 they commenced their settlement within the present county of St. Mary's, near the entrance of the Potomac into Chesapeake Bay. Leonard Calvert, the brother of Lord Baltimore, became the first Governor.

The settlers at once instituted a representative form of Government, in obedience to the terms of their charter, and the first Assembly met in 1635.

In 1642 a company of Puritans, driven from Virginia for not conforming to the Church of England, there established by law, settled at Annapolis, which then was named Providence. They refused to recognize the existing Government, and from 1645 till 1647 there was a contest for supremacy, which resulted in the establishment of the right of the proprietary, Lord Baltimore.

In 1649 the Assembly passed the famous Act of Toleration, granting liberty of conscience to all Christians, and forbidding that any one should be molested or should suffer any penalty on account of the profession of any Christian creed. Catholic Maryland was thus the first State which, to its lasting honor, passed a general Act of Toleration.

The Puritans were not satisfied with this state of affairs, and their settlement was erected into a distinct county, with the hope of making them contented, but on the overthrow of Charles I. they insisted on the recognition of the new order of things in England, while the Catholic settlement and the authorities of the colony recognized Charles II. as king.

In 1652 the Puritans possessed a majority in the Assembly and endeavored to overthrow Lord Baltimore's authority, and to reverse all the legislation which had been enacted under him, including the Act of Toleration. A decisive battle was fought between the two parties, in which the Puritans were victorious, and four of the captives taken were executed, among these being Governor Stone.

The authority of Lord Baltimore was re-established three years later, and it remained with the Calvert family till it was assumed by William III. in 1688. In 1714, however, the Calvert family were restored to their hereditary rights, which they retained down to 1774, when the proprietary Government became practically transferred to a convention of the people.

While religious toleration thus flourished in Maryland, Puritans continued to be persecuted in Virginia, and the Puritans of New England relentlessly punished with the pillory or the stocks, and even with capital punishment, all who did not accept their form of belief, whether Catholics, Quakers, or Episcopalians.

A GRATIFYING CHANGE OF POLICY.

The policy of the United States Government has recently undergone a change for the better in regard to its treatment of Catholics. The Senate has approved of a bill which was recommended by its Committee on Indian affairs, whereby 10 per cent. has been appropriated in addition to the sums already allotted for the maintenance of the contract schools established for the education of Indian children in the far West.

management of several religious denominations, but as the majority of the Christian Indians are Catholics, the policy of substituting Protestant schools, under the guise of non-sectarianism, for the contract schools, bore most hardly upon the Catholic schools under the care of the Jesuits and other missionary religious orders. This policy was inaugurated by President Harrison, who sent two Protestant ministers to the West to put it into effect. These Indian Commissioners resigned when President Cleveland was elected, but the policy was not immediately reversed. It is gratifying to observe now that even at the moment when large appropriations are being devoted to preparations for war on a large scale, the peaceful needs of the country are not being neglected, and that the schools which were admittedly doing the best work in the civilization of the aborigines are being again encouraged by the Government.

In other matters greater liberality is also shown. It will be remembered that last summer Mr. McKenna, as legal adviser of President McKinley's Cabinet, pronounced that a site could not be allotted for the erection of a Catholic chapel at West Point, for the use of the Catholic cadets and employees of that military institution. This decision was felt to be unjust, especially as there are two Protestant chapels attached to the school, and it was the general opinion that, in making his decision, Mr. McKenna was influenced by political exigencies, and this is now practically admitted by Congress to have been the case, as a special bill has been passed by that body to allow the Catholics to erect the desired chapel. They will do this at their own expense, as was the intention from the beginning.

These changes of policy are the more remarkable as they come under a Republican majority in Congress, and the Republicans were the party most strongly worked upon by the A. P. A., that the objects of this association might be attained. No doubt the total collapse of Apalism has convinced the Republicans that such societies cannot maintain their influence amid an intelligent population like that of the United States.

THE MONTH OF MARY.

The month of May has been selected by the Church as being peculiarly suitable for the cultivation of a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God made man, and has therefore obtained the name of the month of Mary.

In this month the earth puts on its beautiful attire of spring, replacing the desolation which the winter has brought upon all vegetation, and all nature now wears a joyful appearance. The flowers are in bloom, giving us the pleasures of beauty, and the fruits of the earth are beginning their growth, whereby we shall soon obtain the plentiful food which they will give for our nourishment and comfort. All this is typical of the happiness brought to the world by Mary.

For four thousand years before Christ was born of Mary, the world was in the valley of the shadow of death, for by the sin of our first parents we were made children of wrath, having lost all right to heaven, and it is only through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that our inheritance of eternal happiness, for which Almighty God created the human race, can be regained.

His birth by His mother Mary accomplished the mystery of His Incarnation. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us," and by dwelling among men on earth Jesus came to the day of His sufferings and death, whereby our Redemption from sin and our delivery from the power of the devil were accomplished: for the Apostle St. Paul tells us, in Romans v., 20, that where sin abounded grace abounded much more. The effects of sin were cancelled by what Christ did for our salvation, and as sin hath reigned unto our death, so doth grace reign to our eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This wonderful resurrection of the human race from sin and everlasting death is beautifully typified by the general restoration of life which takes place in the month of May, when all nature throws off the garb of wintry death and desolation to put on life and beauty and vigor. The month of May is truly a month of resurrection.

But it may be asked here: "Is this a good reason why this joyous month should be specially dedicated to Mary, and not rather to her Divine Son?"

To this we answer, that so intimate is the connection between the Son and the mother that Mary was an active

participator in the sublime work of our Redemption, and when we honor her for her share in that work we honor also her Son.

Catholics do not forget to pay due homage to Jesus, and to devote a large portion of the year to commemorate the sacred mysteries of which He is the Author in His work as our Redeemer. We do penance by the fasts, and abstinences of the year, to commemorate the afflictions of our Lord, and Saviour, and to obtain that they may be applied to our souls for the forgiveness of our sins. Therefore do we fast during the seasons of Lent and Advent, and on other fasting days, and we perform the penance of abstinence on every Friday. Every Sunday of the year is kept holy in memory of Christ's triumphant Resurrection from the dead whereby the mystery of Redemption was made complete, and there are many other festivals kept to honor Jesus directly. But from the very fact that the Son is worthy of divine honor, the mother is also worthy of honor greater than what is due to any other created being; for as St. Gregory the Great said: "Imagine what it is to be the Son of God, and you can have some conception of what it is to be His mother. His excellence above all things will make us understand the mother's excellence also."

This joining together of the mother and the Son as co-operators in the work of our redemption is authorized by reason and Holy Scripture. To show this we need only quote the words of a few passages of the sacred volume.

St. Paul says in Galatians iv, 4: "When the fulness of time was come, (for our redemption), God sent forth His Son made of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law."

The Blessed Virgin is also referred to in the first promise of a Redeemer when God said: "I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. She shall bruise thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. iii., 15.) And when the announcement was made to her by the Angel Gabriel that she should become the Mother of the Son of the Most High, the Incarnation of Jesus was made to depend upon her consent, which was given in the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Be it done to me according to thy word."

The month of May is, therefore, most appropriately dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and should be celebrated by all with great devotion, and with confidence that she will assist us by her efficacious prayers offered for us to her beloved Son.

DISINTEGRATION IN PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS.

The Presbyterians of New York are again troubled over the erratic teaching of one of their prominent clergymen, the Rev. Dr. McGiffert, who maintains that Christ did not intend the Lord's supper to be a permanent institution in His Church, or a sacrament in the sense in which it is understood by Protestants generally. He says that it was merely a transitory symbol of the crucifixion.

This teaching is considered to be entirely at variance with the Westminster Confession and the catechism of the Presbyterian Church, which hold that "They who worthily communicate feed upon Christ's body and blood to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, have their union and communion with Him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other as members of the same mystical body."

The rigidly orthodox Presbyterians are clamoring for the Doctor's trial by the Presbytery for heretical teaching, and one would suppose that if he persists in his refusal to accept the teachings of his church, he should withdraw from it, but there is another party, and with this party the Independent, the principal organ of Presbyterianism, sides, who say that the Church has already undergone trouble enough through its heresy trials, and that it would be most imprudent to have a new one now. They consider it better, therefore, to leave Dr. McGiffert alone, and it seems probable that their advice will be followed.

If it be true that every believer has the right to be his own interpreter of the Bible, it is right that Dr. McGiffert should be allowed to interpret the Bible in his own fashion, but this rule of conduct is not usually applied by Presbyterians except to assert it as the sole guide to faith when they are in controversy with Catholics. It is a rule of faith