

## THE LATE DR. DAWSON.

Recollections of a Learned and Zealous Priest.

A MAN OF WIDE EXPERIENCE.

Mr. Henry J. Morgan has issued a pamphlet in which he pays loving tribute to the memory of the late Very Rev. Aeneas Dawson, V.G., of Ottawa whose death occurred recently. Father Dawson was one of the best known priests in Eastern Ontario, a man of deep learning and decided literary tastes. In his history of the Catholics of Scotland he gave to the literature of the Church a work long desired.



Father Dawson was born at New Haven, Banffshire, Scotland, July 30th, 1810. His early ecclesiastical studies were made at the Episcopal seminary of Paris. Afterwards he studied at Douai, and at St. Mary's College, Blairs, Scotland. He came to Canada in 1854, at the invitation of Bishop Macdonell. His name has ever since been connected with the history of Ottawa. In 1885 Bishop Macdonell of Alexandria made him honorary Vicar-General of that diocese on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his priesthood. We append a few of Mr. Morgan's interesting reminiscences:

I think I first heard of Father Dawson in 1863-4, when preparing for publication my *Bibliotheca Canadensis*. In that work will be found an account of his various literary undertakings from the time when as a very young man he made his first essay as a writer. I was then living in Quebec, but before the appearance of the book, being then as now, a member of the Civil Service, I came to Ottawa, on the removal thither of the seat of government, and on that occasion had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Dawson for the first time. It was in the autumn of 1865, and the friendship which was then formed between us, he, a man well advanced in years, and I but just come of age, remained firm and unbroken until the end.

Father Dawson made everyone at home, and was always much in request. He, as I have remarked, was a fine scholar, had read largely and diligently in general literature, and, in addition, kept himself remarkably well informed on all that was transpiring in our daily world. He possessed also, what is seldom seen in one from the land of Macallum More, a bright and ready wit, which was rarely if ever found to be out of place; but what, in my opinion, gave him so firm a hold on the affections of men was his broadminded, liberal, Catholic spirit, so free from all manner of bigotry and intolerance. Such a man

could not fail of impressing his personality most particularly upon the mind and heart of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, then in the zenith of his fame, whose especial mission in Canada seems to have been the cultivation of a spirit of unity and brotherhood among all creeds and nationalities. The poet statesman was at this period a member of the government, and in the prosecution of his duties, came frequently to Ottawa. He formed a feeling of the deepest regard and friendship for Father Dawson, and when in town would have him constantly near him, along with others of similar worth and merit. I recall an incident at the delivery of one of his lectures in Ottawa, I think it was the last one of a delightful series given by him in illustration of public opinion, life and character, in the old Theatre, Wellington street, not long before his barbarous assassination. Mr. McGee had on either side of him, on the stage, Venerable Archdeacon Lauder, rector of Christ Church, and our departed friend, Dr. Dawson. Rising at the commencement of the proceedings, with a merry twinkle in his eye, he invited attention to the strength of his support. "With Father Dawson on one side of me and Father Lauder on the other, I think," said he, "Church and State will be found to be well represented here on this occasion!"

We took many pleasant strolls together, and I may here remark, as an evidence of his nice sense of delicacy, that never during the entire period of our long and close acquaintance, did he at any time broach in conversation any matter of a controversial religious character, or seek in way to influence my judgment in a religious way. He knew that I belonged to another Church, and like the true gentleman that he was, respected my individual convictions. Sometimes, however, I questioned him, and I remember on one occasion asking him to describe Heaven. His reply was characteristic of the purity and simplicity of his nature. "To my mind," he said, "Heaven is like a beautiful garden, full of lovely plants and flowers, and where we walk about and hold converse with saints and angels, and all is endless peace and joy."

The marked respect accorded to him was the tribute offered by old and young to one of his years, position and merit. On one occasion Principal Grant was lecturing in Ottawa. He was in the midst of one of the finest passages in his address, when the door opened and there passed slowly up the centre aisle a bent and venerable figure. It was Father Dawson, come out in the midst of a violent snow storm to lend encouragement by his presence to the cause in hand. The lecturer, recognizing the new-comer, instantly stopped, and walking half-way down the hall to meet him, cried out as he grasped his outstretched hand: "Father Dawson I am proud to welcome you here; you have paid us a great compliment in coming out on such an inclement night." The good priest was led in triumph to a post of honor on the stage, but so loud and frequent was the applause, that it was some considerable time before the lecturer was allowed to proceed by the audience. I recall many similar acts of attention. Regularly each summer the late Senator Price would forward to him several choice salmon, the first fruits of the fishing season; and then, how thoughtful and full of courtesy it was of Lord Stanley and Lord Aberdeen never to allow the venerable gentleman to walk any portion of the way on returning to town from Rideau Hall. On these occasions the viceregal carriage or sleigh would be brought into requisition for his benefit, and an A.D.C. or orderly be despatched to see him safely to his quiet lodgings in the Upper Town.

## RIGHTS OF THE HOLY SEE

The Exile of the Popes to Avignon Recalled.

LEO XIII. SPEAKS OF HIS INJURIES.

Among the letters received by the Holy Father in the Christmas Season was one from the Archbishop of Avignon. Some references were made to the residence of the Popes in that city during periods of distress and persecution. To this letter a reply was sent which shows that despite the rumored cessation of hostility on the part of the Italian Government the Sovereign head of the church is still subjected to injuries and offences against his liberties and rights.

To Our Venerable Brother Angel, Archbishop of Avignon, Leo, XIII. Pope.

VENERABLE BROTHER—HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BLESSING

We have received during the Christmas Feasts your new and valuable proof of affection towards the See of the blessed Peter and towards us. The acts of which you speak in your letter, and which we have undertaken during the course of Our Apostolic Ministry, increase our gratitude to God, by whose support and aid it has been granted us to do them, such as they are. As to the regrets which you express concerning the conditions in which the Roman Pontificate at present finds itself, and the wishes which you entertain that it may enjoy full liberty, they are expressed in such piety and prudence as is conformable to Our hopes. With what impatience and for how long a time did not the Roman Church deplore the absence of her Pontiff, who had, by the evils of those days, been compelled to seek a refuge in your city! What joy and what profit, not only for her, but for the common good, when at length Divine Providence led him back to her!

In truth, the days through which the Church is now passing bear a great likeness to those days, since now as then, injuries and offences have been heaped upon the liberty, rights, and honour due to her Sovereign head. It, therefore, behoves us to work with confidence, and to unite together in addressing prayer to God. Our trust in the power of the Virginal Mother of God, of which you speak, grows day by day. We hope that she, in her goodness, will console the Church, and adorn her with new triumphs, which will be equally advantageous to the good of society at large.

In these thoughts, and with these hopes, We beg of God in return to shower all blessings upon you, and among these blessings We place in the first rank that of the complete restoration of your health, which is entirely devoted to the welfare of your flock.

As a pledge of these favors We willingly bestow upon you the Apostolic Blessing, as also upon your clergy, the religious families under your care, and all your people.

Given at St. Peter's Rome, December 26, 1904, in the 17th year of our Pontificate.

LEO XIII. POPE.

Of all kinds of credulity, the most obstinate is that of party spirit; of men, who, being numbered, they know not why, in any party resign the use of their eyes and ears and resolve to believe nothing that does not favor those whom they profess to follow.—Johnson.

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