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THURSDAY, FEB. 6TH, 1908.

CANDLEMAS.

The depth and beauty of the symbolism of the Church appear at their best in the ceremony which gives its name to Candlemas Day. It has been said of the greatest of British political philosophers that his supremacy rests principally in his power of associating transient questions with eternal truths. Other masters of political writing might make a more successful appeal for the moment, but their productions had no further value. But long after the crisis which evoked them passed away Edmund Burke's pamphlets are treasured as veritable mines of statesmanlike penetration. He made the things of a day convey lessons for succeeding ages. In an immeasurably higher degree this is true of the Church. She takes the common things of life and makes them henceforth stand for the grandest religious truths and the most salutary moral lessons. Nothing has entered more extensively into human use from the earliest times than the candle in its various forms. Man alone seeks to prolong the day by artificial aid. After daylight died, the star beam of the candle enabled him to continue the work which darkness had interrupted and especially to enjoy the society of his family. How welcome particularly in sickness was that candle beam which enabled him to watch by and relieve the sufferer. Hence, light because of its purity, its beauty, its tender associations, has been a sacred thing, the emblem of all that is bright and good, to mankind from the beginning. This feeling went amongst idolatrous nations to the length of adoration. From being a type of the Divinity light became confounded with its Creator, and the sun and moon and stars were made objects of divine honor.

The Church on Candlemas Day brings light back to the service of its Creator. "O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God," thus the blessing of candles begins, "Who didst create all things from nothing and by the labor of bees, at Thy command, hast brought this liquid to the perfection of wax. . . we humbly beseech Thee that by the invocation of Thy most holy name and by the intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, whose festival we this day devoutly celebrate, and the prayers of all for the service of men and for the health of their bodies and souls. . . and wouldst hear from Thy holy heaven and from the Throne of Thy Majesty the voice of this Thy people, who desire reverently to bear them in their hands and to praise Thee in song." In these words the Church brings light back to its original purpose from which it was perverted by sin and makes it once more what it was in Eden's sinless bowers, the herald of God's wisdom and beauty and purity and omnipotence.

But light has for us tenderer associations. We admire the splendor of the sun, but it dazzles us. But when that same light is dealt out to us in the candle's gentle beam it becomes our companion and the centre of our family reunions. So the great truth of God's creative majesty, of His infinite power, of His all-searching presence overwhelmed man, inspired fear rather than love until Jesus Christ, His Eternal Son, veiling His glory in our humanity, came into our midst as a candle stands in the midst of the household, became our Companion, was consumed for us, giving just light enough to enable us to recognize His divinity without dazzling us, and reserving the revelation of the full splendor of His God-head for the life to come. With what exquisite beauty and depth and suggestiveness all this is set forth in the following prayer with which we will conclude:

O Lord Jesus Christ, the true Light that enlighteneth every man who cometh into this world, pour forth Thy blessing upon these candles and sanctify them with the light of Thy grace, and mercifully grant that as these lights enkindled with visible fire, dispel the darkness of night, so our hearts illumined by invisible fire, that is, by the brightness of the Holy Ghost, may be free from the blindness of every vice; that the eye of our minds being purified, we may discern those things which are pleasing to Thee and profitable to our salvation, so that after the darksome perils of

this world we may be found worthy to arrive at the light that never faileth, through Thee, Christ Jesus, Saviour of the world.

SENSATIONALISM MASQUERADING AS CHARITY.

In our last issue we dealt with the problem of the unemployed and the steps to be taken to relieve the present distress and prevent its recurrence. In that article we certainly did not fail to evince sympathy and urge upon all the duty of coming to the rescue of those in need. We pointed out that this should be done as far as possible in a manner which would safeguard the self-respect of those aided, namely, by providing work. Hence we cannot be accused of callousness, or any desire to discourage generosity, when we enter an energetic protest against some of the methods resorted to for the purposes of booming newspaper funds.

Our newspapers deserve the highest praise for the efforts they have made to make our charitably disposed citizens aware of the extent and severity of the destitution in our midst. And the response their appeals have evoked is equally creditable. But even the sacred cause of charity does not justify exaggerations of the wild character published a few days ago in big capitals by one of our papers. The horror-stricken readers of this journal read with a shudder that 100 babies had perished of hunger during the past month! This announcement had the desired effect of creating consternation and giving a tremendous boom to a babies' relief fund. But how wildly exaggerated it was has just been revealed by the prosaic statistics of the Medical Health Office. These show that the total infant mortality for January, the severest month so far, has been just 117, a little more than the number assigned to starvation alone in the screaming announcement referred to. The unemotional statistician gives particulars of the cause of death in every case, and shows that there is practically no ground for the starvation cry.

The paper which raised this cry did so, no doubt, in good faith and with the best intentions. It received its information from what it deemed a reliable source. This source ought now to be taken to task and made to apologize for a statement so wildly untrue and calculated to injure the reputation of our city. It is hard to get away from the fact that those who read of infants dying of starvation by the hundred in the course of one month in Toronto, will come to the conclusion that the situation is desperate there, and that the bottom must have fallen out of things. The credit and standing of the city will thus be injuriously affected. Furthermore the cause of charity is seriously prejudiced when people find that their sympathies were worked on by statements which had no foundation in fact.

Sensationalism is a bad thing in any department, above all in the sphere of charity. The real state of affairs is hard enough. The citizens are awake to their duty. And a by no means unimportant feature of that duty is to prevent the evils of wildly exaggerated statements.

RELIGION IN FAMILIAR CONVERSATION.

Twice we have discussed the sentiments expressed some time ago in one of our Toronto papers under this heading. First, we endeavored to show that prominence in familiar conversation was not a sure test of the position such a subject as religion held in popular estimation. Next, we discussed the common but miserably shallow saying that provided a man's life be right, his creed matters not. Now we take up a third and final phase of the article under discussion, namely, that decay of faith has not led to any corresponding decay of morality. "The old days were not better than these; they were to the day of the present as the night which has passed. There is infinitely less of drunkenness than there was forty years ago; there is less of strife amongst neighbors; relations between employers and employed were never on a better footing; the halt, the lame, and the blind, who once wandered by the wayside, are now comfortably housed; wars between nations, instead of being part of the normal condition of things, are rapidly passing along the way over which the private duel has already passed."

There is much that is incorrect and more that is decidedly shallow in this paragraph. It is not true to say that present conditions are to the past as day is to night. The days in which the Catholic Church attained the zenith of her power in England were, according to Thorold Rogers, the golden age of the workingman in that country. Here is how the arch-Socialist Hyndman describes the conditions which then prevailed: "The books of the conventual establishments show that a large portion of the income derived from their lands was spent by the monks in entertaining strangers, in relieving beggars, in attending the sick, and in other good works." This does not very well bear out the assertion that the halt, the lame, and the blind were in times past left to wander by the wayside. The same author goes on to say: "The abbots and priors were the best landlords in England, and as long as the Church held its lands and its power permanent pauperism was unknown.

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The general employment which, as landlords resident amongst the people, they afforded—in addition to their action as public alms-givers, teachers, doctors, and nurses—shows what useful people many of these much-abused monks and nuns really were. The "drones" who slept away their lives in comfort and ease at the expense of other men's labor were no more ignorant and superstitious than a Church of England parson or a Wesleyan preacher, and were less dependent on the labor of their fellows than Baptist orators or Radical capitalists of to-day. (H. H. Hyndman, The Historical Basis, pages 16-19).

This description of the harmony which prevailed between employer and employee in the palmy days of the Church seems to be something of an improvement on present-day conditions in England, when labor has been driven by the apathy of the well-to-do and by the grind of poverty to raise the flag of Socialism. O yes! we have a wonderful time—only 75,000 maimed for life and 5,000 killed in one year on United States railways, an appalling amount of suicides, and so on! This shows, of course, that if there be a decay of faith, everything else is going on beautifully. We have already extended our article to sufficient length and will deal with the boast that the present is to the past as day is to night, in our next number.

THE TORONTO BIBLE CONFERENCE.

The much-heralded and widely advertised Bible Conference which met recently in Toronto, has come and gone, leaving behind it a number of big letter advertisements on the bill boards and another proof of the hopeless divisions and utter powerlessness of Protestantism to meet present conditions. Speakers of continental reputation were heralded as speakers. And yet from the fullest newspaper reports we failed to catch one illuminating idea in the whole series of addresses. Modern Biblical criticism seemed to be the one subject under discussion. And even on this topic no attempt was made, as far as reports, the correctness of which was vouched for, go, to give a clear definition of the nature, province and limits of legitimate as distinguished from wanton criticism. The burning questions of authenticity, inspiration, interpretation and such like, were left untouched. The main business transacted was an onslaught on those critics who accept in its fullest sense and carry to its logical conclusion the fundamental Protestant principle of Private Judgment. And appropriately enough, this onslaught evoked the following comment from the pastor of the most wealthy Methodist congregation in Toronto: "In common I am sure, with many of your readers," he writes to the Globe, "I have seen with pain and humiliation the report in this morning's Globe of yesterday's proceedings at the Bible League Conference. It is said that this is the first conference which the League has held in Toronto. Unless the speakers have been grossly misrepresented, it is devoutly to be hoped, in the interests alike of Bible study and Christian charity, that it will be the last." Further on, the writer brands the statements made at that conference "an outrage on common decency."

When a leader amongst Methodist clergymen describes a conference, in which distinguished clerical brethren of his own denomination amongst others took a prominent part, in these terms, the puzzled congregations who see their respective spiritual guides with horns locked will be inclined to ask: Where are we at? Who will decide for us the respective merits of the opponents and supporters of Bible Criticism? And amongst the latter who will decide for us between those who champion some critics and decry others, and those who accept the whole outfit? To these questions Protestantism supplies no answer. Individual opinion is its final court of appeal, and individual opinion in the midst of such conflicting testimony knows not in its bewilderment whither to turn. A characteristic evidence of this befuddled condition was shown by the comment of a leading Toronto paper to the effect that it mattered little whether a clergyman ignored the critics, went half-way with them, or accompanied them the whole way as long as his forceful personality attracted a full house. The preacher may be a Platonic philosopher or a Christian, as long as he has

a "message" and is a drawing card, he is all right. Verily religious divisions must have done its destructive work thoroughly when this depth of indifference regarding the nature of Christian teaching is reached.

INTEREST IN FOREIGN MISSIONS.

We have already contrasted what our Catholics do in the matter of contributing to Foreign Missions, with what non-Catholics do in this respect, and what they themselves would do were they trained in this regard. After making all allowances for the hardships Catholics in English-speaking countries have had to endure for centuries, and the leeway to be made up when their civil disabilities were removed, there remains the fact that wealthy parishes contribute a mere pittance to the great cause of bringing the light of faith to those who still sit in darkness, and they do so because of lack of education in this matter. It is high time that we gave up our custom of falling back on the past for apology and explanation. That past is well gone; our pioneer work has to a great extent been done; we are in as good a position to help our laborers in far-off fields as are many of our neighbors whose contributions in this respect put us to shame. And we are willing to do our part if we be only educated on this point.

Anyone acquainted with the response a few years ago at a moment's notice, to an appeal made in a few of our churches by the head of a missionary college in London, England, will need no further proof, if any proof were required, of the generosity of our people. But how often is this generosity awakened? How many sermons have we heard in a life time on this subject of Foreign Missions? How many of our Catholic colleges have a branch of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith? How often has this subject been touched upon in our Catechism classes?

Without trying to fix responsibility for much shortsightedness in the matter, our present endeavor should be to provide a remedy. And this remedy, it seems to us, is the adoption for Canada of the system recently decided on by the bishops of the United States for work amongst the colored folk of that country, namely, the appointment of a priest of tried organizing ability and whole-souled enthusiasm as director-general. It would be for him, always in co-operation with the local ecclesiastical authorities, to select lieutenants in the various provinces, who in turn would choose diocesan directors. In this way the work of the Propagation of the Faith would be introduced into every diocese and ultimately into every parish. Contribution boxes would be found in every school and home, and the pennies often thoughtlessly spent would under this system amount to a surprisingly large sum in the aggregate. The director-general and his provincial subordinates would need to devote their whole time to the work, whilst the diocesan director should be one whose duties would allow him to give a considerable portion of his energies to his missionary charge. Suggestions as to the manner in which each could carry out his task will be reserved for a subsequent article.

Death of Rev. Mother Mary Berchmans, Chatham, Ont.

At half-past three on the morning of January 22nd, the soul of Mother Mary Berchmans, Religious of the Ursuline Community of the Pines, Chatham, Ont., passed happily to its eternal reward.

Mother Mary Berchmans was very widely known in Western Ontario and in many parts of the States, and the news of her death has caused deep sorrow to her innumerable friends.

The deceased had been ill for about two months, and although it was known that her malady was serious, there was little expectation of its fatal termination. When at last the symptoms became alarming her cheerfulness did not flag, but she resigned herself with heroic and loving confidence to the most holy will of God. On Tuesday it became evident that the end was approaching and after several hours of intense agony she struggled ended in death early on Wednesday morning. The last moments of the dying religious were consoled by every attention that the loving care of her sorrowing Sisters could offer to alleviate her sufferings, and every spiritual help to facilitate the happy passage of her soul. Her patience under the terrible sufferings of those last hours, and the beautiful resignation with which she made the

sacrifice of her life greatly consoled and edified those who were in assistance beside her.

The deceased religious was born in Fergus, Ont., and entered the Ursuline Convent, at Chatham, when but in her sixteenth year. She made her religious profession in 1872, and during the thirty-five years of her religious life has been one of the ablest and most devoted members of the community. The high esteem in which her superior talents were held by her Sisters asserted itself in their constant choice of her to fill the highest offices of trust and responsibility in the community. She fulfilled the duties of Superior during a double term of six years, and at various times held the offices of Assistant Superior, Depository, General Mistress of the School and Zelatrix, holding the last position at the time of her death. She had also been Superior of Mission houses at Tecumseh and Tilbury. Her abilities as a teacher were widely known in educational circles; for many years she was Principal of St. Joseph's Separate School, Chatham, and during the past several years occupied a position on the Board of Examiners for the Entrance papers.

The funeral services were held in the Convent Chapel at nine o'clock on Friday morning. His Lordship, Rt. Rev. F. P. McEvay, D.D., Bishop of London, presided at the services, attended by Rt. Rev. J. Ed. McNier, V.G., Windsor, and Rev. P. McKeon, London. Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Father James, O.F.M., P.P., Chatham, with Rev. P. Langlais, Tecumseh, deacon, Rev. C. Parent of Tilbury, sub-deacon, and Rev. Father Basil, O.F.M., Chatham, master of ceremonies. In the sanctuary were also Rev. J. Aylward, rector of the Cathedral, London; Rev. E. Ladouceur, Jeanette's Creek, and Rev. Father Eusebius, O.F.M., Chatham. The chapel was filled with many sorrowing friends who came to offer their last tribute to one whom they had so deeply loved and esteemed during the many years of her devoted labors among them. The remains were conveyed to St. Anthony's cemetery, where they were interred.

By her death the Ursuline Community of Chatham has lost one of its most capable and devoted members. Mother Mary Berchmans was yet in the vigor of life and in the order of nature it might have been expected that she had still before her a long and useful career in the noble vocation she had embraced. But the Providence of God is inscrutable in its operations, and the deepest consolation of her bereaved community is the memory of the countless good deeds by which she sanctified each day of her life, the zeal and devotedness with which she embraced every duty of her sacred calling and the equal zeal and fidelity with which she responded to the last loving summons of the Divine Spouse. May her soul rest in peace.

Who Said It?

We find the following statement, ascribed to the "Christian Advocate (Protestant)": "In countries where Catholicism is in competition with Protestantism it is said to be difficult to secure boys from the more intelligent families to study for the priesthood? Who says it, and will attempt to prove the preposterous claim? In the United States alone the Catholic Church had at the beginning of the present year 5,697 students from well-to-do families. Intelligence is a prerequisite. Can any Protestant denomination show anything remotely resembling these figures or our quality?"—The Pilot.

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What can I do alone? Very little. But with your co-operation and that of the other well-disposed readers of this paper, I can do all that needs to be done. In these days, when the faith of many is becoming weak, when the great apostasy of the sixteenth century is reaching the full extent of its development, and is about to treat Our Divine Lord Himself as it treated His Holy Church, the Catholic Faith is renewing its youth in England and bidding fair to obtain possession of the hearts of the English people again. I half of that Faith. I must succeed or else this vast district must be abandoned.

IT RESTS WITH YOU

to say whether I am to succeed or fail, All my hopes of success are in your co-operation. Will you not then extend a co-operating hand? Surely you will not refuse? You may not be able to help much, indeed. But you can help a little, and a multitude of "littles" means a great deal.

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