

OUR OTTAWA LETTER

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

In the religious world at the Capital there is little or no news of any importance this week. Still I may mention the fact that a suggestion had been made by some prominent city representatives—both parliamentary and municipal—that something should be done to assist the University in the present unfortunate position in which the recent fire placed the faculty. It was stated that the Council would be asked to grant a sum of \$50,000 to the rebuilding of the institution. As the proposition did not seem to be taken to kindly by all the members of the Council, it was decided to take a popular vote upon it. At this juncture the rector of the University, in the name of the Faculty, wrote to the Mayor, declining the offer. As it was not unanimously supported the rector felt a great delicacy in accepting such a gift, and he naturally asked that the matter would not be submitted to the ordeal of a plebiscite. It is to be regretted that in such a case there should have been any discordant voice. It seems to many that the Ontario Government should do something for the University under the circumstances. There are several precedents, and one in particular should stand out in relief. When, in the "eighties" the Toronto University was burned, the Mercier Government of Quebec, voted a sum of \$10,000 for its reconstruction.

There was a rumor started, shortly after the fire at the University, that Rev. Father Fallon, former vice-rector, would be recalled from his position in Buffalo, and given the rectorship of the University. That reverend gentleman made a clear statement in regard to the rumor, which was as follows:—

"The rumor is absolutely ridiculous. There is not a word of truth in it. If the law could deal with such a case, and I could find the author of the rumor, I would appeal to the law. The affair is ridiculous for many reasons, and above all, for personal reasons."

It is exceedingly unfortunate that unreflecting persons should allow their personal predilections, or personal ideas and prejudices, to lead them into such a course; for they have no conception of the immense amount of worry, annoyance they inflict upon the very people whom they admire and love. Not one in a hundred, not one in five hundred, perhaps, of the people in the outside world, has a practical and proper knowledge of the inner life of community in a religious order. It is generally a case of "save me from my friends." Your correspondent has had twenty-five years of close and intimate acquaintance with our various religious communities, and how often has he not found members of them begging, praying, with tears in their eyes and trepidation in their hearts, to have their names kept out of print, to be saved from notoriety, to be protected against a generous but over-zealous and misguided worldly friendship that menaced their real and only happiness and contentment in life. It is to be hoped that the plain statement of Rev. Father Fallon will put an end for all time to any such inopportune rumors.

On Saturday morning last, after a long and painful illness, Rev. Father Lavan, the popular-gifted and universally beloved parish priest of Pakenham, Ont., died.

He was born on the 2nd August, 1842, and was ordained priest in June, 1864. For over thirty years Father Lavan has been parish priest of Pakenham; but his name and fame as a truly noble priest of God were not confined to his own district nor yet to his own province.

In his last days he had the consolation of a special visit from His Grace Archbishop Duhamel of Ottawa, and Vicar-General Routhier. He was one of those great soldiers in the ranks of the Church Militant whose deeds are not all recorded by men, but whose heroism is known to God who rewards it.—R.I.P.

NOTES OF NEWS.—After the University fire the rector took up his quarters in the beautiful residence of Dr. Chabot, that gentleman placing some of his best rooms at the rector's disposal. On Saturday an alarm was rung and the brigade rushed

to Dr. Chabot's to extinguish a blaze that had commenced in the cellars. We can readily imagine the dread that Rev. Father Emery must have, by this time, of the fire alarm. One such experience is enough in a lifetime.

On the 21st instant, a general assembly of the priests of the diocese will be held, at the Archbishop's palace, for the purpose of devising plans to come to the aid of the University authorities. His Grace is the Chancellor of the University.

Rev. Father Bourque, O.P., the famous Dominican preacher, who is curate at St. Jean Baptiste Church, has returned from a prolonged mission tour to St. Hyacinthe and Quebec. Rev. Father Stickney, former secretary to Mgr. Sbarretti, the Apostolic Delegate, left Ottawa on Monday for Hartford, Conn. Thence he will go to Baltimore to visit His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons; after which he will go to Washington to take up the pastoral charge of St. Peter's Church.

Last year the Catholic Board of School Commissioners obtained permission to have the election of their commissioners held on the same day as the municipal elections. They have sought also to have the voting take place in the same polling booths; but this was refused. Nominations will take place on the 30th December, and voting on the 6th January. The commissioners are in favor of having short-hand, taught in the Brebeuf, Duhamel, St. Jean Baptiste, St. Joseph, and St. Patrick's schools. The pupils who desire to learn this extra branch will pay an extra fee of twenty-five cents per month.

In the political world there is no news to send. In fact, your readers are just as conversant with happenings here as is your correspondent. It is only during a session of Parliament, when the eyes of the country are centred on Ottawa, and when events on Parliament-Hill succeed each other with panoramic rapidity, that the correspondent can find material of a really interesting character to send the readers of a weekly publication. For the present there is nothing more to be told about the Ottawa happenings of this week.

On Tuesday night a most interesting and highly instructive lecture was given in St. Patrick's Hall, by Rev. Father Van Becelare, P.P., on the Old Testament, in the light of the recent discoveries in the East. In addition to the lecture was a fine musical and literary entertainment; but the lecture, in itself was a wonderful revelation, and went far to prove that the members of religious orders are just as zealous to-day as in the past, in scientific, historic and other researches.

The Catholic Bible Class, at its meeting on Sunday last, took up the question of "the Brothers of Our Lord," of whom mention is made in four different passages of the Gospel. Three explanations have been offered in the past, of this difficulty. Some say that these are sons of St. Joseph from a first marriage; others and among them almost all modern Protestants have claimed that they were children of Mary, the Mother of Christ; the Catholic interpretation is that they were cousins, or blood relations of Our Lord. The statement of the director of the Class, Rev. Father Van Becelare, O.P., is most interesting. He said: "The first opinion seems to have no foundation whatever in the texts or in tradition. The second might claim some rationality on the basis of the sacred texts, or the words of some of the fathers; still, the Catholic opinion is quite as rational and logical on the basis of the same sacred texts, but it has moreover for itself the enormous weight of the argument of propriety. How could the mother of the Son of God, who objected to the very idea of becoming a mother at all, even after the salutation of the angel (how shall this be, etc.), have consented to become the mother of other children, and after having been the spouse of the Holy Spirit, to become the wife of a man? The church has made for Catholics the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin a dogma of faith. The present textual difficulty is a fresh instance of the necessity of some dogmatic, supreme and infallible authority to decide the problems which the texts themselves do not enable us to solve by our own researches."

And this is the most sure and only way out of the difficulty.

CATHOLIC LITERATURE

In many important departments of life that materially touch our happiness and well-being in this vale here below, Catholics are sadly indifferent. Among those are the press and our literature.

Recently Rev. Francis S. Betten, S.J., delivered a lecture on the subject of Catholic literature. Incidentally he pointed out the evil which the pernicious literature now flooding the world exerts over the minds of our people. He said:—

We are now facing the fact, that there exists a wicked literature, that there are books and papers which subvert the interests of the devil; that the press, which ought to be a sanctuary of the Most High, has been converted by the powers of darkness into a factory of infernal machinery. This is truly a deplorable fact. But unspeakably more deplorable would it be, should we deny this fact from sheer supineness and ignorance. I say from supineness, for if there are so many bad books, then it becomes our duty to ward off the danger from us and those committed to our charge, and this means that we must be active; from ignorance, for it requires, indeed, a vast amount of conceitedness to ignore the warnings of our God-appointed pastors. Or, do we want to act like the ostrich, who when he spies the hunter, closes his eyes and hides his head in the sand. Of course, he sees nothing, and forthwith concludes with his ostrich sense, that no danger is nigh. Whether he has yet sense enough to wonder afterwards, how he got caught, is not told in the story.

Such tactics, gentlemen, cannot be ours. We cannot sit idly by and look on and smoke our pipes and say: "There are no bad books, no newspapers that exert a baneful influence over us." Such wisdom might fit the pater of a fowl, and it seems too stupid even for a fowl. For, with the ostrich the question is one that concerns only animal life, with us it concerns our immortal soul and the souls of our neighbors. The policy of remaining inactive in such danger is certainly very un-Catholic, and does not at all tally with the practical, prudent and provident mind of the sons of America.

I have already made repeated mention of those branches of literature, whose first purpose is entertainment, viz., novels, magazines and newspapers. I would like to add a few quotations, to throw further light on the true nature of such productions of the present day. "In the light literature of the day," writes a Protestant, "there prevails a tendency to avoid all mention of religion and even the slightest allusion to the truths of Christianity. But infinitely more reprehensible is the proneness to adorn vice and disguise inner foulness with all the attractions of elegant diction. In the long, dismal catalogue of crimes, there is hardly one, which has not been stripped of its repulsive heinousness by the art of the writer. Revolt, murder, lust, debauchery have all been decked out with romantic fancies and literary pomp."

That the female character should fare the worst in such travesty, need scarcely be mentioned. Nor is it at all surprising, that some two months ago a non-Catholic American lady could write: "The idea of womanly purity has no attraction nowadays in the world of letters, rather the contrary. Conjugal infidelity and whatever leads to it, is the only thing that is forever being glorified and paraded."

The Archbishop of Freiburg writes in his latest pastoral: "There are books and periodicals that must be called breeders of immorality. Under the guise of instruction and entertainment, they sully the mind, lure to sin, and pander to the lowest instincts."

If this be so, if the general trend of our current literature be of such dangerous sort, then every sensible man must know where his duty points. I am bound to save my soul; but can I do it, as long as I court the company of books that reek with evil suggestions, or in hours of lassitude yield passively to sensations which such books are sure to arouse?

Impossible, we have the duty, the bounden duty to use judgment in the selection of our reading matter, and when we have our grave doubts about its character, to spurn it manfully. Why do people buy bad books? You do not understand. Even when I buy a pen you try to make sure that its

point is good. And you would buy a book without examination! It is a puzzle to me. It matters little whether the book is well bound and printed, but it matters much whether its contents are good or bad.

This concern is especially called for in the selection of reading for youth. In their young hearts a bad book will awaken far more dangerous instincts than in maturer age. To them apply with particular force the words of the Archbishop already quoted: "Everything is so fascinating that the reader soon begins to devour his poisoned food and is rendered insensible to the loss of his innocence. His mind is tainted, his former love for prayer and earnest work is dissipated, and there is no telling to what depths of degeneration this once virtuous soul may sink."

What a serious obligation rests, therefore, on all parents! As the guardians of the family, they are responsible for what is read by their children. "Do not deceive yourselves," continues the same Archbishop, "one single godless and immoral book can readily destroy all that home and school and church have with great effort built up in the soul of the child. Many parents whose hair has turned grey with grief over their children, reap only the fruits of the unconcern with which they tolerated the printed poison in the hands of their children."

Therefore, banish from your homes every bad book that is a bane to faith and morality; keep them out of the hands of your children; keep them out of your own hands, even though they were given you by your best friend; even though they were bound in gold and jewelry, and were obtained from the shelves of an excellent library. Away with them lest you realize too late the warning of Holy Scripture: Can a man hide fire in his bosom and his garments not burn? Or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? (Prov. vi., 27, 28.)

Though we were the most learned and virtuous men in the world, we must shun bad books and newspapers, otherwise we shall suffer harm in our souls.

I have known a man, a priest, who enjoyed merited reputation for learning and gave many evidences of excellent moral character. He is now an apostate, and fills Germany with the scandal of his double life. Among the causes of his ruin was foremost his want of discretion in promiscuous reading. If ever a priest can suffer such shipwreck of his faith, others have much more reason to steer clear of seas that seem to wave harmlessly over hidden reefs.

But the Church would not content herself with deploring the existence of so many bad books. She had to take steps. This she did by her legislation concerning the protection of books in general and by branding some very pernicious works individually.

The most effective means, however, is the production and spread of good books. For this reason the profession of Catholic writers and newspapermen is so much thought of and so highly praised and recommended by the last Council of Baltimore.

But the books are written to be used. So it is absolutely necessary to buy them. In the first place, there should be in every family not only a catechism, a bible history, but also an explanation of the gospels, a life of saints.

But we should as far as can be done always prefer Catholic books. There is such a vast number of them that no one is excused who spends his money for non-Catholic productions.

A special way of spreading Catholic books is by the formation and support of libraries under Church supervision. The Church has always been a patron of learning and libraries, and in spite of the wanton destruction by misguided fanaticism of many old monastic libraries, she still owns in Rome and elsewhere some of the most valuable book treasures of the world.

Catholic Buffalo is not 100 years old, yet it need not be ashamed of its love for books. Some of you may be agreeably surprised to hear that the Catholic institutions of this city, such as the Catholic Institute and the North Buffalo library, together pile up the handsome total of 50,000 volumes. Among these are not comprised the libraries of most church societies and one or another academy whose possessions could not be ascertained.

You cannot patronize and encourage these libraries too much.

A BUSINESS WOMAN.

She: "Is she a business woman?"
He: "Yes."
She: "What business is she interested in?"
He: "Everybody's."

CATHOLIC ENDEAVOR IN ENGLAND

PARISH PROGRESS.—The correspondent of the "Catholic Times," writing from Tunbridge in the diocese of Southwark, says:—

"Quietly and steadily the Catholic Church seems to be making headway in the Protestant town of Tunbridge. The new Catholic Church, which is being erected in Lyons-crescent, is rapidly approaching completion, and the design of Mr. W. B. Hughes, of Tunbridge Wells and Craven street, Charing Cross, will evidently give great satisfaction. Beyond this, an exiled community of nuns from France took possession of the property known as "Shrublands" at the beginning of the week, and on Friday the Rev. Father Stapley, rector of Tunbridge Wells-Tonbridge visited the premises, blessed the house and chapel ready for the installation of the community on the following morning. On Saturday, being the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, the Reverend Father said Mass in the newly-established Home, and administered Holy Communion to the community.

The Reverend Father also visited the new church and expressed his great satisfaction at the progress made in its construction and the effects produced by the designs of the architect. It is hoped that the new church will be ready for Divine worship early in the New Year, and this is the more necessary because the temporary iron church in Waterloo road is now no longer capable of providing accommodation for the congregation, which is greatly due to the devoted and untiring efforts in the cause of religion of the Rev. James Walsh, assistant in the Rev. Father Stapley.

A handsome oak pulpit was opened at St. Patrick's Church, Huddersfield, on Sunday, the 22nd ult. The new pulpit is octagonal, supported on a circular moulded base and shaft with a boldly carved capital, from which spring the moulded vaulting ribs which terminate behind shields placed at the angles in a band of carved foliage running around the bottom of the octagonal body of the pulpit. The circular angle shafts rest upon the shields and have carved capitals. The panels are deeply recessed and surrounded by cinquefoil arches supported on small shafts with carved capitals. The panels are so arranged that they can be removed, as it is intended at some time to substitute panels painted with figures for the present plain oak ones. The whole of the mouldings and foliage are in the style of the thirteenth century or early English Gothic. The work has been well carried out in the town, in the shop of Mr. H. Holland, the carving being executed by Mr. E. Armitage, under the superintendence and from the designs of Mr. John Haigh, of the firm of Abbey and Hanson, who has also designed the decoration and superintended the repairs of the church.

TO NON-CATHOLICS.—A most successful mission to non-Catholics was brought to a close in St. Mary's Church, Rugby, recently, by a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. The mission was given by the Rev. Father Filmer (Westminster Diocesan Missionary), and is the first mission of the kind ever given in this country outside London. The success attending it was immediate and lasting. No such congregations have ever been gathered together in St. Marie's, and even weeknight after weeknight the church has been more than full, and chairs have had to be repeatedly requisitioned to accommodate the numbers who have followed the sermons.

Catholics, of course, have been interested, and have thrown themselves into the work with the greatest zeal and earnestness, but Protestants have shown themselves most anxious to come and listen to what Father Filmer had to say. The great feature of these missions is that they are absolutely non-controversial, the aim is to explain the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, and from beginning to end not one word was said that the most critical Protestant could take objection to.

Judging by the readiness of Protestants to come and listen, there can be no doubt that this work has the blessing of God upon it, and is a work most suited to the present needs of the Church in England. Night after night the same people have come to the church and a great many enquirers have already come forward, anxious to learn more about

the truths of Faith. "Why has this not been done before?" is the question a great many of them ask explicitly and implicitly. Why not, indeed, may we ask, too.

The "question box" where people may put their questions in and have them answered the following night, was most extensively used and showed the number of people there are in our midst who are ready enough to embrace an opportunity of learning the truth. The local Protestant press, too, solicited full information as to all that was taking place, and showed itself very desirous of obtaining pure and accurate reports.

As far as can be judged, therefore, the work has met with approval on all sides. There has been no ill-feeling created, no susceptibilities wounded, and many misconceptions have been removed and much good done. Father Filmer has done a good work in Rugby. The mission that he and his colleagues of the Westminster Diocesan Association have undertaken is a noble one, and, judging by the results attained at Rugby, is one certain to be crowned with success—one that will lead many souls to God and His Church.

IRISH FORESTERS.—A ceremony which occasioned great interest amongst Irish National Foresters, and those residing in Ardwick and Ancoats particularly, took place in St. Aloysius' Catholic Club, Park place, on Friday night last, when the Rev. David Power, rector of St. Aloysius', Ardwick, and his esteemed assistant, the Rev. F. Barton, together with Mr. P. Earley, a prominent parishioner, were initiated honorary members of the Hope of Erin Branch of the Irish National Foresters. Bro. Councillor Daniel Boyle presided over a very large attendance of members, the visitors including all the district officers, and Bros. A. Madden, J. McDonald (dist. treasurer), John Doyle (dist. secretary), Thomas (in costume), and Mr. Wm. Masterson. The two rev. gentlemen on entering were accorded a "Caed Mille Failthe." Father Power has been the source of great strength to the cause of Irish Forestry ever since he came to Ardwick four years ago, and Father Barton, his popular assistant, although an Englishman, has fairly found his way into the hearts of Irishmen in the district, sympathizing with everything they have in common. Bro. Councillor D. Doyle, after the formal ceremony of initiating had been gone through, welcomed the new honorary members, and proceeded to speak in eloquent terms of the objects of the Irish National Foresters.

MORE UNITY.—The Catholic "Times" reports a movement for secondary education which is evidently going to bear good fruit. The remark of the Bishop Casartelli that parochialism should be put aside to enter the wider field is full of import, even to us in Canada. The report says:—

"Active measures are being taken by the Catholics of Bolton to carry into effect the projected Catholic secondary school and teachers' centre for the town and district. To this end the Sisters of the Most Holy Cross and Passion have promised £1,000 and a very suitable site adjoining the Mount St. Joseph Convent, Deane. With the object of further considering the projected scheme a meeting of the Catholics of the district was held in the Temperance Hall, Bolton, on Wednesday evening, November 25th, when the Lord Bishop of the diocese, Right Rev. Dr. Casartelli, delivered an important address on the question of Catholic secondary education. St. Mary's brass band discoursed selections while the audience were assembling, and when the meeting opened at 7.30 p.m., the capacious hall was filled from floor to ceiling. The Very Rev. Dean Averdonk presided. In opening the proceedings the chairman remarked that a worthy successor of Bishop Bilson had been found in Dr. Casartelli. They as Bolton Catholics were all proud of him, and extended to him a hearty welcome. At the outset of his address, the Bishop expressed his thanks for the heartiness of the reception on that the occasion of his first visit to Bolton; he also thanked those who had organized that magnificent meeting, which he took not only as a personal compliment to himself, but as showing a spirit of co-operation among the clergy and laity. In framing the scheme for a Catholic secondary school for girls for Bolton and the surrounding district there had been united action among the Catholic missions of the town, and this marked the beginning of a new era—the putting aside of the old-fashioned system of what he might term parochialism, and the entrance upon a wider, and therefore a more influential sphere of Catholic life and activity. Various liberal subscriptions in aid of the proposed school were announced.