THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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EPISCOPAL APPROBATION.

"If the English-speaking Catholics of Montreal and of this Province consulted their best interests, they would soon make of the "True Witness" one of the most prosperous and powerful Catholic papers in this country. I heartily bless those who encourage this excellent work.

"†PAUL, Archbishop of Montreal."

SATURDAY ..... NOVEMBER 30, 1901.

Notes of the Week.

HEART TO HEART TALK.—Just after the grtat meeting at the Windsor Hall, which took place on Wednesday, the 20th November, there was a small gathering of some leading Irish Catholics, met for the purpose of having what we might call a heart to heart talk over the questions of the day. On that occasion one of those present passed the remark that applause and cheering were very encouraging and appropriate, but too many felt that their duty ended there and that nothing more practical was required of them. It would be well if we had a few such outspoken leaders in our midst, for that gentleman touched directly the very rock upon which we invariably split. It is quite possible that some of the persons present did not altogether relish the frank remarks, but no one could gainsay the truth of them. The real lack that seems to be found in our Irish Catholic undertakings is exactly due to that spontaneous enthusiasm, the intensity of which causes explosions of sentiment which almost immediately evaporate, leaving an exhaustion of energies that prevents the possibility of practical action. In other words, we cheer while others express our feelings and ideas, we grow enthusiastic over the patriotism displayed by our fellow-countrymen, we applaud their actions, and above all, the recital of their achievements; but we stop short at that point. We are content to allow them to entertain us with their varied eloquence, and are equally content to let them go on fighting the battle; we clap hands and we approve, but we scarcely dream of any further obligation. It would be a blessing if we had some leader, or leaders, whose precepts would harmonize with the necessity of positive action, of practical co-operation, of deeds that speak more eloquently than words. It is only when such a remark as that which we mention is made that we are inclined to pause and to look the situation straight in the face. It is not always the one who is most conspicuous in the public eye that performs the most telling work, or contributes the most substantially to the cause. To encourage by presence and applause is laudable, to do so by persistent and practical action is patriotic.

PECULIAR SERMONS.—In some of the American dailies we find columns of what is styled "Religious Intelligence;" and the items of information furnished would constitute a very strange commentary upon the Christianity that Protestantism has been instrumental in introducing into America. Taking them at random, we come upon a Saturday edition of a New York daily, which contains a series of announcements under the heading "Sermons To-Morrow." We very naturally would expect that the list of prepared sermons for the Sunday in question would contain much that concerns both the dogma and moral of Christianity. However, we fail to glean from the titles of the sermons to be preached any more idea of Christianity than we might gather from a list of lectures under the auspices of some club or literary society.

Let us take a few of them, just for the curiosity of the matter. The Rev. Dr. Mackay, at the Forty-eighth street Collegiate Church, on "A Young Man from the Country." This sounds strangely as the subject of a sermon. Then comes the Rev. Julian K. Smythe, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, on "God of the Hills, but not of the Valleys." For aught we know there may be some reason why a distinction should be drawn between the hills and the valleys in regard to God's authority over them, but we must confess that we would have to hear the sermon before making up our minds that the title was not the expression of some romantic, or nonsensical idea. Then comes Rev. Dr. Eckman, at St. Paul's Methodist Church (were St. Paul to have heard of such a subject for a sermon he would certainly repudiate all connection with that church) on "Alfred Tennyson, the Christian Poet." Imagine a Catholic priest ascending the pulpit, on a Sunday, and preaching a sermon on the verses of some Catholic poet. But the best of them all is the Rev. Merle St. C. Wright, at the Lennox Avenue Unitarian Church, preaching on "Political Achievement in New Zealand." If Macalaulay's New Zealander were to come along, with pencil in hand, he would have a more amusing task in commenting upon that sermon than in sketching the ruins of St. Paul's.

ON TEMPERANCE WORK. — In another place we publish a letter received from a lady signing herself a "Member of the W. C. T. U., and whose card has been sent us "for identification, but not publication." Desirous of dealing fairly with every person, we did not hesitate to publish the letter in question; but we naturally reserve to ourselves the right to accompany it with a brief word of explanation. It will be seen, by what our correspondent writes, that she does not question, in any way, the report of Mrs. Lake's remarks as given by the "Daily Witness." Consequently it may be assumed that the words of hers which we quoted were exactly those made use of by her. This simplifies the matter, and brings it down to a mere question of the tone or expression of the lady speaker, which our correspondent claims to be unfairly characterized as "flippant." That is a matter of appreciation, according to the standpoint from which the remarks in question are studied.

We have no desire to prolong any discussion in regard to the subject; especially as we still regard the lecturer's remarks, concerning the Catholic total abstainers in Montreal, if not exactly flippant at least very much inopportune and uncalled for. It must be remembered that she was talking about her own co-religionists, and that, coming from a Catholic lady addressing a very mixed and even a principally Protestant assembly, the utterances were calculated to touch harshly upon a very sensitive chord in the breasts of her own people. Had a person of some other religious belief made use of the same remarks we would not have paid any attention to them; but coming from a Catholic, who is evidently a stranger to the work done by our Church in the cause of temperance here, the feelings evoked are very different.

Regarding what our correspondent says concerning the temperance cause and Catholic workers therein, and especially Mrs. Lake's lack of knowledge on the subject, we could point to the very history of Montreal as a sufficient testimony to prove all the energy that has been exerted by our co-religionists and our clergy in this same cause.

There is a passage in the letter which we publish that refers to a couple of letters addressed to His Grace the Archbishop by the members of the W.C.T.U. On this point we made special inquiry at the Palace, and were informed that to each of the letters mentioned, addressed to the Archbishop, replies were sent in the ordinary manner.

We would respectfully call the attention of our correspondent to an address on temperance delivered by Cardinal Logue, which we publish in another column, as it touches upon the very matter of which she complains.

BALFOUR'S PHILOSOPHY. — It might be almost safe to say that Mr. Balfour, Government leader in the British House of Commons, is even more of a philosopher than a politician. At all events, whenever he undertakes a purely academic or philosophic address he is certain to treat his subject with more power and upon evidently deeper reflection than when he makes a political speech. His recent address in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, contained reasoning that is applicable to other countries than Scotland. In fact, as Catholics, we cannot but perceive that his views, in a general way, correspond with the long established principles of the Catholic Church. We do not pretend that in detail there is aught of Catholicity in Mr. Balfour's ideas; but, decidedly, he has, according to his lights, exceedingly healthy conceptions of the immediate needs of society, especially from the standpoint of religion. "He insists that one of the most urgent duties of the hour is to foster and safeguard the religious principle," in matters of education. This he considers to be no longer an affair of State.

Mr. Balfour made use of these words: "There was a time when religion, like education, or like public health, at the present time, could call upon the civil power, in some shape or another, to support its efforts for the public good. Those times have long gone by. They would never reappear, and it is well, he thought, for the cause of religion, that they should never reappear." If this indicates anything practical it is a separation of Church and State, a cessation of the dependence of religion upon the secular arm, an emancipation of the Church from the authority of the State. In fact, it is exactly the principle held by the Catholic Church in all times. That religion should be superior to and apart from the State is the logical conclusion of real and sound Christianity.

Mr. Balfour claims that the scientific spirit of investigation and inquiry, in modern days, has unsettled countless minds, and he regrets to find that, in order to cope with the changed conditions of thought, some churches were preaching a religion of morality alone—as if the intellect had no part to play in the matter of salvation of souls. "Morality," he said, "is no substitute for religion." Here is a great truth expressed in a few words. A writer dwelling upon this very point, says: "Though Mr. Balfour never, so far as we observe, used the word 'dogma,' he clearly meant to warn some of the Protestant churches of the perils of letting slip their grasp on doctrine, and of lapsing into a state of mental torpor in its regard, which must, in a short time, reduce them and their congregations to such a conception of Christianity as you might gather from the seven tragedies of Sophicles, or the meditations of Marcus Aurelius. Morality is not religion, though it is a great part of it; for a religion with morality; but without doctrine, is indistinguishable from a Christianity without Christ."

The frank avowal of such principles by a man occupying the eminent social and political rank of Mr. Balfour, must be a source of benefit to the Christian world in general. As far as Catholics are concerned there is no gainsaying the correctness of the attitude assumed in regard to this matter by Mr. Balfour. "Every step away from definite doctrinal belief is so far forth a step from the doors of the Church." It is exactly upon dogma—that is to say definite and clearly defined principles of religion—that the Catholic Church bases herself in the maintenance of her authority delegated to her by Christ and in the inculcation of her precepts for the salvation of humanity. With her morals and dogma go hand in hand; both are necessary to salvation. But her morality is drawn from her dogmatic principles, and not her dogma from her morals. In other words, religion first, and then morality based upon that religion. It is the reverse with many Protestant churches; hence their weakness. It is this source of the weakness that Mr. Balfour's keen eye detects.

DANGERS FOR CATHOLICS. — Two weeks ago last Monday the Feast of St. Charles was duly celebrated by the Oblates of St. Charles at the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, London. His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan was present, and a most beautiful sermon was preached by Rev. Father Bennett, C.SS.R. The subject was the life of St. Charles, and in the treatment of the theme, the preacher took occasion to refer to the characteristic virtue of that great saint—his love for his Holy Mother the Church. He spoke of the co-operation of the laity and the clergy in the grand work of saving the faith of the children of the poor. After dealing with the wonderfully meritorious virtue of humility, the Rev. Father indicated one of the greatest dangers for Catholics of our day. The report of his sermon thus summarizes that important point. He said that:—

"There was no time in a man's life in which humility was not necessary for him, and there was no time when it was more necessary for men to practise humility than when they were dealing with God's Church. Yet that was a truism that was only too often forgotten amongst them, and many seemed to forget it entirely. Only a short time ago the highest ecclesiastical authorities in this country warned them against the danger, and yet to-day there were Catholics who spoke and wrote as if there was little difference between things human and things divine. It was, no doubt, one of the greatest modern dangers that men continually sat in judgment upon every one and everything. They knew that from the newspapers, where people pointed out how the Government of the country should be carried on, how an army in the field should be handled. They seemed to forget that even in human things men must have regard to expert knowledge and the boundless possibilities of their own ignorance. But surely when men came to deal with the things of God it required self-abasement. The Church was God's, she was the bride of the Son of God, and let them never forget it."

THE CORONATION OATH. — Frankly we are weary of this question of the Coronation Oath; it will be a great relief when the ceremonies of next summer put an end to the difficulty—and still greater will be that relief if the monarch be not obliged to repeat the antiquated, fossilized insult that a stupid Act of Parliament forces upon him. While the opposition to the terms of that oath was confined to Catholic protests we could understand that there might be some difficulty in having the desired amendments carried; but when some of the most representative and respectable Protestant bodies are equally dissatisfied with its terms, and openly give expression to such dissatisfaction, we can perceive a stronger reason to hope that it may yet be changed. At the Rochester Diocesan Conference, held the other day, a Mr. H. W. Hill moved that an amendment of the King's Declaration was desirable. In that motion the speaker said that:—

"There should be no theology, but simply a repudiation of the right of any prince or potentate to interfere in the domestic affairs of this realm. The Bishop of Rochester maintained that the language of the Declaration was not merely aggressive, but also irreverent and profane. It ought to suffice for the Sovereign to declare in perfectly plain language that he was not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, and that he did not admit any claim on the part of the Pope over this realm. The motion was carried by the conference. We trust that before the assembling of Parliament most other diocesan bodies of the Church of England will have followed the example of the Rochester Conference. Such discussions help to dispel prejudice and to correct the effects of ignorance."

ADVENT.

The Church prepares her children for all her great festivals by prescribed penances and fastings. It is thus that the glorious event of the Resurrection at Easter is preceded by the forty days of Lenten mortification. Within a few weeks we will once more find ourselves in presence of the great festival of the Nativity. Christmas is naturally a period of jubilation; in the religious sense it is a time of exceptional rejoicing. The birth of the Messiah, whom the prophets had foretold and for whose arrival the patriarchs had prayed, marked the commencement of Redemption's wondrous work. That all may be purified and properly disposed to celebrate that grand occasion in a manner worthy of the spirit which the Church inculcates, it is ordained that the time of Advent should be observed, even as is that of Lent. To-morrow will be the first Sunday of Advent, and the Church will put on the garments of penance and mortification. The purple vestments of the priest, as he celebrates the Holy Mass, will tell the faithful, in a language that appeals to the eye, how necessary it is to humble ourselves in order that we may be exalted. The regulations concerning the fasts and abstinence are not as extensive in their severity as during Lent, but are equally as imperative. These rules are read from the pulpit and are so published that all may be aware of their character and of the obligations that they impose. It remains for the children of the Church to observe them in all their details.

Apart from observing the fasts and from abstaining from flesh meat on the days prescribed, the Catholic is expected to perform other acts of self-sacrifice and of mortification. Some of these are indicated in a general manner, others are left to the good will and the choice of each individual. There are acts of charity which come within the sphere of almost every person and which should be multiplied during this holy season. Alms-giving is always meritorious, when accompanied with the proper dispositions; but during Advent this eminently Christian work is associated with still greater merits than under ordinary circumstances, or in ordinary times.

If we carefully and seriously study the system of discipline that has ever obtained in the Catholic Church we will perceive, without fail, that a wisdom surpassing that of any other organization on earth marks every prescribed rule that the faithful are enjoined to follow. And of these none is more noteworthy than the ordinance to abstain and to fast at certain indicated periods. Even were there never any spiritual benefits attached to such practices, the very ordinary laws of nature would proclaim the utility and the necessity of such observances. But the Church accompanies every restriction placed upon the passions or the inclinations of man with graces that repay a thousand fold the sacrifices undergone. It is for the Catholic to harvest those graces while the opportunity is at hand.

We know fully well that to-morrow we enter upon the season of Advent; but what guarantee have we that any of us will ever spend another Advent in this world? If we look back over the year that has just elapsed, what a number of those who prepared for last Christmas by fasting and penance, have vanished from the scene and are to-day beyond the pale of mortal existence. No matter how limited our circle of acquaintance, yet each one of us can place a finger upon some name in the list of friends that must be effaced for all time to come. These lessons are of daily occurrence, and yet we seem not to reflect upon them with all the seriousness that their importance demands.

Let all of our readers make use of the present season of Advent as if it were to be last that they are to enjoy, and the greeting of a "Merry Christmas," which will mark the close of this season will be no vain or empty salutation.

AT THE CHURCH OF THE GESU.

The Blessing and Inauguration of the New Organ.

[WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.]

On Thursday evening the blessing and inauguration of the new organ in the beautiful Church of the Gesu brought together a large, deeply interested, and music-loving congregation. Great things were expected, not only on account of the well known skill of the builders, but also from the fact that although this was not the largest instrument in Montreal, it had been constructed in perfect accordance with the magnicent acoustics of the sacred edifice for which it was destined and on this first occasion it was to be touched by a renowned master hand. Much had been promised, much was hoped for, but so great was the delight given that even the most aggressive critic, if such a one could be found, must have felt himself carried so far beyond his own little physical being that his mission was forgotten under the spell of perfect harmony.

Music is one of God's greatest gifts to man. It is the fair white height where heaven and earth may meet, for the spirit borne upon a wave of melodious sound thrills with noble impulses, and hears the holy whisperings of a higher, diviner life. No wonder that the blessing of a noble instrument seems rendering to the Lord His very own. It was a reverent assemblage, who in the present case listened to the holy words that set the organ apart forever to God's worship, and it was over bowed heads that the first tremulous notes floated, to find their way to the altar. Softly, timorously the soul of music was awakened and prayerfully it seemed to touch the air as if in awe of its own sublime destiny.

The solo of inauguration was performed by Mr. Arthur Letondal, whose rendition of it left nothing to be desired. It was the "Prelude" in B. minor by Bach, and the spirit of the great old master seemed to have entered once more into his own best loved instrument, when a caressing touch drew forth chords that thrilled through arch and aisle and lighted roof. Bach's music is poetry; the joys and sorrows of mankind are whispered, sung, pealed, and thundered through it till every heart stands still to listen to the electric notes. The sweet, soft minor tones of this "Prelude" breathes of sadness which knows not sorrow. It is the tender melancholy of a young heart dreaming its dreams, and sighing, only because this beautiful world is not heaven. When the last note wistfully died away, the listener still listened to the hush that followed—eyes were moistened but lips smiled.

It was Mr. Gaston M. Dethier, organist of the Church of St. Francis Xavier, New York, who now took command of the keys, and during a beautiful and varied programme kept the audience under a spell of enchantment for the remainder of the evening.

Mr. Dethier's reputation had preceded him. Perhaps only accomplished musicians and trained organists could thoroughly understand the difficulty of the music chosen, and the power and precision of his execution, but all present knew that a song of faith and hope vibrated at his touch. In the romantic music of Liszt, a "Prelude" and "Fugue," his potential command over the great instrument, which seemed to answer to every emotion of his soul as sensitively as an Aeolian harp might to the sighing of the breeze, the brilliancy and delicacy of his touch brought out the grandeur, the sweetness and the dulcet softness of every note. The music stole upon the air like a breath of May, far up in the tender trebles a lark awoke and soared on high to meet the morning sun, and while his enchanting song was warbling through fluted arpeggios, behold, the lilacs were abloom, the lily of the valley swung its perfumed bells, and every garden glowed with a riot of regal tulips—joy! joy!—the joy of spring that held a melodious note of glory deep down in its melodious throat, for in the chasing movements of the "Fugue" it seemed as if angels were vying with each other to catch the theme of praise.

To many Thiele's variations seem to have given the greatest pleasure as they offered difficulties best appreciated by musical people, but to the true artist all things are simple. There was no trying for effect, each note was perfect, with a purity of tone and sweetness of expression the strains arose and fell, now scattered about like pearls from a loosened string, now throbbing with the terrible power of a strong heart upheaval.

"The Storm," by Lemmens, was a grand number, and needed no explanation, even to a child, for the hurricane swept with majestic power over pedals and keys, and never was there wind so weird and mystic as that which moaned through the forest of tuned pipes. Certainly M. Dethier is the finest organist that has been heard for years in Montreal, and the new organ could not have been introduced by a more artistic hand. One feature most noticeable was the deep religious sentiment which pervaded the entire programme.

Music is the voice of the soul, and has been the voice of religion, as far back as the days of the art loving kings David and Solomon; but beautiful, though it arose in the Psalms, powerful in the cries of the prophets there was ever a note missing. One winter night over the hills of Bethlehem the angels bore to earth a celestial melody—"Gloria in Excelsis!" announced the birth of Christ and was the birth of Christian music. The sublime refrain resounded in men's hearts, and since that day music has progressed, as it never did before. The highest and holiest themes, the sweetest and tenderest symphonies, the most exalted and heaven reaching strains, have found their inspiration at Christ's altar, and their noblest interpreters among the children of His Church.

Music and poetry are links upon the same bright chain, forged together by a fire that binds them everlastingly, so when the Rev. F. Lalande, S.J., orator and poet, ascended the pulpit and with the fervor, fire and grace of his triple vocation delivered a short instruction, it seemed as if music had not ceased. He threw a halo of glory around the organ in proclaiming its power for the glory of God. When with a charming simile he concluded he must have felt the tribute that was offered to his words in the breathless silence that followed them.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament crowned this long to be remembered evening.

The voice of the new organ of the Gesu has been raised never to be silenced again as the months and years go by, as long as the great heart has power to sing God's praises. Its music belongs to all who come to listen, to the humblest soul it will tell its tenderest meanings. It is ours to rejoice with us in our joys, to wail with us in our sorrows. It will bear on its mighty wings the timid prayers that our trembling lips dare scarcely utter. It will find words for the mysterious longings of poor human hearts and breathe them to heaven in streams divine. We who with bowed heads, adoring, allow our spirits to arise upon its jubilant chords and ravishing harmonies will return to earth to find God's world more beautiful, the rugged ways more smooth, the desert paths, o'ergrown with flowers; for we will descend from the Mountain of Transfiguration with an echo in our ears, and a foretaste on our lips, of the Seraphic delight of an eternal Alleluia!

BELLELLE GUERIN.

PERSONAL.

Mr. D. Furlong, of Prince Arthur street, one of the leading master butchers of this city, and a staunch friend of the "True Witness," has been elected vice-president of the Butchers' Association at its annual meeting, held this week.

NEW WEAPON FOR THIEVES.—Fighting burglars with a fire extinguisher is the method that the assistant prosecutor of Passaic County, Ralph Shaw, of Paterson, N.J., successfully used recently. Just as he was retiring he heard screams in the house of Mrs. Jennie Clark, who lives next door. He had no weapon handy, so he seized the fire extinguisher and rushed to where he heard the woman screaming.

She was huddled in one corner of the yard, and told Mr. Shaw that there were burglars in the cellar. He entered the cellar and turned the stream on where he heard a noise. He saw two figures loom up in the light as they leaped through a window, and he was able to strike them squarely with the liquid.

The burglars were so frightened that they left all the booty that they had collected.