

OBITUARY

MRS ELLEN O'GORMAN GANNON
There died on Dec. 27th at Whitney, Ont., a venerable old lady who leaves behind her no less than 160 living descendants.

Mrs. Gannon was a woman of Scriptural valiancy. She was born in what was ninety years ago the pioneer settlement of Cedar Hill; reared and educated on the Line, when Renfrew County was opened; the greater part of her life was spent in another pioneer clearing in the north of Hastings County; and when her sons became the first settlers in New Ontario, she gladly followed them to share their hardships on the banks of the White River near New Liskeard.

She has bequeathed to her children and to her children's children the memory of a long and virtuous Christian life. She will be mourned not only by them but by the many friends whom she had made in several parts of the province, and who will long remember her as one of the humble but no less glorious heroines with whom religion of the past century so richly endowed this new land.

ANGUS O'HENLEY

Angus O'Henley, one of Sheridan's most highly respected pioneers passed to his eternal reward Friday morning, Dec. 26, after a lingering illness with paralysis.

Mr. O'Henley was born in Invernesshire, Scotland, June 13, 1849. His parents emigrated to Canada during the same year and settled near Parkhill, Ont., later moving to Sheridan, Huron County, Michigan. In 1880 Mr. O'Henley was united in marriage to Mary McDonald of Parkhill and to this union ten children were born all of whom are living. The bereaved family consists of his widow, two sons, Alex and Donald at home, and eight daughters, Sister M. De Sales of Chicago, Ill., Sister M. Rosella of Wyandotte, Mich., Mrs. Bernard Mianick and Mrs. Frank Mianick of Bad Axe, Mrs. John Egan, Mrs. Victor Miller and Mrs. Gus. Allard, of Detroit, and Mrs. John Sullivan of Owendale.

Largely attended funeral services were held Tuesday morning at St. Columbkille's Church, Sheridan. A solemn Requiem High Mass was sung by Father Ginig of Sebawing

assisted by Father Courtney of Bad Axe and Father Carolan of Sheridan. Highly esteemed as a friend and neighbor, devoted as a husband and father Mr. O'Henley will be greatly missed by all who knew him. No work of charity that came within his reach was left undone. No labor was too great for the upbuilding of Church and community. Ever zealous for the better gifts his life and his death will always be an incentive to all who knew him. May his soul rest in peace.

FIRST HOLY DOOR OPENING

INAUGURATION OF RITE WHICH BEGINS JUBILEE YEAR

By Mr. Enrico Puoci

The rite of the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's, which took place with such majestic solemnity the day before Christmas as a signal for the joyous beginning of the Holy Year, is today four hundred and twenty-five years old. Its celebration once again after all these centuries, then, lends an intense interest to a document which describes in detail the first observance of this sacred rite, in the early days of 1499.

No less a personage than a Master of Ceremonies of the Popes of that era gives us this intimate account. It was John Burkardo, who served at the Vatican from the reign of Pope Innocent VIII. to that of Pope Julius II. and recorded faithfully in a diary all the notable events at the Pontifical Court of his day.

It was in this period that Pope Alexander VI. reigned and introduced the rite of the opening of the Holy Door, for the Holy Year of 1500. For it is generally known that although the Jubilee Year was first held in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII., the symbolic rite of the Door was not originated until two centuries later.

Burkardo writes that on Holy Thursday, 1498, and again on Holy Thursday, in 1499, the Pope published the Bull for the Holy Year of 1500. December 18, 1498, he continues, the Pontiff descended with him into the Basilica of St. Peter to view the door which was to be opened at the inauguration of Holy Year. The portal already was traced out on the inside, and the Pope gave orders that the outside should be adorned with marble for the ceremony. This door was connected with the Chapel of Veronica, and His Holiness ordered also that parts of the walls be taken away so that the people might pass through more readily.

Thereupon, the Pope caused the Bishop of Modena, who held the office of delarior, to prepare the conditions for gaining the Jubilee indulgences. These conditions were that inhabitants of Rome must for thirty days, continuously or at intervals, visit the four basilicas of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John Lateran and St. Mary Major. For those dwelling outside Rome the period was fifteen days.

The reading and publication of the Bull took place the following Sunday, December 22, to the sound of trumpets amid the greatest solemnity. The matter of the rite to be followed at the opening of the Holy Door, Burkardo continues, came up December 23, when the Pope asked him concerning it. As Master of Ceremonies, he suggested that on the afternoon before Christmas the Pontiff, as he was going to chant Vespers in the basilica, stop before the Door, take a hammer and deliver the first blow for its demolition. Then he might enter the basilica and recite Vespers while the workmen tore down the Door, thus avoiding the dust and flying lime of the actual demolition. A strict order was to be issued that no one go in or out of the Holy Door before the Pope returned to avail himself of that privilege.

Upon the completion of Vespers, the Pontiff should leave the basilica and enter through the Holy Door while the bells of Rome were rung. Burkardo himself had prepared liturgical verses and a prayer for the Pope to recite before entering the Door.

To these proposals, Burkardo records, the Holy Father consented, except that he would wait, regardless of the dust, while the workmen broke down the Door. Accordingly, he would enter the basilica only after the Holy Door was opened, and the Vespers would thus be sung in the Holy Year itself. The Pope then chose seven of the twelve liturgical verses Burkardo had submitted, and made some alterations in the prayer.

All plans being in readiness, the workmen arrived on the morning of December 24, placed the marble ornaments prescribed by the Pope and then thinned the wall in such a manner that the actual opening might be made quickly. Pope Alexander arrived at the Door in the afternoon, mounted on his Gestatorial Chair under a canopy. In his left hand he held a candle and with his right he blessed those present. He then took an ordinary hammer from the hands of Maestro Tommaso Matarazzo, foreman of the workmen, and struck several blows on the Door, until some of the bricks fell out.

The Pope then returned to this throne, Burkardo continues, and remained seated while the workmen completed the breaking down of the Door. Meantime, His Holiness personally warned all and had his Ministers also give the admonition that no one was to cross the threshold until he himself entered. "Notwithstanding this," writes Burkardo, "one of the workmen who were on the inside, without thinking and wishing to hurry, crossed the threshold to get a piece of wood that was outside. I stopped him from re-entering, and no one else entered or went out before the Pope."

The breaking down of the Door completed, the Pontiff returned to the portal, knelt on the threshold and remained in prayer for some moments. Then he entered the basilica, accompanied by Burkardo and another master of ceremonies and followed by the Cardinals and court. The diarist also relates that while the Pope was breaking down the Holy Door at St. Peter's, Cardinal Ossini, the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon and the Cardinal Archbishop of Ragusa were invited by the Pontiff to open the Doors at the other basilicas. Here a strange incident is recorded. When the Cardinal Archbishop of Ragusa arrived at St. Paul's he found that neither the abbot nor the monks knew which was to be the Holy Door. Accordingly, finding three doors walled up, the Cardinal opened all three.

"I think, however, that those doors should be closed, if for no other reason as a precaution against bad air," Burkardo adds, quaintly. "But these things are of little importance, because to save the ignorant, faith alone is enough. It seems to me, however, ridiculous that none of the religious there knew so important a thing."

Since Burkardo recorded this personal account of the first opening of the Holy Door, four hundred and twenty-five years have passed and in the course of that time, the sacred rite has been performed thirteen times by the successors of St. Peter. The ceremony has been perfected, the rite has become more and yet more majestic. But through its evolution, the whole of Christianity has never failed to follow the opening of the Holy Door with the most fervent and touching attention. So now the pious inheritance of past generations is received by a moved world as the sacred period of Holy Year begins.

IN MEMORIAM

In sad but loving memory of Robert Condon, Kingston, N. S., who departed this life Jan. 22, 1920. May his soul rest in peace. —Mother, father and family.

DIED

MCDONALD.—At St. Peter's Bay, P. E. I., on Dec. 23rd, 1924, Mrs. Angus R. McDonald. May her soul rest in peace.

ROBERTSON.—At 519 Richmond St., London, Ont., on January 7, 1925, Catherine, beloved wife of J. B. Robertson. May her soul rest in peace.

MURRAY.—At her late residence, 124 Chesley Ave., London, Ont., on December 26, 1924, Miss Katie Murray, third daughter of the late Michael Murray. Born in Hamilton, Ont. May her soul rest in peace.

HARRIGAN.—In Caledon Township, East Fifth Line, Mr. J. S. Harrigan, leaving a widow, two sisters, Mrs. J. J. O'Donnell and Mrs. R. J. Conway, Toronto, and one brother, Frank, of Hamilton. May his soul rest in peace.

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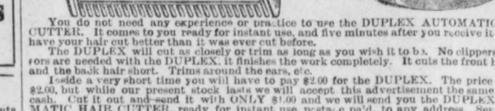
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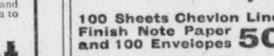
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