

A PEOPLE'S MISSION.

The Rev. Father Marre, of Notre Dame church, has had the honor of having his St. Jean Baptiste sermon criticised by the Daily Witness and condemned by La Patrie; the former considered it inappropriate and the latter finds that it savors too much of the Middle Ages. We congratulate Abbe Marre, no better evidence of the worth of his words could be found than the disapproval of the most anti-Catholic organ in Canada and the censure of one of the most anti-clerical journals in our literary atmosphere. The hostility of these two well-met critics forms a most appropriate prelude to the extraordinary steps taken by the St. Jean Baptiste society, at the suggestion of Count Mercier, when it saw fit to erase the word "Catholic" from its title as a society. We are not surprised at Mr. Mercier, but we are astonished at the members of that great national organization. Very probably Mr. Mercier has found that the sands of his glory have run out, that Rome has conferred the last honors he need ever expect upon his great personage, and that being vexed with the clergy in general, whom he blames for his political downfall, it is time to commence to seek notoriety by joining the worst enemies of the Faith. We hope that His Grace of Chartres will learn the story of Mr. Mercier's last feat, and the advice he gives his fellow-countrymen; that noble and venerable patron of Canada's only Count may find what kind of a defender of the Faith and lover of the race he has been shaking hands with across the Atlantic.

As long as the actions of the St. Jean Baptiste society are confined to questions pertaining to the past, present or future of the French race—as a people—we have no right, nor do we pretend to intrude either our advice or our opinions; but when an association, of the high standing of the St. Jean Baptiste society, and one with such grave obligations upon its shoulders, commits an act that is a direct attack upon religion and takes a step in the direction of indifference, which is the fore-runner of infidelity, are claim that, as Catholics, we have a right to protest. Mark well that the fact of crossing out the word "Catholic" and the opening of the doors of the society to those who are the natural enemies of the very religion that French Canadians, if faithful to their mission as a people, are bound to propagate, is more than a mistake, it is a sin against the doctrine of the Church—and as such we Roman Catholics of another nationality, have a deep interest in seeing that the harm already done be as soon as possible rectified.

Do you dare tell us, you, sons of France's exiled children, you, who have the future of our Faith in your hands, that you are prepared to forego the mission which your race has received from Heaven and to turn back the onward march of Catholicity in this land of the North? Bold words you say; yes, and yet not bold enough considering what you are about to jeopardize. If you cut the word "Catholic" out of the title of your society, in order to appear more liberal-minded and gain a doubtful and partial popularity, then, to be consistent, efface the name of St. John the Baptist. Unless your society is a purely Catholic French Canadian association it has no right to use the name of St. John the Baptist. And why? Follow us please for a moment and we will tell you!

Who was St. John the Baptist? He was the Precursor of Christ, the "voice crying in the wilderness," the one who was "to make straight the ways of the Lord," the herald of the Redeemer, the

Baptist of the Son of God, the martyr for the faith of the Messiah. What is and has been the French race? France was the "eldest daughter of the Church," and the child of her predilection, until the cursed breath of infidelity swept, like a simoom of poison, across her valleys, and then she became the persecutor of the Faith and the enemy of God's envoys. But the race has ever been faithful to its mission, no matter how politicians and adventurers, impious writers and blood-thirsty revolutionists raved against the Church of ages. The great, warm heart of France beats with Catholic pulsations, if not in the bosoms of the great ones, at least in the breasts of millions of the people, the sons of France came here to build up a great country and to open avenues for the pioneers of the Church. You—as a people—are the St. Johns the Baptists of the Faith that Christ left to His apostles and their successors. As St. John went before the Divine one, so have you—as a race—been chosen to become the Precursors of the religion that He confided to His Vicar; you are the "voice crying out in the wilderness," of our great "forests primeval;" you are the advance-guard whose duty it is to "make straight the ways of the Lord," that is to say of the Church. Such is your heaven-imposed mission, and you have no right to turn from its accomplishment. Are you the Precursors of the Faith, when you efface the name of that Religion and fling open your doors to the natural enemies of your institutions? Are you fulfilling out the grand, the noble, the glorious part which you have been called upon, by the Almighty, to play in the drama of history, when you place the Religion that you cannot separate from your national aspirations upon a level with what you know to be error? The fact is that all the excuses of "liberal-mindedness," "larger horizons," "more cosmopolitanism," "broader views," "absence of prejudice," and "bigotry," are all—in this case—mere substitutes, for liberal-Catholicism, indifference, irreligion, anti-clericalism, and final infidelity. And we tell you, gentlemen, that these are the words that will be inscribed upon the black banner of destruction that will float over the ruins of your religious and national institutions, unless you show a truer spirit and a more really national soul.

It is not Dalton McCarthy that will efface the French language—should it ever unfortunately perish here;—it is not Orangeism that will wipe out the French laws—if ever they are abolished;—it is not the natural enemy of our religion that will undermine or batter down the sacred institutions of the land. If these relics of a glorious past and safeguards of a still more glorious future are to disappear, it will be due to the absence of a true Catholic spirit in the French-Canadian race; it will be due to the turning of a whole people aside from a great mission; it will be due to the infidelity that undermined the whole generation in France, to the irreligion that blasted the laurels of the brow of *la fiele ainee de l'eglise*, to the spirit of socialism that rocked to its foundation the pillar of France's glory and convulsed the nation until she became the prey of her greatest enemies. These are the foes that haunt the footsteps of the French in Canada, that lurk along the pathway of their national prosperity, that menace to dig the abyss into which they inevitably must plunge if not checked in time.

We say that upon the fidelity of the French-Canadian race to its mission we as Catholics must depend in this country, and this action of the St. Jean Baptiste Society is the first danger signal that warns us of a possible failure in that

mission. The act is dogmatically wrong, and only short-sighted men could fail to see that it is so.

"A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT."

In the last number of the Ave Maria, the Rev. Reuben Parsons, D.D., has a beautiful article on Brother Philip, the famous superior-general of the Christian Brothers, who died in 1871. He thus commences his able paper: "Voltaire thought it good, necessary, and of the very essence of things in a well-ordered state, that 'there should be in it ignorant tatterdemalions; when the populace begins to reason, all is lost.' At the time when the Sage of Ferney penned this sentiment, a Christian hero, a saint, a priest of the Most High, renounced his not inconsiderable patrimony at the feet of the poor and devoted his energies to the foundation and perfection of an institute which was to combat the cynical idea. And to this day that brainless mob of fancied freethinkers which adores Voltaire as its patriarch assails the sons of Blessed La Salle, because of their cure of the victims of poverty, with the name of 'Ignorantins;' while those who are jealous of the success attained re-echo the senseless cry."

The other day, at a school examination, a gentleman saw fit to cast most uncalled-for slurs upon the order of the Christian Brothers; he pointed to their pupils as examples of ignorance until they came under his care; and while expressing himself with very bad taste and in worse grammar, gave evidence of an egotism that is excusable in a clever young man, and of an ingratitude that is pardonable in neither young nor old.

Very unlike Brother Laur, who when the order was suppressed by the Commune in France, went forth as a pedagogue through the land, but when his glorious congregation was revived at Lyons, not only returned, but brought with him young Matthew Bransiet, the future General and heroic defender of the noblest institution of modern times. To criticise the pupils who had passed through the Brothers' hands is a poor recommendation for the one who so openly gave vent to his spleen on the occasion in question. It was very ill-advised and untimely indeed, and on maturer reflection the speaker would certainly have seen that he was offering his hearers a very questionable certificate as to his own acquirements. The reason is patent; for whatever education or instruction he ever received came from the Christian Brothers. From childhood he was brought up by the Sons of La Salle; any training in teaching that he ever got was from them; every qualification he possesses was secured in some one of their institutions. Moreover, his experience of the world, as a lay teacher, extends over the space of one year and no more. We freely admit that a talented young man may have an extraordinary idea of his own abilities, that he may have certain personal feelings of animosity against others, that there may be, in his mind, sufficient grounds for such feelings, and that he may be animated with the laudable ambition of contrasting his own merits with what he imagines to be the demerits of others; but in all this there is no excuse for a sweeping attack that reflects upon a whole order of teachers whose superiority has been established by the experiences of long years both in the old world and in the new.

It may be contended that this is a matter that does not concern us; we think the contrary. It is our duty to see that justice be done to our worthy religious teachers, and when a public as-

sault—no matter how indirect or covert—is made upon them, we feel that a public justification of them is necessary. Mark Twain tells of an article he once wrote on "The Murder at Dutch Nick's," which called forth such a flood of adverse criticism that he felt himself entirely crushed and was about to abandon forever the profession in which he was destined to shine. A friend told him that if he kept cool for a while and learn a lesson from that experience he might yet find that when many of his other works would be forgotten his story of the murder at "Dutch Nick's" would be recalled with pleasure. And so it turned out. That very sweep of criticism shunted Mark Twain on to another track, and instead of coming to a sudden ending in a literary crash, he rattled on to fame and prosperity.

None are so inexperienced as men who imagine that they possess all the experience required in life. It is very unwise to rush against a stone wall and attempt to batter it down with one's head: the head generally gets the worst of it. It is just as foolish to start out upon life in antagonism to the representatives of what universal experience admits to be one of the finest bodies of instructors that our religion has ever produced: still more senseless is it, when common gratitude, not to speak of prudence would forbid such a course.

IT WAS WITH NO SLIGHT DEGREE OF RELIEF that we read last week of Mr. Gladstone's determination to end the Home Rule discussion in committee upon the 31st of this month, and noted the enthusiastic manner in which the statement was received. This augurs well for the future of the Bill. For a short time every patriotic Irishman, at home or abroad, felt disheartened on account of the clouds that appeared along the horizon. If ever in the history of the Irish people there was need of union and perfect harmony it certainly is at this moment. To be so near the goal of a people's long retarded aspirations and to have the cup once more dashed from the nation's lips would be a catastrophe so terrible that its effects are incalculable. Surely, surely individual differences can be crushed for a time—for a short time! If not, then farewell to all the hopes that have been cherished for over a century.

AS WE ISSUE OUR NEXT PAPER on that extraordinary day—the 12th July—we will furnish a few appropriate texts for the No-Popery preachers and lecturers.

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH.

The Rev. Father Elliott, C.S.P., to Preach.

On Sunday last, at St. Patrick's Church, the Rev. Father James Callaghan, SS., read the pastoral from His Grace Archbishop Fabre, on the subject of the burning of the Villa Maria Convent, and the appeal for contributions to aid in restoring that splendid institution. We give elsewhere the letter itself, and beg of our readers to kindly peruse it with care. Before reading the pastoral the Rev. Father announced that on Sunday next, the pulpit of St. Patrick's will be occupied by the Rev. Father Elliott, the famous Paulist orator and missionary, who will speak on the important subject of "Why I am a Catholic." It is probable that Father Elliott will preach both at High Mass and at Vespers. Father James requested that the pew-holders would extend every courtesy possible to the many strangers and non-Catholics who will, no doubt, attend to hear Father Elliott on that occasion. This will be a most favorable opportunity of welcoming to our church numbers of those who are to flock in during the week, and who come to hold the great Christian Endeavor Convention. By acceding to the request the parishioners will be enabled to extend a real hospitality to them and will do honor to Montreal in general and to St. Patrick's in particular.