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Commons R. R.
Dec. 1909

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MONTREAL, THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1909

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FREEDOM IN CANADA IMPRESSES VISITOR.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S COMPARISON

Finds Restrictions at Home But Full Liberty in Dominion.

The English Catholic arriving in Canada cannot fail to be struck immediately by the absolute freedom his creed enjoys, as compared with the restrictions from which it suffers in his own country. From the moment of his landing at Quebec he sees the priests in their soutanes and monks in their habits walking the streets like ordinary citizens; he sees not infrequently passers by raise their hats to them as a mark of respect; he sees throngs of people passing in and out of the churches all day long, in fact he is living in and breathing a Catholic atmosphere. In England the priest and the monk leave their distinctive garb when they go out in public and become indistinguishable from the clergy of any other denomination, for in spite of the advance of freedom of thought and conscience Catholics are still viewed with curiosity mingled with suspicion. Unfortunately the ignorance, which is the real foundation of this bias and prejudice, is still far from being completely removed.

A STRANGER INDEED.

Hence the Catholic Englishman sometimes feels more or less a stranger in his own country and it can be imagined that the sight of his creed being generally practised and that his is the Faith upheld by the great mass of the people, fills him with a keen sense of comfort and homeliness. He sees on all sides substantial evidence of the interest displayed in the Church's welfare, the pride taken in the adornment of the sacred buildings, the magnificence of the charitable institutions, the actual place the life of the Church occupies in the life of the people. From the pulpits priests direct their flocks and their admonitions are heeded, whether they be concerned with public or private life, with undesirable publications or the avoidance of places of amusement under the ban of episcopal displeasure such control would be impossible in England, and direct censure of that kind only provocative of irritation and bitterness on the part of non-Catholics.

REVENUE OFFICER'S TARGETS.

Monasteries, convents, hospitals, and homes carried on by religious escape taxation in this country, in England they are the target of the revenue officer. In Canada any great festival or celebration is generally ushered in by a religious celebration, Catholic in nature, which is attended by the chief local dignitaries; in England the presence of the King at the memorial Mass of the late King of Portugal, who happened to have been a close personal friend, called forth bitter protests from a portion of the community. In fine there is an air of "live and let live" in Canada which in England is conspicuous by its absence.

One trait, however, strikes the visitor as curious and perhaps not altogether desirable, and that is the cleavage which apparently exists between French and English in the Catholic world. Naturally there must be French priests for French people and vice versa, but that does not seem sufficient explanation of the rift that undoubtedly separates the twain. Though the French may be alien in original nationality and speech, they have sufficiently proved their loyalty to their adopted country and to the outsider it seems a pity that a common faith cannot be the means of cementing a firm friendship and lasting understanding.

THE CHURCH IN CANADA.

The vast wealth of the Church in Canada is also remarkable, for whereas the religious institutions here are rich enough to amply provide for their own needs, in England there is scarcely a Catholic charity which is not crippled for want of funds. A glance through the pages of the Tablet is sufficient proof of the accuracy of this statement, appeal after appeal urges that unless help is forthcoming the continuation of their work will be impossible; refugees, schools, orphanages, all tell the same tale. It must not be supposed for a moment that this is due to any lack of generosity on the part of English Catholics, on the contrary they have literally made bricks without straw and existing churches bear witness to their devotion and piety. It is simply consequent on the fact that as a body they are recruited from the aristocracy and the working class, leaving the great and wealthy middle class practically untouched.

THE ENGLISH PRIEST.

The average stipend of the English parish priest rarely exceeds more than five dollars a week and cases

MIXED MARRIAGES UNDER DISCUSSION.

FATHER PHELAN'S COMMENTS.

Favors Such Ceremonies Being Performed in the Church.

Father Phelan, discussing regulations of the diocese of St. Louis relative to mixed marriages, writes in "The Western Watchman," "We are strongly in favor of having mixed marriages performed in the church. In almost every case the non-Catholic party would prefer to be married before the altar. It certainly would add greatly to the dignity and solemnity of the ceremony; and in these days of easy divorce we cannot surround the marriage rite with too much solemnity. They do it in every country in the world save where the English language is spoken. Why should the speaking of a certain tongue entail ecclesiastical disfranchisement? In nine cases out of ten, where the Catholic party does his or her whole duty, the non-Catholic partner is sooner or later converted. That happy consummation would be greatly hastened by a more religious performance of the ceremony."

HOW TO PREVENT THEM.

It is hard to say what is best to do to prevent mixed marriages. They are coming more and more into disfavor among both bishops and priests. The children of mixed marriages are very often neglected. Where the non-Catholic parent stays out of the Church, the Catholic parent becomes neglectful. Mass and the sacraments become more and more neglected and religious education of the children is not attended to at all. Where it is so difficult to make parents do their duty to their children where both are Catholics, it is next to impossible to keep one party to the marriage contract strictly to the duty.

A PASSING FASHION.

The fact is, the cult of children is going out of vogue, and the burden of looking after them is falling more and more on the Church. If the Orphan Board of this city were to take all the children offered them by the Catholics of the city they would have on their hands to-day seven thousand instead of seven hundred. We are getting very much like the Chinese in our disregard of the natural rights of children; and we are worse than they; for a Chinaman will never throw a male child into the Ganges; while our Catholic people are ready to throw them by the thousand into the orphan asylum, which is a fate not so deplorable, but still deplorable enough. Let us hope and pray for a return of a more Christian spirit among our Catholic people."

have come under the direct observation of the writer where they received even less. At one newly formed parish in Sussex the young priest in charge was given a house and sixty dollars a year, anything more than that had to come out of the pockets of his parishioners, who were all working men. The Church in Canada has grown and flourished under more favorable conditions than these, and needless to say can look to a greater return for its labors. But there is one especial characteristic of Catholicism in Canada that merits particular mention and that is its inherent loyalty to the British flag. Without going into ancient history it has long been the dogma of the English and Catholic that loyalty to the Church and throne was incompatible, and in spite of the numberless Catholic soldiers and sailors who swell the ranks of the British forces, the old stigma still remains, and if occasion demands is trotted out to do service.

THE BLIND CRITICS.

Surely these critics must be willfully blind if they deliberately ignore the lessons that Canada can teach on the subject; here are literally thousands of British subjects, strong and unswerving in their faith to the Holy See and not a whit the less loyal on that account to their King. On the contrary, judging by the tone of the Catholic press, it would appear that the French Catholic has realized to the full that he can enjoy greater liberty of conscience in the Canada of to-day than he could under any other conditions, and no matter what sentiments may linger in his heart for the tri-color, events in France and the rampant anti-clericalism prevalent there, must make him thankful that he is free to serve his God in his own way and without let or hindrance.

A. B. L.

Champlain Tercentenary.

Event Marks Another Milestone in Catholic History of America.

Successful Excursion of St. Aloysius Parish to Plattsburg.

A pleasant outing for Montreals was arranged for Wednesday's celebration at Lake Champlain by the Rev. M. L. Shea, pastor of St. Aloysius, and some five hundred parishioners and their friends attended. At eleven o'clock the train pulled into Plattsburg, and the objective point being the Summer School at Cliff Haven, thither all steps were directed.

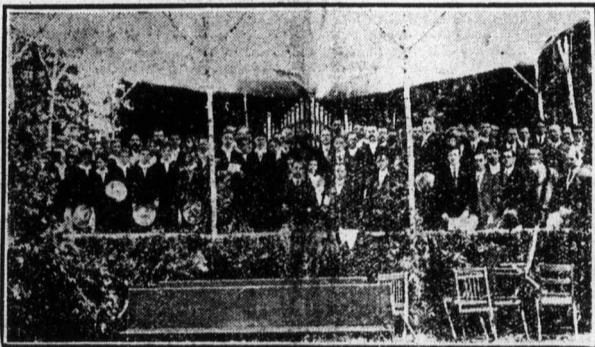
The arrival at Cliff Haven of President Taft, Governor Hughes, of New York, Lieut.-Gov. Pelleties of Quebec, and Hon. R. Lemieux, mense ovation. The speech of the President was most enthusiastically received. He said in part: "We are reaching a point in this country where we are very much more tolerant of everything and everybody than in the past, and where we are giving justice where justice ought to be given. We are

lot, my dear friends, and in that respect just by good luck I came to be an exception, which will perhaps stand for many years as the sole exception, of being a representative of the United States at the Vatican."

THE CARDINAL'S THANKS.

Cardinal Gibbons, in thanking the President for his allegiance, said every word of his speech was an inspiration which would long be remembered by the people at Cliff Haven. What Mr Taft said of true religion was that it enabled each one to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Cardinal Gibbons said he fully endorsed the declaration; certainly America had no cause of complaint when the people had liberty without license and authority which did not bear down the God-given right of conscience.

Dinner over it was optional what

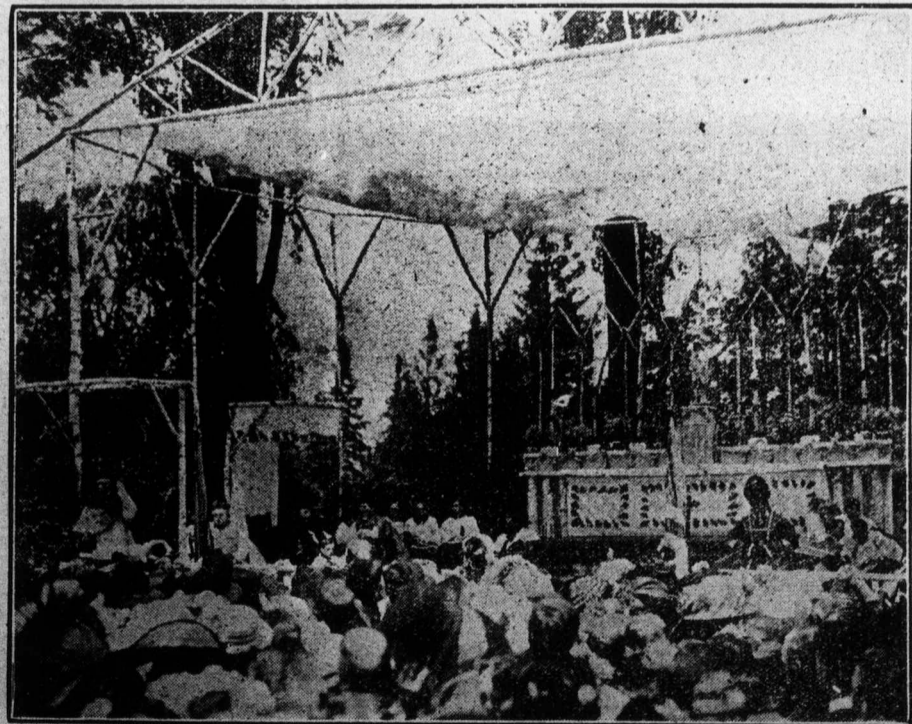


THE CHAMPLAIN TERCENTENARY.—St. Patrick's Choir of Montreal the members of which sang at the religious ceremony on Sunday.

no longer cherishing those narrow prejudices that come from denominational bigotry and we are able to recognize those great heroes in religious Christian faith of the past and appreciate the virtues they exhibited and follow the examples they have set us.

In speaking of the difficulties in the Philippines between the Government and the Church, the President said: "Fifty years ago if it had been proposed to send a representative of the Government to the Vatican to negotiate and settle matters arising

the next move would be. Although the military parade drew crowds back to Plattsburg, still others sought the beauties of the woods around Hotel Champlain. A more enjoyable spot than these peaceful woods could hardly be imagined, where, amid the pines and birches, a perfect sky overhead, and the shimmering waters of the lake at one's feet, one could so easily forget for a while the sordid cares of life. Expressions of satisfaction were heard on all sides, and as the train left Plattsburg last evening, it was quite evident that a most en-



THE CHAMPLAIN TERCENTENARY.—Cardinal Gibbons preaching at the open-air solemnization of Mass on Sunday.

in a country like the Philippines between the Government and the Roman Catholic Church, it would have given rise to the severest condemnation and criticism on the part of those who would have feared some diplomatic connection between the Government and the Vatican contrary to our traditions; but within the last ten years that has been done, with the full concurrence of all religious denominations, believing that the way to do things is to do them direct in the matter to be settled, that it should be settled with the head of the Church who has authority to act. And so it fell to my

joyable day had been spent and the Rev. Father Shea must be congratulated upon the happy result of his undertaking.

OF INTEREST TO CANADIANS.

To the Catholics of the great Dominion of Canada no less than to those of the United States, the Tercentenary celebration of the discovery of Lake Champlain is significant. The heroic deeds of Samuel Champlain are splendid alike in their historical connotation and their epoch-making consequences. The work of so single character of that period stands out in such perfect historical

relief as that of Champlain. The great movements of every age centre around the activities of some one dominating figure. In such a character the forces which make for progress and advancement become crystallized. The whole Champlain valley is linked in legend, song and story with events which tell of savage warfare as well as bitter struggles of three powerful nations contending for honor and empire. The Tercentenary celebration is a fitting commemoration of the achievements of the valiant sons of three nations, England, France and the United States. To the United States the celebration is a glorious monument to those who gave up their lives to found republican institutions. To the English, it is a beacon light, illuminating the heroic characters of a great and powerful nation. To the French, it is a splendid tribute to those dauntless souls who, sturdy and unafraid, brought Christianity and civilization to a new and unknown world. To the Catholics of Canada, perhaps more so than the Catholics of the United States, the events mark a milestone on the way of Catholic progress in America. Beside the Lily of France the French Jesuit planted the Cross of Christ. Three centuries have gone. Empires have been lost and won, but the cross which the early Fathers raised in the pathless forest, and the principles which they sutured in the hearts of the people have grown splendid with years, a guide post alike to all nations. Nothing has been left undone to fittingly commemorate so notable an occasion.

By reason of the closeness with which the history of Canada is linked to that of the United States by the achievements of Samuel Champlain, an important part has been assigned to the clergy and laymen of the great Dominion. Beneath the beautiful forest trees where once the savage Indian roamed and the French missionaries labored to enthroned the principles of the Catholic Church, here a grand forest cathedral has been made ready and in the quiet of the forest the celebration in honor of the Biscayan sailor was inaugurated with Pontifical Mass on Sunday, July 4. Bishop Hickey of Rochester was celebrant. His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons delivered a sermon, befitting the occasion, the special music of the Pontifical Mass was rendered by a choir of two hundred voices from St. Patrick's Church, Montreal. The choir was under the direction of Prof. Shea, organist. Through the kindness of Rev. Gerald McShane, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, a grand sacred concert was given on Sunday evening in honor of Cardinal Gibbons and the visiting clergymen from

the Dominion of Canada and the United States. Following so closely the Quebec celebration which also commemorated the achievements of Champlain, particular importance attaches to the programme arranged for the celebration at the Catholic Summer School, and quite naturally the people of Canada enjoyed no small part in making possible a celebration worthy of that courageous navigator who founded the city of Quebec, scattered the seed of Christianity and set in motion a chain of circumstances which changed the whole current of history.

DEATH OF PRIEST IN LEPER LANDS.

FR. CLEMENT DAMIEN'S FRIEND

Spent Forty-Six Years at Molokai Doing Heroic Work.

News of the death of Father Clement, the companion of Father Damien among the lepers on one of the Hawaiian islands, has inspired the following fine tributes from the Los Angeles Times:

"In the last watches of the night the man who listens to the heart-beat of the great world at the telegraph keys in The Times office was called by the deep-sea cables that connect California with Honolulu. And this is what the telegraph operator away across those tumbling leagues of ocean said:

"Father Clement, who came to Hawaii from France with Father Damien, in 1863, to devote his life to work among the lepers in the Molokai colony, died to-day."

A LIFE SACRIFICE.

"That was all—just those few lines—just those few little words. But the man in The Times office, weary with his long night's work, was not too weary to send the words down to the tireless, throbbing machines in the composing room with orders to border the despatch with stars—stars of glory for a hero dead—even as you saw at your breakfast table.

"Forty-six years—a whole lifetime in itself—spent among the lepers of Molokai; think of it. Nearly a half century ago this great-souled French priest placed himself voluntarily in that charnel-house of the Pacific, shut out from the world of his own free will, exiling himself forever from his own kind, from pleasure and happiness and all joy as we know those feelings, branding himself as 'unclean' and welcoming to his own body the ulcers and sores of a nameless disease.

NOT FOR GLORY.

"Why did he do it? Was it for glory and the world's acclaim? Was it that men might greet him with salutes upon his return from scenes of triumph? Ah, no, because for him there could be no return, as well he knew. The moment he set foot in that place of terror to which he went he knew that never again would he dare associate with other than lepers.

"It seems that, after all, Father Clement escaped the disease. Perhaps God spared him the torture as his reward, even as He spared Daniel in the lions' den, and the three men of Babylon from the fiery furnace.

"But however that may be, certain it is that when Father Clement died death gathered to its bosom a real hero. No need of trumpets to blare above his grave; no need of laurel crown or graven shaft. He asked no glory, but if there be a heaven where rules a living God, there shall be great glory there for this priest of the lepers."

School of Biblical Studies in Rome.

"Rome" announces that a Papal Brief is expected regarding the foundation of a great school of Biblical studies in Rome. In this brief Pius X. will announce that he has provided for the establishment in Rome, the natural centre of all sacred science, of an international institute for Higher Biblical Studies. It will be a university for all the branches of erudition and investigation connected with the Sacred Scriptures—Oriental languages, philology, scriptural history, exegesis, hermeneutics, and so on.

The scope of the new institute will be twofold: First, to promote, develop and co-ordinate the stores of Scriptural knowledge inherited from past ages and acquired in our own times, and second, to serve as a training ground for the professors of Scriptural studies throughout the Catholic world. This coming document may be said to put the crown on the work done by Pius X. in the preservation of the written word of God. He has given explicit directions for the study of the Scriptures in all the theological seminaries of Italy; he has established a Pontifical commission for the scientific revision of the text of the Vulgate, and now he founds a university, where the very latest and best knowledge on all subjects connected with the Bible will first be gathered and then diffused among the Christian people.

The moment could not have been better chosen. The recent studies and discoveries made by rationalists, Protestant and Catholic scholars have added a great wealth of erudition to the mass of Biblical knowledge possessed by students of previous generations, but united with a still greater luxuriance of ill-grounded speculations, false principles, prejudices and deductions not based on the premises. It will be the task of this new institute to separate the wheat from the chaff and give it for the nutriment of Christian scholarship.