

C. M. B. A.

Impressions from St. John

To the Editor of the Catholic Register.

Sir—Some impressions from our visit to the C.M.B.A. Convention at St. John, not already recorded in the REGISTER, may properly form the subject of a short letter. One thing forced itself on the notice of the visitor, the intensity and reality of the Catholic spirit as reflected in the Catholics of the city and their institutions. St. John is many ways a remarkable city. The configuration of its site is a pleasant departure from the flat monotony of most Canadian cities. It is built on hills and in valleys by the waters of a noble river and is watered by the tides of the majestic Bay of Fundy. Its early history is illustrated by the presence and heroism of the bravest of our Catholic pioneers, and its recent history, its marvellous recuperation after the most destructive fire that Canada ever saw, is a record of public and private virtues, exerted for the common good, that is an honor to human nature, as it is the just source of pride to every citizen of St. John. It is fitting, therefore, that from such a city there should come forth some thing of honor as a witness to the faith planted by Champlain and his Catholic successors on the banks of the St. John. And so it is. St. John has not been a shining instance of



T. P. COFFEY, Guelph.
Com. on Laws.

religious toleration, and St. John Catholics have been neither numerous nor wealthy. Consequently many tests of Catholic fortitude have come unsought. It is only a few years ago since the school question in New Brunswick roused the slumbering fire of religious prejudice, and in no place was the bitterness of the conflict more bitter than in St. John. In the first flush of victory the majority wanted the Sisters removed, as teachers, from the schools. Their religious garb was offensive. Sacred pictures, statues and crucifixes were removed from classrooms, for these reminded the pupils they were Catholics and that they were in Catholic schools. After years of concession by the majority, religious instruction was allowed to be taught in the school-room after school hours, the children having first actually gone beyond the school grounds and stood upon the sidewalk before being recalled to the school for Catechism. Regulations, petty, spiteful and annoying, went through grades of evolution until to-day the Catholic children of St. John are taught by Catholic teachers, the boys by lay teachers, male and female, the girls mostly by the Sisters, who undergo the ordinary departmental examinations prior to teaching, held for the most part, however, in the convents. Catholic taxes are paid into the same fund as those of Protestants, and while Protestants in St. John pat themselves on the back and say they have satisfactorily solved the school question, the Catholics make the most of the situation and seem satisfied. To

this happy consummation much has been contributed by the urbane but firm attitude of Bishop Sweeney of St. John, who is universally respected and beloved, the perseverance and self-respect of the Catholic people and some remains of shame and fairplay on the part of leading Protestant citizens.

Among many institutions for the relief of the sick and destitute supported directly by Catholics, other



P. J. O'Rourke, St. John, N.B.
Trustee.

should be mentioned in particular St. Vincent's Orphanage, which is principally supported by contributions from the diocese of St. John. At our visit there were 61 girls and 75 boys in the institution, little helpless ones, receiving the kindest of treatment and the hands of the good Sisters. The Sisters of this order, the Sisters of Charity, have charge of 6 class rooms which are attached to the Convent, where 290 girls from the city attend. Thanks to the ability of the good teachers, the convent school has attained a high degree of efficiency.

Everyone who visits St. John should inspect the Convent of the Sacred Heart. This is a large four storey building built on the top of a mountain ridge known as Mount Pleasant, which skirts the northern side of the city. The convent stands about 600 feet above the level of St. John. River and enjoys perhaps the most picturesque situation of any similar institution in America. It reminds one of the castles pictured us along the Rhine far above the tumult of the common world, overlooking a circuit of fifty miles or more, where the young minds of the scholars enjoy the choicest view of nature in her most beautiful form, lakes, rivers, mountains and the Bay of Fundy, with the bold coast of Nova Scotia in the distant south. The convent, long known as Reid's Castle, was built forty years ago by Robt. Reid, Esq., at that time a large ship owner, and was the theatre of the city revels when the Prince of Wales visited St. John. In 1890 the Sisters of the Sacred Heart bought it



J. J. WEINERT, Neustadt.
Grand Guard.

for \$10,000, less than one-fourth its value, and to-day the grounds, which lie mostly on the sloping hill side, are a maze of drives and flower plots, ornamented with statuary. One of our party, whose eyes are not true for long range, mistook a beautifully draped figure of the goddess Flora, a fancy of the former owner, for a sacred statue, to the great amusement of Madame who escorted us. This beautiful building in so grand a site is destined under the ladies of this distinguished order to be a centre of

usefulness and goodness for the whole maritime district.

We visited the noble Cathedral of Mary Immaculate begun in 1850 by Bishop Connolly, afterwards Archbishop of Halifax, and finished by Bishop Sweeney, who during his episcopate of 34 years has spent on it the enormous sum of \$70,000. There are five other Catholic Churches in St. John, all attended by resident pastors. At St. Peter's is a small community of Oblate Fathers, as well as a flourishing convent.

The Catholic Societies, such as the C.M.B.A. and the A.O.H. are in a prosperous condition and have the warm approval and support of His Lordship the Bishop, while the Socialities and other religious societies embrace a large and fervent proportion of the population. The Catholics of St. John are sterling men and have given a good example of many sacrifices endured for the faith, and are fine samples of the type of Irishmen who have made themselves respected by their Protestant fellow-citizens.

The visiting delegates and their lady friends were under countless obligations for many acts of special kindness as well as the general and generous hospitality which made their visit to the convention an epoch in their lives. Special thanks are due to Brothers Carleton, Burns, Judge Ritchie, Drs. Travers and McInerney, Messrs. Driscoll, Finnegan, Jas. Berry of the Sun, P. P. Curran, P. J. O'Rourke and W. Delaney of the



W. P. KILLACKEY, Chatham.
Trustee.

I. C. R., all of whom did their utmost to make our trip down East a pleasant and enjoyable occasion.

I can honestly endorse what you say of the Toronto delegates. They acquitted themselves admirably as did all our representatives from Ontario. To one of Toronto's delegation, however, you do scant justice. I mean Mr. W. T. Kernahan. This gentleman made hosts of warm friends, who admired the ability with which he discharged the arduous duties laid to his charge by the Toronto branches. If Bro. Kernahan again represents Branch 145 he will find hosts of friends to welcome him in Ottawa.

It was one of the pleasures of our visit to St. John to meet Dr. R. F. Quigley, who is best known to Ontario Catholics (and badly at that) as the author of an entertaining and learned book "Ipse, Ipsa, Ipsum," published in a new edition under the more intelligible title "Mary, the Mother of Christ, in Prophecy and its fulfillment," written as the name tells, to vindicate against misrepresentation and prejudice the attitude of the Church toward the Blessed Virgin. The Doctor is a member of the C.M.B.A. and deserves well of the Catholics of Canada as the best known and most learned among the laity of Canada. He is also a lecturer of unusual ability and popularity in the East and is the author of many good articles on Catholic and Canadian subjects. It is always interesting to know something of the personality of an author and at the risk of being considered a flatterer where flattery would be offence, and tiresome when only a friendly interest is the excuse, I may say that Dr. Quigley is about 40 years of age, unmarried, a lawyer by profession, of less than middle height, who wears a

clean-shaven face, dresses neatly and is a favorite with everybody. A native of Chatham, N.B., and educated there at St. Michael's College, he graduated in law at Harvard and Boston universities, received the degree of Doctor of Literature from Laval, and in recognition of his services to Catholic literature and Catholic truth was specially favored by our Most Holy Father with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This honor Dr. Quigley modestly wears, and it is to be hoped that every Catholic family in Ontario will realize the merit which His Holiness so signally rewarded, by reading for themselves the learned and interesting work of this chivalrous and enthusiastic Catholic. A number of us visitors were favored with a visit to the doctor's rooms, and there saw a collection of good things, articles of vertu, statuary, pictures, relics, all pertaining to Catholic subjects, volumes on everything good in Catholic and secular literature, encyclopedias, works without end, everything, the finest private collection of valuable books we ever saw. To a man of the marvellous memory and cultivated intellect, the Catholic instinct and wonderful facility of expression, possessed by Dr. Quigley, such surroundings as we saw readily explained why the Catholics of St. John, and in fact, the whole maritime region, look up to the modest and learned doctor, as a champion whom they love and revere.

St. John was a delight to all who visited it, but we should not forget Montreal where we stayed one Sunday on our way down. The brethren then held a religious reunion with us in St. James' Cathedral, and the arrangements happily carried out Bros. A. H. Spedding, T. P. Tansey, James Coffey and T. J. Finn of the Gazette contributed in a large degree to the pleasures of our journey. W. V. LYNCH.

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