

OUR WAYFARER

Relates an Incident of the Incucation of the Spirit of Bigotry.

Some Comments on the Reference Made to the School Question by Dr. Campbell of St. Gabriel's Presbyterian Church—A Timely Rebuke to Thoughtless Young Women—An Approving Word for Unity Among Irishmen in Montreal

"Mr. Silas, why don't you say something about the hideous decorations of some of our altars?" said a young lady to me the other day. "Somebody ought to protest against them."

Bearing the suggestion in mind, I stepped into a church next day and proceeded to take observations. At first sight everything seemed artistic and calculated to inspire reverence and devotion. The stained windows, the springing columns, the graceful arched roof—all was perfect until I drew near the Communion rail, and then there came into view—alas! that I should have to confess it—a noble altar decorated with paper flowers. Think of it!

Who is responsible for these atrocities? Generally, I suppose the sacristan. Sometimes they are due, too, to the well meant but ill-directed generosity of members of the congregation, who make presents to the sanctuary of articles that are anything but "a joy forever." Can not we cultivate a better taste?

As an example of how silly bigotry may be implanted and fostered, let me relate a little incident that came under the notice of a lady one evening last summer. She had been attending a service at the Franciscan Church on Dorchester street, and on her way home overtook a nursemaid leading a tiny tot of three or four by the hand and engaged in making the innocent child repeat after her "Boo to the Pope, boo to the Pope." Of course the incident was ludicrous as well as silly, but the professions that have been offered to the Cross within the Franciscan gates may be traced to just such ignorant instructions of youth as the maid mentioned above.

A waxwork representation of the Court of Rome may be a good advertisement, but it is hardly a reverent one for a Catholic to adopt. It jars one's sense of the fitness of things to see an effigy of the Pope presiding over household furniture—a sight that may be seen any day on St. Catherine street just now.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell, of St. Gabriel's Presbyterian Church, hit the nail on the head when he said, in his Thanks-giving Day sermon, that the Protestants of Manitoba have profited by the school bill agitation, inasmuch as it has been the means of introducing religious instruction into the public schools. As a Christian minister the reverend Doctor was pleased to see that the State had been awakened to the fact that children have souls as well as bodies to be cultivated; but as a man of the world he was disheartened enough to see also that the prudging recognition of this truth forced from the law-makers will not satisfy that particular element of the population which does not consider religion merely an adjunct to education but insists that it must be the corner-stone thereof. Dr. Campbell expressed a doubt as to the light in which Catholics would look upon the "settlement"; he feared it would not meet their views. The reverend gentleman is to be congratulated upon his discernment, and upon the absence of any tendency upon his part to insist that because the school-bill suits Protestants it must, therefore, be acceptable to Catholics. Evidently, Dr. Campbell has a clearer apprehension of what the Catholic Church calls a religious education than some Catholics have, if we are to estimate their knowledge by their utterances.

It is refreshing also to hear of his allusion to the bumpiness displayed by the Manitoba majority in arrogating to itself the right to resist Federal legislation because it did not happen to please it. We have had so much nauseating clap-trap about the "free sovereign people of Manitoba," that the Doctor's sensible remarks upon the subject have quite a grateful effect. It is to be regretted that a larger number of Protestant ministers do not endeavour to see more than one side of a question when Catholic interests are at stake. Their sympathies would be considerably broadened by the process.

I wonder if I shall get into trouble if I venture to assert that a great many young ladies are much too fond of making the confessional the subject of thoughtless gossip! It is never very edifying to hear three or four girls exchanging notes on this matter, and giggling over the admissions they received from Father So and So; but when this is done in the hearing of non-Catholics it is simply outrageous. What must a Protestant think of the Sacrament of Penance when he hears it made the subject of silly conversation and meaningless jests! More scandal is given in this way than people are aware of. A piece of advice is repeated or an admonition retained that was meant only for the penitent, and because nobody but herself knows just why either was necessary, wrong interpretations are liable to be placed upon it by the people she thinks she is amusing. It seems incredible that a Catholic woman who has mastered even the rudiments of her religion should so far forget herself as to relate her experiences in the confes-

sional for the entertainment of a roomful of acquaintances, Catholic and Protestant; but it has been done, and by persons who considered themselves very well instructed indeed. Comment upon such an exhibition of bad taste—to call it nothing worse—is unnecessary. Surely there are plenty of subjects of conversation without dragging in those that ought to be too sacred for frivolous discussion.

It is cheering to hear that something is at last being done to unite the Irishmen of Montreal. A man's best friend is himself, it is well to remember.

I hope very few readers of the True Witness missed the intellectual treat afforded last Thursday night by the lecture of Mr. Henry Austin Adams, in the Academic hall of the Geu. The directors of the Free Library are to be doubly congratulated; first, on the spirit that moved them to give Montrealers an opportunity to hear men whose eloquence and learning have made their names famous; and secondly, upon the success that crowned the initial lecture of the course promised. Of late years people seem to have tired of lectures, be they never so brilliant. The drama and the concert have proved dangerous rivals. But the attendance at Mr. Adams' lecture proved that there still exists a numerous body who appreciate keenly an entertainment that appeals to the higher faculties of the mind. All who take an interest in the questions that agitate the world to-day should make a point of attending every lecture of the series. The tickets are placed at a price that puts them within the reach of all.

SILAS WEGG.

CATHOLICS PROTEST.

MEETING IN WINNIPEG PASSES A LOT OF RESOLUTIONS.

WINNIPEG, Man., December 9.—The Catholics of this city met in St. Mary's Church to night for the purpose of protesting against the settlement of the school question. Resolutions were passed protesting against the terms of the arrangement, affirming that the terms are wholly insufficient to redress the wrongs; condemning the Federal Ministers for trying to force on the Catholic minority a proposal considered inadequate, and also for not consulting the minority in the negotiations. As loyal citizens, the meeting claimed British justice, nothing more or less. It was also resolved that copies of the resolutions be mailed to His Excellency the Governor-General, to Hon. Wilfred Laurier and his colleagues and to Sir Charles Tupper and the members of his late Cabinet.

LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART ALMANAC.

The Almanac of the League of the Sacred Heart, for 1897, is, as usual, full of bright stories, exquisite illustrations, music and verse. An effort has been made this year to make the Almanac a complete report of the work done by the Apostleship of Prayer in the United States, in 1896. Very few, even of the members of this great pious organization, comprehend the vastness of the work for which it has been founded. Among other things which make the Almanac indispensable for every Associate of the League is the complete League Calendar,—the list of the Central Directors of the League throughout the world, of the various Messengers, of the publications of the League,—together with a chapter of directions on correspondence with the Central Direction of the United States, which has its quarters at 27 and 29 West Sixteenth street, New York.

Many Directors circulate these Almanacs among the Associates in their parishes. It can be obtained at the Central Direction for 12c. by mail.

(FOR THE "TRUE WITNESS") THE WAIL OF OUR DEAD.

DEPROFUNDIS.

Out of the depths do I cry to Thee: Out of the depths do I sigh to Thee. Oh! in Thy mercy hear Thou me: Stretch forth Thine arm to comfort me.

In these dread flames I am burning still, In these dread flames I am yearning still, Yearning for peace, my soul to fill: Sighing for rest, 'tis Thy sweet will.

Do not, O Lord, all my failings mark: But to my wail in Thy mercy mark: Brighten those depths that are now so dark: Deep thro' my soul send your love's sweet spark.

From morning's dawn until darkness late, My soul hath sighed at Thy mercy's gate, From evening's close until morn did break, I have cried to Thee from this burning lake.

Mercy, my God, some relief, oh! send, And Thy justice with mercy blend: My tongue is parched, my heart doth rend, Cancel my debt and my sufferings end.

At least, you, my friends, one and all, The cooling dew of your prayer let fall: That I from my faults be cleansed and rise, Now plead for me. Offer sacrifices.

Out of these depths do I cry to thee, Out of these depths do I sigh to thee: Oh! in thy pity hear thou me, Breathe one short prayer and comfort me.

F. W. G.

"Yes, I am a self-made man," said Clarence Bricktop, proudly. "I don't admire your taste in hair," replied Miss Kittish.—Harper's Bazaar.

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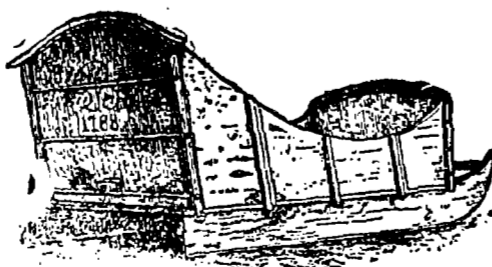
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