

THE SUNBEAM.

A MONTHLY FOR OUR CATHOLIC YOUTH.

PUBLISHED BY

D. M. QUINN, Proprietor "The True Witness,"

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EDITED BY A PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE.

Is the only paper of its kind in Canada, and deserves special consideration and encouragement. It has received the approbation of His Grace the Archbishop of Montreal. Its mission will be to counteract the pernicious influence of evil literature, bad books, dime novels, etc., with which our fair country is over-run.

For the present THE SUNBEAM will appear once a month. The publisher relies on the good will and efforts of the Reverend Clergy to bring it to the notice of their parishioners. Parents and Guardians of our Catholic Youth will further the cause of Catholic literature by subscribing for it and introducing it to their neighbors.

N.B.—Local items and letters from children will be cheerfully received.

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CHRISTMAS.

DEAR SUNBEAMS—Before the next appearance of THE SUNBEAM you will have celebrated the ever-glorious, ever-welcome feast of Christmas. Nearly nineteen centuries have elapsed since, over an humble stable in the village of Bethlehem, the angels sang, from on high, the heavenly canticle: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." The same hymn will soon be heard throughout the land. Angelic voices will soon repeat the glad tidings announcing the anniversary of the Birth of our Divine Lord and Savior. Our churches and homes will soon be filled with the delightful strains that enrapture the souls and hearts of every true Christian. With what yearning do you not look forward to the arrival of that thrice happy day. It was for you, dear sunbeams, that Jesus was pleased to be born in a poor stable. It was to teach you that you should love Him, by always being humble and poor in spirit. Some among the sunbeams have wealthy parents, grand homes. The parents of many other sunbeams may not be blessed with the goods of this life. Fortune may not have smiled on them. Perhaps their homes do not possess all those luxuries and fine things which make homes so attractive. It matters little whether you are poor or rich, rich or poor, Jesus loves you all the same. He wishes those who are rich not to place their affections in their wealth, but, for His sake, to use it in assisting those who are less favored by Divine Providence. There are many of our little sunbeams to whom a little Christmas gift, a few books or toys, would be most acceptable. Neither should the poor murmur. The thought of many others so well off, so happy, should not make them feel sad at their lot. What greater happiness, indeed, than to resemble the Divine Babe of Bethlehem, who, to show His esteem for holy poverty, His love for the poor, chose to be born, not in a palace or in a golden cradle—He might have done so had He so desired it—but in a poor manger, on a pallet of straw.

As the sunbeams diffuse joy and gladness over the whole earth, so must Christmas produce the same effects in all your hearts. Be glad and rejoice, dear sunbeams, at the approach of the great Festival. Prepare to celebrate it in a truly

Christian spirit. You all know Santa-Claus. He is now busy preparing the gifts which he intends to distribute to all the sunbeams who love their parents, who are obedient, good children. The Infant Jesus, too, has many gifts in store for all those who ask them of Him. When He will be in the little Crib, go and ask Him for all the graces you need yourselves; then ask Him to bless your good parents, and do not forget to say a short prayer for all the sunbeams (the editor included), who wishes you all, from the bottom of his heart, a merry, merry Christmas and a happy, happy New Year.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

THE Blessed Virgin Mary is exalted above all women, not only because she united "a mother's love with maiden purity," but also because she was conceived without original sin (original sin is explained in your catechism.) The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is thus expressed by the Church: "We define that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first moment of her conception by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved from every stain of original sin."

Unlike the rest of the children of Adam, the soul of Mary was never subject to sin, even in the first moment of its infusion into the body. She alone was exempt from the original taint. This immunity of Mary from original sin is exclusively due to the merits of Christ, as the Church expressly declares. She needed a Redeemer as well as the rest of the human race, and therefore was "redeemed, but in a more sublime manner." Mary is as much indebted to the precious blood of Jesus for having been preserved, as we are for having been cleansed from original sin. Are there any proofs which show that Mary was conceived without sin? The learned Cardinal Gibbons, whose words we have been quoting, thus continues: In Genesis we read: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head." All Catholic commentators, ancient and modern, recognize in the seed, the serpent and the woman types of our Saviour, of Mary and the devil. God here declares that the enmity of the seed and that of the woman towards the Tempter were to be identical. Now the enmity of Christ or the seed towards the evil one was absolute and perpetual. Therefore the enmity of Mary, or the woman, towards the devil, never admitted of any momentary reconciliation, which would have existed if she were ever subject to original sin. It is worthy of note that as three characters appear on the scene of our fall, Adam, Eve, and the rebellious angel, so three corresponding personages figure in our redemption, Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam, Mary, who is the second Eve, and the Archangel Gabriel. The second Adam was immeasurably superior to the first; Gabriel was superior to the fallen angel, and hence we are warranted by analogy to conclude that Mary was superior to Eve. But if she had been created in original sin, instead of being superior she would be inferior to Eve, who was certainly created immaculate. We cannot conceive that the mother of Cain was created superior to the mother of Jesus. It would have been unworthy of a God of infinite purity to have been born of a woman that was even for an instant under the dominion of Satan.

R. I. P.

Since the first issue of THE SUNBEAM, death has been reaping quite a harvest in our midst. ALICE DALY died in her fifteenth year, on the 17th inst. She was reckoned among the foremost pupils of St. Anthony's Academy, and was

esteemed by all who knew her. Alice will be long missed by the family circle to which she belonged.

KATIE LAWLOR died on the 18th inst., at the early age of eleven. She was a great favorite among her schoolmates in St. Patrick's School. Innocence was pictured in her countenance. Katie was pious, gentle and obedient. She has been transplanted from this valley of tears into the Paradise of God. Her loss will be keenly felt by her deeply afflicted parents, to whom we wish to convey the sentiments of our sympathy in their sad bereavement.

MISS ANNIE GREENE departed this life on Nov. 21st. She belonged to one of our most respectable families, and constituted its pride and happiness. She was completing her 22nd year when death snatched her from our midst. Annie made an excellent course of studies at Hochelaga Convent, and excelled as a catechist in St. Patrick's Church. She was greatly admired for the many sterling qualities she possessed, and is deeply regretted by all who had the happiness of forming her acquaintance. Throughout her illness she displayed uncommon patience, and cheerfully resigned her soul into the hands of her Creator. Her fondest wish was to die on a Festival of Our Blessed Mother and it was realized on the Feast of her Presentation.

We subjoin the following verses taken from Longfellow, and offer them as a balm of consolation to the relatives and friends of the dear ones whose obituary notice we have given above:—

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

There is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.
"Shall I have naught that is fair?" saith he;
"I have naught but the bearded grain!"
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them back again."
He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise,
He bound them in his sheaves.
"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,"
The Reaper said, and smiled;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child."
"They shall bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear."
And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she would find them all again
In the fields of light above.
O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an Angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

JUST THE THING FOR CHILDREN.

Dear Mr. Editor:—I received one of your papers, THE SUNBEAM, last Sunday, at catechism. It is the most interesting paper I ever read. Mother says it is just the thing for us children. The stories are both amusing and instructive. This is the first time I ever wrote to a stranger. I will try and get subscribers for your paper. I will not write a long letter this time so as to give some other little friend a chance. I close hoping your paper will prosper and soon be known all over the world as the children's friend. Wishing you success, I remain your little friend,

EVANGELINE, aged 12 years.

Montreal, Nov. 4, 1891.

[Many thanks to Evangeline for her welcome letter and for her good wishes. Her first effort in letter writing has been very successful. I am sure she is a very good little girl. Write soon again.—Ed.]