

# The Weekly Ontario

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## THE LATE POPE PIUS.

Throughout Canada the news of the death of Pope Pius X. will be received with profound regret, not only among the people of the Catholic faith, but also among people of different beliefs. While to the world at large the late Pontiff may not have assumed such great proportion as his predecessor, Leo XIII., yet he was a really great man and filled the grave responsibilities of his office with rare eminence. He aimed at simplicity and achieved distinction. Giuseppe Sarto came of humble family and his selection to the Pontificate again revealed the wonderful democracy of the Catholic Church. More than that, it was afterwards to show the wisdom of the selection. This man of peasant stock was to prove himself a really wonderful administrator and an advocate of simplicity in all things. This latter characteristic was a source of great strength to the Papacy during the eleven years in which Pius X. occupied the See of Peter. In his time he was to see great advances made by his Church in the English-speaking countries and he was also to see a better understanding between peoples of different religious beliefs. While France had broken the Concordat and had taken to herself great properties of the religious orders it was to result in a better, stronger, simpler faith among the people. While Pius X. was adverse to pomp and ceremony he was a strict disciplinarian and a great believer in missionary effort. He was adverse, too to controversy and advocated that priests should concern themselves in preaching the Gospel. He did much to improve the music of the church, disapproving of theatrical compositions and encouraging the simpler Gregorian chant. Indeed the simplicity of the man was an outstanding feature. Yet this same man improved the already wonderful administration of the Roman Catholic Church and did much to encourage art and architecture. One gracious act that will be particularly remembered in this Dominion was his elevation to the Sacred College of His Eminence Cardinal Begin. It can well be realized that the terrible events in Europe must have brought great sorrow to him and must certainly have shortened his useful and holy life, and it may well be that the sad circumstances of his death will bring home to millions as nothing else would the appalling seriousness of the present gigantic war and cause them to contemplate how foul a blot is this "inhuman butchery," as he called it, upon our civilization, how sad a commentary it is upon our twentieth century Christianity.

## AMERICAN OPINION.

In the Spanish-American war, the Kaiser of Germany proposed to intervene. Great Britain said that any European nation that undertook to fight the United States would have to fight her as well. This act of friendship, together with the protection given to Admiral Dewey by a British admiral against a German naval attack in the Philippines, was not only highly appreciated at the time, but marked the beginning of a new era in the tone of the American press and people regarding Britain and things British.

It is gratifying to find in the present European struggle, the sympathy of the American press is whole heartedly on the side of the Triple Entente, and chiefly because Great Britain is the backbone of that combination. The opinion is well-nigh unanimous that the German monarch represents all that is medieval in Europe, in contrast with all that is progressive, and, as an autocrat of unlimited ambition, it is time he was taken in hand. Democracy against absolutism, they seem to think, is the real issue. Moreover, Great Britain is entirely in the right in respecting treaties and standing by Belgium.

Quotations could be given in this sense from the New York Tribune, World and Sun, the Chicago Tribune, the Boston Transcript, the Springfield Republican, the Providence Journal, the Philadelphia Press and the Baltimore News. We mention only a few representative journals, of both political parties.

It is also remarkable that the American press seems to care very little what may be thought of its attitude by the foreign elements in the American population.

## THE TERRIBLE COST.

Perhaps the most significant lesson of the battle, or battles, of Liege is the advantage of strongly fortified defensive positions when resistance must be offered to a war of aggression. The advantage or fortified positions such as

these would be very little were the Belgians the aggressors and carrying the war into Germany; since it is the very solidity and permanency of the fortifications that render them so valuable now, as means of defence; whereas on the offensive they would simply have to be left behind once the army advanced. But for defensive purposes they are amazingly strong and useful—a fact strikingly shown by the New York World which, pointing out that even if the Germans have not lost more than 25,000 men at Liege (though all the facts indicate a loss of nearly double that number) the siege, will rank as "one of the bloodiest encounters in modern history." Comparing this siege with other battles and sieges The World offers some interesting comparisons as follows:

"To rout the French at Worth cost the Prussian army in 1870 only 10,642 men; to storm the pitiless height of Spicheren less than 5,000. At Gravelotte the French loss was 14,000. The attacking Germans' 21,000. The crowning victory of Sedan was accomplished with a Prussian loss just under 9,000. Worth and Sedan together were less fatal to German troops in 1870 than Liege in 1914, if this report is well founded. The entire Franco-Prussian war cost on the invaders' side only 28,000 killed and 101,000 wounded.

"A field of famous fights in Belgium. There was Fontenoy, in which neither side lost 8,000; and Blenheim, with a loss of 12,000 for the allies and a somewhat larger one for the French, besides prisoners; and Ligny, with a butcher's bill of 20,000 on both sides combined. Even in the great day of Waterloo, June 18, Prussians and English together lost but 22,000 men. Austerlitz, the summit of Napoleon's military career, cost the beaten allies, besides prisoners, less than 13,000. At Gettysburg, the "high tide of the Confederacy," Meade's army lost only 23,000 in killed and wounded."

And yet already in the storming of Liege—and it is a minor engagement as compared with what is to come—more lives have been lost than in any of these historically great battles. St. Helena will be none too secure a place for the mad German Emperor responsible for precipitating so bloody a war.

## THE PROMISE TO POLAND

One of the very few good things coming out of the war in Europe thus far is the promise of Russia to the Poles that they shall have comparative freedom of speech and conduct, the use of their language and enjoyment of their religion without interference from the State, if they will be loyal to the Empire in this struggle.

This proposal is not wholly to be taken as evidence of fright on the part of the Czar, but, rather, as proof of his desire to liberalize his government. It is well understood that while he is firm in his belief in the autocratic principle, he has still gone so far as to have set a Duma in motion which is gradually taking an important part in the political life of the Empire.

He has been greatly opposed in that work by the nobility around him and in every effort which he has made to improve the condition of his people he has had virtually to battle his way, for even a Czar cannot have his own way all the time without risk of losing his life itself at the hands of men more desperate than the ruler himself and more implacably devoted to their order with its privileges and possessions.

Probably the Czar feels that this is a good time in which to take a forward step toward attaching his subjects to the throne and that he may do it in safety under the stress of war, without fear of rejection in court circles. He is entitled to credit, at least for the moment.

We know what a desperate struggle his ancestor, Alexander II., had in carrying through the plan of freeing the serfs and we know that every endeavor on the part of the Czar of Russia to advance along the path of freedom has been bitterly contested by the narrower minded autocracy and bureaucracy by which he is surrounded.

It is highly significant that almost the first thing that the Russian ruler does is to suggest greater freedom for a very important province of his dominion.

## GREATEST OF ALL BATTLES.

The greatest battle in the world's history is to be fought along a curved battle line more than 200 miles in length. It would hardly be exaggeration to say that every foot of the ground has been fought over again and again, during many wars, in Flanders, in Lorraine, in the wars of the Angevins, in the battles of the first republic against the allies, and in the countless campaigns for possession of the Rhine. The most historic of all these fields is Waterloo, which may be fought over again before this battle ends. But the battle line is now so much longer than that at Waterloo a century ago, and thenumber of men to be engaged so infinitely greater, that all of Waterloo field, for the strategic purposes of what is now under way, can be marked by a red, blue or green-head pin on the war maps of the contending generals, as but one point in the greatest battle plain ever drawn

We may search the past in vain. Herodotus, though he runs into infinite and sometimes wearisome detail in telling everything about the host Xerxes sent, conveys no such idea of magnitudes and distances, armaments and movements in force as one who has followed everything from the beginning of this campaign can now have of what is impending.

That expert writer who fancied that the Germans were to fight with their faces turned to the North Sea, should begin to realize that there has been nothing in their movements, as we were bound to see them reflected from time to time, in British, French and Belgian official despatches, to indicate the there was any likelihood of that. It could easily seem, rather, and must have so impressed many minds, that from the first, although meeting with frequent checks, the Germans were drawing the big lines of battle to serve their own plans. Only at one point in Alsace, did the French commanders checkmate them by an offensive movement, and if they have been able to hold the advantage gained at that point, it is likely to prove of great strategic value to them before the battle is over. That the Germans realize this is made plain by their desperate efforts to regain the lost ground. Everywhere north of Alsace, however, along the Moselle, and in Belgium, it is impossible to find a point where the Germans have not seemed to pitch the battle lines to their liking, the allies in strong positions awaiting their coming.

If the Germans have succeeded in doing this, as is indicated, they have done more than the great Von Moltke did in '70, for he had not to meet the hostile aeroplanes, carrying war scouts, to spy out his formations and directions. Accordingly, he could and did move his great army almost in an unbroken line across France. If the Germans have now even approximated his great feat in mobilization and concentration, they have done more than he did, for their difficulties and handicaps have been infinitely greater. But, even with the same advantage of position they had forty-three years ago, the fact is not conclusive, nor even significant, beyond the fact of an army being on the defensive. It is a new France which confronts them, a France of which, militarily speaking, that of the early '70's was but a pale shadow. And France now has allies, posted in her long battle line against the Germans. Whatever may be happening in Russia, Austria, or Eastern Germany now, the eyes of the world for the next few days will follow the wavering line stretching almost from the English Channel to the north-east boundary of Switzerland, along the hundreds of thousands of men who will be fighting the greatest battle of all time.

The one bright spot in these dark days is the happy issue which promises to emerge from the Irish controversy. The world has never witnessed a finer spectacle than the marvellous transformation which has occurred in Ireland, where Nationalists and Ulsterites are standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of the Empire. It is the one thing worth while which is coming out of the present conflict. It is indeed a splendid tribute to the patriotism of the Irish people. Mr. John Redmond's speech in the House of Commons has been a great contributing factor to the splendid unity which inspires and actuates Irishmen to-day.

For the first time in almost a hundred years British troops are marching again through France. In 1815 they came down from Waterloo, where they had been killing Frenchmen, to put Louis XVIII. on the throne of Napoleon, an act of enmity under palaver of friendship. Yesterday they came as friends of the republic, soldiers themselves of what is practically a republic, and fighting in the people's cause of self-government against autocracy and the "divine right" of war-lords. That they are welcomed with the deepest enthusiasm the despatches need not state. Calais and Dunkirk, two of the landing places of the British army of invasion were once English outposts on the continent. The expeditionary line of march must pass more than one bloody battlefield where during centuries of warfare Englishmen and Frenchmen contended for the mastery. In all probability soldiers of the two nations are marching now in parallel or converging lines, to fight side by side on Belgian soil not far from where they met in the days of Blenheim and Fontenoy and Waterloo. The swiftness with which the crossing was accomplished hints that the British army is in a state of efficiency far higher than the Boer war discovered it in. By the Kaiser's invasion of Belgium, what was until then simply a naval agreement for the disposition of the French and British fleets has become a thick-and-thin war alliance between ancient enemies. Much history has been written in the past ten days, but nothing more remarkable than this union of the Briton and the Gaul on the soil of France.—New York World.

## JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE MOTHER.

The late Dr. Robert Parker of Stirling was a veteran of the American Civil war. As a young physician he volunteered his services to

the North for their medical Corps. In this way he was enabled to witness many of the important battles of that titanic struggle. He could relate many thrilling occurrences that took place during the various campaigns. Among others he used to tell how that on the evening before the great battle of Petersburg in 1864, the soldiers sang with such feeling as only soldiers could express the following song by Geo. F. Root, "Just Before The Battle Mother." The entire camp was swept with emotion and upon the cheeks of many hardened soldiers there was something that "washed down the stains of powder."

This song was widely popular during the latter period of the American war and is still to be found in most standard collections.

Just before the battle, mother,  
I am thinking most of you,  
While upon the field we're watching,  
With the enemy in view.  
Comrades brave are round me lying,  
Filled with thoughts of home and God,  
For well they know that on the morrow  
Some will sleep beneath the sod.

Farwell, mother, you may never  
Press me to your heart again;  
But oh! you'll not forget me, mother,  
If I'm numbered with the slain.

Oh! I long to see you mother,  
And the loving ones at home,  
But I'll never leave our banner  
Till in honour I can come,  
Tell the traitors round about you,  
That their cruel words, we know,  
In every battle kill our soldiers  
By the help they give the foe.

Hark! I hear the bugles sounding—  
'Tis the signal for the fight,  
Now may God protect us, mother,  
As He ever does the right.  
Hear the battle-cry of "Freedom,"  
How it swells upon the air;  
Oh yes, we'll rally round the standard,  
Or we'll perish nobly there.

## THE FADED COAT OF BLUE.

Another song that arose during the Anti-Slavery war was "The Faded Coat of Blue," which was written by John Hugh McNaughton (a minor poet and song writer, who was born in Caledonia, N.Y., in 1829), during the Civil War, and set to a sweet and plaintive air struck a sympathetic chord in the nation's heart, and was for years a most popular melody. Mr. McNaughton wrote a number of other popular songs, among them "Belle Mahone."

My brave lad he sleeps in his faded coat of blue,  
In a lonely grave unknown lies the heart that  
beat so true;  
He sank, faint and hungry, among the famished  
brave,  
And they laid him, sad and lonely, within his  
nameless grave.

No more the bugle calls the weary one,  
Rest, noble spirit, in thy grave, unknown;  
I'll find you and know you, among the good  
and true,  
When a robe of white is given for the faded  
coat of blue.

He cried: "Give me water, and just a little  
crumb,  
And my mother she will bless you through  
all the years to come;  
Oh! tell my sister, so gentle, good and true,  
That I'll meet her up in heaven in my faded  
coat of blue.

He said: "My dear comrades, you cannot take  
me home,  
But you'll mark my grave for mother, she'll  
find if she'll come;  
I fear she'll not know me, among the good and  
true,  
When I meet her in up heaven in my faded  
coat of blue."

Long, long years have vanished, and though he  
comes no more,  
Yet my heart will startling beat with each  
footfall at the door:  
I gaze o'er the hill where he waved a last adieu,  
But no gallant lad I see, in his faded coat of  
blue.

No one was there breathing soft a mother's  
prayer;  
But One, who takes the brave and true in ten-  
der care.  
Low lies the sod o'er my lad so brave and true  
In his far off grave he sleeps in his faded coat  
of blue.

No more the bugle calls the weary one;  
Sleep, noble spirit! in thy grave unknown;  
I'll find you, and know you, among the good and  
true,  
When the robe of white is given for the faded  
coat of blue.

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