

A GRAND CEREMONY.

AN ELOQUENT SERMON BY FATHER BELANQER, O.P.

Consecration of Catholic Citizens to the Blessed Virgin Mary—Blessing of the Monument of Our Lady of Good Help.

Seldom has Montreal witnessed as imposing a ceremony as that which took place in Notre Dame Church on Sunday last. The vast temple was thronged with citizens, the decorations were in accordance with the occasion, and the presence of his Grace Archbishop Fabre, who pontificated, added a special *eclat* to the magnificent scene. The two grand features of the celebration were the consecration of the Catholic citizens of Montreal to the Blessed Virgin, and the masterly sermon preached by the Superior-General of the Dominican Order, Rev. Father Belanger. Immediately after the Gospel, Rev. Cure Deguire ascended the pulpit and read the following touching address to the Mother of God—Our Lady of Good Help:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

In this solemn moment you see gathered at your feet, O Lady of Good Help, an immense crowd of people from the city and from the country. O, Mary, they are your children, who have come in countless numbers to this new monument erected in thy honor by grateful hearts. Descending from the Christian heroes and martyrs who fertilized the soil of this new land with the blood of their veins and the sweat of their brow, they are happy to renew, on this solemn occasion, a consecration which was made by their forefathers 250 years ago. At that distant day, generous souls consecrated to thee, O Mother of Good Help, this city which was then still in its cradle, and in order that the remembrance of it might never pass away they gave the city thy august name: it was called Ville Marie and thou wert from that day and forever honored as the protector of the metropolis of Canada and of the whole country.

Accept, O Mother of the Canadian people, our sincere and everlasting consecration. Bless us all: May thy open arms allow to fall upon thy children kneeling at thy feet the blessings which they hold so abundantly. Spread thy blessing not only on the faithful present here, but also over all the pastors who enlighten them and guide them. Obtain for our Holy Father the Pope, for our Archbishop, for all the clergy, and for all the faithful of this city and archdiocese, treasures of exceptional blessings, that we may walk firmly in the path of righteousness and of duty, and that we may safely reach eternal happiness. Amen.

A MAGNIFICENT AND TOUCHING SERMON.

The Rev. cure of Notre Dame, after the usual announcements, introduced the famous Dominican orator, Father Belanger, of France. There is something very imposing in the presence of this man, and the graceful and attractive garb of his order rendered still more effective his appearance in the pulpit. But it was only when he commenced to speak, or rather when he had entered fully upon his beautiful theme, that greatness of the speaker became really apparent. What a glorious tribute to the Mother of Christ, to the Refuge of Sinners, to the Queen of Angels. He opened by a comparison between a people and the giant flow of a great river. Both must be traced to their sources if we are to know them. When one goes back to the birth of Montreal he finds that the people of this city were consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. That feeling of ardent faith characterized the origin of the Canadian people. And as a river cannot, without drying up, be separated from its source, so was it true that the Canadian people could not without danger to themselves forget the religious traditions of the past.

But in every nation, even the most faithful, there is always a latent germ of infidelity and of doubt. In the eyes of those who doubt and of those who do not believe he would endeavor to justify the extraordinary devotion of Catholics to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in order that those who believe might never hesitate to confess their faith. Here the preacher

told the story of Rev. Mr. Olier's work on behalf of Montreal, and paid a good and deserved tribute to the Order of St. Sulpice.

Catholics render to Mary a triple tribute of admiration, of confidence and of imitation. They render to her a tribute of admiration, and they have been charged by those who dissent from them with having lowered their religion by displacing God Almighty to give the first place to a woman. Oh, it is quite true that Catholic orators and Catholic artists have exhausted all the resources of their genius to express their love and their admiration for Mary. But were they not justified in doing so by God himself. During centuries the Creator prepared this most perfect of Virgins, and when she appeared in the world He said: I will make this daughter of my intelligence and of my heart my spouse. And when she consented He was not satisfied with loving her as a father and as a spouse, but said: That I may love her with all the power of my heart I will make her my mother. Could men be accused of having too much love for Mary when God himself had given her such honor?

Catholics have faith in Mary. They address her as all-powerful, not because she is such in herself, but because of the power of her prayers. They call her their mother because as the Mother of God she is the mother of all the children of God.

Catholics render a tribute to Mary by trying to imitate her, because she should be the type of all Christian women. Let the Canadian people remember this and beware of those women who, under the guise of literature, would throw away the simplicity of Mary.

The oration was a glowing tribute to the virtues and perfections of the Blessed Virgin, and at the same time a stirring appeal to the women and the men of Montreal to honor the patroness of the Island by imitating her and by placing entire confidence in her limitless bounty and love. Rarely has such a grand sermon been ever heard in our city.

AT THE BONSECOURS CHURCH.

In the afternoon the inauguration of the monument of Notre Dame de Bonsecours took place. The service was witnessed by thousands of people, the crowd completely filling not only the streets around the edifice, but the windows in the adjoining buildings, and the dyke held hundreds of others. Vespers was sung in Notre Dame, and after this the procession was formed. It consisted of Archbishop Fabre, surrounded by the clergy of his household, the students of the Montreal college, Jesuit college and the Mount St. Louis cadets in uniform, the Salaberry and Ville Marie Guards, sections of the St. Jean Baptiste and other societies. A platform was erected near the river opposite the monument which was occupied by His Grace and attendants. Two united choirs, numbering about three hundred voices, first sang a canticle, after which the Rev. Father Leclair, Cure of St. Jean Baptiste, delivered an eloquent address. He first spoke of the pleasure afforded in witnessing such an immense throng of the faithful, who had turned out to witness the religious ceremony. Montreal, he claimed, with its grand commerce and substantial buildings, was a most religious city, in fact there was no other that equalled it. The reverend gentleman then gave a history of the founding of the Bonsecours church. — "Bonsecours which was, Bonsecours which is, and Bonsecours which will be forever." The restoration of the present building, he said, was started a year and a half ago by Abbe Lenoir and is now completed. It was in 1657 that the first building was erected. It was a wooden structure 30 by 40 feet, and was built through the efforts of Sister Bourgeois, who in the early history of Ville-Marie went from house to house educating the children religiously and otherwise. An edifice became necessary and Governor Maisonneuve granted a tract of land and the first church was built, the foundations of which still remain. This building was then about 400 feet from the city proper, and although of wood was considered an edifice of great dimensions. In 1673 this building was replaced by one of stone, and two brothers, named Denis and Louis Lepretre, presented a small statue of the Virgin, about eight inches long, made of wood, which for years had been an object of particular veneration. The benediction of the new chapel was August 25, 1675. In 1754 a disastrous fire swept over

Montreal and the Bonsecours church fell a prey to the flames. Nothing was saved whatever, but it is a remarkable fact that the little statue was found in the ruins in perfect order. The church was rebuilt in 1775, and was 102 by 46 feet; this building still remains.

Archbishop Fabre then gave his blessing to all present and to the city, followed by the consecration. His Grace next entered the building and blessed the monument. The proceedings terminated with the singing of the "Magnificat."

IN MUNSTER'S VALLEY.

Beautiful Inniscarra, With Its Picturesque Scenery and Historic Spots.

"T. M." in T. P. O'Connor's London Sun, writes as follows:

I have never met the name of the place in my guide book. "Personally-conducted" tourists follow the familiar paths worn by the footprints of thousands of their predecessors, and never trouble themselves to think of what may lie at the other side of the steep hill around whose base their train plods and puffs its tiresome way. The valuable agents who accompany them never heard of it; and, though the more self-reliant traveller, who declines to allow a limited liability company to chalk his path for him and regulate his menu and the hour of his meals, may pass close by, he goes straight on to more famous and less attractive scenes, and misses a combination of sylvan beauties which would fondly haunt the memory long after more showy places were forgotten, and the sins of the writers who deluded him into visiting them forgiven. I know that the stranger's heedlessness may be less misleading than the native's prejudice. But in these holiday times, when the steps of so many pleasure seekers are turned towards the Emerald Isle, there is not one amongst them who cannot very conveniently visit the locality I refer to and judge for himself. To the traveller bound for Munster's sunny valleys I would say: "Visit the Blarney, and then ask someone—priest, peasant or policeman—how to go to Inniscarra." To some the name is not wholly unknown. An event in that far-away vale in Ireland may have had no inconsiderable share in shaping modern English political thought. Charles Bradlaugh was a man whose influence on his generation has not yet, perhaps, been properly appreciated. In his youth he wore the Queen's uniform and served her majesty as a private soldier in the big military barrack at Ballinacoly, hard by; and it was while assisting as a private soldier at an eviction in Inniscarra during the terrible famine period he first imbibed that sympathy for Ireland and the Irish which was really one of the dominating traits of his character. But my Irish readers will associate Inniscarra with another and remoter episode. The greatest "separatist" of the past seven hundred years was not the Scotch-Englishman, Mr. Gladstone, nor the Irish Saxon, Mr. Parnell, but a Celt of the Celts, Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone by English patent, and chief of the Hy-Nials by popular election, who flourished, fought, conquered and failed in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." For many years this Celtic warrior held the land of Ireland against the best and bravest armies that the great English Queen and her greater ministers could put into the field. Dublin, Cork and a few other walled towns remained in the hands of the invaders; but O'Neill was master of nineteen-twentieths of the country, and when, in A. D. 1600, he chose to display his power and to consolidate his forces by marching in triumph through the heart of the island from Donegal to Cork, he chose Inniscarra as his final camping place; and here, on the banks of the winding Lee, he held semi-regal court for three weeks, and received the "disaffected" southern chieftains of the old race. Thus Inniscarra, like hundreds of Irish districts even more remote from the ken of "the ordinary tourist," has memories and associations of its own which ought to interest many outside the comparatively limited circle aware of its existence.

But if the outside public have not yet appreciated this delightful valley, those who have been lucky enough to know it from earliest childhood have not been equally unappreciative. Generations of versifiers—purely "local poets"—have celebrated its beauties in rhymes more or less uncouth. Very familiar at a time

when I regarded it as a perfect example of lyrical composition—ah, me! it seems so very long ago!—was a lay which commenced after this fashion:

And sure you may through the world wander
As far as Cork or Doneraile,
And find in nowhere a spot equal
The Lee's sweet valley—my native vale.
For peace and plenty and nature's beauties,
And charming girls, too, by the score,
There's naught can touch old Inniscarra—
If once you come there you'll go no more.

Even more enthusiastic was the "poet" to whom posterity—in Inniscarra—owes this lyrical gem:

Och! bother your lakes of Killarney,
Your Shannon and Giant's Causeway;
Don't talk about London or Blarney,
Or anywhere over the say.
'Tis only in old Inniscarra
Mirth, beauty and love can be found,
Where the Lee winds as straight as an arrow,
And whiskey's good all the year round.

I would not advise the prospective explorer to take the bard's word as to the quality of the very much taxed mountain dew. To the credit of the singer, it must be remembered, however, that his harp was strung at a time when the homely distiller worked at will, and when Sir William Harcourt troubled not the concocters of ardent liquors.

Really, the district is one of those neglected places with whose beauties those who travel for rest or health should be far better acquainted. Holiday makers are generally too lethargic to depart from the old familiar grooves. In seeking for innocent pleasure, as in the more serious business of life, a little more energy and enterprise would not come amiss. There are hundreds of localities in England which those who know the Lake country well might visit rather than Windermere. There are sylvan beauties in Ireland which can favorably compare with Connemara and Killarney. In this secluded valley on the Lee the *blaze* city toiler will find rural loveliness in every shape and form. A broad river, unsullied by contact with the contagion of towns and cities, flows between meadows as green as any even in the "Emerald Isle." The brawling streams are bright as crystal; the woods all around are now as green as the meadows, albeit they are older than the Norman Conquest; while beyond the black bare hills shut in the view and impress the casual visitor with a sense of his complete seclusion from the striving world without. Above all, he will there find the Celtic nature unspoiled and undefiled. The people are hospitable. Even the fierce political struggles of this generation have not removed some of those traits of character which rendered the Irish peasant unique in other days, and which some of their most thoughtful friends wished to modify rather than obliterate. And all the Celtic imaginativeness is still there. The banshee wails when a member of "an old family" departs; the wild *phooka* horse conveys unwilling riders over unimagined distances at midnight; and the merry fairies, the "good people" of popular fancy, hold joyous revels in their favorite dells when the moon sheds its soft light over all, and when the mortals who might profanely intrude on their mystic gambols are at rest.

BENEDICTION IN THE FRANCISCAN CHURCH.

In order to promote the devotion of the faithful to St. Anthony and to help them to gain the indulgence, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed on every Tuesday in the Franciscan Church from two o'clock in the afternoon until seven o'clock, when Benediction will be given.

Forty novices took the final vows last week in the Notre Dame convent, Baltimore.

Miss Helen Martin, daughter of U. S. Senator Martin, of Kansas, entered the novitiate at St. Mary's Catholic academy, Leavenworth. She recently became a convert to the Catholic Church.

Reports from Spain state that Sr. D. Rafael Gaerriary Alvarez, director of the Institute for Secondary Education, died in Granada, after having publicly abjured his errors. He filled in the Masonic lodges the office of sovereign grand inspector, and degree of the Grand Orient of Spain, and venerable of the Lodge "Lux in Excelais" No. 7, and of the Chapter of Prince Rose Cross, Mariana Pineda, No. 61. His conversion has caused a great sensation in the lodges throughout Spain.