

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LX.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME XLIX.

Vol. XIII

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1897.

No. 1.

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The Electeur and the Bishops.

No small sensation was caused in Quebec on Sunday, Dec. 27th, by the reading in the Roman Catholic churches of a mandement, signed by the Archbishop of Quebec and five suffragan bishops, placing the Electeur newspaper under the ban of the church and forbidding all Roman Catholics to read, buy, circulate or work for it, under pain of mortal sin and refusal of the sacraments. The grounds upon which the Electeur is condemned are contumacy toward the prelates of the church, insubordination toward their teachings, denying their right to intervene authoritatively in the question of remedial legislation in the matter of Manitoba schools, and for the publication of articles declared to constitute a religious peril to its Roman Catholic readers. The course taken by the ecclesiastical leaders in this case is quite in keeping with their principles and precedents, and, having these in mind, there appears to be no ground for surprise that the Electeur has incurred the utmost displeasure of the bishops and fallen under the ban. What the Electeur has been accustomed to publish in its columns we know only through the statement of other newspapers, but according to these statements that paper has not been in the least careful not to give offence to the leaders in the church. It would rather seem, from the boldness of its attitude generally, and the freedom and severity with which on occasion it has criticised the action of the prelates in reference to political matters, that the paper has not had the fear of the bishops before its eyes, and that it has been quite willing to provoke them to extreme measures. This view of the matter is supported by the fact the mandement evidently did not take those who controlled the Electeur by surprise. On the contrary they were all ready for a shrewd move in their own interests as soon as the ban of the Archbishop should be published.

The Electeur Succeeded by The Soleil.

The Publisher of the Electeur, Mr. Ernest Pacaud, at once announced that, owing to the mandement, the paper had suspended. In some quarters this action is severely criticised as indicating a sad lack of courage, but the fate of other Roman Catholic papers in Quebec which had attempted to stand up against the ban of the bishops is no doubt sufficient, from a business point of view, to justify the retirement of Mr. Pacaud from the field and the suspension of the paper. The suspension of the Electeur is, however, more nominal than real, since it gave place immediately to a new paper, the Soleil, which succeeds to the advertising business, and is sent to all the subscribers of the suspended Electeur, the printing establishment of the latter having been taken over by the 'Compagnie d'Imprimerie de Quebec.' Nothing, it is said, appears to be changed except the name, and the management, which is now in the hands of Mr. Pinault, a

member of the Provincial Legislature. Mr. Pacaud announces that he has appealed from the condemnation of the bishops to Rome. It is stated also that he will institute action for large damages against the Archbishop and the suffragan bishops who signed the mandement, in order to test in the highest civil court, the question of the legal right of ecclesiastical authorities to take action resulting in the ruin of a newspaper chargeable with no offence except that of having criticised and opposed the policy and action of ecclesiastical leaders.

Will it help the Prelates?

How much of political animus there may have been in the action taken by the prelates it is not necessary to enquire. The fact that the mandement has been issued when a provincial election is pending seems significant. The Liberal leaders are perhaps not wrong in taking it as an intimation that the full strength of the hierarchy is to be exerted on behalf of the Conservatives in the approaching election. The bishops have made no secret of their intense dissatisfaction with the settlement of the Manitoba School question as arranged by Mr. Laurier, and it is to be expected that the Liberal leader must count upon the full force of their adverse influence which, without doubt, can be most effectively employed against him in the Roman Catholic province of Quebec. Whether the ousting of Mr. Laurier from power, which apparently the Roman Catholic leaders so much desire, is a thing to be desired in the general interests of Canada, we shall not of course discuss. But it seems to us somewhat doubtful whether the course those leaders are pursuing is making strongly in that direction, and still more doubtful that it is tending to strengthen and perpetuate their own influence over French Canadians. If the reports coming to us through the daily papers are to be credited the mandement against the Electeur was far from being received with that universal docility which the bishops would have desired. In some churches it was received in sullen silence, in others with pronounced tokens of disapproval, and evidences of sympathy with the condemned paper and exasperation at the action of the ecclesiastics are abundant. It is very evident that there is now, in the province of Quebec and among those attached to the Roman Catholic church, no inconsiderable element of the population unwilling longer to accept with docile spirits the dictation of the prelates in regard to matters which they do not consider properly within the ecclesiastical domain. The bishop is given to understand that in regard to spiritual concerns he will be listened to with all respect, but, beyond that domain, there must be liberty. There is, if we mistake not, a growing disposition to advance against the rule of the hierarchy the claims of personal liberty. A considerable and growing class is less and less disposed to submit their political opinions and affiliations to priestly control. The more persistently the attempt is made to force such control upon the people, the more pronounced the result against it is likely to become.

Spain and Cuba.

While it cannot be said that the end of the Cuban war of rebellion is yet in sight, it seems wholly improbable that it can be continued much longer. The expenditure of \$12,000,000 a month, which it is said the war is costing Spain, is ruinous to that country, and, unless there is prospects of a speedy and successful issue to the war, the drain upon the revenue and the increase of taxation can hardly fail to make most

serious trouble for the Spanish Government at home. Then, it seems certain that the United States will not much longer tolerate the continuance of the war. The present attitude of the United States executive is indeed not unfriendly to Spain, but the President's recent message to Congress contained a not obscure hint to the Spanish Government that the non-intervention of the American Government could not be counted upon indefinitely. The subsequent action of the U. S. Senate in introducing resolutions looking to the recognition of the independence of Cuba, the popular sympathy with the Cuban insurgents and the hostility toward Spain, now so openly manifested in the United States, together with the change in the executive soon to take place, are warnings which Spain cannot afford to ignore. There are rumors that Spain is now about to concede some measure of self-government to Cuba. Whether or not there is good foundation for the statement we do not know, but it is doubtful whether anything which Spain now can do will enable her to retain her colony. There was a time, not long ago, when judicious concessions would probably have been effectual. Now, when the offer of autonomy would mean a confession of inability to hold the island by force of arms, it is likely to be despised by the Cubans, who perceive that their holding out a few months longer will in all probability result in a recognition of their independence or in the annexation of the island to the United States.

The Fate of Maceo.

According to a Havana despatch of Dec. 31st, Maceo, the insurgent leader, is still alive, and the Cubans are rejoicing greatly over the fact. Quite circumstantial details are given as to the character of his wounds and his progress toward recovery. It is stated also that the false report of his death was given out in order that his followers might be able to carry him to a place of safety. Little credence is given to this story. The Cuban Junta in New York entirely discredits the story. If it should turn out that Maceo is really alive and recovering from his wounds, it would doubtless be a cause of rejoicing to the insurgents, but as the Cubans according to their own confession are adepts at concocting false reports. The statements now sent out concerning the fate of Maceo are much less likely to be true than those before received.

Archbishop Fabre.

The cuts in the Montreal papers representing the face of late Archbishop Fabre, indicate a man of genial disposition and of large intelligence. The death of the Archbishop occurred on Wednesday last, after a somewhat protracted illness, at the age of sixty-nine years and ten months. Archbishop Fabre was a man of distinguished learning and ability, widely known and influential within his church, and as a citizen enjoying the respect of the people generally. The Montreal Star says that the Archbishop's death "will inflict a severe sense of loss upon the community. The influence that he exercised so patiently while at the head of this Metropolitan diocese was always for charity and Christian forbearance. The wheels of life ran more smoothly in this mixed population for his smile, and now that the grim shadow of death has fallen across it we shall be all the poorer."

Silas Huntingdon Carpenter, chief of the Canadian secret service, has been appointed chief detective of the city of Montreal.