

N. NO. 3. meets on Wednesday of 1868 Notre Dame Hill. Officers: Albery, M.P., Pres. Vice-President, Hon. Sec. Secretary, street, L. Brophy, Hughes, Financial Young street; M. an Standing Com-Donnell, Marshal.

The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle



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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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EPISCOPAL APPROBATION.

"If the English-speaking Catholics of Montreal and of this Province consulted their best interests, they would soon make of the 'True Witness' one of the most prosperous and powerful Catholic papers in this country. I heartily bless those who encourage its circulation." — PAUL, Archbishop of Montreal.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

The report of the introduction of the Irish Land Bill, which we have taken from the daily press is published in another column. From the summary which the report gives of Mr. Wyndham's speech, we may now say that it goes far to show that the English Government has at last awakened to the real importance of Ireland and to the absolute necessity not only of conciliating the country, but also of making it prosperous.

INFORMATION WANTED.—Will the lady who paid \$1.50 annual subscription, at the office of the "True Witness" on Tuesday morning, kindly send us her name and address.

THE ANNUNCIATION.—On Wednesday last the Church celebrated the feast of the Annunciation. This is one of the several events in the life of the Blessed Virgin which are held in special commemoration by the Catholic Church. It is the anniversary of the occasion on which the Angel Gabriel paid the visit to her, the humble maid of Galilee, to inform her that the Most High had destined her to become the Mother of Christ—the Messiah. Following the predictions of the prophets of old the Jewish race had an absolute confidence in the advent of the Messiah, and had a certainty that He was to be born of a woman of their race. Consequently every female Hebrew had the great ambition to become a mother, and above all the mother of a son; and it was considered a kind of misfortune for the family if no male child was born therein. Hence the surprise, the delight, and the deep humility, as well as the astonishment, or rather bewilderment of that Jewish maiden of Nazareth when the "Angel of the Lord" appeared unto her, and addressed her in language that has been embalmed for all time in the Gospel and that has become the daily expression of the Catholic Church throughout the ages—but which all other sections of Christianity discard. It was on that occasion that the "Hail Mary" was said for a first time, and that the replies of the Blessed Virgin, which are still repeated thrice daily, at the sound of the Angelus, were given. That was the first act of the stupendous work of the Redemption, and it shall ever remain memorable as the most authentic evidence of the maternity and virginity of the Mother of God.

T. A. & B. SOCIETY.—Established 1856, incorporated 1864. Meets in St. Paul's Church, St. Alexander Street, Montreal, on Monday of each month. Officers: Rev. Director, P. P. Doherty; Rev. C. J. Doherty; Rev. M. J. McGreen; Rev. J. J. Harrigan; Rev. T. P. Tansley.

NEW BRANCH.—The new branch of the True Witness, established at St. Paul's Church, St. Alexander Street, Montreal, on Monday of each month. Officers: Rev. Director, P. P. Doherty; Rev. C. J. Doherty; Rev. M. J. McGreen; Rev. J. J. Harrigan; Rev. T. P. Tansley.

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Hence it is that the Church celebrates that day with all the pomp that is commensurate with its importance and that does not clash with the penitential aspect of the Lenten season.

It would need the pen of an Angel to fittingly relate the magnitude of the favor conferred upon Mary, the honor done her by Divinity, and the glory that became hers from that day onward. And the strangest evidence of the contradiction and even anti-Christian principle of Protestantism, is the rejection, or ignoring, or denial of the glory accorded to Mary by God, Himself, and in the extraordinary manner recorded in the Gospel. How they can dispute the "Hail Mary" that still, from the lips of an Angel sent by Heaven, and that the Evangelist has preserved for us in the

Church is concerned, she can afford to fling round the memory and name of the dead woman, the mantle of her charitable silence. And the poor creature now gone, was like the storm-bird in the Atlantic coast, that flies at the glaring eye of the lighthouse on the rock, pecks at the glass, dashes its self against the stone-work, and finally falls back, a mere speck, into the ocean to be swallowed up forever in its immensity, while the lighthouse remains to cast its guiding rays far out upon the turbulent waters.

The only great loser, in all those years of struggle with the terrible hardships of soul and of body that marked the life of the woman, was Mrs. Shepherd herself. She alone went through all the trials and reverses that were profitless; she alone sank silently into an unconsecrated grave; she alone had to answer for her own soul before the tribunal above; and she alone has reaped the whirlwind after sowing the wind throughout her life. We leave her creeping upon him, which he fought to the oblivion that closed in around her, the moment the spark of vitality had fled.

MARGARET SHEPHERD DEAD.—The announcement comes from Detroit of the death, under very unhappy circumstances, in the Harper Hospital, of that city, on the 8th March, of the notorious lecturer and so-called "ex-nun," Margaret L. Shepherd. There is no necessity of reciting the events connected with her last illness, suffice to say that she died without the consolations of any species of religion and without the presence of any kind of human friendship.

The painful story of her life has been so frequently told that it is now better buried with her. By some she has been called an apostate, by others a convert, and by herself an "escaped nun." As to her apostasy we have no evidence, for we do not know what her first faith was—if ever she had any. As to her being a former member of any religious community, the thought has been effectively effaced, by the revelations, concerning her, of Mr. Stead of London, and Father Cronin of Buffalo. Her career was one constant rush after money and notoriety; the latter more for the sake of the former, as a means to obtaining it. As the "Michigan Catholic" said truly:—"Ill and broken in health she made her way back to this country and finally fell a victim to incurable disease. She had no clientele of faithful friends to follow her to her grave. She had no faith in a hereafter when she came to die. She had not even a great amount of what she had given her life and her character for—money."

Even had she once been a Catholic, her subsequent life-work merely proves the grandeur and sublimity, the purity and truth of the Church. The "Boston Review" very truthfully remarks:—"Now is it not a fair inference that if people of such character have been obliged to leave a certain church, it is not at all likely that that church is a corrupt one? On the contrary, if they can not find a home there, is it not more likely that it is their own unworthiness for the purity, the sacredness, the holiness of that Church which has made them unable or unwilling to stay in it?"

But all this has nothing to do with the case of such a life as Mrs. Shepherd's. As for the

day, Rev. Jesse Thompson, of Gloucester city, addressing a Methodist Congress, declared that, "The American Sabbath is dead. It is now a question of resurrection or burial. Shall we resurrect the Sabbath of the past, or shall we give it up forever?" The report says that the members of the conference shouted "No! No!" To say the least the answer is pretty vague; it is not easy to guess whether they intended the "No" to apply to the last or to the second last idea of the reverend gentleman. In any case whether they are in favor of resurrection, or of burial matters little; the leading fact to be considered is the acknowledgment of the "death" of the "American Sabbath." By that, we take it, the clergyman means that the commandment to "keep holy the Sabbath" is no longer regarded seriously by the American people, and that the Sunday, as we understand it, is rapidly drifting into the groove of the week-days. In other words, the people no longer feel the need of that day of prayer, of rest, of thanksgiving, and of communion with higher things than those of this world.

If such be the case, and we have no reason to doubt that it is, we must emphatically say that it is Protestant America that has killed the Sabbath and that is responsible for the consequences. As far as Catholicity is concerned, we have no two opinions on the subject; the Church has from time immemorial ordained by precept that which God ordained by commandment, and she has made it, not only advisable, but even obligatory to "keep the Sabbath."

It is in vain that the clergyman of any denomination will preach, invoke, pray, beg, menace; if there be not some human attraction to draw the people, there will be no general observance of the Sunday. His threats count for nothing, because he has no means of putting them into execution. It is very much otherwise with the Catholic Church. She has entered upon her book of discipline an ordinance that has been the law for long centuries, and that all Catholics accept with pleasure. Each one must attend and hear Mass, at least once, on each Sunday, and that under pain of mortal sin. It is no slight error to miss Mass; it is a grave sin. And that simply means that the Church obliges the faithful to observe the Sabbath. Of course, there are reasonable exceptions; but the right to be so exempt must be clearly established. It is not by whim, or desire, or inclination that the observance of the Sabbath, by the Catholic faithful, is governed. Consequently, we may truthfully say that whatever observance of the Lord's Day exists in America, or elsewhere, is absolutely due to the influence, teachings, principles and practice of the only Church that can rightly be called, in every acceptance of the term, Catholic.

AN IRISH HOLIDAY.—A contemporary says:—"A bill has been introduced into the British Parliament to make St. Patrick's Day a national holiday in Ireland. Strange, one might think, that this was not done long ago, but doubtless it would have been of little use. Now, however, that the English, following the example of their late queen, have, for purposes of their own, taken to wearing the shamrock, they may be disposed, for like purpose, to make further concession to Irish sentiment by State recognition of the national anniversary."

Think what we may of the foregoing, or of the motives behind such movements, there is a certainty that, in Irish affairs, like in those of all peoples, "straws show the way the wind blows." There must have been something more than mere spontaneous outbursts of kindness in the according the Irish soldiers a permit to wear the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day; there must have been something other than a sudden whim or impulse in the recognition of Irishmen by authorities that had theretofore seemed to despise them. All the changes that are now crushing us almost with surprise must have been long brewing. However, the sancting of a holiday, especially St. Patrick's Day, will never make it more or less of a holiday in Ireland. It has always been one—law or no law to sanction it; but it is the spirit of the act that we admire more than the mere formal enactment.

THE AMERICAN SABBATH.—At Albany Park, N.Y., on last Saturday, Rev. Jesse Thompson, of Gloucester city, addressing a Methodist Congress, declared that, "The American Sabbath is dead. It is now a question of resurrection or burial. Shall we resurrect the Sabbath of the past, or shall we give it up forever?" The report says that the members of the conference shouted "No! No!" To say the least the answer is pretty vague; it is not easy to guess whether they intended the "No" to apply to the last or to the second last idea of the reverend gentleman. In any case whether they are in favor of resurrection, or of burial matters little; the leading fact to be considered is the acknowledgment of the "death" of the "American Sabbath." By that, we take it, the clergyman means that the commandment to "keep holy the Sabbath" is no longer regarded seriously by the American people, and that the Sunday, as we understand it, is rapidly drifting into the groove of the week-days. In other words, the people no longer feel the need of that day of prayer, of rest, of thanksgiving, and of communion with higher things than those of this world.

ence; but that does not matter. The one makes iron bars melodious, and the other disintegrates rocks. The remainder of the figures of speech would be sufficient to drive one mad. Yet under it all there is a vague idea that, if divested of so much phraseology, might be turned to some use. However, we cannot avoid reproducing the two paragraphs that follow. They say:—"Whatever we may think of prayers, however we may regard the formal words of ritual, we must all believe in prayer, for adoration in the presence of the Adorable is inevitable to spirit. Gratitude, admiration, the hunger for communion with the pure, the thirst for companionship with the divine, represent the soul at its maximum everywhere. These constitute the prayer which exalts the heart that yields to its law. Prayer is the hunger of the conscience for righteousness, the thirst of the heart for love. When by thinking we reach a sense of the ineffable; when thought lands us at the feet of the Unthinkable; when the Known is conscious of the measureless rim of the Unknowable that surrounds it, this is prayer, and in this realm we are all brothers."

After all this "spread-eagled" if we may apply the term to a religious subject, we think it will be interesting to read our correspondent's analysis of the entire letter.

AN IRISH DICTIONARY.—During the past few months one of our special contributors has been dealing in an extensive manner with the question of the revival of Irish literature and the ancient language. It has been noteworthy that during these past few years an immense amount has been done for the advancement of a knowledge of the ancient tongue. Of course, one of the very first books that is needed in the acquisition of any language is the satisfactory dictionary. Of late appeals have been made to the Irish-American clergy to work in the direction of assistance for the completion of an Irish-English dictionary that is now being compiled in Dublin. Archbishop Walsh, of Dublin, has made this appeal, and he says:—"For years I have thought it a disgrace to us all that Irish is the one language which our Irish students are left to study without having the elementary aid afforded by a dictionary. It were better to give up all talk of the revival of interest in the Irish language in Ireland if, for the want of a few hundred pounds, we leave the students of it without the help of a dictionary."

His Grace assumes one-tenth of the cost of this work. It is being edited by Rev. P. S. Dinneen, D.D. It is expected that the dictionary will be completed by the end of the present year. On this side of the Atlantic there are several colleges which include the Irish language in their courses and these are all prepared to purchase the new dictionary.

It can be readily understood that even Peter O'Connell's manuscript dictionary, that took thirty years in compiling, cannot be considered complete enough for our age. Something that will include all that is modern as well as what is mediaeval and ancient, in expressions, must be used, if the language is to be made use of as a living tongue. It is with no small degree of pleasure that we note the advent of this new addition to Irish literature, as well as new auxiliary, in the revival of the language.

A VERY SAD EXAMPLE.—The world has rung, for a long time past with the praises of "Fighting Mac," the gallant commander, known to the civilian world as General Sir Hector Macdonald, and the public has been shocked beyond expression, by the two sensational reports concerning him, that have succeeded each other so rapidly. It is not for the purpose of repeating details of what cannot but be painful to every true Christian that we touch upon the subject, rather is it to draw an obvious moral from the lamentable story. And in so doing we are inclined to give play to every sentiment of Christian charity.

The General to whom we refer was one of the most highly respected officers of the British army. He entered the service as a private soldier, and he has one of the best fighting records in its annals. He had been

with Roberts at Kandahar, with Wolsely up the Nile, with Kitchner at Khartoum, and with Roberts in South Africa. He was five times mentioned in despatches, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order medal for gallantry at Suakim. Lately he was in command at Ceylon. Charges of a disgraceful character, imputing immorality to this great soldier were made. A court-martial was ordered. He came to England to lay matters before his superiors, and Lord Roberts advised him to return and face the ordeal. He left in consequence, and stopped a day in Paris on his way. What the immediate cause of his despair was we cannot tell; but probably some report he had read in an English paper. In any case he shot himself in the upper room of a Parisian hotel, and the suicide put an end to his career.

Neither now, nor ever here below, can judgment be passed upon the reported sins laid at his door. Consequently we are justified in giving him the benefit of the doubt, and in supposing that a system overstrained by long service in wars, by the fierce suns and climates of the East and the South, had become weak, and that the mental shock produced by such terrible accusations snapped the chord of reason in that proud soldier. This is, at least, the most charitable construction we can put upon the matter.

But what a moral to be drawn! How vain all the honors that human greatness can bestow, how small all the achievements of man, when there is an absence of that abiding faith which can alone make the creature rise superior to all obstacles. The discipline that makes a great Commander and the courage that constitutes a grand soldier are admirable; yet how insignificant when placed side by side with the discipline that regulates the passions and the courage that vanquishes oneself. It is thus that we see in true light the transcendent merit of the saint, of the martyr, of the silent, suffering, faithful Christian. The courage that sustained the man in the presence of charging thousands, failed him in the hour of deadly struggle with self. While we lament the fate of such a man we cannot but point out, for the benefit of others, the lesson that his life and death teach. And that lesson is expressed in that sublime saying of the Apostle: "The victory that conquers the whole world, is the victory over ourselves."

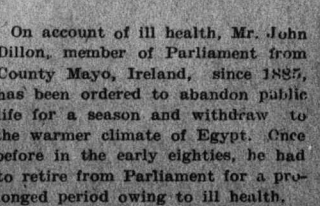
John Dillon to Retire.

On account of ill health, Mr. John Dillon, member of Parliament from County Mayo, Ireland, since 1885, has been ordered to abandon public life for a season and withdraw to the warmer climate of Egypt. Once before in the early eighties, he had to retire from Parliament for a prolonged period owing to ill health.

PERSONAL.

The vocal selections of Mr. J. MacCormack Clarke, rendered at the recent banquet of St. Patrick's Society, were very much appreciated. His exquisite interpretation of the famous Irish ballad "The Minstrel Boy" evoked the greatest applause. Mr. Clark possesses a powerful and sweet tenor voice which he uses with much judgment and taste.

HR. JOHN DILLON M.P.



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