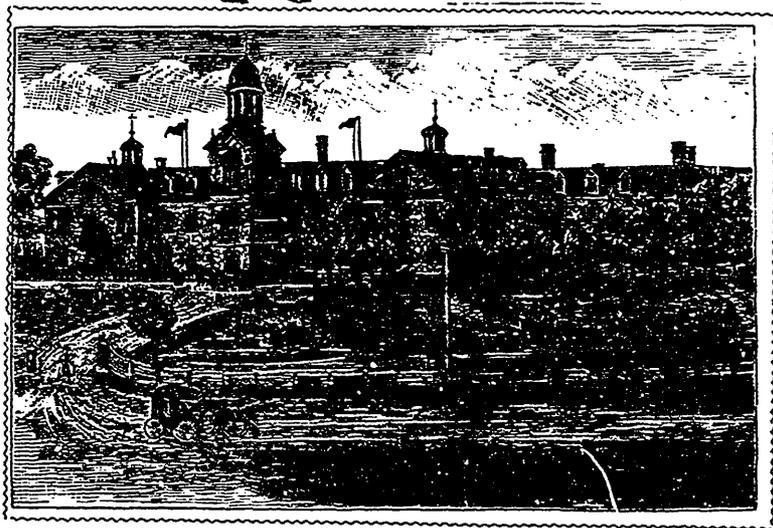


EXCELSIOR.

MARCH,

1899.



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EXCELSIOR.

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ANTIGONISH, N. S.

We beg to acknowledge receipt of complimentary notes from some of our friends. They have our hearty thanks for their encouragement "Pains, patience, and perseverance together with their co-operation, will, we trust, carry us through successfully.

During this month Catholics the world over are petitioning the court of Heaven for favors, temporal and Spiritual, through the powerful advocacy of St. Joseph. Next to the Mother of God herself none of the saints can plead so successfully for us as the foster-father of the Man-God. Ask with confidence and ask much and be sure Joseph will obtain for you the favor asked for, if only it be for your eternal good.

Every school boy of our country can recount the political storms that threatened the ship of state during the exciting period immediately preceding Confederation, the struggles of principles against parties and the final success of the former. He is familiar with that grand galaxy of historical figures that

sprang up, when their need was the sorest, to steer safely the good old ship clear of the rocks of discontent that threatened to disrupt even the empire itself. On page 169 of our British American history we find the names of those who proceeded to London to participate in the drawing up of the British North America Act. Of the "Nova Scotia delegates" there mentioned, none remain save Sir Charles Tupper. Of the "peoples delegates" the last passed away in this town, where he resided, on Tuesday 28th ult. Through industry and strict application to details Hugh Macdonald rose from the ordinary walks of life and became the peer and associate of Howe, Archibald, Tupper and all that glorious band whose names memory inscribes in golden letters on the heart of a nation that has reaped the fruit of their toils. They leave us one by one. Sometimes we stop and ask, with dubious expectation, will any age of our history ever see such another phalanx of heroes, patriots, and statesmen.

THOUGHTS FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

"God," says the Psalmist, "directs the nations upon the earth." As to each individual so also to every people He has appointed a mission to fulfil. In the vicissitudes that mark the lives of nations, faith sees the workings of an eternal mind.

Men point to Ireland's history during seven centuries of sorrow and misfortunes, and tell us that some evil destiny hangs over the land. They who argue thus speak in a human fashion, ignoring a great and fundamental truth. They exclude from their reckoning a mysterious Providence which "chooses the weak things of the world to confound the strong." That which lacks material grandeur they look upon as unlovely, as if the spiritual were not the only substantial, the most truly excellent. Judged by the world's standard of worth, Ireland is indeed weak and insignificant. But if true greatness consists not in earthly empire, but in loyalty to God and to truth, hers is a glory unsurpassed.

God chooses earth's weaklings to accomplish His designs, and He makes their very weakness a mighty power which the merely human cannot successfully withstand. An example of strength in weakness we have in the apostolic twelve, and in those evangelists who in later days brought to the nations the light of Christian truth. What in the eyes of the world was Patrick, the exiled

shepherd-boy as he tended the herds of a heathen master along the shores of Ireland? Only a weaking of sixteen summers. But in the eyes of Providence he was a "vessel of election" destined to carry the name of Christ to a Gentile people. Abject in the sight of man, heaven's favours were upon him. He had a mission from on high, and no adversity could quench his zeal or defeat his purpose.

How he fulfilled his God-appointed task; how the face of the island was changed as he passed along, until a pagan realm became a kingdom of the living God, is a story so often told and well, that I shall not attempt its repetition.

St. Patrick's apostolate did not cease when he changed his mitre for an everlasting crown. He bequeathed it to his spiritual children whom God, it would seem, had singled out to be a missionary race. In the golden age of faith and learning that succeeded Patrick's advent, this is their undisputed title; and the misfortunes that have been their portion for centuries past, appear but a condition to the fulfilment of a providential plan. The dispersion of the Hebrew people was a judgment of God in punishment of their infidelity. The dispersion of the Irish was Heaven's decree, a chastisement if you will, but yet a blessing in disguise. Shorn of worldly power and political liberty, yet strong in faith, and free in that freedom which truth alone can give, they were scattered abroad to be the builders of a spiritual empire. Had it been given to Ireland to enjoy the measure of material prosperity that other nations have received, she might not have served religion's cause so well, and her children might not be found to-day sowing the seeds of the Gospel in every corner of God's earth.

When we consider the persecutions which Patrick's sons have undergone; how they have been despoiled of their liberties and their language; despoiled of all that gives delight to home and country; how in the midst of these calamities they have ever clung to the old faith: when we behold their dispersion among the nations, and especially among the Saxon peoples, who have almost all of them abandoned the ancient creed, the thought is suggested that to them in a special manner has been given not only to spread the faith in many lands, but also to reclaim the English-speaking races to the Church of Christ.

We know how Greece at the acme of her civilization was

prostrate at the feet of Rome's conquering warriors, and how Grecian influence reacted on the conquerors until it was said with truth that the Greeks had vanquished their invaders.

Similar we may suppose is the destiny of Patrick's subjugated children. To them in God's design is given to conquer their aggressors. But theirs shall be a nobler conquest than that by which Greece overcame her foes. It shall be a religious triumph. The course of their history seems to tend at last to such a consummation. Subjugated to Saxon sway the Celt adopted the language of the spoilers; bereft of the hope of honest livelihood in his native land, he turned to foreign shores, and ever as the 17th of March comes round, on every continent, in the islands of every sea, the sons of Erin kneel before God's altar to honour the Saint who centuries ago brought the faith to the motherland. They bow in thanksgiving to Him who fired the exiled shepherd-boy with apostolic zeal, and crowned his labours with apostolic success.

Let us hear the testimony of men who neither by birth nor blood claimed kinship with the Irish Celt. The learned Jesuit, Thebaud, who made a careful study of Ireland's history, and of its people writes: "We may say that the labours of the Irish missionaries during the 7th and 8th centuries are to-day eclipsed by the truly missionary work of a nation spread now over North America, the West Indies, the East Indies, and the wilds of Australia, in a word, wherever the English language is spoken. Whatever may have been the visible cause of that strange 'exodus' there is an invisible cause clear enough to any one who meditates on the designs of God over the Church. There is no presumption in attributing to God Himself what can only come from Him. The Church was to be spread through and in those vast regions colonized now by the adventurous English nation, and no better, no more simple way of effecting this could be conceived than the one whose workings we see in the colonies so distant from the mother country."

Cardinal Manning says: "Whence comes this wonderful expansion of a nation save from the hand of Him who multiplied His own people in Egypt? No other than God Himself has wrought for them. Thinned indeed they have been these late years fresh in our memory; and they who hope for the Protestantizing of Ireland point to diminished numbers. But where

are they now? Ask the roofless cabins which by the roadside make the traveller's heart desolate; ask the green homestead where the voice of the children a little while ago was heard; ask the cold hearthstone around which father, mother and child were gathered but the other day; ask of the fever, and ask of the famine, and they will tell you that the anointed dead are in the green grove, and their spirits are mighty intercessors before the throne of God. They are joining in perpetual prayer with their great apostle for the benedictions of God on the land of their love; for light and grace for those whose hand has lain heavy on Ireland. Some are in the world unseen, and the rest where are they? They are throughout the world spreading the true faith of Jesus. They have gone forth not only as emigrants, but also as cross-bearers in every land. They are in the townships of Canada, in the cities of the United States, in the valley of the Mississippi, in the forests of the West, in the islands of the West and South, in the whole life and action of the new societies which people Australia. They are nearer home. In Scotland and in England, in the dense population of Glasgow, in the heart of Liverpool, and Manchester, and London, in the very life-blood of manufacturing and middle-class England. Where but yesterday there was only a handful, they to-day are by tens of thousands. Where in the memory of man a solitary pastor tended a few scattered souls, there now rules a bishop surrounded by the priesthood of a diocese. This is the will of God and wonderful."

Yes, children of the Celt be assured that it is the will of God; look upon it as a providential mission. Not unwisely has God permitted this dispersion of your race among the nations. If He suffered your fathers to be trampled under foot, to be deprived of their language, and to be scattered over the face of the earth, it was indeed in fulfilment of a merciful design.

The manifest mission of the Celts is to spread the light of Patrick's faith in lands which are theirs either by adoption or by birth; to bring back God's wandering children to their father's house. Of the qualifications that fit them for the accomplishment of so grand a purpose, not the least, perhaps, is the facility with which they adapt themselves to the conditions wherein Providence has placed them. They are at home in every land. In Canada they are ardent Canadians, in the United States they are second

to none in their loyalty to the Stars and Stripes. Diverse as the people with whom they cast their lot, they still are one in their common heritage of Irish blood and religious faith; one in love and sympathy for the sorrowing motherland.

This is as it should be. True patriotism is expansive, not exclusive. It reaches out to all, and asserts the brotherhood of man. Nationalism has been a heresy in God's kingdom ever since the Expected of the nations walked the earth, and gave a law that admits no line of race or class. "There is neither Gentile or Jew, barbarian nor Seythian, bond nor free." The Irish Celt can the better show his manhood, can the better promote religion's cause by lending his influence to the uplifting of a land that has long worn the "gyves of sorrow." That land has a claim to his eternal gratitude because through centuries of blood and tears she has preserved to him inviolate the priceless heritage of faith. Did he refuse her a place in his heart he would be the most ungrateful son of a most worthy mother.

Whether it shall be given to us to see Ireland take her stand once more as of old in the foremost rank of nations, we cannot say. The sunshine of Ireland's liberty, the dream of her myriad-exiled sons, historians may never chronicle. But whatever be her political destiny, we may safely affirm that her sons will have no small share in a spiritual triumph more momentous far than the founding of any earthly commonwealth.

Already the watchmen who stand high up on Sion's tower descriery streaks of light athwart the eastern sky, and they tell us the day is dawning that shall witness the English-speaking races once more in the bosom of mother Church. We see among the people of to-day a spirit of honest inquiry, a religious earnestness, and a love of truth. The same story is told everywhere. Even the haughty "Sister Isle," whose hatred of God's pure Gospel was once so aggressive that she would have blotted out Patrick's faith in blood were it only not divine, is no longer steeled to the influence of truth, and her most gifted sons led on by a "kindly light" are returning to their ancestral home.

How many decades, or how many centuries shall elapse before the Church will rejoice in the return of her prodigal children, only the Omniscient knows. But we know that the means by which His plans are perfected are not entirely from on high. He employs earthen vessels to convey His treasures to the sons of men. Patrick, the exiled captive, was the earthen vessel He chose to convey heaven's message to a benighted race, and Patrick's exiled sons He has elected to proclaim that same blessed message "till the ends of the earth shall be converted to the Lord."

FROEBEL AND DICKENS.

There is an article in the February number of the *Century Magazine* entitled, "What Charles Dickens did for Childhood," by James L. Hughes, Inspector of Public Schools, Toronto. The writer gives the great novelist a leading place among our educational reformers and concludes that, "the philosophy of Froebel and the stories of Dickens are in perfect harmony." The article is rife with sound educational thought and principles, and it reveals in Dickens' destructive criticisms of English schools a meaning and a purpose, more serious, more positive, and nobler than the casual reader is apt to discover.

"Other educators and reformers," says Hughes, "considered the problems of human evolution from the standpoint of the adult, and had asked, 'What can we do to fit the child for its work?' Froebel and Dickens asked, 'How can we help the child to grow by its own self-activity?'" These are fundamental questions. They form the bases of two educational systems — the one erroneous and evil in its results, the other sound and productive of good.

In primary education the distinction between the two systems may not be so clearly marked. As it is the function of the primary school to impart information, rather than to develop mental power, to open the pupil's way to all the great branches of human learning, rather than to afford thoroughness in any one; its aim and scope must largely be "to fit the child" for the work of discriminating between the various subjects of knowledge, and of selecting that particular line of study for which he is best adapted. Yet even this much should be accomplished, not by making the child a mere passive recipient, but by awakening and stimulating his natural curiosity, and making him, as far as possible, the active agent of his own development.

But Froebel and Dickens' theory aptly suits the pupil when he enters upon his secondary education. At this age a new phase of character is in evidence. His "self-hood" asserts itself; "self-activity" becomes a potent factor. He will no longer be wholly guided, he will begin to guide himself. He is no longer a "wondering" being, but an "examining" creature. He has his own interests, his own tastes, likes and dislikes, and his energies, if directed by these, are employed to best advantage.

Upon this diversity of dispositions and talents, the harmony

and integrity of the human society are grounded. The branch that brings not to the mother trunk its own part of the light and sunshine of heaven, soon withers and falls away; the individual who does not contribute to the society in which he moves and lives the fruit of his own share of God-given talent, will soon be placed under the ban of isolation.

The force, then, that impels and draws a pupil in a certain line of intellectual energy is as fixed as that which guides the current in its course; and it must be patent that any system of study which parcels out by percentage every hour of his time must be evil in itself and in its results, besides being an unwarranted interference with the full development of the pupil's individuality. Once a pupil has taken up his secondary education, one-third, at least of his time ought to be exclusively his own. This much time ought to be given him for his choice studies, or to be spent in what ever way he will, provided he gives a good account of it.

It is easy to find a reason why popular education should cram everything "teachable" into its curriculum. To be self-supporting it must produce a yearly body of teachers from the ranks of its pupils. These teachers, in order to meet all the requirements of the schools over which they may have charge, must possess, at least, some knowledge of all the subjects to be taught. High-school education is then, practically, professional education. It may be necessary for those intending to adopt teaching as a profession, but it is certainly not useful for anybody else.

But it is urged that one must be educated upon a broad and comprehensive basis to enable him to match the difficulties and parry, with success, the complexity of circumstances that will surround him in after-life. This immediately involves the concrete question, who is better fitted for this purpose, one who has been enfeebled by a course of training or he that has been invigorated by a process of self-development; one that has a "veneer of knowledge" of everything knowable, if you will, or he who has acquired a thoroughness of intellect, an intensity of character, and a mastery over his own resources, over his own powers, over himself? The answer is evident. And if general culture or a wide acquaintance with books is so essential, why not trust it to the pupil's good faith? He that has early been made to feel a self-responsibility will seldom fail to adjust himself to the requirements of the civilization that surrounds him.

Again it is urged that pupils — High School pupils, “cannot afford to ignore the subjects thrust upon them by the civilization of the closing years of the nineteenth century.” It would be more truthful to say the subjects thrust upon them by popular education. This cry would have some virtue, were it shown that the nineteenth century had touched the “ideal.” But it is he that breasts “the tide of times” and rises above the common plane that is destined to fashion the incoming century and not the one who allows himself to be drawn into the current of an age in which there is so much that is superficial and false, of an age so wrapt in sensationalism.

There is as much falsity in the idea of a “popular road” as there is in that of a “royal road” to knowledge. A people is not made intellectually strong by being subjected to a “patent compressible” system of education any more than it is made highly moral by “piling up” and enforcing acts of Parliament. As we would ask, how does each man govern himself, rather than how he is governed, so we should ask how does a young man “educate” himself, not how he is “taught.”

Knowledge then is useless until it simmers down and is sifted by the learner; assimilated and changed by him into intellectual flesh and moral fibre; and that education is not worthy the name, which does not set forth self made men — men who are the outcome of their own resources, the product of their own self activity. This is the idea that pervades Froebel’s system of education, and as we shall endeavour to show by quoting freely from the article before us, this is the system that Dickens reveals in the model schools depicted in some of the best and most widely read of his novels.

(Concluded next issue.)

As the “Fin-de-Siècle” question has now received considerable attention in these columns from contrary points of view we must give notice that its further discussion will be discontinued.
— Ed. Excelsior.

XAVERIANA.

The lecture on Mary Queen of Scots, by Prof. Nichols, which we announced some time ago, and which the students so eagerly looked forward to, was given before a large house on the night of the 9th inst. The lecturer sketched in graphic language the pathetic career of the Scottish Queen from the cradle to the scaffold. The illustrations were exceedingly fine and lent a vividness and an air of *reality* to the shifting scenes of her life. Though in no wise apologetic the tone of the lecture was strong and sympathetic throughout. We regret that limited space forbids a more extended notice of its many merits.

A pleasing feature of the evening were the pictures of the great British Naval Review of 1897 that were thrown upon the screen, including some of England's most celebrated naval leviathans. The formidable array of *cruisiers* and battle ships, gaily decorated with their streaming and varicolored flags and bunting presented a scene well calculated to arouse a feeling of pardonable pride in every British heart.

The students observed the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas by approaching the Holy Table in a body. This is the first time in the history of the College that the festival has been observed in this way. Yet it seems that led on by the "philosophers," the students intend that in future this will be one of the principal festivals of the scholastic year. This is as it should be, for who should be more honored by the student than the saint whose depth of thought has never been surpassed and whose labors have been of such inestimable value both to Theology and to Philosophy.

Every student should have a strong devotion to St. Thomas, since the Holy Church herself advises us in no uncertain language to study the works of this greatest of students. Cardinal Satolli, writing to the Spanish Universities, Sept. 1898, tells them, that it is the expressed wish of the Supreme Pontiff that the works of St. Thomas be used in their theological courses. When speaking of philosophy he advises the professors to give at least one lecture every week on the "Summa" or "Quaestiones Disputatae" of St. Thomas.

The appropriate title of Angelic Doctor, with which St. Thomas has been honoured is a proof of the esteem and

eneration with which the Church regards this great philosopher, theologian and saint.

We are pleased to note the success of Messrs. A. McIntyre, J. A. H. Cameron, N. A. McMillan, Finlay McDonald, and M. T. McNeil at the recent law examinations of Dalhousie. The first four have brought their courses to a successful termination, and have been awarded the degree of LL. B. Mr. McIntyre stood first in the majority of his classes. All are former St. F. X. boys, and EXCELSIOR wishes them *bon voyage* in their chosen profession.

SESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS.

(Omitted last issue.)

SOPHOMORE.

Algebra — 1, J. J. McKinnon. Physiology — 2, J. J. McKinnon.

DEATH OF SISTER LUCY.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Sister Lucy of the Order of St. Martha, which occurred on the 3rd inst. Sr. Lucy was a native of Digby County and entered the religious life as a professed sister of the above order about a year ago. She was esteemed by all who knew her many virtues, especially her child-like simplicity. For some months previous to her death her health had been failing; but she struggled bravely along in the discharge of her duties until it became evident that recovery was impossible; when she resigned herself to the will of her Master whom she had learned to serve so faithfully. May she rest in peace.

SHALL AND WILL.

Here are a few passages taken at random from George Eliot's "Romola," which exemplify some uses of *shall* and *will*.

"You would like to stay here to-morrow, shouldn't you?"

"I should like to have this place to come and rest in, that's all," said Baldassare.

"I would pay for it, and harm nobody."

“Tell me, is there anything you shall cry about when I leave you by yourself?”

“No, child, I think I shall cry no more.”

“The next morning she was unusually industrious in the prospect of the pleasure she should give the poor old stranger by showing him her baby.”

“Mona Lissa said she should like to go.”

THE TIMES OF OUR FATHERS.

A book of interesting reminiscences is the *Memoir* of Father Vincent, translated from the French of the Reverend Father himself by A. M. Pope, of Charlottetown, P. E. I., in 1786. It deals with the writer's experiences in America from 1812 to about 1823. The first part tells of the attempts of Father Vincent and his associates, driven from France by the persecutions attending the Revolution, to found houses of their Order, the Trappist, in the United States.

For us, the second part of the little work has the greater interest, for in it the writer narrates what befell him in our own Province. Upon the restoration of Louis XVIII. to the throne, religion was re-established in France, at least for a breathing spell, and the Trappists determined to return. The little band of monks left New York about the middle of May, 1815, and arrived at Halifax fifteen days later. Whilst awaiting a favourable wind to sail, Father Vincent left the ship on what appears to have been a trifling errand. Scarcely was he ashore when the wind veered round to the right quarter and the ship sailed away, leaving the Father behind. In this, doubtless, the hand of Providence was manifested, for the cause of religion in this region at that time sorely needed the assistance of one so indefatigable and so well grounded in virtue as Father Vincent. His superior, learning how strangely he had been left behind, “wrote to me,” he tells us, “that as God had permitted it, I could remain until further orders and occupy myself with the salvation of the Indians.” Thus it was that the mission fields of Nova Scotia came to be cultivated by the zealous, untiring, unselfish and saintly Father Vincent. As such our fathers have known him, as such he lives in the memory of their children.

At that time there were only two priests in Halifax, Fathers

Burke and Mignault, the former of whom, as the *Memoir* relates further on, became "Bishop of Sion and Vicar Apostolic of this Province." The vastness of the vineyard and the scarcity of laborers gave Father Vincent the opportunity his zeal and piety sought. He set vigorously to work, nor did he confine himself to the residents of Halifax. Chezzetcook, "seven leagues away from the town," was settled by Acadians. Hither he was wont to come to dispense the comforts of religion. On such occasions the Indians gathered there and attended the exercises. Henceforth he gave much of his time to the welfare of the Red Man, and after he was given pastoral charge of Tracadie, Harbor au Bouche and Pomquet he found himself still near enough to succour him. He says himself: "There is a tribe of the Indians called Miemac in one of these three parishes that is named Pomquet (an Indian word); and I was in a position to observe them, as they were only ten miles from Tracadie, which was my ordinary place of residence."

The details he gives of Indian character and customs are very interesting, for they show that the original owner of our fair land is proof against the innovations of later times. He speaks of their strong faith, their tractability and their charity; their mode of living, their language, their skill and dexterity. Speaking of their faith, he observes: "These Indians were called to the Faith about four centuries ago. French priests or Jesuits, coming at the peril of their lives, brought them the light of the Gospel. . . . Since these Indians became acquainted with the true religion they have never been known to conform to any other, but have preserved their firmness in the faith up to the present day in spite of the danger of perversion to which they are so often exposed, more especially since they have lived among the English, and in spite of their ignorance, for it is difficult to teach them."

"The feast of St. Anne," the writer says, "is a great festival for the Indians, and I made a point of being at Chezzetcook on that day. Two hundred Indians assembled. Most of them came in a spirit of devotion, but some of them had evil designs, for they meditated killing their king and all his family. I discovered this plot in time, and learnt the cause with astonishment. It was that they believed that the chief and all his family would change their religion,—that they had become Protestants,

or that they intended so to do. This is how it came about: Some heretics called Methodists had done all in their power to attract the king of the Indians to their sect, going so far as to give him all sorts of provisions and other valuables, such as cows, pigs, farming implements, etc. One of the Methodists was sent among the Indians to learn their language, and so corrupt them more easily. In this way the report got about that their chief, Benjamin (which was the name of their king), had joined the Methodists with all his family. Mr. Mignault, parish priest of Halifax, and myself knew this to be false, for Benjamin himself, whom we had warned against the dangers that threatened him, had replied: "The potatoes of Bromlet (the Methodist who had given him the things) are good, cows good, pigs very good, me tak' 'em; religion no good, me no tak' hit."

The *Memoir* then goes on to explain how he pacified the Indians and disabused their minds of the idea that their king was wavering in his loyalty to the Faith.

In another place the reverend writer tells how docile the Indians were and how easily they could be persuaded to do what was right. As an instance of this he tells how, when they were clamoring for arms promised them by the Government, they were pacified by him at the urgent request of the Governor.

The labors of Father Vincent were not confined to Nova Scotia proper. "I have often," he writes, "crossed an arm of the sea in order to visit other Micmacs who live in Cape Breton. This Cape is surrounded by little islands, and there is there a lake seven leagues in length and five or six in width, on which I was once shipwrecked." Then follows an account of his escape from the angry seas and his reception by the Indians. Further on he says: "The Cape Breton Indians are the best of all the Micmacs; they are sober, obedient to their priests, exact in the observance of the smallest articles of religion (if indeed there be any small). It is true that they are ignorant, but this is pardonable in them because of the difficulty of their language. One day I had given communion to an old squaw who was ill. They were all alarmed, as she was not fasting when she received; they thought that both the priest and the squaw had been guilty of great disrespect to the Blessed Sacrament. In order to quiet them, I said to them in Micmac: 'Kijidou,' which means: 'Be easy, there is no harm in that, it is permitted; I know what I

have to do.' Immediately they looked at each other and smiled, their consciences at rest."

Speaking of the country itself, Father Vincent says: "A proof of the country not being a bad one, is that everyone lives well there. Strictly speaking there are no poor, for one never sees a beggar. It has been remarked that those who work well, and are rather industrious, live in comfort without being exactly rich."

THE ITALY OF TO-DAY.

VI.

And then the Catholic Press what shall be said of it? The very first paper of every issue of every paper in the land, but especially the Catholic paper, is eagerly scanned by government inspectors; and if it is found to contain anything "contrary to the well-being of the Italian Government or State" its publication is at once stopped, and the poor editor has to go elsewhere to look for matter to fill in the space of the objectionable article! Not only that but in a few days he is hauled up before a civil tribunal, where justice is a hollow mockery, heavily fined and often imprisoned. Sometimes the paper is entirely suppressed. During the disturbances last spring several Catholic papers, for commenting on the destructive and vicious policy of the Government and blaming it with truth for the disturbances, were entirely confiscated, while hundreds more were fined and their editors imprisoned. One case will furnish an illustration of how justice is done here. A Government organ blamed the Government for some misdeeds. A few days afterwards a Catholic journal in the south reproduced the article. Immediately its editor was dragged to court, fined, and imprisoned! Nothing must appear in any Catholic paper which in any way may be construed as contrary to the existing order of things. Father Albertario, of the *Osservatore Catholico* of Milan, a plain, honest, outspoken man, gave the Government a piece of his mind and he has been condemned to solitary imprisonment. The other Catholic papers dared not say that the sentence was unjust, for should they say so the same fate would befall their editors.

The Catholic Church in Italy has a thousand and one other grievances which are impossible to be enumerated here. The policy of the Italian Government has been the destruction of the

Church not only materially but also spiritually. It has no doubt caused much trouble but as to its utter discomforture in the end no one doubts, for centuries of combats have given the Church centuries of victories. That this persecution of the Church is for the best and that good will ultimately come out of it, who can doubt? Little thanks however will be due the Italians for any benefits which may accrue the Church from their wickedness.

VII.

In what condition, then is the Italy of to-day? From time to time riots in the north, riots in the south, revolts and bloodsheds! Crime has assumed alarming proportions. Last year upwards of three quarters of a million were up before the criminal courts, nearly five thousand fell by the stiletto alone, while the number of illegitimates reached sixty-three thousand, high figures indeed for Italy. Secret societies, Socialism, and Anarchy are rife. Assassination often becomes the only means of revenge against a Government man. In fact it seems as if another hoard of barbarians had lately poured down from the north, sweeping away the ancient sentiment and threatening to overwhelm religion, morality, justice and true civilization. And what has been the cause of all this? There is but one answer. There can be but one, viz., the high-handed despotism and the corruption of the Government. In Italy a quarter of a century ago a band of robbers laid their hands not only upon the moveables and homesteads of honest people, but also the liberties and rights of States, Principalities and Kingdoms. To assert and maintain this ill-begotten power has involved recourse to a most drastic and often outrageous exercise of the civil power. Add to this that those in power are men who neither fear God nor anything else, and who, provided only they maintain themselves in power, crush on regardless of all consequences. There is unblushing bribery, thefts by the highest and most immaculate in the land. The successful official is he who in his term of office can keep down his opponent, let his means be what they may. Laws are made not to administer justice to all men but to protect the friends of the Government, and to damn the innocent. Crispi who has stolen millions and that openly is not only allowed to go unpunished but even exonerated, while the peasant, whom want and dire starvation drive to lay his hands on a few chestnuts

or a bunch of grapes is quickly and roughly seized, hand-cuffed, dragged before a court, despoiled of his few remaining belongings under the title of a fine and condemned to the penitentiary for a term of years! The criminal code is such that from morning till night one must have his eyes open lest he inadvertently infringe upon the law and a soldier grab him. Never fear, if one breaks the law he is caught, for men are tracked by soldiers who act as spies and secret detectives. There are soldiers in each street, in each café, on the lonely country roads, peeping from between the rows in every vineyard, in the mountain passes— everywhere. They collect all kinds of secret and useful information, delve into family secrets, track unsuspecting foreigners, have an eye on Socialists and Anarchists and shoot down their own friends should a violent protest be made against bad government. One word is enough to condemn, one word which can in any way be construed as treason against the King, the constitution or the army — the trinity of the Italian God!

Add to all the outrages against common justice and humanity a crushing taxation — a taxation which embraces within its taxables everything from the bite of corn-meal bread the half-furnished peasant greedily swallows to the grand palatial residence of the rich foreigner. A farmer for a solitary pig pays a tax of a dollar a year, while the country grocer pays a dollar and a half as tax on a common counter scale! Everything else in proportion. This should produce an enormous revenue. So it does, but going on year after year it has caused a great deterioration particularly of the middle and lower classes, and as a consequence it does not yield as much revenue as formerly.

VIII.

But what is the use of all this money? Where did the confiscated endowments go? Where the money obtained from the sale of Church property. It must be remembered that the Italian politician has a deep pocket — an unsoundable one, that Italy ranks third as a naval power in this sad world, that there is always a huge standing army kept ready, armed to the teeth and that in time of war fully three millions of Italians can rise in one day to a call to arms! And the foreign policy of Italy has been carried on so successfully that millions were spent and

thousands of lives lost in Abyssinia and they have to show for it — disgrace, the whitened skeletons on burning African deserts, a huge pension list and an enormous debt! Railways were built to out-of-the-way places, huge salaries and rewards were given to those who in any way aided the Government. Public monuments are in construction which have already cost millions and are far from being finished. Every public officer from the King down have salaries equal to those given by the richest nations of Europe to officials in the same positions.

(To be continued.)

THE END OF THE CENTURY.

(Correspondence.)

In your exhaustive treatment of the "Fin De Siecle" in last month's *Excelsior*, the only thing, to my mind at least, that you demonstrated was, that as far as you are concerned the question is *debateable*.

Viewing the article from a literary standpoint its writer deserves the highest praise for its excellence; but no wording, however profuse and varied, can cover all the defects in its argumentation. Some of its arguments would not hold even congealed water. I gather from the trend of the essay that the writer believes 1899 to be the last of the nineteenth century. For my part, I am convinced that 1900 is the very last, and this I shall endeavour to prove.

Let us first review *EXCELSIOR's* own pages. The verdict of the Astronomer Royal for 1900 seems to be the sorest thorn in the side of the writer, for his title adorns the first two pages quite frequently, and his testimony is the first to be shelved. If any man under heaven's blue vault should hold his tongue in this matter it is an astronomer. What does he know about time! This seems to be *EXCELSIOR's* position. The writer's faith, and it is certainly greater than mine, in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer may strengthen his belief against the Astronomer Royal, but let him please remember the authority of one who knows whereof he speaks outweighs the ranting cant of a hundred old women. Galileo, he will remember, stood up for the

Copernican system in the face of the whole world. This he did through conviction not belief and all learned men now hold his principles. The Astronomer's opinion is then, of great value and that opinion is found on the 1900 side of the scale.

Then "Lalande, an eminent mathematician!" What did he know about numbers! "To facilitate computation," Mr Lalande and all sane men would start at a certain point; but points have no extension, that which has no extension is nothing, therefore he would start at 0; but not till he had passed from this starting point to 1 would he say 1. Putting that down, then, history has no need of telling us what Exiguus meant when he put down 1. He meant that 1 represented the time in years that elapsed from 0, the starting point, to the end of the first year, and he could not put down 1 as the number of completed years until the first year was over. The article claims that time is too abstract to be dealt with as one would deal with weight. Weight surely is an abstract entity. Both weight and time are abstract entities, but what they measure is concrete. Weight measures force; time, motion. Then, if with Lalande, you grant that we must pass from 9 to 10 in the case of the iron balls "before we complete the decade" it follows, that we must also pass from 9 to 10 "before we complete the decade" of years, and we must pass from 90 to 100 before we complete the last decade of the first hundred years. Therefore 100 would finish the first century and the even hundreds all the other centuries and therefore 1900 would complete the 19th century.

EXCELSIOR puts up other arguments of which we shall consider but one, since it acknowledges that they are only "at least *apparently* indisputable." We take up the infantile one. A child is born Jan. 1st, 1898, and when three months old is said to be in its first year, but it must live till Dec. 31st before it attains its first year. March again comes round, the kid is still one year old, so again in June, but it attains its second year on Dec. 31st 1899 (good), the babe being all the while in its second year. You deduce an inference from this that I cannot, nor should I hope to see, were I to outlive the next century and excogitate on the question all the time.

Because Dec. 31st, 1899, is that last day of the child's period of two years you say that Dec. 31st, 1899, would be the last day of

a period of nineteen hundred years. This is argumentative suicide. You'll admit that Dec. 31st, 1899, would be the last day of any period of nineteen hundred years as well as that of the nineteen hundredth year of the Christian period. Then it would be the last day of the nineteen hundredth year of the child's period.

But the child's 1st year is completed Dec. 31st of its year 1 and the child's 2nd year is completed Dec. 31st of its year 2. So far you and I agree.

And furthermore the child's 1899th year is completed Dec. 31st of its year 1899. And the child's 1900th year is completed Dec. 31st of its year 1900. Here we part.

You say the child's 1900th year is completed Dec. 31st of its year 1899.

Then you'll admit the child's 1899th year is completed December 31st of its year 1898. And so on for the other years down to the 2nd, the number of the year on the left being always one greater than that of the one on the right.

Then the child's 2nd year is completed Dec. 31st of its year 1. But you have already agreed that the child's second year is completed Dec. 31st of its 2nd year. The former conclusion is untenable unless you admit that the child was born one year before it came to this sophisticated world. Therefore Dec. 31st, 1899, is not the last day of the 1900th year.

That Dec. 31st, 1900, is the last day of the present century appears to me as clear as crystal when I view the question in the following manner. I take 0 for a starting point and you also say, "let us see if we may not commence at 0." This 0 is nothing more than the point at which we begin to calculate and corresponds with the starting point on a rule or the beginning of a mile, if you will. This 0 then we take as the point from which the Christian era begins. It is the commencement of the initial moment of 1 A. D. and is taken as the beginning of the 1st day of January of that year. Dec. 31st will be then the last day of 1 A. D. Then from 0 to the end of 1 A. D. is the 1st year. But the end of first year and the beginning of the second is precisely the same point of time. Therefore from end of 1 or beginning of 2 to end of 2 is 2nd year, and from end of 1899 or beginning 1900 to end of 1900 is 1900th year. But Dec. 31st is the end of 1st year. Therefore Dec. 31st is the end of 1900th year, and therefore the 1900th year ends Dec. 31st, 1900.

A SUBSCRIBER.

SPORTS.

HOCKEY.

After a three days' trip through the Province our hockey players returned to us, well and strong. Although they secured no victories, we are proud of them. We all know the disadvantages a team has when playing in strange places. The first game, which was played in Truro, was won by the Truro boys; the score standing 1 to 0. Our boys claim that the referee was hard on them. He dealt severely with hard checking—a proceeding which has no precedent in Hockey—on College side and allowed the Truro seven to indulge in it to their heart's content. Surely the Truro boys are made of sterner stuff and can give and take like men. They should remember that Hockey is not croquet.

The second game was played in Wolfville. There, our boys lined up against the seven of Acadia College. The boys played a splendid game but were not yet up to their work. Our famous little centre player was unable to take part in the game, owing to illness. This also weakened the St. F. X. boys considerably. Four to one in favour of Acadia was the result, one of the goals being scored by our own goal-keeper. During their short stay at Wolfville the boys made many friends. Mr. Crandall, captain of Acadia's team, paid every attention possible to them. He has put all of us under obligations to him by his courtesousness to our Hockey players.

A drive of nine miles from Wolfville brought our boys into the pretty little town of Canning. For four years the Canning boys had defeated all-comers. They played a draw on the 30th inst.—and the team who fought them so pluckily represented St. F. X. College. All were certain that the boys would suffer severe defeat. The Canning boys were champions of Annapolis Valley. When the score card read 4-4 we knew that our boys had at last played the Hockey we had expected from them.

When the team returned to St. F. X. it appeared that there was "nothing too good for the Canning boys." The excellent treatment our boys received, the interest displayed by the spectators who cheered lustily every good play they made, is still the chief topic of conversation. If the Canning boys failed to win the game they did not fail to win a host of friends and admirers.

The Hockey season is now at an end. Our players have gained valuable experience which we hope they will profit by when snow and ice are with us once again.

There is a rumour afloat which says that Base Ball is rubbing its eyes.

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