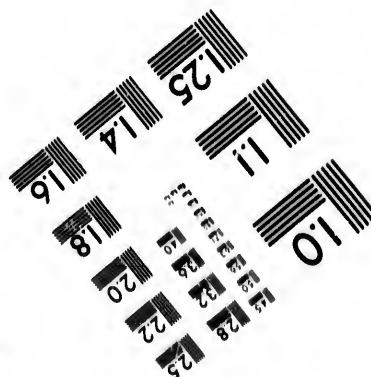
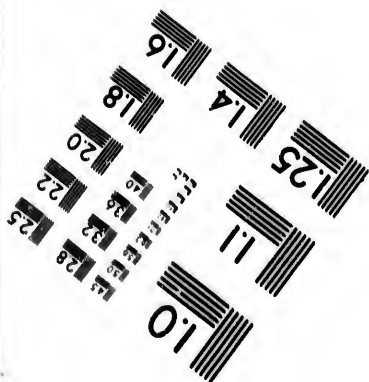
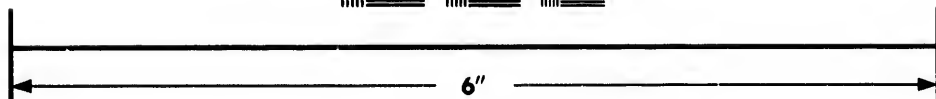
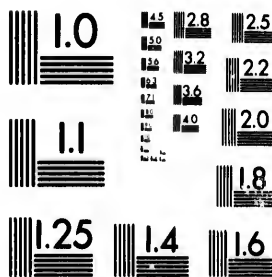


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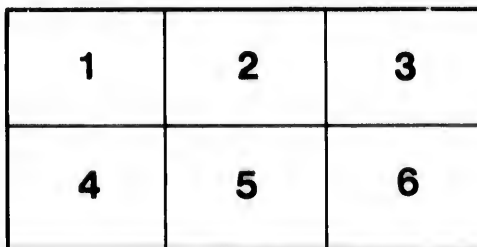
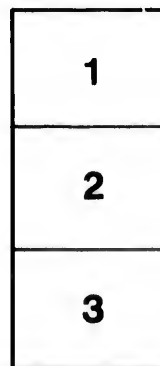
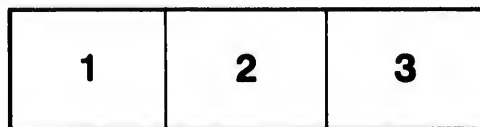
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(No. 77.)

PASTORAL LETTER

OF

HIS GRACE E.-A. TASCHEREAU

ARCHBISHOP OF QUEBEC

CONCERNING THE SOLEMN DEPOSITING OF THE
MORTAL REMAINS OF BISHOP FRANÇOIS DE
LAVAL DE MONTMORENCY INTO THE
CHAPEL OF THE SEMINARY

30th APRIL 1878

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ARCHBISHOP OF QUEBEC

CONCERNING THE SOLEMN DEPOSITING OF THE
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LAVAL DE MONTMORENCY INTO THE
CHAPEL OF THE SEMINARY

ELZEAR-ALEXANDRE TASCHEREAU,

By the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Arch-
bishop of Quebec, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne,

*To the Clergy Secular and Regular, to the Faithful of
the Archdiocese of Quebec, Greeting and Bene-
diction in Our Lord.*

Never shall we forget, OUR DEARLY BELOVED
BRETHREN, the emotion which seized our soul, when, in
september last, we stood in presence of the mortal remains
of bishop de Laval, the glorious founder of our church.
Ah! it is that we were given to contemplate that vene-
rable head, once the seat of so many great and noble
thoughts! God had *filled him with wisdom and under-
standing! Implevi eum sapientia et intelligentia* (Exod.
XXXI, 3)! There, by those mouldering bones, we
thought we heard the beating of the heart wherein

sentiments the loftiest as the most generous had so fitly met together! and that heart seemed to receive, and to repeat to us all, the words of the psalmist: *Let thy heart take courage for the holy cause of righteousness; do manfully: viriliter age et confortetur cor tuum* (Ps. XXVI, 14.). Oh! how beautiful did they still appear to us the feet of the apostle of Canada, of him who had brought the glad tidings of peace to the shores of our country, who had *preached salvation and had said to another Sion, still barbarous; thy God shall reign! Quam pulchri pedes annuntiantis bonum, dicentis Sion: Regnabit Deus tuus* (Isaias LII, 7.). And the prophet again raised his voice to console those dried bones, by foretelling to them a glorious future: *your bones shall flourish like an herb: ossa vestra quasi herba germinabunt* (Isaias LXVI, 14.).

Happy the church of Canada, a thousand times happy for having been founded by a bishop according to the heart of the founders of the Universal Church! Is it not he, in effect, who is portrayed by St. Paul, in the epistles to Titus and Timothy? *It behoveth a bishop to be blameless*, says the apostle, *oportet episcopum irreprehensibilem esse* (I Tim. III, 2). The reputation of bishop de Laval has emerged spotless and brilliant from the clouds, with which some of his contemporaries labored to obscure it. In his very day, the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation bestowed upon him a just praise, and her judgment posterity has gladly accepted and sanctioned: "He is, she wrote, a man of high merit and of singular virtue. So exemplary is his life that he commands universal admiration." It behoveth the bishop, continues St. Paul, to be *prudent, prudentem*. Amid the numberless difficulties which sprung on all sides, has not bishop de Laval given superabundant proofs of wisdom, of exquisite tact, of caution and of ability? He contrived to avert all dangers; dangers which arose from the conflict of powers, dangers into

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which heresy might have drawn the colonists, dangers to which civilization was exposed in presence of barbarity, dangers into which the aborigines were about to be thrown, free scope being given to their insatiable cupidity.

The Apostle St. Paul also adds : it behoveth a bishop *to be given to hospitality, hospitalem*. Ah ! O. D. B. B., well may we here raise our voice, and loudly proclaim that no one, more than this illustrious prelate, did create and keep up a livelier sentiment of hospitality ! In his unbounded charity, the fondest wish of his heart was that his clergy should form but one family, and he was the father thereof ; and the paternal roof, under which he loved to receive them, and to bestow upon them the most delicate attentions, was the Seminary of Quebec, to this day the faithful inheritor of his sentiments. Yes, O. D. B. B., we call to witness the members of our clergy, as well as the reverend gentlemen who visit us from abroad : has not the example of bishop de Laval been constantly followed for more than two hundred years ? Where, but in the house endowed by his liberality, could be found a more cordial welcome ? Does not the priest there meet brothers ever happy to receive him ?

One of the charms of Bishop de Laval's character was his winning kindness : such as he honored with his intimacy admired his meekness : *non percussorem*, said St. Paul. Recall to mind, O. D. B. B., what moderation he displayed in presence of a governor, his former friend, who, forgetful of his most sacred duties, had come and assailed him with men in arms. Our prelate, calm and resigned, stands at the foot of the altar, and prays for his persecutor after the example of St. Thomas a Becket, like him ready to shed his blood for justice sake. To this contempt of life he had long prepared himself, by giving up all earthly blessings.

The bishop must *not be greedy of filthy lucre, non turpis lucri cupidum* (Titus I, 7.); and our illustrious father in Jesus-Christ had carried disinterestedness to heroism. The heir to one of the greatest families of France, he renounces his titles on behalf of his brothers. The means which he reserves to himself, and which he receives from the munificence of his benefactors, he makes over to his Church and to his Seminary. He keeps nothing for himself. He chooses to live and to die, like His divine model, poor and divested of all earthly riches.

The Apostle St. Paul may further add: a bishop must *be holy, sanctum* (Titus I. 8); this obligation imposed upon bishop de Laval need give us no apprehension. Undoubtedly, to the Church alone it appertains to place the aureola on the brow of the christian heroes she wishes us to honor with a public worship, and we do not here presume to anticipate her judgment. But, O. D. B. B., if, to possess the quality required by St. Paul, it be sufficient to have practised a humility, a mortification, a charity, which, according to his contemporaries, were in no wise inferior to the heroism of the primitive ages; if it be sufficient to have been animated with burning zeal; if it be sufficient to have founded and governed a vast church with so much grace and light, that his immediate successor was enabled to say: "What I regret the most is to take possession of a church wherein I find, as it were, no field for the exercise of my zeal;" if it be sufficient to have been a faithful son of the Holy See, ever ready to receive its teachings, notwithstanding the pernicious examples shown by France; if, in a word, to be holy, it be sufficient to have vowed to one's duties an inviolable fidelity: we are firmly convinced that bishop de Laval has not remained far distant from the ideal described by St. Paul, and in him shall ever be found one of its most perfect realizations.

Great as a bishop, as a citizen bishop de Laval was also great. He holds the foremost rank among the founders of our nationality. One day even, owing to his powerful mediation, our ancestors were saved from the abyss into which they were about to be engulfed, together with all our future prospects. It was in 1662, three years after his arrival in Quebec; what a distressing sight met the eye on all sides! at home, a general famine; abroad, threats of war, of atrocious tortures which awaited missionaries and the inhabitants of the colony; in the minds of all, the constant fear to witness the hopeless overthrow of both Church and State. Discouragement became so general that some even proposed to renounce all future prospects and to return to France. Bishop de Laval, already more Canadian than French, energetically resisted a project which would have annihilated us as a nation, and proffered to go and beseech the King to come to the assistance of his remote subjects. The saintly bishop was received at the court of Louis XIV with the respect and veneration due to the greatness of an illustrious name and the lustre of heroic virtues. Troops were sent: the administration of public affairs was organized, and gratitude might have bestowed upon the prelate the title of "Saviour of his country."

Canada became so thoroughly his country that he could no more absent himself without feeling as an exile. *Where thou shall dwell, I also will dwell, thy people shall be my people*, said that heroine of Holy Writ to Noemi; *The land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die: and there will I be buried* (Ruth. I. 16. 17.). Such language did bishop de Laval hold to the young nation which had grown under the benign shadow of his pastoral staff. His life had been spent whole and entire in the service of Canada: to rest there after death was the supreme consolation he ardently wished for. When he visited France for the

last time, an honorable retreat was offered to him on the part of the monarch, where his old age would have come to a close amid universal respect and veneration. They could not propose to him a more painful sacrifice : " it was, as he said, asking him to renounce what he " held most dear upon earth." He therefore besought Louis XIV to permit him to come, and spend the last years of his life in the midst of the young nation he had loved so well. Touching spectacle which carries us back to the biblical scenes of the first ages ! *I was in the presence of the King, says Nehemias, and I was as one languishing away before his face, and the King said to me : why is thy countenance sad ? And I said to the King : Why should not my countenance be sorrowful, seeing the city of the place of the sepulchres of our fathers is desolate ? If it seem good to the King, and if thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, thou wouldst send me into Judea to the city of the sepulchre of my fathers (II Esdras, II. 2, 3, 5).* The monarch was moved by so noble a stand and by so deep an attachment, or rather, Divine Providence did not permit that a strange land, as it were, should possess the mortal remains of bishop de Laval. They were ours by right ; and if this devoted father, this signal benefactor, this hero of sacrifice, this great man, animated with the purest love of country, had become so identified with us, as to persuade himself that his bones would rest more peacefully in our midst : what an immense consolation for us to be entrusted with the sacred keeping thereof ! We have treasured them as an inalienable deposit, which recalls to us a past stored with innumerable and fond memories, and which is for the present generation, as well as for posterity, a sure pledge of the divine protection !

But, O. D. B. B., one institution did Bishop de Laval cherish above all others : he was wont even to style it the soul of the church of Canada ; an institution

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which he three times brought to life, since, having first erected it with his own hands, he, after two disastrous conflagrations, raised it up again; an institution so admirably constituted that it has lived through the whole duration of our national existence, imparting to each generation light and virtue; an institution which has escaped all perils, and has, more than once, proved a rallying point, as it were, for our people; an institution which, through gratitude for its founder, has willed that one of the finest sanctuaries of sacred and profane science should bear his name; that institution is the Seminary of Quebec. Bishop de Laval was endeared to it with his heart's love, and with all the powers of his soul. He had created it, established it on a solid basis, intimately connected it with the Seminary of Foreign Missions in Paris, that admirable school of martyrdom and of evangelical preaching. It was, as he said, his chef-d'œuvre, yes, admirable chef-d'œuvre destined, without his knowledge, perpetually to repeat the history of his great virtues! Is it to be wondered that having loved it so well in life, he should have wished never to be separated from it, even in death? Therefore was he desirous to rebuild the chapel wherein he would sleep his last sleep, until the glorious resurrection. But the hardness of the times did not permit him to realize this fondly cherished project.

We have therefore thought, O. D. B. B., we would fulfil bishop de Laval's most legitimate desire, by granting to his worthy sons of the Seminary of Quebec the consolation to possess his mortal remains, after an interval of one hundred and seventy years.

Let them therefore go, and rest in peace in the blessed sanctuary, where Divine Providence seems to direct and place them for ever! The royal prophet, addressing the Lord, said to Him: *Shall any one in the sepulchre declare Thy mercy and Thy truth in the*

*empire of death? Numquid narrabit aliquis in sepulcro
miseriam cordiam tuam et veritatem tuam in perditione
(I LXXXVII, 12)?* Yes, shall we confidently answer.
In the depths of his tomb bishop de Laval will
continue to exhort and instruct us. He will proclaim
both the wonders of grace effected in his regard, and
the wonders which have attended the prodigious in-
crease of his church of Quebec, to-day the fruitful
mother of more than sixty dioceses. He will speak to
the heart of that numerous youth, which will love to
come, and pray, and seek courage by his immortal
ashes. To all he will teach that the fulfilment of duty,
and the practice of strong virtues is the surest pledge
of the prosperity of empires as well as of the happiness
of individuals. And all, attentive to his voice, and
filled with the memory of his great examples, we shall
see the wish of the psalmist fulfilled: *The just shall be
in everlasting remembrance: in memoria æterna erit
justus* (Ps. CXI, 7)!

Wherefore, having invoked the holy name of God,
we rule and ordain as follows:

1st. On the 23rd of May, after a funeral service in
the Basilica, shall take place the solemn depositing of
the mortal remains of bishop de Laval in the chapel of
the Seminary;

2nd. The faithful of our Archdiocese are requested
to offer up fervent prayers to heaven, that the Church
may, one day, proceed to the glorification of this great
servant of God, if such be the will of Divine Providence.

The present pastoral letter shall be read and published
at the prone of all parochial churches and chapels where
public service is performed, and, in chapter, in religious
communities, on the first sunday after its reception.

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Given at Quebec, under our signature, the seal of the Archdiocese, and the counter-signature of our secretary, the thirtieth day of April, 256th anniversary of the birth of bishop de Laval, one thousand eight hundred and seventy eight.

✠ E.-A. ARCH. OF QUEBEC.



By His Grace's Command,

C.-A. COLLET, Pst.,
Secretary.

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