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CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1890.

VOL. 26.—NO. 115

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sept 27—2w (sat tues) pat

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J. W. HODGSON,
Customs Broker.
Ch'town, Sept. 26, 1890—1m eod

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Church and Temperance.

No. 2.

SIR,—Father Elliott continues: "The supernatural influences of religion, joined to the drink-wounded natural character of man, are like a noble tree whose bark has been girdled at the root. What, indeed, is the bark compared to the wood, or to the sap, or to the fruit. But the wood must die, and the sap must stop, and the fruit must rot unless the bark be cut away. To confine one's self to the assiduous administering of the sacraments, the faithful preaching of the ordinary Sunday sermons, and the usual sacerdotal labors for the sanctification of the people, in an average city parish of America, without an aggressive crusade against saloons and saloon-going, is to water and preserve a tree all day long whose bark is gnawed by a beast all night long.

"A house may be laid upon solid foundations, built of enduring materials, proportioned and adorned by a skillful architect; but let the drainage be defective, and it is turned into a house of death in which miasmatic fevers slay the inmates. So is a city parish presided over by a priest who ignores the prevalence of drunkenness. If asked by his bishop or the missionary what are the people's chief faults, he perhaps names missing Mass, neglect of Easter duty, failure of parents to instruct their children or to send them to Sunday School. In this he names the effects, and does not even suspect the one only sufficient cause of these sins, and of the worst of the others—the drink habit. There are not a few such good priests in America, well educated and devout men, who have many drunkards among their people, and have never preached a temperance sermon. I am persuaded that the reason of this is a delusive idea of the able sufficiency of the supernatural aids of religion. Such men are neither cowards nor sluggards, but are oblivious to the need of bringing into play the moral forces of nature in order to secure the fruits of supernatural religion. If asked to take a leading part in an aggressive attack on saloons and saloon-going, to organize or re-organize a temperance society, they answer: "I really have no time to do so. I am kept too busy by my regular clerical duties—my confessional, visiting the sick, paying off my debt, etc.—to attend to outside matters like that."

They tether themselves in their sanctuaries, and go round and round their lives long with beautiful churches and fine houses, and a drunken people. The solid ground of the faith, the high privilege of the sacraments, the noble brotherhood of the christian society—what do they avail to multitudes of the dwellers in a beautiful temple beneath which flows the miasmatic sewer of the drink habit.

"Another view of the case is that which arises from the duty which the Church owes to the community at large in distinction with that which she owes to individual souls. This duty has been continually insisted on by Pope Leo, as, in these times especially, something of the utmost importance. The farther the public life of men recedes from the morality of the gospel, the more assiduously should the Church endeavor to win men back to that best guarantee of civil welfare. The Church of Christ is the only divinely-appointed public guardian of the moral law, that law which is a condition of the happiness of nations as well as of men. Now, this office involves the necessity of keeping up a good name for the Catholic parish of every town in the land—the necessity as well as the duty. What God made the Church to be to the civil community, that will the civil community instinctively demand that the Church shall actually be. The parish priest has no less an obligation to win the respect and to earn the gratitude of the non-Catholic community about him than he has to break the bread of life to his own parishioners. The wise doing of the one secures the performance of the other duty. Yet, how many of our priests absolutely confine their efforts, their very thoughts, to their own ecclesiastical subjects, and that in a strictly exclusive sense? "You are the salt of the earth," applies, in their view, only to the Celtic or Teutonic colony of the busy city, in a corner of which they dwell; or to the "exiles" scattered throughout a smaller town. Nay, priests are sometimes found to privately sneer at the efforts of public-spirited citizens to lesson the number of saloons, to break up gambling dens, to secure the observance of Sunday laws; and in spite of the earnest exhortations of this the American hierarchy that priests and laymen should do all in their power to aid such movements. Those who deem themselves but Celts transplanted or Teutons transplanted are too absorbed by backward glances regretfully cast across the ocean, to seriously grapple with an American evil present everywhere about them. This is true also of their use of theologians. The theorizings of distant men on distant facts are respected by some priests more than the positive injunctions of the American hierarchy itself, stamped with the broad seal of Rome. I have often been met with the allegation of customs tolerated in Europe as an answer to the express decrees of the Third Plenary Council at Baltimore. All priests who have been active advocates of the total abstinence movement and the anti-saloon movement, will tell you often they have been knocked about with theological "stuffed clubs," stuffed with words and sentences written in "temperate wine-drinking France," or Italy, or "sober, beer-drinking Germany," as if this land were Italy, or Germany, or France; as if moral theology were not a practical application of principles; as if the bishops were not the divinely-appointed legislators of the church to judge of circumstances and apply principles. Unless a religion makes men better men and better citizens, its insignificance must be its only enduring guarantee of perpetuity in the state. "How can you expect conversions," demands Canon Mur-

nane in his paper read to the Catholic Truth Conference at Birmingham—a most terrible because a most undeniable confession of the infection of the body Catholic with the drink plague—"how can you expect conversions when a Catholic prison chaplain can assert that, of six or seven thousand women brought into the prison yearly, more than eighty per cent. are Catholics?" Can we deny this of American penal institutions? Alas! no. I remember witnessing the horror of an American bishop, after a visit to such a place near one of our large cities, his horror and his shame that a prodigious majority of the inmates were unmistakably of our own people, though in population we are not one-third of the city. This moral cesspool, filled from Catholic "homes" through the open sewers running from the saloons to the police courts, daily revealed in the press, is the extinction of the hope of converting the "other sheep not of this fold." What the above authority, in addition to his quoted words, says of England is true of America: "The people of this country understand nothing of supernatural virtues, they see not the life of the soul; but they do see and do hear what takes place next door and in the street. They know and appreciate the moral virtues, temperance, honesty, etc. These must be our motives of credibility and the notes of the true Church. The conclusions are obvious."

"If drunkenness were prevalent in a bad priest's parish, "Like master like man" we could say. But the poison of the sting is that the evils we have been considering are often enough found in the parishes of our best priests, judged so by the standards of education and piety; and that, in the midst of it all, the sober Catholics are not led to show their hatred of drunkenness publicly. The case is totally different when the priest preaches openly against saloons and against convivial drinking, and gets his sermons into the daily press; where he joins reform movements, lends his name and influence to public efforts for the suppression of drunkenness and its occasions; joins with all and any citizens, Protestants, Jews and Gentiles, in every lawful effort for the relief of human misery and the elevation of men. In the parishes of such priests Catholic laymen take heart. They soon become conspicuous for their political virtue and public spirit. If drunken Catholics are upcast to them, they can answer by pointing to flourishing Catholic Total Abstinence Societies; they can offset the Catholic boodler with the Catholic reformer, and the Catholic saloon-keeper with the Catholic temperance hall.

"The priest without a good temperance society, but a flourishing devotional society, in a parish full of flourishing saloons, is like a lawyer who has a good case but lets his antagonist get judgment by default; or he is like a certain kind of bankrupt, assets in the form of securities far in excess of debts, but the securities cannot be realized on. Show that you hate drunkenness and saloon-going publicly, for the vice is public, and the good name of a public society, like the church, can only be safe-guarded by public conduct. If you have got good fruits of sobriety to show, show them; they should not be all hustled away out of sight into pious sodalities."

I offer no apology for having trespassed on your space at so great length; I am sure your columns could contain nothing of nobler sentiment or purer morality than the extracts I have given from one of the most notable contributions to temperance literature which I have ever met with. The situations in the United States and Canada are alike—the rum power rules and Catholics are notoriously among its slaves. This is strong language, nevertheless it is true. Let others in high positions follow Father Elliott's example, and fearless of whom they may offend, grapple with the enemy. It will not do to be content with measures of defence. The conflict must not cease until the tyrant has been dethroned, and his allies driven from the positions in the councils of our country, which, to our disgrace, they are allowed to occupy.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC.
St. Matthew's Day, 1890.

News Notes.

Jay Gould, Russell Sage and Deacon White, three of the best judges of the financial and business situation in the United States, think the duties of the McKinley Bill will stimulate production in the country and so benefit labor, and that internal competition will bring about a reduction in prices.

The Victoria Times attacks the Dominion Government as an enemy of the development of Canada's resources because it refused to a United States vessel a right the law does not give it power to grant, that of catching whales in the Gulf of Georgia. How a United States ship catching whales in Canadian waters and taking the product direct to a United States port would develop Canadian resources, is not just apparent on this side of the continent.

The report of United States Consul Ryder, of Copenhagen, regarding a series of experiments recently made in Denmark, on the relative value of different foods in swine feeding will be of interest to Canadian farmers. The excellent results obtained from the use of roots and potatoes possess especial interest to hog-raisers in a country admirably adapted as much as Canada is to the growing of root crops.

The carrying power of sheep tracts in Australia has been diminished by the abundance of rabbits from 30,000 to 3,000, and the value of farms has been enormously reduced. In the years from 1882 to 1889 the Government of New South Wales spent £732,236 in experiments in trapping and poisoning, and became convinced that such devices were vain. A reward of £25,000 has been offered for the best mode of destroying the animals, and 1,400 plans have already been received and rejected. The commissioners are in favor of a propagation of a disease among the rabbits and of the enclosure of the land.

Dyspepticure—Is not a palliative, but a cure; it first relieves, then controls, and finally entirely subdues the irritation and inflammation of the stomach that causes indigestion and dyspepsia.