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ARCHBISHOP HUGHES.

His Sermon Yesterday at the Cathedral.

THE DOGMA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Proposal to Commemorate the 8th of December.

ASSAULTS ON THE CHURCH.

&c., &c., &c.

Archbishop Hughes returned from his journey to Rome on Tuesday last, in the Atlantic. He had gone there on invitation of the Holy Father, to participate in the proceedings of the Council or Convention of Bishops, in reference to the much talked of and but little understood dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. That great point settled, he has returned to give his attention to the interests of his archiepiscopate, and to those questions, lay and spiritual, which attract so much public interest at this particular epoch. Yesterday being the first Sabbath since his return, there was a very general desire manifested on the part of the community, as well of other denominations as of his own fold, to see and hear him, and to learn his views on matters and things in general, and on the topic of the Immaculate Conception in particular.

It had not been announced that he would have made his appearance in his pulpit yesterday, but yet it was generally expected that he would. And so St. Patrick's Cathedral was the shrine to which thousands of our population yesterday bent their steps, albeit many among them were unused to appearing in that or any other Roman Catholic temple. Our reporter was among the number, and with difficulty—so densely thronged was the edifice—was able to procure admission. But the Roman Catholic clergy of this city are extremely and exceptionally civil and attentive to the press, and did not even close the door of the sanctuary itself against the servant of the public. It was Palm Sunday, and the pews and aisles were plentifully supplied with branches of that shrub, which had previously, it is to be presumed, received the usual benediction. The church wore its usual aspect, it not being the custom to drape it until Good Friday, we believe. The mass, too, was the ordinary high mass celebrated every Sunday, the only difference being that it was somewhat longer, the history of the Passion, as related by the Evangelists, being introduced and read at length. The Rev. Francis McNierny officiated at mass, assisted by the Revs. Wm. Starrs, Vicar General; Thos. S. Preston, Secretary; Thos. Durning, John Barry and John Hennessy. Archbishop Hughes occupied the throne during the celebration of the first portion of the mass. He did not wear the state robes of his high office, but the ordinary under-dress, if we may so call it, of an archbishop, consisting of the tunic, and a lace cape, surmounted by a smaller purple velvet cape. Instead of the golden mitre, he wore on his head the barita, or velvet cap. We were pleased to see the reverend man appearing in such excellent health. He seems much improved by his European tour, and, as a gentleman beside us observed, must have left Rome immediately after the close of the carnival, and availed himself of a traveller's license to take what fare he could get. After the reading of the Gospel of the day he ascended the pulpit with a firm step, and, with excellent intonation and forcible delivery, commenced his

SERMON.

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way.

And the multitude that went before and that followed, cried out saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest

The narrative in the Holy Scriptures, as read in the mass of Palm Sunday, is the history of the Passion of our Saviour. It begins with the 21st chapter of St. Matthew and concludes in the 23d, and is appropriately read at this season. But the words which we have just read as our text are those which are especially applicable to the solemnity of the day. They are the record of the enthusiasm of the people, seeing the Son of God entering into the Holy city. They are the record of that mutability of human affections which shows that possibly the same voice which cried out "Hosanna," cried out a few days afterwards "Let him be crucified." Nevertheless, the church, in order to impress upon you the great truth—that of our Saviour submitting to the humiliation of the passion, which was not by necessity, but by his own choice, and as the manifestation of his love—the church, I say, has preserved those words that you, following day by day, through the ecclesiastical year, the course of the mysteries of the earthly life of the Son of God—may say in welcoming him to your hearts, "Hosanna! blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord." In short, the palms you bear are significant of triumph as well as of joy. The palm is the symbol which, along the aisles of the catacombs, distinguishes among the saints who were laid there to sleep during the first ages of the church, those who died as martyrs to their faith. The branch of palm and the vial of blood engraved on their tombs distinguish the martyrs above all others, and symbolize victory. Victory! And yet it seems strange for me to speak to you to-day on the subject of victory, since it is not my purpose in this connection to speak of the victory of the Son of God, who triumphed over death and the grave and thus became a conqueror; but of his church, which inherits the vicissitudes of his life. That church is heir to his sufferings, and yet at the same time it is triumphant. It is of it I now design to speak. It might otherwise seem strange to you that I should speak of triumph, or of palms which symbolize it, at a moment when you are assailed in the private circles and in the public journals with imputations of dishonor, with revilings with calumnies, with slanders, and when even those who should be, and who are by the very object of their creation, the appointed guardians to regulate principles of eternal justice, have themselves, in pushing their authority to an extreme, attempted to invade the simple rights and liberties of the Church of Jesus Christ. This, then, does not seem a moment to speak of triumph; and yet it is precisely the moment when that subject is proper. It is so—because what do these assaults prove? They prove that the ordinary means are now considered not sufficient to arrest the progress of truth on the theatre of free discussion. They prove that there is no way of putting down these pretended teachers of the doctrine of the Son of God—those who are substituted for his own presence—the church. They prove more particularly that if the hostile feelings of those who know nought of her divine attributes and of her majestic beauty, who believe that she is the source of corruption, that she is the enemy of the human kind, that she is the adversary of all that is enlightened, or grand in conception or performance, can find no other mode of attacking her; she is beyond the reach of their feeble attacks. And if they find this course necessary, is not this a time of triumph? But there is still more, dearly beloved brethren. Looking over the history of this church, of that miraculous society, one, harmonious, universal, independent, that the Christian society called the church—looking, I say, over the annals of her history, and of what she has passed through, you perceive how closely she resembles in her history, the history of the life of her Divine founder. Here is a succession of trials and of triumphs. Here is, like his, an everlasting suffering on the part of the world, and on the part of the enemies of truth. And on the part of the church, as on the part of Christ, there is a perpetual triumph. And who is it that can recollect for a moment her vicissitudes when the first Apostles entered the gates of Rome—the imperial mistress of the world—and entered the lists with the powers of that enemy when Peter entered the lists with dread Nero, who, I say, can recollect that, and not recognise her Divine origin? Nero had his triumph for a moment, while Peter had his triumph for all eternity, in heaven and on earth. Both were conquerors. Watching the succession of her cares during the first three hundred years, and seeing that the whole force of that empire which had subjected the nations of the world was directed towards the extinguishment of the young life of Christian society, we find that that society grew and increased the more, and that that mighty Colossus of an empire crumbles into dust. Thus it is that while, on the part of the world, the church is, and has been, and ever will be assailed by all the bad passions of the human heart, allied with [illegible] allied with science, and allied with wealth [illegible] while she must, like her Master, suffer for the present, nevertheless, at the proper time, she triumphs. But there is a special reason why the uplifted palm in your hands to-day should be regarded by you as a token of triumph—the celebration of a victory. That victory is the great event which has so lately occurred. It is the definition of a doctrine which, although believed as a private sentiment in the heart of the church for eighteen hundred years, had not yet before received the official seal of the church. I speak of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary. And the ground of triumph in respect to this topic is, not that any definition, or any belief could make that most distinguished and most elevated of all God's intellectual creatures, whether in heaven or on earth, more honored, or that any definition could add to her glory or to her prerogatives, but that all the heresies by which the church has been assailed from the beginning contains, without one single exception, in the errors which they teach some principle calculated to weaken or destroy, and, if possible, to bring into degradation, in the estimation of men, the ever blessed Virgin Mother of God. That has been more particularly the case within the last three hundred years. The least ancient of the heresies which have been preached is that one especially which made it a point to wound her and cut her off. Their theory was to adore her son, indeed, but at the same time, by way of increasing his honor, they would depreciate her prerogatives and almost call into question the attributes which render her, as the servant of God, high respect. And they thought they were making great progress at first, because they pretended to reject things, the mere excrescences of time, which had grown into the holy practices of the Catholic church. Then after these came others, seeing other errors untouched by the first reformers, until finally every doctrine of the church, even to the divinity of the Son of God, has been not only disputed but denied and rejected under the plea of making Christianity pure and at the same time rational and worthy of intelligent beings. These errors have gone as far as they possibly could go. And, on the other hand, while the church has maintained those doctrines which she always had maintained, it is remarkable that in proportion to the assaults of the adversaries of truth the faith of her children becomes more and more warmly intense towards every dogma which her enemies had denied, and among them more especially the honor of the blessed Virgin Mary is, I will not say among the Catholics of this community but of the world, more lovingly upheld. Among the opponents of the Church no sound is heard now except the sound of hostility to the prerogatives of Mary. Catholics may have found themselves at times under the necessity, as it were, through the sense of expediency at least, of not urging this doctrine, but they believed it none the less. Finally, at a time when many of these idle speculators, these philanthropists without God, these humanitarians without any divinity, these men who look at human nature as a kind of improvable upper-strata of animal life, and have no key to its mysteries—these men who believed at last, I suppose, that the Church of Christ had fulfilled her high mission, and was now a thing which had out-lived the period of its usefulness and should be cast aside—the Church of Christ determined a great point of faith. Ah! let these men meditate on the spectacle which was witnessed in Rome on the 8th of December, 1854, and they will probably understand that the church is not dead—that the church is not old—that the church has not outlived its usefulness—that she lives and reigns; and that as she has seen the rise and the ruin of empires and dynasties during eighteen hundred years—herself unmoved—so she will live to witness all the changes and vicissitudes of these silly speculations on human philosophy and human humanity, by which these philanthropists would attempt to come to the relief of mankind, by raising and elevating this fallen and otherwise depressed and unhappy race. It was my privilege, dearly beloved brethren, to be among the favored ones who witnessed the assembly of bishops at Rome. As it was not my desire to pronounce anything like a formal discourse to-day, I shall perhaps better fulfil your desires if I give you in brief a narrative of things as they occurred, in connection with this great subject of universal joy and triumph. I will therefore proceed to do so. As I have remarked, for the last three hundred years, but particularly since the beginning of this century, those who were most nearly in communion with God—the bishops, or many of the bishops, the priests, and holy persons devoted to religion—expressed outwardly their great desire that the sovereign Pontiff should define as an article of faith that belief which had been floating from the beginning on the sea of Catholic tradition, and abiding in the Catholic heart, with reference to the Immaculate Conception. The Holy Father entertained with favor the expression of this sentiment; and during the period of his exile from before the tombs of the apostles, when at Gaeta, he issued an encyclical letter to all the bishops of christendom, requiring or requesting them to furnish him with a declaration of the sentiment which prevailed among their clergy and people on the subject. Of course it required a long time to receive answers to such a letter, sent to the various parts of the earth; but little by little, one after another, these responses came in, to the number of, I think, 564, from so many bishops, scattered throughout the world; and of these there were less than fifty whose writers considered that, although the doctrine was true, and was believed by them and by their people, it was not expedient to define it at that moment. There were only four out of that immense number whose writers were not prepared for the definition. These letters are published, and constitute an aggregate of nine octavo volumes. And still, owing to the difficulty of access in such remote and pagan lands as some of the bishops dwell in, they had not yet received the encyclical letter, or had not been able to forward their answer. These letters having been received, the Holy Father, even then, while yet at Gaeta, appointed a commission of twenty of the most learned theologians, for the purpose of investigating everything which history had recorded on this subject. These again, after their return, were aided by others in Rome; and finally, after much prayer and fasting and supplication of God, both by himself and by others whom he required to unite with him, the Holy Father determined—no doubt under the Divine inspiration—to make that solemn declaration of the doctrine. For this purpose he invited a certain number of bishops, so that the episcopacy of each country might be more or less represented, to assemble at home. He did not invite many because he was aware that to some bishops it would be a matter of great inconvenience to go, and he knew that anything like an invitation or formal request would be corresponded with, no matter at what sacrifice. Nevertheless even this, for some days previous to the 8th of December there were assembled, from day to day, some 154 bishops of the Catholic church, representing every nation, and, I may say, every tongue and tribe under the sky. These had come together, and the question was submitted to them, not indeed as to the doctrine, for that they had already been the first to profess, nor as to the appropriateness or fitness of the time—these two points were withheld—but as to the form and words of what is called the "bull"—the form and articles of the proclamation in which this doctrine was to be defined, as it had been drawn up by the theologians. It was this which was submitted to them. This it was their duty to canvass, paragraph by paragraph, line by line; and they did so, having for purpose simply to sift out and examine and probe whether any authority had been quoted in support of the doctrine, which authority could be questioned. It was their province to see that no slight error of the theologians should introduce a doubtful testimony in support of such a doctrine. Oh! dearly beloved brethren, what a spectacle was the meeting of these bishops! All were kindly received by the Holy Father. All assembled in a public hall adjoining the great St. Peter's. There was no introduction necessary. On the second, third and fourth days, there came in other bishops, travel-worn, who had come from the distant East or from the far off South. These men, who had journeyed thousands and thousands of miles, had but just time to refresh themselves and put on their episcopal robes before they walked into the assembly; they took part in the discussion of the matter before the body in the very hour within which they had arrived. There was no comparing of notes as to what each one believed—there was no question of high doctrine or low doctrine—there was no interrogation as to what school one belonged, or as to what had been the influence which the sentiments of the government, or the effect of the church North or South, or East or West, had had upon the minds of those who came to take part in the proceedings of that august assembly. There was the oneness, the universality of truth—one heart, one faith, and one language. If every bishop had spoken his mother tongue, what a jargon would have been there! What an imitation of the scene at the Tower of Babel! But there was one language used—the language of the church; and a faithful and a truthful one is that language, by which every bishop understood the other, and read his thoughts without ambiguity. There was no time, I say, for introductions or making acquaintances; but they were able to read each other's countenances. And thus, having transacted the business for which they came, they returned home each to the fold he had left behind, without—with a few exceptions—having made the acquaintance of even the brethren whom they had met in that assembly. Finally came the day for the promulgation of the dogma. That 8th of December deserves to be celebrated in the annals of the church, for all time to come, as a day of joy to every Christian heart. The holy Pontiff himself—the supreme Pontiff—officiated; and at the proper time received, in the name of the whole Catholic church—including the Greek and Armenian—received, in the name of the whole Catholic world, from the lips of the Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, supported by the bishops of both ranks, the supplication that, by the authoritative and infallible decision of the church, he might declare the prerogative to the Mother of the Son of God. That scene cannot be described; and no one ought to attempt to describe it. I shall not attempt to delineate to you the picture which that scene has left still fresh and solemn on my memory. I shall not attempt to speak of it, because I could not convey an idea of the wonders of art, architecture, painting and music by which that scene was rendered so impressive. And so let those things pass. But there was another part of the spectacle which I should notice. It was the grand and touching spectacle of two hundred prelates, besides an immense multitude, surrounding the successor of St. Peter—that successor occupying his throne on the very tomb of Peter himself, and of Paul, and on the very spot where Peter and Nero had contended, and where the apostle bore to the prince the testimony of his faith, and of his love to his Master by choosing the same instrument of death—the cross—but, considering his unworthiness, requested as a favor that he should be crucified with his head to the earth. On that same spot, I say, there sat St. Peter's successor, able to count, link by link, the whole chain which bound him to the first apostle, and, through that apostle, to Christ, and through Christ to God. There he sat. All other things had changed, but there he was still on the rock. The very tempests and persecutions and trials by which the church had been continually agitated had served only to remind him of how truly the reality corresponds with the description given by the Son of God. How could he, or how could you, dearly beloved brethren, recognize this as the Church of Christ if it were a church all powerful; if it were a church sustained by the riches and talents of the powerful of this earth; if it were a church having the universal love of mankind? If it were all this, it would not be the church of Christ, and you can find no similarity between it and what he describes, because he describes a time when those who should persecute to the death the children of that church should think they were rendering God a service. So it was that there sat that venerable pontiff on the chair of St. Peter, the head of that church which had endured persecution and still triumphed, breaking the fury of the waves on both sides of the rock. Around him knelt venerable bishops, his brethren of the episcopacy, for the Pope is but a bishop in the order of rank. In things appertaining to order he is a bishop, but in what appertains to jurisdiction he is the chief. In that he is our chief, although as regards rank he is but of our order. He was surrounded by his brethren, and at the proper time that document which had been prepared for the promulgation of this doctrine was read by him, in a clear, distinct, audible voice, but amid a silence which was, I may say, awful, in such a multitude of people. When he came to that part which is purely doctrinal, which is the definition—namely, that God by a special prerogative had, through the merits of Jesus Christ, preserved the Virgin Mary from every stain of original guilt—when he came, I say, to that point, his voice failed him with emotion, and then you might have seen every cheek present bedewed with tears of emotion and of tenderness. And at the proper time, after having announced it, the music of the special choir was forgotten—that choir so peculiar and so cultivated in its power of execution, was forgotten—and the great hymn of praise and thankfulness, *Te Deum laudamus*—was raised under that mighty dome of St. Peter's, and sustained by 40,000 voices. Such was the spectacle witnessed on that occasion. But in the meantime the bells from the towers of three hundred churches announced the joyful tidings to the expectant population; and from town to town, and from village to village, went forth the news that at last, by the supreme authority of the church, it was no longer a belief of individual choice or affection, but a doctrine of the Catholic church, that Mary, the virgin Mother of the Son of God, among other prerogatives of divine grace, had been conceived without a stain of sin. As there may have been some misconception in regard to this point, it is proper that I should explain to you, briefly, the sum and substance of the question. I need not remind you that the Catholic church, in her origin, preserved the faith in the utmost simplicity. It was believed, but as yet there was no definition by which it was formally expressed. And thus you know that, whereas the divinity of Christ is the very cornerstone of Christian doctrine, that dogma was an indefinite one, and not in the form in which we now have it, until three hundred years after the time of our Divine Saviour. Will any one say, will any Socinian say, that because this doctrine was not defined it was therefore not believed? That would be absurd. Its not being defined proves nothing, or it proves that it was believed, and that the definition was not necessary till the period when Arius and his associates were supposed to take advantage of the simplicity, or, if I may so call it, the vagueness of the faith; and, by an ingenious use of human language, they pretended to teach that the divinity of Christ was certainly not hitherto believed. So, too, with reference to the very Scriptures. It was at a later period still when the church defined and proposed those books of the holy Scripture which are of inspired origin and of heaven. Up to that time some denied one book some another. There was a certain vagueness and indefiniteness about it. So again with regard to the nature of Christ—the schism which took place in the time of Nestorian. The Nestorians would have Christ as a duality of persons—the divine person and the human person. They would admit that the blessed Virgin was the mother of the man Jesus, but not the mother of the Divine Jesus. The doctrine of the church had been, at all times, that the persons were one, and that the divine and human natures were united in the one person; and, consequently, that the blessed Virgin Mary was the mother of this one person—Jesus Christ. So at the Council of Ephesus, where the question had been much argued—the multitude of the faithful outside, waiting patiently to know the authoritative decision of the church on this subject, as soon as they heard that it was lawful to continue still, as they had continued before, to call Mary the Mother of God, ran through the crowded streets of Ephesus, proclaiming the joyful news. Thus, you perceive, that a doctrine may be true, and may be revealed and known as truth, long before it receives the authoritative seal and sanction of the teacher which God has appointed to preserve all truth, and to make known all things whatsoever touching the faith of Christ. In what, therefore, is the difference between our condition as Catholics now, and what it was before this dogma was proclaimed? I will tell you, in brief. Before that time we believed by individual belief it was a sentiment which was familiar in the writings of our predecessors. We find the ardent devotion which from the earliest times they have manifested towards the blessed Virgin. Because they loved Christ, their Master, they loved his blessed mother, hardly separating them, with this difference, that the one was a pure creature, created in time, and the other was a God and man united. But in the human relations of Christ they never separated him from his mother in that total and repulsive sense in which modern heresy has attempted to accomplish it. We, therefore, believed in the Immaculate Conception as a sentiment. True, there was a time when we might deny it without ceasing to be Catholics, because it was not defined. Just as in other matters we might do so; and just as in early periods theologians accepted or denied certain books in the New Testament, because there had been no authoritative definition of what books should be regarded as inspired writings. We know that St. Augustine believed in the Immaculate Conception, for though he had relied much on the doctrine of original sin being universal, he had always said, "excepting always the blessed Mother of God." She was excepted. He did not say that she was conceived without sin, because it was not his province to pronounce a dogma in any authoritative form; but he excepted her. She was too sacred to be included in his theory of universal depravity. And what is this universal depravity, dearly beloved brethren? You know that it is original sin. You know that by the fall of our first parents it was introduced, and all mankind became tainted. You know that a polluted fountain does not give forth pure water. You are aware that in the order or appropriation of mankind from that first pair the parents communicated to the children their own nature, and they could not communicate a higher nature. The guilty parent could not communicate innocence to the being about to be created. Thus original sin passed into a law; and the doctrine of the Catholic church has always been that the blessed Virgin Mary, by her merits in the birth of Jesus Christ, applied to her in anticipation as a qualification for her high calling, was exempted from that common law. We are cleansed, by the grace of God, from original sin in baptism. That is the grace of God which cleanseth us from that original taint of guilt. She, in the very moment of her conception, by the grace of God, was sanctified without baptism, in her mother's womb. Mary, according to the defined and universal faith of every Catholic heart, never had contracted the slightest stain, the slightest blemish, either of original or of natural sin. And, in fact, dearly beloved brethren, though this be called Catholic doctrine, if there were among those who are separated from the Catholic church any who believe really—not by mere common *parlance*—but believe really, the divinity of Jesus Christ, they should as a matter of course admit—they would be by their own reason compelled to admit—the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Mother because he issued from the flesh of the blessed Virgin Mary; because he was in that flesh thus ministered to under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and because it would be an incongruity and an indignity to suppose that he would take flesh of a being who had been at any time, at any period, in her conception or afterwards, under the dominion of sin and under the dominion of the devil. And this would have been so had it been otherwise. She could never have been the Mother of God had she been, not one preserved by His divine grace and power from the stain of original sin, but one ransomed, one who had been the slave of the devil by original sin, but who was now emancipated and rescued, and qualified as an emancipated slave to become the Mother of "the word made flesh." No such thing! The Catholic heart never believed that. Always and everywhere the sentiment of the Immaculate Conception applied to the very nature of the Christian faith. As a matter of course, it was a consequence necessary from the belief in the Incarnation. This sentiment always existed, and would have existed, though it had not received this authoritative sanction. It was the universal faith, the universal belief throughout the Catholic world, and of ages and ages since the commencement of the church. What was the nature of our faith then? Our faith then was a kind of principle. Our faith in this matter was as is the faith of those who do not recognise the principle of infallible authority. Let me speak of one of those outside the Catholic church. He believes in a great many of our doctrines, in the Trinity, the Incarnation, and many other tenets which are dogmatic in the Catholic church. But how does he believe them? He believes them because he reasons them out himself—because there is a certain system of religion in his head of which these form ingredients. He believes them thus, and calls that faith, and that is the highest degree of faith he can have. But when an infallible teacher, an infallible propounder of what is true, gives authority to this faith, it then becomes real, and is not faith for one, but for all. Without that authority we may believe a dogma, but we have no authority to impose it on any one else; so we had no authority heretofore to teach this in an authoritative sense. It was a sentiment. But now what has happened? It has happened that that which has been universally believed in by the whole Catholic church from the beginning has received the sanction—of what? of the holy Catholic church—of the Supreme Pastor of that church—of him who is the vice-gerent of Christ in determining truth—of the Vicar of Christ—of the one whom Christ commanded us to believe—of the one Minister of whom He said: "He that hears you hears me, and he that despises you despises me." Who, then, is it that teaches this doctrine? It is the Son of God. How does he teach it?—verbally? It may have been so while he was on the earth, but now he teaches it, or rather he has always taught it, as an element in the faith itself, imbuing the convictions and feelings of every believing heart. Thus it has been taught. And now this truth, so authorized by the church, has become a dogma of the Catholic faith, namely, that by the merits of Jesus Christ, God, by a single prerogative had in the first instant of her conception, exempted the everglorious Mary from the taint of original sin. That is the new theory. That it is which is the subject of joy, not that it increases for a moment our faith, but that it sanctifies our faith. You believed before because you so thought, but now you believe because the authority appointed by God for the purpose proposes it for your belief, and you believe the testimony of God, through the medium thus appointed. That is the only difference. And it is in this that we rejoice. We rejoice that the prerogative, the first and the last, and—excepting eternity—the highest prerogative which distinguishes the blessed Virgin Mary, has been thus solemnly recognized and solemnly proclaimed before the world. Let those men who, in their shallow conceptions and by their low estimate of what is humanity, attempt to ameliorate mankind; let them now lift their eyes, and let them understand that that humanity which exhibits so much of misery and wretchedness, and has so little capacity and susceptibility for all that is great and sublime, let them understand, I say, that that humanity is dignified, that that humanity is exalted. Jesus Christ belonged to that humanity. He took its nature upon himself, and from that moment all who have an element for true amelioration behold in humanity something Divine. But the Divine Saviour, we are told, though man, was God also, and had, of course, the excellency and perfection of unapproachable goodness even in his humanity. But there is another by which humanity is raised. There is one daughter of Eve—a daughter who was as pure in her conception and in her nature as if she had been the first born before the fall of our parents—as if she had been a child of their innocence, with the difference that then she would have been pure and immaculate by nature; but now she is, by the grace and by the prerogative of God. Look on her then, and watch her footsteps along the humble career of her life, free from taint of sin in birth, in life, or in death. She was the creature of God, as you are. She was not divine. She was human; but she was qualified for divinity, and was chosen above all the daughters of the earth. This humanity, therefore, is not all bad or irredeemable. There is at least one exception. There is that pure bright lily undefiled; there is that one who has been fitly described by so many epithets and comparisons in the writings of the ancient fathers; there is one on whom while fixing your eyes you behold the point from which the man who would elevate humanity must take his departure. Rejoice, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, on this occasion. Let the palms in your hand be at once the commemoration of the journey of our Saviour to Jerusalem, and of this great triumph after 1,800 years. Let your hearts be lifted up. *Sursum corda.* Let there be no depression because of the enmity and assaults of the world. By them you know what you are; and you know that if you were not what you are, you would not be assailed. Let your hearts be lifted up to God. Let them rejoice in a tender, holy joy; and give thanks for His infinite mercies. And may we be by grace preserved from the ruin which original sin brought on the whole human race; and may we live here exempt from every stain and defilement which have descended to us from our first parents. Let to-day be held sacred. Let the 8th of December be called for many centuries to come the Anniversary of the Immaculate Conception. Let it be fixed in your minds. And for myself I propose to commemorate it both in testimony of the event, and of my joy at being present at the Council, and in gratitude for many favors, and for the extraordinary protection which I have received—and I have no doubt, from the all powerful intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary. Let me have the happiness to commence a monument to be dedicated to the glory of God and his church, and to be in commemoration of the events which have so recently transpired, and of the Catholic ideas which I have endeavored thus to communicate.

After the sermon was ended, the mass was resumed—many persons having meanwhile left the church; and the ceremonies having closed, the Archbishop gave his benediction, and the congregation dispersed.

The Oyer and Terminer.

THE PRISONERS TO BE TRIED.

The April term of the Oyer and Terminer opens to-day, and the Hon. E. P. Cowles, lately appointed by the Governor to fill the unexpired term occasioned by the death of Judge Edwards, will preside. The calendar is unusually heavy: one man is charged with arson in the first degree, and seventeen as principals in nine different murders. We subjoin the following list:—

The People vs. Moses Myer, charged with arson in the first degree.

The Same vs. William Eberle, charged with murder.

The Same vs. William Scharffenberg, charged with murder.

The Same vs. James Ryan and Justen Patten, charged with murder.

The Same vs. Peter M. Lawson, charged with murder.

The Same vs. Edward Allen, charged with murder.

The Same vs. Terence Hammill, charged with murder.

The Same vs. Joseph Hall, charged with murder.

The Same vs. Anna Maria Doichey, charged with the murder of her child.

The Same vs. Lewis Baker, James Turner, Patrick McLaughlin, John Hyler, Cornelius Linn, Charles Van Pelt, John Morrissey and James Irving, charged with murder.

Owing to this great press of business it is probable that the trial of those charged with the murder of Wm. Poole will not be brought on this term. We trust it may turn out otherwise. The following is a brief description of the different prisoners mentioned above, and a sketch of the crimes with which they stand accused:—

MOSES MYER

is indicted for arson in the first degree. About seven o'clock on the evening of the 3d of November, 1854, a fire was discovered in the grocery store of the prisoner, No. 505 Grand street, but was soon extinguished by the police of the Seventh and Thirteenth wards. The following suspicious facts are charged against Myers in connection with this fire. It is said that a fire occurred in the same store on the Sunday night previous, under circumstances which created at that time a great deal of suspicion. The fire on Sunday night burnt a hole through the floor by a partition, and on the second occasion it occurred behind the counter, under the shelving. A strong smell of camphene, or burning fluid, was noticed by the police and neighbors at the time of putting out the fire on this last occasion. In addition to these circumstances, there was an insurance of $1,500 on the stock, in the Reliance Fire Insurance Company, and $500 on household furniture, when in fact there did not appear to be stock and furniture in the premises to the amount of $500.

WILLIAM EBERLE.

William Eberle, accused of the murder of John Gilfoy, by firearms, on the 12th of October last, is a German by birth, of light complexion, and is about thirty-five years of age. It is alleged that Eberle and Gilfoy were workmen together in a cabinet manufactory in Fifty-fourth street, and that the former, about nine o'clock in the evening of the day in question, (under the impression that his fellow-laborer had represented him to the boss as a bad workman,) took a double-barrelled gun, and, while Gilfoy was walking in Ninth avenue, came behind and fired at him. The man instantly fell. Eberle, it is stated, ran away, and was seen thus by several witnesses. Gilfoy died from the effect of the wounds he received two days after, and the Coroner's jury, at the inquest on the body, returned a verdict of wilful murder against Eberle.

WILLIAM SCHARFFENBURG.

This prisoner, under an indictment for the murder of Helena Myer, is a Swede—a sailor by profession—and about twenty-five years of age. It seems that he was attached to Helena Myer, a young German girl, boasting of fair face, bright eyes, and frail virtue. Helena was in a dancing house in Washington street on the night of the 24th of September, flirting desperately with a legion of lovers. Unfortunately, Scharffenberg made his appearance, at an unlucky moment when his mistress was reclining on a sofa with two or three adoring swains about her. He became jealous, and her caprice and neglect of himself roused his passions to a pitch of fury beyond his control. Without giving any warning of his intentions, and before his design could be frustrated, he drew a dirk knife and stabbed his victim, inflicting a wound from which she expired the next day.

JAMES RYAN AND JUSTEN PATTEN.

James Ryan and Justen Patten, two youths of between 17 and 19 years of age, the former an Irishman, and the latter, we believe, an American, are jointly indicted for the murder of James Cahill, a policeman. It is alleged that the prisoners, about one o'clock on the morning of the 29th of September last, burglariously entered a baker's shop, in Ninth street, near avenue C. The owner, who was in bed, hearing a noise, got up and went down stairs. The burglars, after one had snapped his pistol at him, instantly turned and fled. The baker raised the alarm, shouting watch, and officer Cahill, hearing his cries and seeing the men running, chased them as far as the corner of avenue B and Tenth street. Here, it is supposed, Ryan fired at him three several times with his revolver—two of the balls entering near the region of the heart. The policeman staggered to a tree-box, against which he stood until the other parties came up, when he fell and almost instantly expired. The murderers meanwhile had escaped. Ryan and Patten were arrested on this charge the next morning about 6 o'clock in the Parade Ground. Nothing was found about their persons to implicate them in the crime; and the main point in their trial will doubtless be their identity with the burglars.

PETER M. DAWSON.

This prisoner is a Swedish sailor, of about twenty-seven years of age. He is charged with murdering John O'Neele, a longshoreman, on the 17th of December last, under the following circumstance:—They were both in a porter house in Washington street, drinking together, when words passed between them about some trifle, that finally terminated in a determined quarrel. It is alleged that Lawson caught O'Neele by the back of the neck, bent him over, and ran a dirk knife into his body, near the spine. Internal hemorrhage ensued, and the wounded man died the next morning. The prisoner was arrested on the spot by the First ward police.

EDWARD ALLEN.

A boy some sixteen years of age, is charged with the murder of Patrick Quinn. Quinn, it is stated, was walking in Anthony street, near Centre, on the morning of the 5th of November, 1854, where he had some difficulty with a crowd of boys. He was intoxicated at the time, and may have been violent in his language and behavior. Allen, it is alleged, rushed from a basement, and, making straight for Quinn, drove a dirk knife once or twice into his body. The man died two days afterwards, and the prisoner was arrested on the spot where the crime was committed.

TERENCE HAMMILL

is an Irishman, about 45 years of age. He has worked in a bonded warehouse, and up to the commission of this offence, though indulging often in liquor, is said to have borne the character of an honest man. He is charged with murdering his wife by wounds and bruises, on the 1st of January 1855. He lived in 32 Trinity place, and, it is alleged, came home drunk on the day in question, and finding his wife there kicked and beat her to death. A man in company with Hammill, and who was arrested as a witness, went in search of a policeman, and when he returned the woman was dead, and the floor covered with her blood. The prisoner, now in the Tombs, presents a picture of the extreme of misery and despair.

JOSEPH HALL

is, we believe, an American; about 35 years of age, and is charged with the murder of William O'Brien, with a pistol, on the 1st of January last. The prisoner had previously been in California, and it is supposed had been much affected by the delusion of spiritual rappings and manifestations. The deceased and the prisoner, both about the same age, were become friends, living and boarding together. They were in a drinking saloon on the day in question, and, it seems, a quarrel took place between them about a dollar bill that O'Brien had found. Hall wanted half, but the other said no; he would give him two shillings or nothing. Hall then became very much excited. He drew a revolver, and pointing it at O'Brien exclaimed, "Six shillings or nothing." No reply being given he fired. O'Brien fell, and while on the ground his quondam friend fired again twice. Two bullets were lodged in the victim's breast. Hall then, supposing he had killed his associate, fired another shot at his own throat, wounding himself severely, severing the carotid artery and laying open his jaw. He also fell, was arrested, and conveyed to the Penitentiary Hospital on Blackwell's Island, where, for two months, he lingered between life and death, and was not allowed to hear of the fate of O'Brien, who, after being wounded, was removed to the New York Hospital, where he died at the end of the fourth day. The defence set up by the prisoner's counsel in this case is insanity.

LEWIS BAKER.

The personal appearance of Lewis Baker, who stands charged as a principal in the murder of William Poole, is by this time very well known to the public. If notoriety is in any way that gentleman's ambition, his wish must have been amply gratified. He is about five feet ten inches high, strongly built, large head, blue eyes, and light curling brown hair. Baker was born in this country, but is of Welsh descent, and has been a resident of New York. His occupations during life have been varied. At one time a sailor, he deserted from a whaleship at the Sand wich Islands, and came home in a man-of-war. About five years ago he obtained the appointment of policeman, and was detailed to protect emigrants against runners. He continued in the department until some five weeks previous to the Stanwix Hall tragedy, when he was suspended on account of a pistol fight that he and Turner had with Tom Hyer, in Dick Platt's saloon, under Wallack's theatre. During the latter part of his career, Baker was, in all respects, a fighting man. After Poole was shot, Baker (who was not wounded so severely as to prevent his travelling) went to Johnny Lyng's saloon, at the corner of Canal street and Broadway, where he remained concealed during the search of the police. Thence, it is alleged, he departed in company with Councilman Kerrigan, Daniel Linn, one of the Eighth ward police, Harvey Young, and George Burns. He was afterwards seen at Patty Florence's public house at Macomb's dam, where he was concealed for the day. It is supposed that on the second night he was taken away in a close carriage and was brought back to the city to the house of one Brady, in Elizabeth street, where he remained a few days; that, under the disguise of a milkman, he escaped from thence to Jersey City, where he was traced by Judge Stuart, but succeeded in getting away in the nick of time. The last fact known in Baker's history, is his taking a passage in the Isabella Jewett and setting sail for the Canary islands. Whether he will be ultimately captured by those who are now in pursuit of him remains to be seen. Their success can scarcely be deemed probable.

PATRICK M'LAUGHLIN.

Patrick McLaughlin, alias Pandeen, is of Irish parents, but born, according to his own statement, at Cohoes Falls, above Albany. He is now 24 years of age. McLaughlin is a stone cutter by trade, though he does not seem to have practised it much. His character is said to have been bad previous to his going to California, in 1852, and since his return it has not improved. Many brutal assaults are laid to his charge. In his examination before the Coroner in relation to the charge preferred against him, McLaughlin stated: "I was not in Stanwix Hall at the time the shooting was going on; I was on the sidewalk."

JAMES TURNER.

James Turner is now about thirty years of age. He is the man who, it is said, shot himself in the arm while taking aim at Poole. He was born in New York, and went to New Orleans to learn the cooper's trade. He subsequently left that city for San Francisco, where, it is said, he belonged to the A. B. C. Club, and became somewhat notorious. Some time after his return to New York he had an affray with Tom Hyer, the details of which have already appeared before the public. Turner was so indisposed from the effects of his wound that Coroner Hilton did not think it prudent to take his examination with the others. Still, there was never any necessity for the amputation of his arm, as has been stated; he has since almost recovered.

JOHN MORRISSEY.

Morrissey was born in Ireland, and is twenty-four years of age. He came to this country, when an infant, with his friends, who settled in Troy. He is over six feet in height, powerfully built, and of dark complexion, eyes and hair. He was once engaged in steamboating on the Hudson, and subsequently as an emigrant runner. He also went to California, and seems to have returned from thence with the character of a fighting man. He has had several ring fights, and has been engaged in numerous rows. When the Stanwix Hall tragedy occurred he kept a gambling and drinking house in Leonard street, called the Belle of the Union. He was not present when Poole was shot.

JAMES IRVING.

James Irving is a butcher by trade, and is said to be doing a good business. Though not a remarkable fighter himself, he associates with men of that class, backs them up, and seems ambitious of being considered one of their number. Irving has been an active soft shell democrat.

HYLER, LINN AND VAN PELT.

John Hyler, Cornelius Linn, and Charles Van Pelt are also indicted as principals for the murder of Poole. Hyler is a tall, thin, gentlemanly looking man, of light complexion, between 30