

NORTHWEST REVIEW

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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5 1897.

That Bone of Contention.

The Rev. Dr. Bryce of Winnipeg has often been chaffed about his famous "bone of contention." In his work on "Manitoba; its infancy, growth and present condition," he said in 1892 (p. 351): "Lord Selkirk's scheme of perfect religious equality and toleration is that still subsisting in Manitoba. One of the results of this is a friendly feeling subsisting between the different churches. It is satisfactory that there is no bone of contention of disturb the prevailing harmony." Eight years later, as the late Archbishop Tache wittily reminded him in a monograph on Manitoba Schools, Dr. Bryce was one of the first and foremost to throw into the provincial arena an immense "bone of contention" which he kept valiantly flourishing in the face of Catholics till Mr. Ewart snuffed him out.

By a coincidence this metaphorical bone has now materialized and been sent to Dr. Bryce himself for identification. Three medical doctors besides the reverend one, sat on this bone to find out what it was. Not being Cuviers, they have failed to place it, though they incline to the belief that it is part of the backbone of an enormous moose deer that used to frequent the shores of Lake Winnipeg. It will evidently be a bone of contention for some time yet.

The Conspiracy of Silence.

A list of Remarkable Assassinations of this century has been going the rounds of the press. The czars Paul and Alexander II., the Duc de Berri, Marshal Prim, the Earl of Mayo, Lincoln, Garfield, Carnot, Stambouloff figure in this ghastly chronicle of murders. The fact that one of the most remarkable of them all—the assassination of Garcia Moreno, the saintly and singularly able President of Ecuador, killed by Freemasons at Quito in 1875—is omitted from this list is significant. Moreno was one of the greatest men the world has ever seen; but having died for the cause of Catholicism and good government, he must, according to the secret instructions of the ubiquitous sect, be ignored. However, as he said with his last breath, "God does not die," nor can the suppression of the truth be eternal.

The Rosary.

His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface has sent a circular to the Clergy expressing the wish that, during this month of October in all churches the beads be recited every evening with the mysteries of the Rosary announced, followed by the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and the prayer to St. Joseph, all these exercises to take place during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The first motive of these pious exercises should be prayer for the entire Church according to the Pope's intentions; the second motive will be to pray for the restoration of our Catholic schools.

Meanwhile the Sovereign Pontiff's encyclical on the Rosary, dated Sept.

12th, has arrived. It lays down the great difference between prayers directly addressed to God, asking him to grant blessings, and prayers addressed to the Blessed Virgin and the other Saints, asking their intercession with Almighty God that he may be prevailed upon to grant those blessings. When we pray, however, we do not expect God to change his mind, but we expect to receive what God, from all eternity foreseeing our prayer, has resolved to give us. The Holy Father says experience proves that the repetition of the Hail Marys, far from being derogatory to the paramount claims of the Godhead, has great influence with the Heart of God.

The faithful who recite the Rosary, says Leo XIII, thereby imitate very closely the Holy Angels: Gabriel, who announced the good tidings to Mary; the Angels who sang at Bethlehem; the angel who warned Joseph to fly into Egypt; the comforting angel in the garden of Gethsemane; the angels who told the holy women that Jesus had risen from the dead; the two angels who informed the disciples, after the Ascension, that Jesus would come again as they had seen him going into heaven.

Two Kinds of Criticism.

The Globe Review for September has just reached our office. Having heard that Mr. Thorne was, according to his own remark to a common friend, about to give us "Hail Columbia," we turned eagerly to his "Globe Notes," and there sure enough we find about thirteen hundred words devoted to blackguarding "this fellow... who does this wisecrack and consummately stupid work in the NORTHWEST REVIEW." True, this awful severity is toned down by a remark to the effect that the editor of this paper is merely a "presumptuous gentleman," and elsewhere he is styled, in irony no doubt but still with an air of foundation in fact, "this wondrous saint and scholar."

Filled with the consolation afforded by this unwilling to trace, we are in a fit frame of mind to follow calmly and dispassionately two very different styles of criticism, Mr. Thorne's and ours.

It will be remembered that we first criticized the June number of the Globe Review in our issue of July 6th. There we said, among other appreciations of Mr. Thorne's value:

It is a great pity that his first article, "The Reconciler," drops away occasionally from its majestic rhythm and high thoughts to vulgar language and bling-gate. Again, it is a thousand pities he is not more discriminating in his estimate of men. After a brief but telling characterization of Carlyle and Emerson, he spoils all in the next paragraph by saying, "Newman and Manning were far smaller minds, but with richer spiritual gifts." Manning no doubt had a smaller mind than either Carlyle or Emerson; Manning was emphatically remarkable by his will power more than by vastness of intellect. But Newman was a genius far above Carlyle and Emerson. Bracketing Newman with Manning in point of mind reveals the limitations of Mr. Thorne's critical faculty; it is a peculiarly American process, this painting of word pictures without due perspective. Precisely because Mr. Thorne's mind is intuitive, fragmentary, imperfect, he cannot take in the inferential processes, the vast span, the finished detail, the rounded completeness of an intellect like Newman's, compared to which Carlyle and Emerson are like the momentary gleam of a rocket in comparison with the sun's all-pervading ray.

A fortnight after the foregoing criticism had appeared, we printed, July 20th, a half-column letter to us from Mr. Thorne, who wrote, "I always appreciate what you say of me. It is honest, intelligent criticism, and you must not interpret this letter as a complaint." He even went so far as to thank us for our strictures on his lay sermon, "The Reconciler." "I felt," then wrote Mr. Thorne, "that the local references were out of place, but had not the courage to cut them out."

In these words Mr. Thorne has unwittingly revealed his besetting sin—lack of courage. No courage is needed for coarse invective against a man who is two thousand miles away and may never come any nearer. Violent adjectives are a sign of weakness. It requires more courage to cut out than to insert such phrases as "this stultified and immaculate Catholic booby of the NORTHWEST REVIEW," phrases which are more detrimental, in the mind of the thoughtful reader, to the framer of them than to their object.

What does require courage is the patient, painstaking examination of facts, and this is just what Mr. Thorne lacks. Thus he misrepresents us as if we wished to whitewash all Catholic history. We never said one word that could be so construed. We spoke once of Mr. Thorne's "unconsciously half-Protestant view of the Middle Ages," and on another occasion we wrote: "Mr. Thorne's reading of history has been for so many years tinged with Protestant views that he still fails to realize

how non-Catholic historians take a wrong view of the main facts of Church history. They all look at the tapestry on the wrong side, so its outlines are distorted and the whole picture is a caricature." It will be observed that we nowhere hinted that the half-Protestant view thus described clings necessarily to all converts. We are too well acquainted with Manning, Newman, Ward, Faber, Allies and a host of other clear-sighted converts, to make such a silly assertion. Yet this is what Mr. Thorne fathers on us when he begins his three-page diatribe with these words: "I must make some reference here to certain very unjust and impertinent criticisms of this magazine that have recently appeared in the NORTHWEST REVIEW, to the effect, for instance, that having had a Protestant education, Mr. Thorne can hardly be expected to have other than biased—that is, erroneous—views concerning Catholic Church history." We repeat that we never asserted that a convert could not be expected to have right views of history, and we challenge Mr. Thorne to produce any passage in our paper that could warrant such a sweepingly stupid generalization. All we meant to do was to offer some explanation of Mr. Thorne's way of attributing ambitious motives to the Popes of the Middle Ages en bloc, and his opposition to the restoration of the Holy Father's temporal sovereignty, an opposition which he maintains in the present issue of his Quarterly (p. 219). But, far from wishing to make out that all Catholic history is angelic, we quite agree with Mr. Thorne that "the meanest and most dishonest knaves have been Catholics" (on the principle that the worst of all things is a good thing spoiled), and that "some of the Popes and some of the prelates of the Middle Ages were little better; but the Church is divine in spite of its Judases."

Another instance of Mr. Thorne's un-scholarly inaccuracy is this. In his article on the Hierarchy, without any special relevance, but as if he were haunted by our criticisms, he says: "A scientific tracing of the details of these studies... might convince the editor of the NORTHWEST REVIEW and the Antigonish CASKEET that the editor of the GLOBE REVIEW was not a lunatic after all." Now we never even hinted at lunacy, though the Caskeet did.

The fact is, Mr. Thorne's forte is imagination rather than intellect, heart rather than mind. He excels as a poet and as a critic of poets. History, philosophy, science are beyond his sphere; they are too exacting on the score of facts and sequence of ideas. Nothing but the exuberance of his imagination and the ultra-sensitiveness of his feelings can excuse his unjust misrepresentation of our attitude towards himself. The accuracy of his readers, not having access to our pages, will be inclined to think, from his onslaught, that we have been, to say the least, very sparing of commendation of his work; whereas, in point of fact, none of our contemporaries have bestowed on him more praise than we have, whenever his work deserved it. We have repeatedly called him "an invaluable free lance," we have stated that his pungent sayings "are eminently suggestive, stimulative of good and repressive of evil tendencies." When reviewing his June number, we said "we could fill whole pages of our paper with other apposite extracts, for this number is intensely interesting," and then we quoted some of his profoundly Catholic remarks on Catholic Liberalism. Had we stopped at the praise and not gone on, as truth obliged us, to note his limitations, Mr. Thorne would have continued to pat us on the back. But our censure has rankled and got the better of his sense of justice.

The man that flares up for a moment in presence of an adversary, and presently cools off with becoming apologies for his transient anger, may be brave, though he lack self-command. But the man that broods for six weeks over a fancied slight and then commits to cold type what he himself calls "cuss words" cannot be brave. His vanity, his unreasonable self-esteem robs him of the manliness that acknowledges evident shortcomings. He brooks no censure of himself, and while he holds up to ridicule Mr. Henry Austin Adams, a fellow-convert who is doing excellent practical work, he complains that an earnest soul like his own is not welcomed with joy and gratitude.

Over and over again we welcomed Mr. Thorne, when he was right, with joy and gratitude. Even in those three pages where he brands us as "wrong-headed, narrow-headed, prejudiced and conceded," we hail with delight his condemnation of "all the Protestant, Liberal, infidel and scientific lies of our day," and his now healthier tone of appreciation with regard to

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Newman. We are glad that our strictures have wrung these utterances from the clever editor of the GLOBE REVIEW. We are willing to work with him in the eternal harness of truth and charity. But we refuse to accept blindly, as an infallible pronouncement, his mere ipse dixit. If on examination we approve it, we shall gladly say so. Thank God, the truth has made us free, and we acknowledge no allegiance to any teacher or master but the infallible Church.

St. Boniface College.

At the preparatory meeting of the College Literary Society the following officers were elected: President, Noël Bernier; Vice-President, Fortunat Lachance; Secretary, Achille Rousseau; First Counsellor, Joseph Lajoie; Second Counsellor, Alfred Bernier. In the evening of the 3rd inst., in presence of the Prefect of Studies, Father Drummond, Father Carrière the Moderator of the Society, and several other Fathers, the customary inaugural speeches were made. The president, Mr. Noël Bernier, gave a brilliant and fervid address on the triumphs of eloquence. The skill with which he marshalled his illustrations proved him to be in every way worthy of presiding over these literary meetings. Mr. Lachance spoke feelingly of "Religion et Patrie." Mr. Rousseau was charmingly didactic in treating of "L'Action oratoire." Mr. Lajoie had many original views on oratorical pauses. Mr. Alfred Bernier read a terse and telling sketch of the great writers of the age of Louis XIV. The proceedings closed with a few words of congratulation from Father Drummond, who incidentally dwelt on the importance of reading eloquently in public, and with suggestions for future work from the Moderator. This first meeting gives good promise of excellent literary work during the coming months.

Protestant Grammar Schools.

The "Guardian" of last week has the following letter: "Can nothing be done that these should be obliged to give Church of England boys definite Church of England teaching? I have before me the prospectus of one with a long list of subjects taught, but religion conspicuous by its absence. I was at the prize-giving on speech-day of another, and until this year there was no recognition of religion whatever; this year we did have a prayer in the shape of the National Anthem. The indirect influence of this hiatus in teaching all sciences except the highest of all—namely, Divinity—is doing throughout the country infinite mischief." We really fear nothing can be done. There is no such thing as definite Church of England teaching. Her articles speak one voice; her prayer-book another. She is a State-ordained compromise. The managers of grammar schools are much too shrewd to risk the loss of any applicant for entrance by an insistence on the peculiar views of any party in the Church, and we think they are wise. Why should they lose by trying to spread any individual point of belief when that Church herself is sublimely indifferent to unity of teaching, even in matters of fundamental importance? But the writer of the letter is to be commended for the discovery that the National Anthem is a "prayer." It will be pleasant information for many a merry peasant to learn that its enjoyment closes with the singing of the National "prayer."—CATHOLIC TIMES.

Wayside Shrines and Portal Statues

Catholic News, Eng.

What are we coming to? "A prominent Nonconformist assured me, writes Mr. Elliot Anstruther, a Sunday or two since, that the feature of Continental religious life that he considered most admirable, was the wayside shrine before which the peasantry kneel in prayer; and he told me further, that, were it not for the "weaker brethren," he would himself erect a domestic oratory, with crucifix, etc., complete, in his own home. This is, indeed, a sign of revolution, and speaks well for the Catholic spirit which is now extending beyond Church of England circles, and animating many of our Nonconformist friends." Perhaps I may venture to throw out a suggestion based upon the opinion of this Nonconformist gentleman: Why have we not more wayside shrines in England? There are many ways of cultivating the Catholic spirit, and surely an edifying one would be the re-establishment of these little centres of piety, so many of which were despoiled when the religion of this country was "reformed." Of course it will not be possible as yet to introduce the feature generally, but Catholic owners of land in the country might easily spare the small sum necessary for the erection of a shrine. In like manner, could we not easily place a statue over the entrances of our houses, and thus help to make English towns reminiscent of Bruges, for instance, or Normandy? The matter is a simple one, and in its very simplicity lies the immediate opportunity for its adoption. I shall gratefully hear from any of my correspondents of places where this excellent practice is carried out.

Reaping the Whirlwind.

The terrible tragedy enacted last week in the mining regions of Pennsylvania could hardly have occurred in any other part of the civilized world. Unfortunately it is only too true that among our neighbours to the south the value set upon human life is a gradually diminishing quantity and such a scene as that to which we refer is now almost as characteristic of the United States as are the periodical revolutions in the smaller republics of South America. We can all admit and admire the good points of our American cousins and can appreciate the difficulties which they have to encounter in the process of assimilating the millions of mixed nationalities who go to their shores, but at the same time it is obvious to all but the intentionally blind that they have not made, and are not making, the best use possible of the grand opportunities they have had of building up a nation that would be a pattern for the rest of the world. They appear to have totally ignored the injunction which should bind nations as well as men "to do unto others as you would be done by," and this charge may be applied as well to the individuals who compose the nation in respect to their dealings between themselves as to the politicians and the money classes who have in their hands the government of the country. The trouble with them, therefore, is a fundamental one, for it is one which strikes at the very foundation of successful nation-building. Many things have, no doubt, contributed to this deplorable result but amongst them all the one evil in their system which stands out clear and striking and which more than all else combined is responsible for the widespread irreverence and the disregard of the authority of God and the natural rights of man is the Godless education of the young. What the people of the United States have thus sown and, unhappily are still sowing, they must reap, and the time will inevitably come when as a nation, as well as individually, they will have bitter cause to rue the blindness and the folly with which they so perversely rushed headlong to disaster.