

# Northwest Review

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## CURRENT COMMENT

The Pope's Encyclical on "The Teaching of Catechism" is, like everything Pius X. does, one more practical move in the line of his well defined aim, announced at the beginning of his Pontificate—"to restore all things in Christ." The Holy Father's experience as a parish priest now stands him in good stead. As bishop and archbishop, he was known as a great advocate of thorough catechetical instruction. And now he applies this garnered lore of years to the guidance of the whole Church.

There is a manly directness about our reigning Pontiff's style that goes straight to the heart of the question. Plainly, almost bluntly, he tells the proud world that it is extremely ignorant in religious matters. This is true, to a certain extent, even of the generality of Catholics in our day. Preachers never should suppose that any religious instruction is too elementary for even a supposedly educated Catholic audience. Contemporary education being superficial in all branches except mathematics, where superficiality is fortunately untenable, it is not surprising that even Catholics should have but a superficial knowledge of the most important of all subjects, religion. We have met literary Catholics who did not know the meaning of the Immaculate Conception. To enlighten this widespread ignorance is the first object of every practical preacher. In other words, the ideal preacher naturally and at all times is an expositor of Christian doctrine, that is to say, a catechist. Before moving his hearers by exhortation he seeks to convince their minds by teaching. If he merely dwells in the lofty realms of speculation, or if he is merely an eloquent manipulator of catchwords, he fails of his chief duty. This latter showy style of preaching requires no remote preparation, while the solid catechetical style, to be made interesting, supposes a long habit of deep and wide theology. In this sense does the Holy Father say: "It is much easier to find a preacher capable of delivering an eloquent and elaborate discourse than a catechist able to impart instruction in a manner entirely worthy of praise."

And, now that the attention of parish priests all over the world is earnestly riveted on this point we may expect that sermons will become more interesting. For there is nothing so interesting as the truth when properly presented. Some forty years ago in London a company of highly educated Catholics, mostly converts, were discussing the secret of a then famous preacher's popularity. One lady said his success was due to his admirable voice, but another objected that Father B., with a much richer voice, had no drawing power. A dabbler in literature thought the secret was the preacher's faultless style and easy, fluent delivery; but he again was met by the example of other well known preachers who were less effective than the subject of their discussion, although they had that noisy volubility and factitious earnestness which is frequently mistaken for eloquence. As often happens in such discussions, the person most able to disentangle the skein of thought was the most reticent. However, when he was finally appealed to, he who had more theological learning than the majority of priests, but could not enter the ranks of the clergy because he was converted after his marriage said: "I don't pretend to give you the real, ultimate and universal secret of Father F.'s success as a preacher, but I will tell you why I would walk ten miles to hear him preach. It is because he always teaches me something. I have never heard a sermon of his in which he did not throw a new and bright light on some point of Catholic doctrine." In other words, he was a born catechist.

A professor in the Jesuit college of Santa Clara, California, has just made one great practical step in the art of

aerial navigation. We find a full account of the first public trial of this real flying machine in the "Scientific American" of the 20th inst. This is the first time that an aeroplane, bearing a live man, has made 4,000 feet in the air. This machine, which is known to the outside world as "the Montgomery aeroplane," after its chief inventor, but which he calls the "Santa Clara" after the college in which he teaches, is the joint conception of Professor Montgomery and the Rev. R. H. Bell, S.J., Professor of Physics in the same college. In appearance the aeroplane is a light framework of hickory braced in its different sections by light piano wire supporting two wings, 24 feet in length from tip to tip, covered with thin muslin. Together the wings have a surface of 185 square feet. The two wing surfaces are parabolic from the front to the rear edge, with a flat tail and a vertical keel. With proper manipulation, the machine travels in a wave line through the air, with a gradual descent, turning in circles to the right or left, as the form of the surface on either side is modified.

This is precisely what it did on April 29, in presence of a large number of invited guests and the representatives of many of the great newspapers of California. Of course there had been private trials before, but this was the first public trial. An aeronaut, a professional acrobat, had consented to risk a flight. The aeroplane, in which he sat, was hoisted by a hot air balloon to the height of 4,000 feet, and then cut off from the balloon. At first blush the risk run by the aeronaut seems terrible; but when we reflect that the aeroplane is really an uncollapsible parachute, and that the only danger in a descent by a parachute is the collapsing or upsetting thereof, the risk, for one who, like this aeronaut, had witnessed four successful private trials, was very slight. In fact, the aeroplane, when released, suddenly dropped, perhaps a hundred feet, then quickly regained its equilibrium, and floated with the air current. The flight was deliberate, and the descent gradual. A piece of paper dropped from an elevation on a still day might indicate the nature of the flight as it seemed to the spectator. The operator, in order to demonstrate his supreme control, caused the machine to describe circles, to raise itself, to back and go forward, and to perform difficult evolutions. The gliding flight of the aeroplane, from the moment of its recovered equilibrium after release to the instant of its return to earth again, appeared to the writer in the "Scientific American" like the action of a huge bird on the wing. The landing was effected with the most perfect ease; the aeroplane emerged from the trial without a scratch. The orders of Prof. Montgomery to the aeronaut were to land at a certain designated spot in a certain field to the southeast of the college grounds. This is exactly what the operator succeeded in doing.

The writer concludes that an advance has been established in the science of navigating the air by means of a machine heavier than the air, there has been a great leap forward, but the problem is not yet solved. Neither Prof. Montgomery nor his able Jesuit coadjutor, Father Bell, lends any countenance to the extravagant declarations to which this successful experiment has given rise in certain quarters. What the joint inventors say is this. An aeroplane has been constructed that in all circumstances will retain its equilibrium and is subject in its gliding flight to the control and guidance of an operator, but there still remain two other obstacles to be overcome before aerial navigation is either practically or commercially possible. There remains, secondly, continuance in flight, as an essential, and thirdly, the power of a machine to raise itself from the earth. The first principle has been solved beyond a doubt. The two remaining ones, perhaps the most difficult of all, await solution.

Nevertheless, when we bear in mind that, although attempts to imitate the flight of birds by mechanical means

antedate the balloon by several hundred years and have been conducted scientifically of late by Langley, Lilienthal and Sir Hiram Maxim, yet no other flying machines have shown such results as the "Santa Clara," we may well point with pride to this notable achievement of a Catholic college. The Rev. R. G. McBeth also might take note of this fact—among a multitude of similar facts, such as the discoveries of Roentgen and Marconi—before he ventures upon a repetition of that sneer he lately published in "The Tribune" about the Catholic Church fostering ignorance.

There is a perennial freshness about some things that prevents their ever growing stale. This must be our excuse for reprinting, long after date, a letter to the "Toronto News," which had hitherto escaped our notice, although originally published in that paper under the humorous heading, "Bouquets for the Editor."

To the Editor of "The News."

The stupidity and fanaticism displayed in your journal concerning the questions of Autonomy and Separate Schools are far more facetious than anything ever exhibited in Barnum's show. Therefore, as I want to take in all the fun, I can get out of that comical exhibition of intolerance and bigotry, I herewith enclose you one year's subscription to the "News."

If you can send me the back numbers, please start my subscription from the first of March inst. You will thereby oblige me very much. "The News" has become so funny even among the other papers of its kind!

I want to save all this for future generations, so that they may then form a correct opinion about the kind of men and newspapers we—Catholics of the Dominion—had to deal with at the beginning of this twentieth century.

J. A. LEVESQUE, J.P.

Bonfield, March 22, 1905.

We are all the more pleased to see the "Catholic Fortnightly Review" quote in full our tribute to the memory of the late Mr. J. P. Tardivel, because "La Verite" itself, in its issue of the 13th inst., cuts off the most interesting part of one of our sentences with the vague hint of three dots. It translates the first part of that sentence, viz., "The good seed sown by him with unflagging toil during so many years has developed into a magnificent harvest;" but it stops before the next words, "transforming the arid wastes of the liberalistic wilderness that environed and at first anathematized him, into a smiling growth of vigorous Catholic fruitage unconsciously witnessing to his fostering care." Is it possible that it is still considered imprudent to remind Quebecers of what happened less than thirty years ago? Must we wait fifty years before we can safely print facts which every middle-aged person knows? We who always prefer the whole truth are naturally glad to see that, thanks to the Catholic Fortnightly Review, the business end of that sentence will find a larger audience.

In the same number of his Review (vol. 12, No. 10) Mr. Preuss has a striking and convincing article, deprecating exaggerated "Sympathy with Animals." His most telling proofs are taken from an essay in the Boston "Evening Transcript" (January 21) by Mr. T. E. Brewster, who, albeit apparently an evolutionist, shows by experiments that the sensitiveness of brutes to pain is as nothing compared to human feelings under similar circumstances. The lower animals, such as the worm, do not seem to feel pain at all. The higher animals sometimes seem to feel pain, but infinitely less than man; often even the higher animals, such as horses, manifest an utter callousness to pain. Mr. Brewster's experiments and observations no doubt carry conviction to the reader's mind; but how much deeper and more satisfactory would have been his solution of the question with which he heads his article, "Do Animals Suffer?" had he known of John Henry Newman's incomparable sermon on the

"Mental Sufferings of Our Lord in His Passion." Herein, with the marvellous intuition of genius, the great thinker has thrown off, as if by way of a mere illustration, the most luminous description of brute feeling in the whole compass of human philosophy. "Living beings," he says, "feel more or less according to the spirit which is in them; brutes feel far less than man, because they cannot think of what they feel; they have no advertence or direct consciousness of their sufferings. This it is that makes pain so trying, viz., that we cannot help thinking of it, while we suffer it. It is before us, it possesses the mind, it keeps our thoughts fixed upon it. Hence, I repeat, it is that brute animals would seem to feel so little pain, because, that is, they have not the power of reflection or of consciousness. They do not know they exist; they do not contemplate themselves, they do not look backwards or forwards; every moment, as it succeeds, is their all; they wander over the face of the earth, and see this thing and that, and feel pleasure and pain, but still they take everything as it comes, and then let it go again, as men do in dreams. They have memory, but not the memory of an intellectual being; they put together nothing, they make nothing one and individual to themselves out of the particular sensations which they receive; nothing is to them a reality or has a substance beyond those sensations; they are but sensible of a number of successive impressions. And, hence, as their other feelings, so their feeling of pain is but faint and dull, in spite of their outward manifestations of it. It is the intellectual comprehension of pain, as a whole diffused through successive moments, which gives it its special power and keenness, and it is the soul only, which a brute has not, which is capable of that comprehension."

Although this masterpiece of psychological analysis is apparently unknown to Mr. Brewster, yet he makes out his case very well. "The fact is," he writes, "that with our belief in evolution, the rights of animals, 'our little brothers of the air,' and the rest, we are in danger of forgetting that between ourselves and the lower animals" (he means all brute beasts) "there is, after all, a great gulf fixed. Doubtless we do well to stop teamsters from maltreating their horses; not however for the horses' sake so much as for our own. It is not a pleasant sight to see any creature in distress, and the man who begins by beating his horse which he hurts less than he thinks, may end by beating his wife whom he will hurt more than he knows." And then he points the moral. "The evil of all our sympathetic impulses is that they are pretty certain to distort our moral perspective. The amount of time, money, effort, and, I fear, sympathy at the disposal of any one of us is strictly limited. If we spend it on one object some other must go short. They had a law in England—I do not know whether they have it still—which made it an offence punishable by fine to wrap a frog in a wet towel and stretch out the web of its toes on the stage of a microscope to demonstrate the circulation of the blood, the frog all the time being about half as uncomfortable as a child on a hard chair. But to get this law passed and enforced cost somebody a good deal of trouble which might better have been bestowed elsewhere. A law nearly as foolish has lately been presented to our own General Court. In the meantime it is practically impossible to secure adequate legislation for the protection of persons in dangerous trades, who for lack of it are killed and maimed every year by thousands. The effort which might have helped to save men and women and children is drained off to frogs and guinea-pigs."

The special ladies' edition of the Regina Leader in aid of the Regina Victoria Hospital came out on Friday, the 19th inst. With masculine curiosity we first admire the photographic group of the fourteen devoted women who make up the editorial and business staff of this "ladies' edition." There we note, among our own people, Mrs. Thos. Bennett, editor-in-chief (Regina correspondent of the Northwest Re-

view), Mrs. C. J. McCusker, Mrs. Rimmer and Mrs. Acaster. Then we turn to the first editorial, "Our objects," the tone of which is thoroughly business-like. The editors and managers have no "personal or collective desire for notoriety," "no private ends to serve," no political axe to grind; they are "just plain every-day women trying to do a little to lessen some of the ills" which skilled nursing can relieve even more effectually than the "utmost skill of medical science." Perhaps the most thought-provoking passage in that excellent article is the following: "The members of the Women's Hospital Aid or Regina are by no means women of leisure—the paradox that only the busy have any leisure is essentially true in this case. To do increases the capacity for doing. It is far less difficult for a woman who is habitually exerting herself in the multifarious duties of her home to do a little more for an extra purpose, than for the woman with few calls upon her time to overcome the vis inertiae for the same end."

A great feather in these ladies' cap is their having succeeded in obtaining an autograph article from Mr. Edward Bok, the renowned editor of the Ladies' Home Journal of Philadelphia, the most widely circulated magazine in America. He describes in a most amusing way his interview with Sarah Bernhardt, when he, a "cub" reporter, did not know a word of French except "oui" and "non, Madame," and she could not speak or even understand English. The result was just what one would expect from the capricious, fantastic creature her own memoirs, lately published in the "Strand," prove her to be.

This special ladies' edition of the "Leader" has so far outstripped its intended proportions, thanks especially to the generous patronage of local advertisers, that it has been found necessary to issue it in two sections. The first section, which appeared on the 19th, consists of sixteen large pages with views of the hospital, outside and in, group photos of the Honorary Members' Hospital Aid Executive and of the editorial and business staff of the paper, portraits of Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Forget and of the principal officers of the McCarthy Supply Company, Ltd., which has a whole page to itself. The variety and excellence of the original matter is fully in keeping with the handsome appearance of this very creditable issue. The second section which is to appear "in the early days of the new Province of Saskatchewan," i.e., sometime next month, will contain a number of interesting articles and features already prepared. We wish every success to this good work.

## Clerical News

Monsignor Count Vay de Vaya, before leaving Montreal for Quebec on the 17th inst., addressed to his friends here, by way of souvenir, copies of the programme of his lecture in New York at the Waldorf-Astoria, on March 31. A very good full length portrait of the distinguished prelate fills the first page. The tickets were five dollars each, and evening dress was de rigueur.

At the recent session of the board of the Catholic University, Very Rev. Charles P. Grannan, professor of Holy Scripture and a member of the Biblical commission now sitting in Rome, was elected Vice-Rector of the University with special supervision of the academic work of the faculty.

The Master-General of the Dominicans, Very Rev. Hyacinth Mary Cormier, left Cherbourg May 12 for a visitation of his order in the United States and Canada. He is accompanied by Father Horn, O.P.

A curious instance of a priest filling many posts occurred lately at St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, London.