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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1899.

CURRENT COMMENT

Those well-meaning asses who intend to boycott the Paris exposition next year because of the second condemnation of Dreyfus betray so little self-control that we may be quite sure they will not carry out a threat which implies self-denial.

A recent conversation heard in Winnipeg points to the correctness of a surmise that has frequently been expressed of late in Catholic journals. A globe-trotting entertainer, on entering a newspaper office, said to one of the staff, "Are you a Mason?" "No," was the reply, "I have no time for such tomfooleries." "What about Dreyfus?" was the next question, and its following so promptly on the heels of the former suggests that the Masonic view of the Rennes trial is the one which the cablegrams have been giving us for the last month.

"But," some simple, honest soul objects, "how is it possible that so many truth-loving people all over the world should have been deceived? The despatches from most civilized countries protest energetically against this terrible verdict which they deem iniquitous." Well, the first obvious answer is Carlyle's "Mostly fools." The majority of the human race are and always will be the slaves of passion and prejudice. Modern education, instead of checking this tendency to hasty judgments, has immensely increased it, because it cultivates the memory at the expense of the judgment, and thus fills the man of scraps with the pride-producing notion that he is a great man, whereas he has never learned to think; because it confides the training of the budding intellect to young people, mostly girls, who have no traditions of self-repression, no maturity of mind or character, nothing but superficial culture and ineradicable vanity.

Another answer might point to the evident one-sidedness of the cablegrams. What does any-one outside of France know of

the evidence presented by the prosecution? What did Mer cier, for instance, really say? We were told the row his enemies got up against him, but his own testimony was carefully suppressed. To find it, one had to read the French newspapers. But most people either could or would not take that trouble. This is another defect of contemporary non-Catholic culture, the inability to weigh evidence or at least the disinclination to look at both sides of a question whenever national or religious prejudice has accustomed us to one view. Outside of the legal profession which can, when it so wills, sift evidence admirably, there never was a period so fruitful as this in multitudes of noisy writers and speakers who are either unwilling or unable to weigh evidence. The most ridiculous theories, the most uncertain facts are accepted by literary and supposedly learned men on the flimsiest of testimony.

So sweeping an arraignment of the majority of the non-Catholic world may seem presumptuous to those who have not our Catholic experiences. But to us who are daily confronted with the ludicrous misconceptions in which non-Catholics indulge in regard to our beliefs and practices, with their incredible ignorance of our inner life, such a widespread hallucination as this Dreyfus worship is only one more example of the huge blunders which follow in the train of a fundamentally wrong view of religion. The idiots who really believe that the practice of auricular confession—which we Catholics know by experience to be the bulwark of morality, the key to the knowledge of human nature, the royal road to holiness—is essentially immoral can swallow any and every collection of lies provided it be guaranteed by some Protestant or Masonic body. We are far from complaining that we are misunderstood. On the contrary this experience is invaluable. We are so used to being lied about and cried out against that we get accustomed to putting on non-Catholic public opinion its true valuation, i.e., zero. We are thus saved from the prevailing Protestant blunder of thinking with the thoughtless crowd. No non-Catholic name, however exalted, has any paramount authority over our minds, because we daily find the greatest men outside the Church flustered by the simplest problems.

Take, as a palmary instance, Goldwin Smith, a refutation of whose historical mistake about one fact we print on our first page. He is distinctly not a panderer to the tastes of the mob. To some extent he even figures as an original thinker, though generally, when he does so, he is only echoing Catholic thought: for nothing seems so new nowadays as the oldest truth. He thinks that he has settled the question of the immorality of Jesuit teaching by simply referring to the "saintly Pascal." He has never looked at the Catholic side of the question, which brands Pascal as the very opposite of a saint, as a falsifier of texts, as a phenomenal liar, as guilty of that very sin with which he charges those

whom he unreasonably hates. Goldwin Smith's astounding ignorance, which arises from the fact that the better half of Christendom, i.e., the cream of the human race, is to him practically a terra incognita, prevents him from realizing how utterly impossible it is that a religious order, addicted, as he supposes, to immoral teaching, could enjoy the confidence of the Catholic world as the Society of Jesus does. Again he points triumphantly to the suppression of the Society of Jesus by Clement XIV. as proof of its guilt; and yet, if he had ever read the other side, he would know that the Brief of suppression, while reciting accusations, refrains from endorsing them, and dissolves the order merely to stave off greater evils, that this brief was wrung from a reluctant Pontiff hoping to save the ship by jettisoning the cargo, that the brief was purposely made so inoperative that the Jesuits could and did continue their canonical existence with the Pope's permission in Prussia and Russia, and that the Society of Jesus was re-established everywhere 41 years after its suppression. This restoration by a free Pope in answer to the entreaties of Catholics all over the world dispels all the temporary clouds of the suppression, and reflects indefinitely more honor on the Society than its momentary eclipse could inflict discredit.

The Poole Printing Company of Toronto have sent us "The Teller," a short story by the author of "David Harum." It must have been unearthed from the manuscripts of Edward Noyes Westcott, since he died before "David Harum" gave him posthumous fame. The tale of the teller is so short—containing no more reading matter than is to be found in one number of this paper—that it affords little scope for the skill in character-building displayed in "David Harum." However there is one strongly pathetic passage where old Samno tries in his rough way to atone for a terrible blunder, and the whole story is interesting and thoroughly wholesome. The booklet is neatly printed and sells for 15 cents.

Our Ste. Rose correspondent is unduly exercised over a phrase we used some time ago about "the monumental hypocrisies of the Anglo-Saxon race." The context in which these words appeared ought, we think, to have made it clear that we did not allude to Anglo-Saxon Catholics, since we spoke in the same sentence of the religion which most Frenchmen profess. What we had in mind was the hypocrisy of Anglo-Saxon public life, such hypocrisy, for instance, as that which Goldwin Smith lately denounced with scathing sarcasm in the Toronto Sun, when he twitted the American Saxons, who affect to be horrified at the Dreyfus verdict, with ignoring the lynchings and burnings of untried criminals within their own borders. It is one of the strangest phenomena of modern history that those who pride themselves on their Saxon ancestry seem to forswear in their relations with foreigners and "inferior races that straightforwardness and blunt sincerity which makes them so trustworthy in private life.

ARCHBISHOP IRELAND ON
THE DREYFUS VERDICT.

There is deep wisdom and noble forbearance in the great Archbishop of St. Paul's advice in reply to a reporter who had asked his opinion on the meeting called to protest against the Rennes verdict. Archbishop Ireland, who spoke these wise words on the 13th inst., refrains from stigmatizing, as it deserves, this infamous insolence of American meddlers; but he cannot help expressing his belief that such meetings are "untimely, unfair to France, and likely to breed regrettable ill-feeling" between the two countries. His Grace continues:

I shall not deny that I have always had in my heart deep sympathy for the unfortunate officer, who has been under trial in Rennes, and that I have wished and hoped that the sentence of the court would have been one of acquittal. But it is another question to face the verdict of the court, the moment that verdict has been declared, with the assertion that it is plainly against truth and that the court from which it issues is guilty of base injustice and sacrilegious perjury. And it is still more so another question to lay upon France the crime of the verdict, if crime there be in it, and throw at a whole people and their government insulting epithets. Let us wait. This whole matter belongs to the internal life and to the internal administration of France, and international courtesy, as well as justice, bid us talk about it very carefully and very slowly. France is a proud and sensitive nation. She will deeply resent, as it is her right, undue criticism and hasty judgment of her acts by a foreign people and especially will she resent, as it is surely her right, any uncalled for interference with her internal administration and any imprudent challenging of her national honor.

Let us hope that these counsels of moderation will have weight with the better class of Americans who have preserved the time-honored habit of reflecting before they speak and act and of abstaining from unwarranted interference in matters that are quite beyond both their ken and their sphere.

FATHER LACOMBE'S JUBILEE.

Next Monday the public celebration of Father Lacombe's jubilee will take place at St. Albert, near Edmonton. Our readers will remember that the fiftieth anniversary of the venerable missionary's ordination occurred on the 13th of last June and that the event was commemorated by his fellow-members of the Indian Commission near Lesser Slave Lake in true "voyageur" style with charming cordiality and bonhomie. An account of this first private celebration was reproduced, in our issue of July 25th, from an interesting special correspondence of the Free Press. It was eminently fitting, we might almost say it was a delicate arrangement of Divine Providence that the half-hundredth anniversary of his priestly life should have found him still in harness, still afoot for the interests of peace and the welfare of the Indians and half-breeds, in the very act of earning the blessing which Christ promised to peacemakers. And he was then earning it at no small cost. At his advanced age and

after his recent alarming illness nothing but what Commissioner Laird, in his address read under the far Northern tent last June, called his "keen sense of duty" could have led Father Lacombe "to undertake this arduous and hazardous mission."

Now, thank God, that mission has been most successfully completed. Much of its success is, of course, due to the long experience in treaty-making of Hon. Mr. Laird; but those who were present at all the interviews with the Indians and half-breeds cannot help wondering how they ever could have got on so well without the genial magnetic presence of the peerless Oblate missionary. His eloquence in the Indian, French and English languages, his beaming, kindly eye, his fatherly and at the same time his brotherly manner, the irresistible witchery of his smile, the grand record of his past achievements, in a word, all that makes him the typical Indian missionary, admired and loved throughout English and French speaking America, must have had a paramount influence in persuading the children of the forest and the plain to comply with the wishes of the Great Mother at Windsor represented by the Pale Face Chief Sunny Ways at Ottawa.

We wish Mr. W. T. Stead could have come across Father Lacombe after a preliminary talk with Sir William Van Horne. The picturesque editor of the Review of Reviews would have found a "character" worthy of his graphic pen. What themes he would have had in that ticklish crisis of 1884 when the Blackfoot tribe refused to let the C. P. R. build the road through their Reserve and could be appeased by no one else than Father Lacombe, or in that still more anxious moment during the rebellion of 1885 when the whole town of Calgary, in mortal dread of an uprising of those same Blackfoot Indians, despatched Father Lacombe as its ambassador suing for peace and welcomed him on his return as its saviour and as a tower of strength.

The author of the great Cree Dictionary, who speaks that widespread tongue with a perfection rare even among the aborigines, the initiator of so many great movements for colonizing the Northwest and improving the condition of the Indians and half-breeds will be feted and congratulated, on the 25th, by hosts of friends privileged to greet him on that day. The once savage natives civilized by him and his brethren will welcome him as "The old man of the prairie," "The old one that knows everything." There will be stirring speeches from well-wishers and touching replies from this most venerable and dearest of priests, and the dominant note of all this harmonious gathering will be love for the Apostle of the great, warm heart, who spent himself for the native races, who has won the admiration of the greatest and the noblest people of all creeds and tongues in the Dominion and who never made an enemy.

Rev. Father Enck, O.M.I., is the latest addition to the clergy of this diocese and at present resides at St. Mary's Winnipeg.