



CURRENT COMMENT

Last Monday the Telegram published a most suggestive and thought-provoking interview with the Hon. T. A. Brassey, son of Lord Brassey, and for many years editor of the Naval Annual. His views on Imperial Federation embody a consistent and reasonable theory; but their practical application to self-governing colonies such as this will depend upon the temper of leading minds in these colonies, and perhaps the Hon. T. A. Brassey does not realize what a change has lately come over the spirit of that "dream." One of our most distinguished citizens recently visited Toronto, which, in the realm of thought, is fast becoming the nerve-centre of the Dominion. There he met many old friends, whom he had formerly known as ardent imperialists, and he marvelled how the ardor of these gentlemen had cooled in the face of cold facts. They were discussing England's traditional policy of sacrificing Canadian rights on the altar of United States friendship. Their forbodings pointed to a continuance of the same policy in the pending Alaskan Boundary commission. They were justly indignant at what they feared would happen. With them the interests of Canada, as contradistinguished from those of the Empire, were now paramount. Some of them even went so far as to hint that, if the Mother Country kept on making a cat's-paw of Canada, the time might come when independence would be our only refuge. As the returned Winnipegger was relating these conversations to a group of friendly listeners here, one of them said: "Then those men have become disciples of Henri Bourassa." "Well," was the significant reply, "people may say what they like, but Bourassa has a level head." Of course this may be only club gossip; but it may also be the straw that shows how the wind blows.

Mr. Brassey thinks that the only possible way of dealing with the Irish Home Rule question is to make it a part of some federal plan of devolution, in which self-government would devolve upon England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales with a federal Parliament in London which would exercise a supreme control over these local legislatures. Every one knows that the present British House of Commons is overwhelmed by the mass of local business which it now attempts ineffectually to cope with.

In reference to the Irish problem Mr. Brassey's words deserve to be quoted: "The great objection to the carrying out of the policy of devolution or establishment of local legislatures in the United Kingdom has been, of course, as regards Ireland, but the passing of the Irish Land act has removed the main objection to home rule, in the mind of the average Britisher. The feeling between all classes in Ireland has immensely improved during the past few years, and I have heard, on recent visits to Ireland, that when the demand for local government is revived, as it undoubtedly will be, that demand will be supported by many of the class which has hitherto been opposed to it. I look upon the solution of the Irish question as eminently to be desired, not only from the point of view of Ireland, but from the point of view of the Empire, which could never be strong while so large a section of the people of the United Kingdom are hostile to the Imperial government, and there would be much less danger of any rupture in our relations with the United States were the people of Ireland loyal and contented."

The Sacred Heart Review—which, by the way, is to be congratulated upon having resumed its original name and given up the clumsy attempt to substitute, by the use of large and small type respectively, "Boston" for "Sacred Heart"—animadverts upon M. Labori's convenient earnestness. When he was the defender of Dreyfus he was admired by all the non-Catholic and easily deluded world as a most noble, self-sacrificing eloquent lawyer, who believed firmly in the innocence of his client. The same Labori lately defended the Humberts, those notorious French swindlers, and proved that he could plead for consummate scoundrels, whom he knew to be guilty, with as much eloquence and apparent selflessness as he did for Dreyfus. The question suggests itself whether an honest lawyer, who really believed in Dreyfus, could be an able one.

Has anyone reflected how the whole career of the late Pope tends to refute the superstition that "thirteen" is an unlucky number? Taking the word "lucky" in its Christian sense of "a beneficent providence," could any career have been more lucky than that of Joachim Pecci? Blessed with a healthy body and mind, he had the further advantage of the best possible early training in a noble and devout Catholic family, in an excellent college, in one of the very finest seminaries in the world, in that matchless school of wisdom, the diplomacy of Papal Rome. Long before middle age he learned to know men by meeting some of the wisest in the course of his diplomatic career and by governing some of the most astute at Benevento and Perugia. When his green old age began he was called to Rome as Camerlengo or Head of the Papal household at the very time when the great and glorious Pius IX., nearing his end but still in full possession of his faculties, could impart to the man of his choice the fruits of his unparalleled experience. How practical was the result of these conferences between the dying and the coming Pope may be seen in the new Conclave regulations drawn up jointly by the two and made public within the last few weeks. Providence made the election of Leo XIII. a remarkably rapid and unanimous one. Providence, again, placed him on the pontifical throne just when his conciliatory temper was most needed, while at the same time the parting instructions of his predecessor steered his already iron will against unwarrantable concessions. Even if, as was hinted at the time, Cardinal Pecci came to Rome with liberalistic tendencies, the memory of the lion-hearted Pius, who, like Moses of old, had fought the battles of the wilderness, would have kept the peace-loving Leo from abating one jot of the thunders of Sinai, as, like a second Joshua, he entered the Promised Land. And what plenty he found there! Papal infallibility accepted by the whole Church, a galaxy of great theologians trained in the school of his great predecessor, the world-wide Church drawn by the cords of love, as never before, to the centre of unity, his own mind stored with the accumulated lore of a studious, active, observant and undisturbed episcopate of 31 years. He begins his luminous reign as if he foresaw that it would last more than 25 years. As we follow the majestic development of his immortal encyclicals, we feel that he is rounding out a plan that shall embrace all the needs of the Church, all the errors of the alien, all the classes and interests of the human race. Time, which seemed to linger at his behest, had also prepared the fitting hour for his advent as peacemaker. If he brings Bismarck to his knees, it is because the German Centre Party, which was only feel-

ing its way during the last years of Pius IX., now holds the balance of power. If he is called upon to arbitrate between contending nations, it is because the recent memory of great European wars has filled the minds of statesmen with horror of further bloodshed. There have been no great European wars since the year of his advent, which closed the Russo-Turkish war. And even where Leo XIII.'s policy met with apparent failure, as it seems to have done, for the present at least, in France, the rare exception only confirms the general theory, viz., that his success was due, no doubt first of all to the masterly keenness and breadth of his mind—*itself a gift from God*—but also to environment and happy circumstance. What does all this point to if not to a providential dispensation of events and men, which the thoughtless call "luck"? Are we not justified in holding that Leo XIII.'s career inflicts upon the "thirteen" superstition a blow from which it ought never to recover?

One of the newest of our exchanges is the "Northwestern Messenger," the first number of which, dated September 5, is published at Duluth. In his "Greeting" the editor informs us that the Messenger "will be the official newspaper of the diocese of Duluth, which embraces seventeen counties with an area of 40,000 square miles and a population of 55,000 Catholics. This ecclesiastical territory in itself is about half the size of Minnesota and is yet in its infancy. The wealth of Ormuz and of Ind is found within its borders in minerals, in lumber, and in agriculture. It is being rapidly settled and is destined to be the home of millions of people before the middle of the twentieth century."

With the learned and energetic Bishop McGorrick behind it, our promising contemporary is in no urgent need of our best wishes, though we humbly tender them. Its first number is full of interesting comments on Catholic and other topics, and its copious news of the Northwestern states is quite a special feature.

We gladly cull from the Northwestern Messenger the following passage in its opening editorial.

It is hardly necessary to dwell on the value of a Catholic paper in a community. Popes, prelates and priests have recommended the circulation of the Catholic press among the members of the church. The daily and weekly secular papers are good enough in their way and answer the purposes for which they are published. It is necessary to have them and they deserve a generous patronage. But frequently they contain matter inimical to faith and morals. Sometimes they print false news, either wittingly or unwittingly, about the Church. It is the province of a Catholic journal to correct erroneous statements and to defend the Church from misrepresentation. It is the duty of intelligent Catholics to encourage it in its work.

A Catholic paper of some kind should find its way into every Catholic home. The members of a Catholic family who depend upon the daily paper alone for information are behind the age. What can they know about events in the Catholic world if they read no Catholic paper?

On the same date, Sept. 5, the "Catholic Citizen" of Rochester, N.Y., also makes its bow to the public. It is a compact 12-page paper, with several good half-tone illustrations. Although it does not

profess to be the organ of its venerable and illustrious Ordinary, the Right Rev. B. J. McQuaid, it is fully in touch with the principles of that fearless champion of Catholic rights, as may be seen by its richly deserved castigation of its Milwaukee namesake, the dilettante whitewasher of the Philippine administration.

Here are some extract from that telling article:

The "Catholic Citizen" of Milwaukee, has taken upon itself the task of censuring the Catholic papers and Catholic societies which have spoken out boldly concerning the outrages which have been perpetrated "in the name of humanity" by American soldiers, American officials and Americans generally in our recently acquired colonies in the far East.

Does the "Citizen" complain that the Catholic press was not pleased when Private F. L. Bishop, Company E, Tenth Pennsylvania regiment, after asserting that he would not hesitate to steal anything in the way of sacred articles from the Catholic churches in the Philippines, went on to say: "The Catholics, particularly the Catholics of the Philippines, are fanatical in the extreme, and their religion is nothing more than absolute idolatry!" It is plain that Mr. Bishop would loot Catholic churches in this country did opportunity present itself, and if the Catholic press did not sternly rebuke such sentiments or the part of government soldiers, it would not be worthy of the name.

Why should the "Citizen" find fault with the Catholic press for declining to take seriously the inconsistent statements sent out from Washington, one week that the friars were the backbone of the Aguinaldo insurrection, and the next that the insurgents were the implacable enemies of the friars and would never surrender until the latter were expelled from the islands? Were we not to be pardoned for looking with suspicion, at least, upon the self-apologetical statements which have been and still are sent out from Washington about Philippine affairs?

The Milwaukee paper makes use of one peculiar argument in chastising its colleagues. It is that the Catholic laity should not have taken up the cudgels in behalf of justice to their Filipino brethren until the American hierarchy had taken united action. And why not, pray? The Philippine situation does not involve any matters of ecclesiastical policy upon which the American bishops have any right to intervene. Such questions as the disposition of church property in the islands, the future of the religious orders there, and so on, are matters for the Propaganda to settle. But matters such as we have referred to belong in the realm of practical politics.

Politicians do not fear the denunciations of Catholic bishops or priests. It is the wrath of an outraged laity—the men who vote—that they fear. Hence we say that in order to bring about a cessation of the practices we have referred to and others still more to be deplored it was perfectly proper, nay, it was the bounden duty of the Catholic laity to speak out boldly. And, if we mistake not, the attitude of the Catholic press and a portion of the Catholic laity, coming on the eve of a presidential election, has frightened the politicians.

It cannot be that the Milwaukee paper thinks it a crime to occasionally frighten politicians?

Persons and Facts

Mr. Frederic R. Condert, the great Catholic lawyer, is very ill with heart disease at his home in New York. He is 71 years old.

The Hon. Eric Drummond, whose conversion we mentioned last week, is half-brother and heir presumptive of the Earl of Perth, head of an historic house famous in Jacobite days. James, Earl of Perth, who was converted by Bossuet, was made Duke by James II. His descendants, for the most part, fell back into Protestantism. Those who did not emigrate to the North of Ireland. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the rightful heir to the earldom of Perth, Charles Drummond, was excluded because he was a Catholic priest. Mr. Eric Drummond is 27 years of age.

Rev. Robert Benson, son of the next to last Archbishop of Canterbury, was received into the Church last Monday.

The first edition of Dr. William Turner's "History of Philosophy" has been exhausted in three months. Father Turner is one of the professors at St. Paul's Seminary, Merriam Park, Minn., and is a man of scholarly attainments. His work is being used as a text-book in some non-Catholic colleges and is very popular.—Northwestern Messenger.

Among the places which the King visited in Vienna was the church of the Capuchins, where he prayed at the tomb of the murdered Empress of Austria.

The Holy Father has confirmed the nomination of Bishop Bourne to the Archbishopric of Westminster and of Dr. Casartelli to the bishopric of Salford. Archbishop Bourne is the youngest and one of the ablest members of the English hierarchy. Bishop Casartelli, though of Italian descent, is a thorough Englishman, a learned Orientalist, and, like the new Archbishop, an excellent administrator.

The London correspondent of the Dublin "Daily Express" says he learns that the Government will next session introduce a bill transferring to Ireland the right to transact its own private legislation.

Two more Franciscan Sisters from Syracuse, N.Y., are preparing to go to care for the lepers in the Sandwich Island called Molokai. They are Sister Mary Leonida and Sister Beata.

The Most Rev. J. J. Harty, Archbishop of Manila, arrived at New York on September 5, on the steamer La Touraine from Havre.

It is to be hoped that no Catholic parent will send his child to a non-Catholic school. It is repugnant from a religious point of view and does not pay from a secular point of view.—Catholic Citizen, (Rochester).

The annual collection of 1902 for the education of ecclesiastical students in the diocese of Rochester, N.Y., was \$14,050, probably the largest sum ever contributed at one time by the people of one diocese for this purpose.

The Red River and Assiniboine Bridge Company is renewing the piers of the Broadway bridge.

The Sisters of the Holy Names in St. Boniface are carrying on most of their classes in the Royal Block, pending the completion of their two new wings. The lowest class is, however, taught in one of the class-rooms of the convent.

Flowers are still blooming in many a Winnipeg and St. Boniface garden.