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CURRENT COMMENT

Although the circulation of the Winnipeg Daily Tribune is not generally deemed at all gigantic, we are pleased to see it giving wider publicity to some of our remarks on the school question. They are thus more likely to reach the very people who stand most in need of them, and yet are least likely to consult our columns. Among the readers of our afternoon contemporary there must be a certain number of fair minded, independent thinkers, and these must have been deeply impressed by the contrast between the Methodist "Christian Guardian's" ponderous call to battle and the "Northwest Review's" crisp and incisive array of facts, both published by the "Tribune" in its editorial page of March 24. We were especially pleased to see the reproduction of Dr. Halpenny's arraignment of the public schools as "one of the chief factors in spreading evil influences among boys." We regret, however, that the "Tribune" was not sufficiently honest to quote the passage in which we credited to the "Free Press" the report of Dr. Halpenny's damaging testimony. Some of the "Tribune's" readers may have thought, with their traditional views of Catholic veracity, that we purposely garbled that report, whereas we took particular care (see "Northwest Review" of March 18, p. 1, col. 3) to refer that report to the "Free Press" "Local Notes" of March 13, where anyone can verify its literal reproduction by us.

The "Evening Telegram" of March 23rd printed a letter from "An American Immigrant," who, while replying to Mr. J. F. Tennant's letter, reproduced in our last issue, conceals his own identity under a vague pen-name. Fortunately, for the cause of truth, this enables him to betray his ignorance more boldly. He writes: "If we follow the history of crime in the United States, as reported in the press for a number of years, from the bomb-throwing anarchists of Chicago down to the assassination of President McKinley, as well as the Italian 'Mafia' and 'Black Hand' societies, we find that nearly all the criminals are foreigners, most of them from southern Europe, where they have had all the advantages of Mr. Tennant's 'Godly' sectarian schools. 'The tree is known by its fruit.'"

"An American Immigrant" is evidently not aware that his assertion and argument have been answered most triumphantly and most damagingly to the United States by Mr. S. S. McClure himself in his magazine for December last. Mr. McClure's article on "The Increase of Lawlessness in the United States," made up as it is of quotations from representative and serious newspapers, and from the published statements of judges and citizens, and of statistics of murders and homicides patiently collected during 23 years by the "Chicago Tribune," has been widely quoted and commented on in both hemispheres. First of all, he establishes the increase by a series of tables and figures, which he thus summarizes: "These statistics confirm the general impression regarding the rapid and alarming increase of lawlessness in our country. At present there are four and a half times as many murders and homicides for each million of people in the United States as there were in 1881." Then he flatly contradicts "An American Immigrant's" assertion that "nearly all the criminals are foreigners." Mr. McClure says: "Some thoughtless people say 'It's the foreigner.' It is often carelessly said that these foreigners come to us from countries where murders and homicides are more common than here, that they have less inherent respect for the observance of law than we as a people have. Let us examine the facts. In 1900, according to the United States census, we had 10,356,644 foreign born population in our country." He then gives the figures for each of 26 groups of foreign countries, among which we need mention only Canada and Newfoundland with 1,181,255. "Of these 10,356,644 people," the writer continues, "only those from Russia (424,096) came from a country where there are more murders and homicides

than there are here, and even in Russia the percentage but slightly exceeds ours. The other 9,932,548 came from countries no one of which has half as many murders and homicides per million of population as we have. And 2,788,304 of them (those from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) came from countries whose murders and homicides are less than one-tenth as common as they are here. Furthermore, American States in which American blood is purest, Kentucky, for instance, have their full share of crime."

Finally, at one single stroke, Mr. McClure demolishes "An American Immigrant's" argument that the crimes of these foreigners were due to the sectarian schools which they had attended in Europe. "So," he concludes, "the records of murders and homicides in the various countries seem to show that foreigners in the United States acquire most of their disrespect for law after they come among us. Our governments—city, county and state—are inefficient and sometimes criminal. Under inefficient government the strong individual oppresses the weak. Take, for example, the extraordinary story of the Standard Oil Company, with its years of successfully crushing competition, that practically deprived men of their property and their business, with its control and selfish use of railroads that were given their franchise by the state for the good and equal use of all. A despotic government could do no worse."

We recently witnessed, in a small way, a manifestation of that lawlessness which is assuming such alarming proportions south of the boundary line. It was in a small North Dakota town, where most of the grown-up people were born in Ontario. A highly-respected citizen kept his fine young Mount St. Bernard dog strictly within the enclosure of his property. On our suggesting that he might be taken out for a stroll, he replied, "I had rather not. I'm afraid he would be poisoned, as his predecessor, a still finer animal, was. They have a habit here of poisoning all valuable dogs." "But why don't you ferret out the poisoners and have them prosecuted?" "Oh, it would be no use; even if I caught them, they never would be punished. I expect my dog to be poisoned before he is full grown." A nice country to live in!

There is only one grain of truth in the letter of "An American Immigrant." "Ask," he writes, "the real estate dealers what immigrants bring the most money into the country (Canada) and invest it wisely, and they will tell you it is the Americans." Quite true, the settlers who come to us from the United States are, as a rule, prosperous and well behaved. None but law-abiding citizens would come to live in a law-abiding country. The others stay at home. The old story of the U. E. Loyalists is being repeated today with a difference. The infant United States then lost its best citizens when it drove them into voluntary exile for the sake of virtue and honor. Now the best citizens of the neighbouring republic are coming to us of their own accord, because the conditions of life are more stable and satisfactory here, where might is not right.

The Very Rev. Alfred Meyer, O.S.B., whose letter to the local M.P. of his district we publish elsewhere, is the head of that large German Catholic colony which has taken up land in the Quill Plains of Saskatchewan. As Father Meyer represents some three thousand of the best settlers in the country, his opinion must carry great weight. One of the chief attractions for these staunchly Catholic settlers was the fact that in the Northwest Territories, as contradistinguished from Manitoba, they could have separate schools. But apart from all the extraneous authority of that letter, its reasons are luminous and unanswerable. However, it is our duty to warn Father Meyer that, as soon as he attempts to organize separate schools according to the law now existing in the Territories, he will find that the only thing Catholic about them is the teachers and the

pupils, and that the Department of Education will shake his liberty in every possible way.

It will be noticed that the Archbishop, in his reply to the English address at St. Boniface College last week, praises the excellent English accent of those pupils who spoke that language. His Grace, who has a keen ear for correct sounds, remarked the absence of nasal or guttural tones and he styled the happy medium "velvety English." Mgr. Langevin's opinion is confirmed by a recent occurrence. A Protestant Englishman withdrew his two sons from St. John's College, because during several years of contact with the students there they had lost their pure home accent, and he sent them to a boarding school in England in the hope that they would thus recover what they had lost. Meanwhile his sister, a convert, had placed her two sons in St. Boniface College, where, during the same time they preserved their home accent without any deterioration. Their Protestant uncle expressed his surprise at the difference. The fact is all the more remarkable in that several of the professors at St. John's are English born and have preserved their distinctive English accent, while none of the professors at St. Boniface College were born in England, all of them being natives of Quebec, the Maritime Provinces or France except one who is a New Yorker and has the best accent of the Empire City. The reason of the difference probably is that more care is bestowed on the students' pronunciation in St. Boniface College than in any of the Winnipeg colleges. Moreover, the habit of speaking French tends to improve one's English accent. Good French is spoken "trippingly on the tongue," not through the nose or in the throat. The psalm-droning nasality of the 17th century Puritans, which endures to this day in the States and among most of the descendants of the U. E. Loyalists in Canada, was dropped in England as soon as French influence began to prevail at court and in polite society, and this improvement continued during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries till the growing estrangement that followed Waterloo made the use of French less common and the consequent lapse into guttural speech more prevalent.

That was a very telling speech of Mr. F. D. Monk in the House of Commons at Ottawa on the 23rd ult. He showed a truly independent spirit by opposing the amendment of his chief, Mr. Borden. "He took strong issue with the leader of the opposition on his constitutional argument and held that the Government was well within its powers in the legislation it proposed." As to the vexed question whether or not section 93 of the British North America Act applied to the new provinces, "he held that it did; others held that it did not. This proved that lawyers differed and it also established the necessity for the re-enactment of the British North America Act provisions in this bill. The re-enactment could at any rate do no more than duplicate what the constitution provided. It could show the intention of parliament to guarantee to the minority of the Northwest what the minority had enjoyed for thirty years. The honor of the House was involved in the preservation of these rights."

Mr. Monk claimed too that the term "public schools" in the Dominion Lands Act included the separate schools of the minority and should enable them to share in the funds produced by these lands. As to the proposal to leave the rights of the minority to the unrestricted care of the provincial majority, the history of Manitoba did not recommend that course.

Mr. Monk made a palpable hit when he called attention to what had been done in Great Britain to establish church controlled schools, and nothing half so radical existed in Canada. What was proposed by this bill was far, far short of what had been done in Great Britain. There was a certain section of the people of Canada who were loyal and vehemently British in everything but the matter of education. In the case of the character of schools, this section of

the population shows a servile desire to imitate the United States, where religious teaching of any sort is forbidden in the schools.

Another excellent point in his speech was this. "I wish," he remarked, "before resuming my seat to make a very brief allusion to the character of the discussion of this matter in the public press. We have heard a great deal about the Freedom of the Northwest and about common schools. We have in some papers a clear indication that when the opportunity is offered them there exists a great desire to deprive this minority, once for all, of every shred of the rights which they possess at the present moment in the Northwest Territories." This hostile animus, which surprised Sir Wilfrid himself, proves conclusively that the tyrannical majority in the Northwest should be restrained by legislation from oppressing the minority.

Being a Catholic, Mr. Monk felt that he ought to defend himself against the charge of undue subservency to the hierarchy, and he did so in the following convincing words: "The discussion has gone even further, and it has been time and again written and said that those members who in this House defend the rights of the minority, are under clerical influence, are acting under the dictation of the hierarchy—whatever that means."

"What is the meaning of these insinuations? If they were written once or twice, if they appeared so to speak by accident, one would be prepared to treat them with a tolerance which must necessarily be the quality of a public man if he wishes to live. But it has been so often stated that those who in this House adopt the views which I adopt, are under the domination of the clergy. I wish to enter a protest against that insinuation. There is no foundation for that accusation and those who make it know not of what they speak."

"I came to this House to fulfil my duty to my country without any control over me either of priest or bishop or anybody else. That control I have never admitted and that control never existed. As a matter of fact, I say, the clergy in my province do not exercise any control over the votes of men in this House. Priests exercise no influence in the exercise of the franchise. I verily believe if the parish priests of my constituency were to unite to control my election, I would lose my deposit."

Says the Sacred Heart Review, of March 25: "Australian papers to hand contain the information that in the Public Service Examination, held in December last, the pupils of Catholic schools secured nine places out of twenty-five, or 36 per cent. of the passes including the first place among the candidates throughout the whole State. Seeing that Catholics comprise only one-fourth of the population, and that the Catholic schools have obtained more than one-third of the available places, we think the performance one that the Catholic schools may be justly proud of. But it is only the same story in Australia as elsewhere. Catholic schools wherever given a fair test, are always found to be superior to other schools." That is one of the two principal reasons why so fierce an onslaught is made just now on Catholic Schools in the Northwest. The other unavowed but most real motive is the wish to profit by the school taxes unjustly wrung from the Catholic body.

Mr. D. W. Bole, M.P. for this city, has written a letter, explaining his position, to the Rev. A. E. Smith, of 273 Austin Street. He says there are three courses open to parliament:

(1.) Accept the educational clauses as brought down to Parliament February 21.

(2.) Pass the autonomy bill without any reference to education, giving the provinces so called provincial rights, or:

(3.) Confirm the system of education now in vogue in the Territories.

He rejects the first course without discussing it. As to the second, he shows it would be unwise and might

lead to completely denominational schools. This point is so well taken that we quote it entire.

In the proposed new provinces separate schools are established by law; but there are two laws, first the Northwest Territories Act of 1875, which provides for separate schools, pure and simple, and second, the ordinance of 1892, which provides for separate schools on a national basis, under absolute control of the legislature and removed from clerical dictation. There are many eminent lawyers who think that the ordinance is ultra vires of the Act of 1875 as it does not provide the kind of schools intended by the Northwest Territories Act. Sir John Thompson although he does not specifically state clearly held this view. He refused to interfere when appealed to by the Catholic minority as a matter of public policy and not as a matter of law. Then if union was held to mean the time of the entry into confederation of these new provinces clause 93 might not apply to the minorities in the protection of what they have now, if what they have is ultra vires, but would enable the minorities to conduct separate schools on purely denominational lines under the Act of 1875. This we do not want, but are in danger of getting it, if you insist that the new provinces should have a free (?) hand untrammelled by any constitutional limitations in the bill before parliament.

In view of all these prospective dangers and complications he adopts the third course as the only one left. Of course it seems clear to us that he would avoid all dangers and complications by adopting the first course, which is the logical conclusion of his objections to the second. But we heartily commend Mr. Bole's fairmindedness to Catholics according to his lights. He has always done his best to make our school position in this city less intolerable than the 1900 Act has made it. And the fact that the Tribune jeers at him for being "dead easy" is greatly in his favor.

On January 28th last we mentioned that the town of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, would celebrate this year the twelve hundredth anniversary of the first coming of St. Aldhelm to that town in 705. An old "Shirburnian" sent that number of the Northwest Review to one of his former masters in Sherborne School. This quondam teacher, now enjoying in a green old age his "otium cum dignitate," writes to his much younger friend and pupil, who allows us to make an extract from his letter. "I also found the 'Paper' interesting. The article upon Veillot I thought really good, and I could not but wonder again and again how such writing could find 'fit audience' in Winnipeg. It certainly would not in Salisbury." Our friend's correspondent is not aware that Winnipeg is the home of Ralph Connor, one of the ablest writers in the English speaking world. To return to the extract. "No doubt Veillot was a great master of French prose, perhaps the greatest of the last fifty years. The author of the article lets in the light a little upon another marked characteristic of the man—his brutality to others. I suppose most strong men have a brutal side. Clearly Veillot, like Bismarck, had it in a supreme degree, and, of course, it must be called essentially unchristian." We should hardly call Veillot brutal. In that article we spoke of the "pungency of his wit" and of his "crushing saitre," but also of his "deep tenderness." We might have enlarged upon his forgiving spirit as exemplified by his reiterated attempts at reconciliation with Montalembert who had so grievously misjudged him. Now a brute is neither tender nor forgiving. No; Veillot was never brutal; he was often caustic, bitter, even virulent, but only against the Pharisees of his day who were far worse, because more enlightened, than their Hebrew prototypes whom the Master and model of all Christians branded as "Whited sepulchres" and "Serpents, offspring of vipers." Severity is not unchristian when the object thereof can be silenced only by the word-