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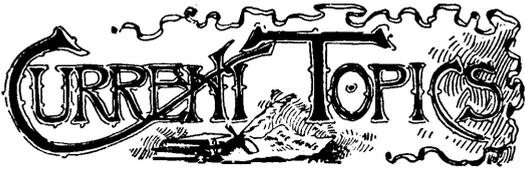
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Some time ago we had occasion to refer to the growing interest of English manufacturers of fertilizers in Canada's phosphate deposits, due to the gradual exhaustion of the great stores of guano in certain islands of the Pacific coast of South America. It is not generally known that Canada has also its guano fields, though they have never been developed to any appreciable extent. Indeed, their existence is not dreamed of by the great mass of our population, though the fishermen of the Labrador coast have long been aware of the occurrence of such deposits on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The fact was first formally revealed to the scientific world by Mr. Saint-Cyr in a report which contains the results of a voyage of exploration undertaken in 1885 to that portion of the Labrador coast which is comprised in the Province of Quebec. Though Mr. Saint-Cyr's researches were avowedly of a scientific character, and were made in connection with the Department of Public Instruction, of whose museum he was then curator, his treasure-trove is by no means destitute of economic value. This is evident from the list of subjects covered by his report, which comprises guano, eider-down, porpoises, seals and other cetacea and various kinds of sea-birds. Mr. Saint-Cyr applies the term guano to the rich deposit of *humus* or soil found on some of the islands on the north shore, which he considers by no means worthless, though its fertilizing qualities have been impaired by frequent rains and frost. His stay was not long enough to permit of a minute examination of the soil in question. He visited the islands of the Mingan, Archipelago and Grand Meccatina. These islands contain large quantities of a black earth, rich and light, in which certain sea-birds make their nests, and to which they resort in such numbers that sometimes the whole surface is almost covered with them. He feels certain that, but for the frequent rains and the melting of the accumulated snows, these guano deposits would ere this have acquired considerable value. Whether the fertilizing substance can be found in sufficient quantity and of a quality excellent enough to give promise of remuneration from the working of the deposits can, he concludes, be ascertained only after a thorough exploration of the ground. The deposits of which he heard during his voyage greatly exceeded in extent those which came under his actual observation. Since Mr. Saint-Cyr wrote his report Labrador has been attracting a good deal of attention in both England and Canada, and it remains to be seen whether those who are interested in that long disregarded region will think it worth while to develop this feature of its resources. Besides bird guano, there is a fertilizer, rich in nitrogen and phosphate, made from the refuse of the cod and seal fisheries, but its oiliness makes its action comparatively slow.

A question of no slight importance to those who are concerned in professional education in this province has of late been the theme of much dis-

cussion among our French contemporaries. We refer to the proposed fusion of the medical faculties of Victoria and Laval Universities. Especial interest has been added to the subject by a message from the Vatican requesting the Premier to take charge of the bill framed for the purpose, entitled "An Act to amend the Act constituting as a corporation the School of Medicine and Surgery of Montreal." Monseigneur Paquet and Abbé Proulx pleaded the cause of union on behalf of the University of Laval and its Montreal branch, respectively, as rector and vice-rector of that institution. It was urged that the fusion would be beneficial to professional training; that it would satisfy the Catholic community in both sections of the province; that it would work to the prejudice of no class or individual, every right being respected and due regard being had for the sentiments of all concerned. Of course, to attain any great end of common interest there must be concession on both sides; but the advantages that would be secured equalled, if they did not exceed, any sacrifice that might be necessary. Each of the amalgamating corporations would gain by the Act, while no essential privilege would be surrendered by them. Drs. Lanctot and Brunelle dissented from the principle of the Bill and defended the right of the Victoria School of Medicine to continued and separate existence. It was not fair that those who had laboured for more than thirty years to build up that institution should be deprived of the fruits of their efforts. By the fusion Montreal, the metropolis of the Dominion, would be doomed to content itself with a branch of a university which had its centre of operations at Quebec. The Protestants of the province had two distinct institutions with university powers—McGill and Bishop's College, Lennoxville—each of which had its medical faculty. It was not in consonance with equity that the professors of a faith whose adherents were so much in the majority should be deprived of equal educational advantages. Drs. Lanctot and Brunelle advocated affiliation rather than fusion—a plan which, they maintained, would leave the vitality and independence of the School of Medicine virtually unimpaired. Mgr. Paquet and Abbé Proulx disclaimed any intention of interfering with the rights and privileges of the school of medicine—the aim and affect of the Bill being, on the contrary, to enhance its prestige and authority by giving it full and recognized university rank. The preamble of the Bill was then taken into consideration by the committee, and, after some debate, was adopted. This question of university amalgamation, which has already (though from a different standpoint) been discussed with such fervour in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces, has for some years been a source of unrest among our French-speaking compatriots in this province, the introduction of the present Bill being the climacteric of a long continued agitation.

The editor of the *Educational Record* of the Province of Quebec makes an earnest appeal to the press and the public men of the country on behalf of the elementary teachers. The late convention held in this city gave, it is urged, various welcome evidences of educational advancement. It has been usual for the other provinces to take it for granted that Quebec lags behind in the general eager forward movement of our time. But Quebec has been by no means standing still. In some respects, indeed, Quebec can claim precedence over communities that would be startled at the suggestion that she was even their rival. In what points she had got the better of her neighbours the *Record* had not hesitated to indicate more than once. But, while deeming it only fair to repel disparaging reflections on the vitality, progressive spirit and attained triumphs of this province, the *Record* skinks from the avowal that the time for self-congratulation has arrived. There have been very real gains, it is true, but they are mostly in the direction of higher education. The elementary school, which lies at the basis of the whole system, has been too much lost sight of, and it is to the improvement of its status that the most strenuous efforts at the present moment should be directed. Stagnation, where stagnation exists, is due to one

obvious cause—the lack of means. The teachers are wretchedly paid. Let those who question the statement read the reports of the Superintendent, and especially the included reports of the inspectors for years back. Their pitiable plight is or ought to be no news to any one who is directly or indirectly concerned in education. The fact is beyond dispute. What is needed is prompt redress. The Department, it seems, does all that lies in its power to make the position of the elementary teachers more tolerable. The Commissioners complain that their treasury, too, can yield no more. To whom, then, are the teachers to apply for help? What hope is there of just remuneration ever being their portion? Surely there is public spirit enough in the province to do something for their relief. If scores and hundreds of thousands of dollars can be obtained with comparatively little solicitation for our higher seats of learning (and most noble have been the benefactions of some of our men of means to those institutions), what is there to prevent the exercise of generosity towards our common schools—generosity which shall yield returns by which the entire community must profit? The Government has promised to enlarge the subsidy, but we may be sure that, whatever the increment, there will be ample scope for private munificence.

Extraordinary architectural remains of the style known to antiquarians as Cyclopean, discovered in some of the most isolated of the Pacific islands, as well as in several of the more important groups, have long been a puzzle to ethnologists. On Easter island, for instance, which is some 2,500 miles from South America, and forms the south-eastern limit of Polynesia proper, there are great platforms, built of large cut stones, fitted together without cement, the walls of which towards the sea are nearly 30 feet high, and from 200 to 300 feet long by about thirty wide. Some of the squared stones are six feet long. Colossal images are found lying where they have been thrown from their pedestals. One statue, eight feet in height and weighing four tons, was brought to England and is now in the British Museum. Wooden tablets, bearing signs and figures, have also been found on Easter Island. On Tongatabu of the Tonga group there is a curious monument formed of two rectangular blocks forty feet high, surmounting which is a slab bearing a large stone bowl. In Ponape, one of the Carolines, there are extensive ruins, the principal being a court 300 feet long, the walls of which are formed of basaltic prisms. There are other ruins of smaller extent both on Ponape and on Kusaie in the same group. In the Ladrões, or Robber Islands, there are stone columns fourteen feet high, with a semi-globular stone, six feet in diameter, on the top of each. The late Mr. H. B. Sterndale, who discovered gigantic defensive works in the Seniavine islands, states that these pre-historic remains are more abundant than many had previously imagined. He held that the parent stock from the Indian Archipelago reached not only Polynesia but Central America. This theory is not altogether new. Years ago Sir Daniel Wilson indicated the possibility of such migrations in his "Pre Historic Man." Quoting the statement of his namesake, Prof. H. H. Wilson, that at the date of the earliest Vedas the Asiatic Aryans were already a maritime and mercantile people, he points out how easy it was to pass from the continent to the nearest island groups, and from them to the remoter islands; and he refers the reader to the map of the Pacific for evidence that a boat driven a few degrees south of Pitcairn, Easter or the Austral Islands would come within the range of the antarctic current, which sets directly towards the Chilean and Peruvian coasts. He also points to those "objects of vague wonder," about which Mr. Sterndale had been writing, as traces of an ancient history altogether distinct from that of the later insular races. And he thus concludes: "Wanderers by the oceanic route to the New World may therefore have begun the peopling of South America long before the north-eastern latitudes of Asia received the first nomads into their inhospitable steppes, and opened up a way to the narrow passages of the North Pacific."