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CURRENT COMMENT

Last Sunday was a delightful break in the long cold winter. While the thermometer rose in the shade to the melting-point of ice, 32 degrees, and the bright sun was thawing snow and ice at a great rate, the percentage of humidity, which had been down to 15 the day before, now rose to 80. One rather disagreeable result of the thaw was the complete disappearance of the thin coating of hardened snow in our streets and in many parts of the country roads, thus interfering with the winter traffic by the more smoothly gliding and therefore more economical runner-equipped vehicles.

The able article we published last week on "The School System in Newfoundland" appeared at the same time in French in the February number of "La Nouvelle-France", a high-class review published in the venerable city of Quebec. The author, who preserves his pen name of "Terra Nova" even in the pages of our French contemporary, and who is described therein as "a personage whose authority and competence are of the first order," is one of the few men that can write both languages equally well. There are, of course, many Canadians who, in private and public speech, can handle the two idioms with an ease that makes the hearer think them native to both; but when their productions appear in cold type the equality is not so manifest.

Another writer in the same review, Father Omer Cloutier, rightly takes Mr. A. G. Bradley to task for some of his remarks in the series of articles he has just completed in the "Canadian Magazine" on "The Fight for North America". Mr. Bradley frequently exhibits towards the French and the Catholic religion a hostility that is unworthy of a sober writer of history and which one is pained to find tolerated in a magazine purporting to voice the sentiments of the Canadian people, 42 per cent. of whom are Catholic and one-third French. The fact is Mr. Bradley is lamentably ignorant of the history and temper of the French part of Canada.

"Everybody's Magazine" for March, which reached our editorial table on the 20th inst., contains Mr. Thomas W. Lawson's first plunge into "Coppers", that plunge announced last July and kept dangling before the public as a tempting bait ever since. Even this article is only an introduction to the great subject of the Amalgamated Company. But it is a truly luminous introduction. We begin to realize the time-honored dictum that a gold mine ruins most men, a silver mine makes a few fortunes, but the safest of all mining ventures is copper; or, as Mr. Lawson himself puts it: "Gold can be found in a day by anyone with eyes, silver in a week by anyone with hands, and money in a year by anyone with sense enough to save it, but no man gets into copper without capital, fortitude, patience, and brains." From his earliest youth, when he went about the streets of Boston as a broker's messenger, Mr. Lawson became "impressed with the importance of the metal and all pertaining to it". The gains were so great that conservative Boston investors complained when their copper investments returned only twenty per cent. per annum. And this immense profit was "legitimate, not brought about through unfair restrictions or forced combination, or evasion of the country's laws,"—as Mr. Lawson has proved in his previous articles most of the Wall street lucrative speculations are—but was wholly natural, being founded on the fact that the supply was so limited, the demand prevented the price dropping below a certain figure, and that this under ordinary circumstances represented at least 100 per cent. of gross profit to the producer after he had paid for

labor and material the highest ruling prices." Seeing so fair an opportunity for honest and legitimate profit confined to a close corporation, Mr. Lawson determined to buy up all the good copper-producing mines, to organize them into a new corporation and to offer its stock to the public. The men who risked their money in the first venture, he calculated, would require \$100,000,000 and would make from one to two hundred millions, while at the same time the public would make from two to four hundred millions. This plan he submitted to Mr. H. H. Rogers, the "piston-rod" of the "Standard Oil" machine. At that time, 1896, Mr. Lawson had not yet learned "the cruelly cynical principles that guide this financial juggernaut in its relation with men and things." Miss Ida Tarbell's matter-of-fact disclosures in McClure's Magazine were yet in the womb of the future. So Mr. Lawson approached Mr. Henry H. Rogers, who, after some hesitation, went into the subject with his usual thoroughness, and after independent investigations which amply corroborated Lawson's assertions, it was agreed that Rogers, William Rockefeller and Thomas Lawson should be of "havoc and desolation," "hatred and betrayal," has yet to be told. Meanwhile Lawson is attacked by the "System's" agents, Denis Donahoe, James M. Beck, Banker Eckels and others, to all of whom he replies vigorously and triumphantly.

Another and a worse monopoly than "Standard Oil" is being exposed in "Everybody's Magazine". The meat, fruit and dairy products on which the American people live grow more costly every year. At the same time the farmer and the cattle-raiser complain that they are receiving less for their products than ever before. Why is it that fifty years ago, when wheat fetched two dollars a bushel and cattle almost twice the price they do now, living was cheaper than it is today? This is the puzzle solved by Mr. Charles Edward Russell, who reveals a monster monopoly, controlling the natural food supply of the United States and Canada, gathering toll from both producer and consumer. It is the Beef Trust, remorseless, untiring insatiable, defying the law of the land and even Wall Street itself, terrorizing great railways by threatening to direct all freight from their lines, exacting tribute from more commodities than all trusts and monopolies together, and planning to make the price of every eatable thing grown in the country large enough to increase its own profit. To-day it fixes the price of all meats, fruits, fertilizers, and dairy produce; within certain limits it can make the price of wheat, corn, and oats what it pleases. To-morrow it may be able to control the price of every loaf of bread. In the March issue, Mr. Russell shows the source of this monster trust to be the refrigerator-car, owned by the monopolists and for which the railways must pay mileage whether the cars are loaded or empty. The 54,000 refrigerator-cars in daily operation in the United States and Canada are the instruments that have forced up our household expenses and bound to the trust chariot the most important of American industries.

Four weeks ago in our issue of Jan. 23, when all the daily press was loudly proclaiming the impending overthrow of the Tsar's government, we said that "very likely the whole thing will turn out to have been nothing more serious than the wise and necessary repression of a great socialist demonstration." The following extract from one of our English exchanges shows that we were not far wrong.

The appointment of General Treppoff as dictator of the Russian capital has proved a success. For the moment, at least, force has been a remedy for the disturbances. In the use of it there has been no hesitancy. Blood has flowed very freely, with the result that ostensibly there is peace in St. Petersburg, and the

prospects of the revolutionists being successful over the forces of the Government are too unlikely to be any longer entertained. Mercilessly have the Russian troops shot down the Czar's subjects. The inhabitants of Moscow have suffered much in the same way as those of St. Petersburg, and the butchery in Warsaw has been still more atrocious. Ashamed of the popular outbreaks, Russian officials have been casting about for plausible explanations. A rumour set afloat by the Latin agency in Paris to the effect that enormous sums of money have been spent by the English in order to stir up disaffection in Russia has been industriously circulated, and a placard containing it was posted up in all the streets of Moscow on January 25. Feeling was thus aroused against England, and an attack was made by soldiers on Saturday last upon Mr. Murray, the British Consul General at Warsaw, and upon Mr. Macakain, who was wounded by sword cuts and is in hospital. Representations have been made to the Russian Government by the British authorities, and orders have been given for the destruction of the placard and for an enquiry into the Warsaw incident. If all who disapprove of tyrannical autocracy are to be suspected of promoting the revolutionary movement in Russia then the revolutionists must have had assistance not only from England, but from all parts of the world.

However the recent horrible assassination of Grand-duke Sergius puts a new aspect on the probable future. A government which has been fittingly described as "despotism tempered by assassination" may well quail before such atrocious reprisals. Abject fear may possibly lead to some concessions.

The "Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart" comes to us with "The Spirit of Prayer" as the general intention for March. "By the spirit of prayer," writes the editor, "we mean the feeling of dependence on God in all we do, the conviction that we can do no read or lasting good for ourselves or others except with God's help and consequently it is the uplooking of the soul to God for aid and comfort, the cry of the heart to Him as often as we are rendered conscious of our need or loneliness. Little by little this recourse to God becomes a habit, a kind of instinct, and our greatest help in all the difficulties of life" . . . "It must be confessed that the spirit of our age is not the spirit of prayer, but the very opposite. Its overweening confidence in its own powers, its self-elation over the victories of research and the triumphs of inventive skill in so many wondrous applications of nature's forces, only carry man farther from his Creator. The false glare of so-called science blinds him to the true knowledge, and the clattering wheels of progress deafen him to the accents of the inward voice. When the feeling of the emptiness of it all and the inadequacy to satisfy the deeper longings of his rational nature is borne in upon his soul like a crushing weight, the is disappointment and despondency not infrequently ending in suicide." To be sure, there is no valid reason, no intellectual motive connecting scientific conquests with irreligion. On the contrary, if men would only be deeply and consistently logical, these conquests ought to make men and do make great men more inclined to break out in praise of the infinitely resourceful Creator. But great men, men who reason with their intellects and not their imaginations, are fewer now than in any past age since Pericles. And they tend to become fewer and fewer outside of the Church, owing to the increase of showy, shallow, superficial systems of education. As a result, we have Kipling saying that "we're all islands shouting lies to each other across seas of misunderstanding". The only escape from this mental chaos will be a return to the true mental perspective, God in whom the whole uni-

verse exists and moves and has its being. Every single prayer from the faithful soul hastens that consummation.

Two days after the Telegram had trumpeted abroad the Hon. Robert Rogers's great hopes for the western extension of Manitoba, the same wise and prophetic journal deploras the fact that there will be no such extension in any direction. But it omits to give the reason thereof. The only obstacle to the territorial expansion of our province is its iniquitous and cruel school system. Not even the wildest corner of any unorganized territory will consent to saddle itself with such a tyranny. Manitoba must be content to remain small and mean so long as it maintains its small and mean school policy.

"To-day as in the time of Bousset the variations of Protestantism are a standing denial of its pretensions as a teacher of true Christian doctrine," says the London Catholic Times. "Of course when private interpretation of the Scriptures is a foundation principle of any Christian communion serious doctrinal differences are bound to prevail among its members. The Dean of Canterbury has been striving to lay down for the Church of England a standard by which some sort of uniformity may be attained. On Monday last by Dr. Wace's invitation a meeting was held at the Church House to arrange that a deputation should wait on the Archbishop of Canterbury and convey to him the opinion that nothing should be accepted by the Church of England as 'truly catholic' which cannot claim the general assent and observance of the Christian Church before the end of the sixth century. Would that the Church of England accepted all the doctrines of the Church up to the end of the sixth century. Then its Catholicity, whether spelled with a "c" small or "c" large, would be the true article, for it would be identical with that of the Roman Church. But all these discussions about uniformity of doctrine in the Anglican Church are very unreal. We take up a little volume containing in Latin the Meditations of St. Augustine, after the Apostles the greatest churchman up to the end of the sixth century or since. The former owner of the book was an Anglican, and where St. Augustine at the end of chapter XXXV, says: "Grant my request and earnest wish through the intercession, prayer and petition of the glorious Virgin Mother, my lady, and all thy saints," lines are scored with a lead pencil over the words of one who has been called the monarch of the Fathers. Uniformity of doctrine in the Church of England is nothing more than a pious dream."

Clerical News

In recognition of the golden jubilee of his priesthood, the Right Rev. Dr. Leonard, Bishop of Cape Town and Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of the Colony, was the recipient of addresses and gifts from the Catholic clergy and laity in the Cape Peninsula and throughout the whole of his Vicariate. Congratulations were poured in from all sides. The address from St. Mary's parish, Cape Town, was accompanied by a purse of 450 sovereigns. The Bishop, who is in feeble health, had a most cordial reception. In the addresses testimony was borne to the great success of his work as a Bishop.

A reunion was held in the Town Hall, Oxford, on Tuesday night, to celebrate the silver jubilee of the Bishop of Birmingham. Lord Edmund Talbot, M.P., presided, and among those present were Sir John Day, Lord C. Crichton-Stuart, Lord Feilding, the Hon. A. Bertie, Monsignor Kennard, Father Bernard Vaughan, and Mr. Grissell, Papal Chamberlain. Hearty congratulations were offered by the chairman, Father Day, Mr. Gresham Wells, Monsignor Kennard, and Mr. Grissell Papal Chamberlain. Hearty

congratulations were offered by the chairman, Father Day, Mr. Gresham Wells, Monsignor Kennard, and Mr. Urquhart to the Bishop, who briefly acknowledged the compliment. Father Vaughan, in addressing the gathering, said that he had received a telegram from the Vatican as follows: "The Holy Father blesses you and all taking part in the jubilee welcome to 'saint' Catholic Bishop of good and February, 3."

Of the late Father Nicholas, O.S.F.C., who was Guardian of the Franciscan Community at Chester from 1879 to 1882, the "Franciscan Annals" tells the following story. Father Nicholas, who was a native of Italy, speedily acquired an idiomatic grasp of the intricacies of the English tongue. Indeed he was frequently from his speech taken to be an Irishman. This once caused him some inconvenience. It was at the time when London, and especially the police, was suffering from what was called the Fenian Scare. One evening he was returning from London to his little monastery at Crawley. He had made small purchases, which included hosiery and a small alarm clock, and these he carried in a bundle. While sitting on a platform seat at London Bridge Station a vigilant detective was put on his track by the muffled ticking of the clock. On being spoken to, his accent only served to confirm the eager detective in his suspicions, and Father Nicholas had to display his investments—one by one—there and then—at the risk of losing his train.

His Eminence Cardinal Vanutelli, who is Bishop of Palestrina and Archbishop of St. Mary Major in Rome, but retains "in commendam" and "ad nutum Sanctissimi" the presbyterial title of San Silvestro in Capite, celebrated on the Feast of Our Lady's Purification the silver jubilee of his episcopate. Cardinal Vanutelli was born on Dec. 5, 1836. Seeing the lithe and stalwart figure (with its six feet five inches of height) of his eminence, one finds it hard to believe that next December he will enter into his seventieth year. After his consecration as titular archbishop of Sardis in 1880, Mgr. Vanutelli spent two years in Constantinople as Apostolic Delegate. In 1882 he was appointed as Intercuncio to Brazil, but before he started on his journey thither Leo XIII changed his destination and sent him as Nuncio to Lisbon, where he remained for seven years and a half. His elevation to the Cardinalate dates from 1887, but he did not receive the hat until 1891. He has been frequently chosen to represent the Holy Father. He was Papal Envoy at the coronation of Tsar Alexander III, he represented Leo XIII at the Eucharistic Congress held in Brussels, and Pius X at the consecration of the Armagh Cathedral last year.

While the death of a French subject who was Secretary-General at Propaganda for the East leaves an important vacancy at Rome, the simultaneous demise of Mgr. Piavi, O. F. M., the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has followed almost immediately upon the nomination of Mgr. Giannini, O. F. M., as Archbishop of Hierapolis and Delegate Apostolic in Syria.

Passengers arrived at New Orleans from Nicaragua announce that President Zelaya has followed up the move against Bishop Ferrera, whom he banished from the country, with proceedings against other priests, leading to the popular belief that he wishes to get rid of all the priests. Bishop Ferrera was banished because the president could not silence him. From Leon, the ancient capital of the republic, eighteen priests have been banished, leaving the country on the German steamer Memphis. The charge against them is violation of a law recently passed by the Nicaraguan congress, at the dictation of the president prohibiting priests from wearing their ministerial robes on the street. President Zelaya believes that the priests