

## NORTHWEST REVIEW

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## Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3 1897.

## CURRENT COMMENT.

Referred  
Back.

Mr. Julius E. Rein-  
er writes to us from  
New York, saying  
that the article, "A  
Nun's Jubilee," which we printed in  
our issue of the 20th ult., was issued in  
the "N. Y. Sunday World" and not in  
the "Irish World," to which we credited  
it. To this we make reply that we  
clipped the article from the "Irish World,"  
which printed it without any indication  
that it came from another source. We  
are, however, glad to give credit to the  
"N. Y. Sunday World" for this really  
excellent sketch; and now that we come  
to think of it, we might have suspected  
that an article in which the Queen was  
mentioned without abuse or without a  
sneer could not have originated in the  
editorial rooms of the Irish World.

Nurses and  
Nuns.

Our attention  
has been di-  
rected to a short  
editorial in the  
"Rat Portage News" of July 2nd. We  
reproduce it here because, though it is  
now rather late, it contains a truth that  
is as new to some people as it is really  
old in itself. The hospital nurse is very  
good in her way. If she combines with  
professional skill the love of Christ in  
his suffering members, she may be a  
perfect nurse. But when she is merely a  
well trained machine trying to turn an honest  
penny, she falls far short of the re-  
quirements of great emergencies. Even in  
ordinary cases of fever, where loving care  
and unsparing watchfulness are more  
successful than prescriptions of doctors,  
the average hospital nurse is a very poor  
substitute for the hospital nun. Recent  
statistics of typhoid fever patients prove  
this. And when the professional nurse,  
as too often happens, bristles with self-  
importance and contempt for non-profes-  
sionals, she becomes a positive hindrance  
to the patient and an eyesore to others.  
Says the "Rat Portage News":  
"Several cases of smallpox have devel-  
oped in Winnipeg of late, and cases of fever  
are not by any means scarce in that city.  
It is worthy of notice in connection with  
the smallpox development, that the Grey  
Nuns of St. Boniface have been called  
on and have taken charge of the unfor-  
tunate stricken with this dread disease.  
The ordinary hospital nurse is all right in  
ordinary cases, but when some loath-  
some plague makes its appearance the  
religious community is always to the  
fore. There appears to be a difference  
between those who devote their lives to  
the care of the sick, ailing and unfortu-  
nate, with a view to benefit from their  
labors in the hereafter, and those who  
make nursing a business for monetary  
considerations. There is something more  
potent in the world than money after all."

It must be quite  
fresh in our readers'  
memory that the  
Holy Father has  
granted a plenary indulgence to be

gained on the feast of St. Joseph Cal-  
sanzio, to all who, having contributed  
to the Manitoba Catholic school fund,  
receive holy communion on that day,  
the 27th of August. A little more than  
three weeks from to-day, therefore the  
feast of this first organizer of Public  
Schools will be at hand, and, as will be  
noticed in the masterly chapter we take  
from Father Young's "Catholic and Prot-  
estant Countries Compared," it was in  
1597—just three hundred years ago—  
that he founded the first free public  
schools. Nor were these sham free public  
schools, supported by exorbitant taxes  
wrung from the people, even from a  
large section of the people who condemn  
the use to which their money is put. No;  
these schools were really and truly free,  
the expenses being met by the church  
itself from its own resources, without a  
ny fresh impost on the faithful.

Good  
Example.

The August inten-  
tion for the Apostleship of Prayer is "The  
Apostleship of Good  
Example." There is far too much lay  
preaching in essays, reviews, novels and  
would-be philosophical treatises. There  
are too many prophets and seers like  
Carlyle, men who preach heroism and  
ill-treat their wives. What we need is  
the eloquence of example. As the August  
Messenger says, "if we feel the drawback  
of living in evil times, with all the forces  
of sectarian prejudice, unprincipled news-  
papers, a corrupt stage, an immoral liter-  
ature, and godless educators arrayed  
against us, let us stop to consider that  
we ourselves owe the influence of our  
best example as Catholics to those a-  
bout us, first, to our fellow-Catholics, who  
are as sorely tried as we are by evil sur-  
roundings, and then to all our non-Cath-  
olic fellow-countrymen, who deplore  
with us the evil influences at work and  
who are without our safeguards or reme-  
dies against the same."

Library of the World's Best  
Literature.

There is now appearing, under  
the editorship of Charles Dudley  
Warner and the associate editor-  
ship of Hamilton Wright Mabie,  
Lucia Gilbert Runkle and George  
H. Warner, a monumental work in  
thirty large octavo volumes, entitled  
"Library of the World's Best  
Literature Ancient and Modern." Ten  
volumes are already out; the rest  
will be issued before the end  
of this year.

It is advertised with most con-  
summate skill as an unequalled  
epitome of the scholarship of the  
world drawn up by the best schol-  
ars of our time. We are told that  
"nothing like it has ever appeared  
before; and so fine and high is the  
quality of its execution that a work  
of like magnitude and value will  
not, in any probability, appear a-  
gain for generations to come." The  
editor of McClure's Magazine pro-  
fesses to believe "that this is the  
greatest purely literary enterprise  
of the century." The American edi-  
tor of the Review of Reviews says:  
"We do not mean that the vast  
work upon which Mr. Warner and  
his associates are now engaged is  
an entire substitute for books. It  
is much more than that. It is not  
a mere library of selections and  
extracts, but an exhaustive com-  
pend of the world's literature, that  
presents at once biography, bibliog-  
raphy and the quintessence of  
the writer's best work."

What will catch the eye of many  
a Catholic is the name of Mr. Mau-  
rice Francis Egan, LL. D., figuring  
among the twelve members of the  
Advisory Council, who are sup-  
posed to review and direct the en-  
tire work. There is also in that  
same council another member,  
whose name, Alceé Fortier (of Tu-  
lane University, New Orleans),  
suggests the profession of the  
Catholic Faith. A casual observer  
would infer that nothing anti-  
Catholic would be tolerated by a  
Council, one of whose members is  
a fearless, enthusiastic Catholic and  
another probably a Catholic of  
some kind. To be sure, wiser heads,  
who have observed the action of  
mixed bodies in which Catholics  
are a minority will entertain no  
such delusion; they are too con-  
servant with the ruthless arro-  
gance of Protestant majorities. But  
still, when these points are added,  
by a clever canvasser, to the Cath-  
olic authorship of several special  
articles, for instance, "Thomas A-  
quinas" by Father Pace of the  
Catholic University of America  
and "Keats" by Miss Louise Imo-

gen Guiney, it is no wonder that  
even so sagacious a critic as the  
editor of the Ave Maria was at  
first quite carried away by the  
real treasures offered, forgetting  
that a few real gems cannot re-  
deem a collection of paste diamonds.  
However, as soon as the mistake  
was discovered our Notre Dame  
contemporary wrote the following  
note in its issue of July 3rd  
last, p. 31:

We hasten to withdraw our com-  
mendation of the Library of the World's  
Best Literature, which is not what we  
were led to suppose—and had a right  
to suppose—it would be from the infor-  
mation furnished us. The very first  
article of the first volume of the Lib-  
rary condemns it for Catholics. Only one  
strongly prejudiced against the Church  
or grossly ignorant of her teaching and  
institutions could have written it. It  
is an insult not only to Catholics but to  
all intelligent persons. We have always  
been suspicious of works of this kind  
when highly recommended by Catholic  
personages. In future our caution  
must be extended to such as are said  
to be revised by competent Catholic  
critics.

That first article in the first vol-  
ume is thus announced in the pros-  
pectus: "It opens with a delightful  
account of the historic lovers Abé-  
lard and Héloïse, with typical let-  
ters of each and the famous "Ves-  
per Hymn" of Abélard. Here we  
are making acquaintance with the  
close of the eleventh and the open-  
ing of the twelfth century." Not  
a bit of it. What you are making  
acquaintance with is not the  
thoughts and deeds of the great  
Hildebrand, nor the Catholic reviv-  
al which he heralded at that time,  
but simply an erratic heretic, who  
exclaimed on his deathbed "Alas!  
after working hard and accom-  
plishing nothing, my life is a fail-  
ure!" What you are making ac-  
quaintance with is one of the most  
scandalous episodes in the Middle  
Ages. Men of Mr. Warner's stamp  
cannot find anything of interest in  
Catholics, unless the latter have a  
strong heretical bias or loose morals.

Of course, the editors of so  
large a work must, in common  
decency, insert a few Catholic  
names; and so we have selections  
from Thomas à Kempis, Fénelon,  
Massillon, Newman and some others;  
but the number of Catholic authors  
is cut down as much as possible  
everywhere, and a wholesale slaugh-  
ter of Middle Age worthies is pre-  
pared by this typical sentence of  
the prospectus: "Yet later came the  
age of the Classics, when the Greeks  
and Romans wrote with a stylus  
upon their parchment rolls"—we  
always thought the stylus was used  
only for wax tablets—"and rap-  
id slave copyists made reproduc-  
tions of the more popular writings,  
which circulated widely through  
the Empire. THE AGE OF DARKNESS  
FOLLOWED." With these five words  
is the age that preserved the classics  
by recopying them dismissed. Thus  
is the way paved for the omission  
from the list of poets—not of Dante,  
they could hardly strike him out  
though he did live in the age of  
darkness—but of the melodious  
and incomparable hymnist, A-  
dam of St. Victor, and almost all  
the sweet Catholic singers of the  
ages of faith.

On the other hand what business  
has Zola to appear in a Library of  
the World's Best Literature? or  
Ibsen? or J. S. Palfrey? or D'Alem-  
bert? or Abigail Adams? or Berlioz?  
or Artemus Ward? These are a few  
of the scavengers or the non-entities  
of literature who are flaunted in the  
prospectus, to show that the work  
is large and cosmopolitan. We  
thought we were being introduced  
to a select company and lo! we are  
ushered into an omnium gather-  
um of all the loudest voiced shriek-  
ers of the past and present.

This sort of thing may please  
agnostics or easy-going Protestants,  
it may even take the fancy of shal-  
low Protestant ministers who want  
to appear liberal; but for an edu-  
cated Catholic to call such a hot-  
potch "the best literature" is to  
stultify himself. No doubt some  
of the best literature is there, but  
mixed with a good deal of the  
worst; and the pity of it is that  
error is given at least equal pro-  
minence with truth, and vice with  
virtue. Consequently, the general  
effect is far from elevating. In  
fact, the tendency of so undiscrim-

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REV. J. M. MCGUCKIN, O. M. I., Rector.

inating a miscellany is ruinous a-  
like to artistic taste and supernatu-  
ral faith in the minds of the great  
mass of readers. In a word, the so-  
called "Library of the World's  
Best Literature" is not a fit adorn-  
ment for a Catholic library, and  
is a very poor possession for any  
decent kind of Christian.

"How comes it, then," somebody  
may ask, "that there are Catholic  
contributors and at least one Cath-  
olic in the Advisory Council?" As  
to the contributors, they are, we  
suppose, left free to be as Catholic  
as they choose, and in this way the  
accuracy of some of the articles is  
ensured. Dr. Pace, for example  
will not be likely to minimize the  
merits of the Angelic Doctor. And,  
as for Dr. Egan, the great Catholic  
member of the Advisory Council,  
he has doubtless contributed to  
make the "Library" less of an an-  
ti-Catholic cyclopedia than it  
might otherwise have been. It is,  
in all conscience, bad enough; but  
it might have been worse.

## Dr. Abbott Misquoted.

New York Freeman's Journal.

We give place with pleasure  
to the following letter of Dr. Ly-  
man Abbott. He has been  
made to experience the annoy-  
ance which everyone experiences  
whose utterances are of interest  
to the general public.

June 21, 1897.

Editor New York Freeman's Journal.

Dear Sir: It is not my custom to deny  
erroneous reports in the secular press  
of sermons; such reports are rarely pre-  
pared by persons familiar with theology  
and sometimes by persons more eager to  
make a sensation than to state the truth.  
But I should be sorry to have my Roman  
Catholic friends—and I have not a few in  
that communion—think that I had de-  
clared the doctrine of the Trinity an "an-  
tiquated superstition." In fact, the sermon  
so reported took respecting that doctrine  
the ground which the Roman Catholic  
Church takes, namely, that it is a  
mystery which explanations cannot  
explain and definitions cannot define,  
but one which is vital in the experience  
of Christians and witnessed to by the  
life and faith of the Church Universal.  
I do not think that there was any state-  
ment in that sermon regarding the  
Trinity for which authority, recognized  
as such in the communion which you  
represent, might not have been cited.  
The report on which you relied reported  
exactly what I did not say.

Yours respectfully,

LYMAN ABBOTT.

We cannot agree with Dr. Ab-  
bott as to definitions. That which  
cannot be defined cannot be  
thought of or discussed intelli-  
gently. As a matter of fact, all the-  
ologians who treat of the Trinity  
define it, and it is only by the  
definition that we know of what  
they treat. The Trinity is one  
God in three Divine Persons.  
This definition is clear and intel-  
ligible. If it were not so we  
could not say the Trinity is a  
mystery. If we had no definite  
idea of the reality which the  
definition presents to the mind  
we could neither affirm nor deny  
anything about it. The Doctor  
and we affirm that it is a mystery  
—something which the mind,  
while knowing clearly what is  
meant, knows that it cannot  
comprehend. The Doctor says the  
Trinity is a mystery "vital in the  
experience of Christians." How  
can he affirm this without know-  
ing what the Trinity is? How  
attribute an operation to that  
of which he has no conception?

STATE UNIVERSITY 1866.

His statement is correct and  
proves that he knows clearly  
what is meant by the definition,  
"One God in three Divine Per-  
sons." He does not talk at random,  
like a man shooting in the dark  
and thinking he may hit some-  
thing, not knowing what. The  
fact that a thing is a mystery  
neither proves its non-existence  
nor excludes its definition. A  
mystery does not mean some-  
thing indefinite, for every mys-  
tery is a definite truth, a definite  
reality. In itself there is no  
vagueness. Its mysteriousness  
appertains to the finite intellect  
that cannot grasp it. It is not a  
mystery to God, who sees and  
comprehends it.

The Catholic Church does not  
take the ground that the Trinity  
is indefinable, for she defines it  
and makes it a matter of faith  
as she makes other supra-ra-  
tional truths that rest, and, from  
their nature, must rest, on the  
infinite wisdom revealing them.

We are glad to learn that Dr.  
Abbott was misreported, and  
that he does not reject that  
fundamental Christian truth, the  
Trinity. The attitude he was  
represented as assuming afforded  
us an illustration of the tendency  
to agnosticism and infidelity in  
strong minds that follow the  
Protestant rule of faith. We are  
not sorry that he has deprived  
us of the illustration, for we  
would rather be without it than  
see a man like him wandering  
still further from the true faith.

## GIVING THE DEVIL A CHANCE.

From the New World.

In many Protestant churches the final  
services preceding the vacation season  
were held last Sunday. During July  
and August, the two months in the year  
when there is most levity and frivolity,  
when the watchfulness of parents over  
their children is necessarily relaxed,  
when young folks are given to rural  
outings, indulging in sports and amuse-  
ments unusually dangerous; in a word,  
during the very time when the devil is  
least hampered in his work and when  
he can do more evil in one hour than  
just then the ministers, as if by secret  
understanding with the foe, lock their  
churches and hide themselves to refresh-  
ing resorts. If it be good to hold the  
devil in check at all, it is good to hold  
him in check all the time. To give him  
a season for play is only to give him new  
encouragements and new advantages  
over weak humanity.

## X RAYS AS CUSTOMS AGENTS.

Allusion was made in our issue  
of last week to experiments which  
were being prosecuted in France  
with a new apparatus which  
would render it possible for the X  
rays to act the part of Customs offi-  
cers. The experiments have been  
conclusive; and the system is to be  
applied immediately to parcels  
coming through the post. Details  
of the experiments have been  
published, which have astonished  
even those best acquainted with  
the mysterious rays as hitherto  
employed. It seems only a ques-  
tion of time to settle the date  
when they shall also play upon,  
or rather through, passengers lug-  
gage. Meanwhile the kind friends  
at home who from time to time  
send packets of cigarettes and En-  
glish matches by parcels post and  
declare them as "samples—no  
value," in the hope that the Cust-  
oms may pass them without look-  
ing—a thing which occurred pretty  
often—had better be advised that  
there will be no necessity in future  
to open the parcels, and that each  
parcel will be looked through.—  
BOSTON CATHOLIC NEWS.