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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1900

CURRENT COMMENT

With regard to Mr. Goulet's appointment as Inspector of Schools, in addition to what we say in our editorial, there are a few points that need clearing up. Mr. Rochon, in the first of a series of promised letters to "L'Echo de Manitoba," calls himself "ex-inspector of French schools." There are no French schools in Manitoba. There are schools which, at most, may be styled French-English schools, i. e. schools in which French is only the thin end of the English wedge.

The Free Press says Mr. Goulet is "innocent of any part of the three years' practical experience as a teacher." This is contrary to fact. Mr. Goulet taught as assistant in the primary department of St. Boniface College for most of one year. As to his normal school training he had, what for a man of his keen powers of observation, was even better; he was for six years in constant and familiar and trusted intercourse with a body of teachers whose ripe experience no normal or public school in this country could surpass. And in connection with this matter we wish to be enlightened. The Advisory Board, which lays down these laws as to qualifications, is of course supposed itself to possess them all. But where did His Grace of Rupert's Land and the Rev. Dr. Bryce take their course of normal training? Surely they are both esteemed as not the least influential members of that august body, and rightly so.

A fact which, though of extreme importance in this matter, has been overlooked even by "Le Manitoba" in its hearty congratulations to Mr. Goulet, is that this gentleman carried off the highest and most valued prize in the gift of the University of Manitoba by winning the first scholarship of the Previous year in 1899. A University graduate is always, other things being equal, preferable to the mere holder of a school certificate: what then must be thought of the qualification possessed by a medallist in the most important of all the University competitions?

The principal God-given qualifications of an ideal teacher are quickness of perception, good jugdment and sympathy. Mr. Goulet possesses these three and many other natural gifts. He is an all-round man in the best sense of the word. Besides being an athlete and an excellent elocutionist, he is endowed with rare facility in the acquirement and retention of knowledge, and his kindness, amiability and prudence endear him to all his friends. This is, for our French-speaking people, the most popular appointment that was ever made.

His popularity with the public was presaged some ten years ago by his popularity at college, where in his junior year (first year of Philosophy) he was elected secretary, and in his senior year, president of "L'Académie Française," the literary society of St. Boniface College. These functions entail the constant use of the judicial faculty in public criticism of essays, recitations and debates. Young men living together in the close contact of a boarding college necessarily become fairly good judges of character and ability, and their choice of Mr. Goulet to lead them implies in him the absence of all meanness, selfishness or whimsicality, and the presence of a well balanced mind and a conciliatory temper.

Quoth the English "Catholic Times" of the 2nd inst.: 'We are glad to find the "NORTHWEST REVIEW," of St. Boniface, Manitoba, quoting our "Note of the Week" on "The Oblate Fathers and the War," though we do not understand why it should attribute it to the "Catholic Tribune" instead of to the Catholic Times, the proper source.' Neither do we. The mistake must be due to some absent-minded beggar, the scissors man or the proof-reader.

The Sacred Heart Review of the 17th inst., by crediting the Michigan Catholic with our editorial note of January 30th on Father Hughes, the inventor of the printing telegraph and the microphone, reveals two facts. The first, which we deplore, is that our splendid Boston contemporary's exchange editor does not read our columns as assiduously as we do his, perhaps owing to the American principle that bigness is the test of value. The second fact, which does not surprise us, is that the Michigan Catholic, while copying our note verbatim et literatim, with the change of "last week" into "recently" and "the Catholic college of" into "St. Joseph's College," forgot to give due credit to us. This roundabout way of getting a quotation makes the Sacred Heart Review a week late in chronicling a fact already a week old when we called attention to it.

We fully agree with the refined and sympathetic editor of the Midland Review that Prof. Otten's sarcastic and utterly gratuitous allusion to Miss Eleanor Donnelly's "romantic period" was an ungentlemanly and indelicate sneer, which painfully shocked us as it must have shocked many other admirers of Mr. Preuss' "Review."

Eminently thought-provoking is Hon. Senator Bernier's latest speech, which we reprint from the Senate report. The commonplace platitudes that abound in most Senator's orations are not to be found in his. Every sentence is full of ideas suggested by current events, and those ideas are marshalled with a skill that betokens the graduate of a Catholic college; they are not flung in a ghastly heap after the manner of the disjointedly educated. As it contained some unpalatable truths, and was quite unanswerable, the Senate adjourned immediately after a speech of which many of them could not realize the excellence.

The Telegram and Tribune were both mistaken when they announced yesterday that Mr. J. B. Leclerc's new hall over his store was intended for the use of "secret societies." As Mr. Leclerc is a consistent Catholic he could not lease his hall to a secret society. All secret societies are condemned by the Catholic Church. The mistake is, however, a natural one for Protestants, among whom secrecy seems to have all the charm of forbidden fruit. Almost all their fraternal societies are secret; ours are not, and Mr. Leclerc's hall is intended for Catholic fraternal societies

From the last number (Feb. 3) that has reached us of "The Tablet" we gather that Dr. St. George Mivart must be out of his mind. The extraordinary contradictions between his statements in the January "Nineteenth Century" and those that he has since made to Cardinal Vaughan do not seem to admit of any other explanation, and we cannot help hoping that he is crazy, as this would free him from responsibility for the heresies which he professes. In the Nineteenth Century he wrote of "devout Catholics, weekly communicants, who believe Joseph to have been the real and natural father of Jesus." Now he tells the Cardinal that he "did not mean to affirm they were theologically blameless, but simply that they were persons who looked upon themselves as Catholics while leading 'good' lives in the ordinary sense of that term," in other words, he meant nominal Catholics. Again in the Nineteenth Century he says: "My aim has been to strengthen Catholicity." On the contrary, writing to the Cardinal, he now says that in 1893, after the publication of the Encyclical 'Providentissimus Deus,' he felt his position as a Catholic was no longer tenable and gradually he came to feel that he must remove the impression produced by his former writings. "So that," as the Tablet remarks, "though outwardly conforming, he really ceased to be a Catholic some years ago. That Dr. Mivart, in so short a space [one month], should have persuaded himself first that he wrote 'to strengthen Catholicity' and then that he wrote only to weaken its claims is a melancholy phenomenon in the presence of which criticism is disarmed."

The tide of victory seems happily turning. Roberts and Kitchener seem at last to have found the joints of the Boer armor. God grant they may soon end this cruel war. General French is nobly maintaining his reputation as one of the few successful British commanders in South Africa.

Protestants, even though they be professors of Logic, live in such an illogical atmosphere that they cannot help contradicting their words by their acts. Sunday night, the 10th inst., the Free Press tells us, Dr. Kilpatrick, of Manitoba College, while championing, in St. Stephen's church, Mr. Irwin as a hero for joining Strathcona's Horse, and expressly disclaiming any wish to fix the blame of the South African war on anyone, "said war was always a crime and an offence to God and His Son, the Prince of Peace." If war is always a crime, then the British Empire must be an incorrigible criminal, then every man that joins Strathcona's Horse is a felon, then most of the Old Testament is a special plea for crime. Happily the Doctor is not infallible, and it will ever remain true that a just war may be a most virtuous action and, in spite of the sufferings it entails or rather precisely on account of those trials, a splendid school of heroism.

We beg to tender to Mr. Arthur Preuss our most sincere condolence on the recent death of his dearly loved wife, who was, he himself tells us, "for seven years his visible guardian angel." In a heart-broken paragraph in the first column of "The Review" of the 15th, he most earnestly asks his readers to pray for him and above all for her, to whom he applies "the words of a more famous, though surely not a better woman: 'de qua nihil unquam homines doluere nisi mortem' (she never grieved others except by her death)." Those who have learnt to look eagerly for Mr. Preuss's fearless review of weekly happenings all over the Catholic world, and who appreciate his manly exposure of humbug and ignorance, will deem it a debt of gratitude to pray for his "faithful, devoted and untiring helpmate."

THE RECENTLY APPOINTED SCHOOL INSPECTOR.

In a long article last Friday anent the appointment of Mr. R. Goulet, jr., as School Inspector for the French-English schools of the Province, the Free Press will have it that Mr. R. Goulet is far from possessing the required qualifications to occupy the position with credit to himself or advantage to the cause of education. On the other hand it claims that Mr. Rochon has the required certificates.

The whole of the Free Press' article, it is clear, was inspired by its political antipathy for the Hon. H. J. Macdonald's administration. We are loath to follow our transpontine contemporary in its political career wherein its achievements of late have proved anything but enviable; nor do we intend to endorse all of the new government's appointments. Our position is an independent one. We advocate principles and by principles alone shall we abide. But in the question just raised we are perfectly free to express doubt as to the Free Press' own qualifications to pass a proper judgment.

In the first place we would challenge the Free Press to clearly set forth what qualifications are required for the position of School Inspector of French-English schools in the province. The Advisory Board, as far as we know, has failed up to the present, to define these qualifications, and to draw up a complete programme of studies for French students in the French-English schools.

Again the Advisory Board, perhaps on account of its lack of knowledge of the French Language, has refused to issue or approve of first-class certificates being granted to teachers in the French-English schools.

The Free Press therefore should realize the difficulties of the position, if it knows anything about them, and be slow in passing judgment on any School Inspector of the French-English schools. We claim that in this case the qualifications required are different from those of an ordinary School Inspector.

Now since the Free Press has ventured to establish a comparison between Mr. Rochon and Mr. Goulet—although we have no liking for such invidious contrasts—we are prepared to say that in our estimation Mr. Goulet is incomparably a better man for the position than Mr. Rochon ever was or ever will be.

The Free Press says Mr. Rochon has the qualifications required, or, what we should suppose amounts to the same thing—the required certificates. We should feel under great obligation to our contemporary if it would consent to let us see its vouchers for the assertion.

But, be the matter as it may, whilst we should not like to say anything disparaging of Mr. Rochon, we venture to question his ability to give, say, a lesson of English pronunciation, an ability which would be absolutely necessary in a School Inspector of French-English schools, and which exists to an eminent degree in Mr. R. Goulet.

Penmanship might also be mentioned as an interesting feature of comparison between the two. Mr. Goulet writes a most beautiful hand.

Mr. Goulet has not the Normal School training, nor three years' experience as a teacher. Granted, but many there are or may be whose training will never supply them with the judgment and tact which we know to exist in Mr. Goulet. Besides, Mr. Goulet may if need be, until he is acquainted with the routine of his work, follow the example of his predecessor, and have recourse to some of his fellow School Inspectors to assist him with their good advice, until he receives the last finish. And in his case, at least, this will not demand the

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