

## CURRENT COMMENT

Last Saturday's Tribune contained a graceful reference to the Holy Father. That reference consisted of only two words added as a heading to an Associated Press dispatch; but a heading, as we have sometimes noticed in other papers, edited as the Tribune is, by non-Catholics, may be made to carry a sting of bigotry, and, when the dispatch editor behaves like a courteous gentleman towards the most august figure in Christendom, we appreciate this indication of kindly good will.

The dispatch read as follows: "Today, March 19, being St. Joseph's Day, the Pope's name day, His Holiness received congratulatory addresses and telegrams from all parts of Italy and from abroad. Members of the 'Advocates of St. Peter' (miscalled in the dispatch 'the St. Petersburg (sic) Club'), which includes the whole Roman legal profession, presented the Pontiff with a magnificent basket of the most carefully selected fruits and flowers. The basket represented a Venetian gondola. His Holiness in thanking the givers made a most touching reference to his beloved Venice, adding, 'Pray that I may prove a good helmsman for the bark of St. Peter.'" This dispatch was the theme which it was the editor's business to condense into effective headlines. For his sub-heading he put "Pope Pius Steers the Bark of St. Peter," which to a Catholic sounds rather too trite to be used as a heading, since we know that he has been steering that bark for the past seven months. But the main heading, which shows the editor's good taste and fine feeling was "Holy Gondolier." Much better than "the bark of St. Peter," does "Holy Gondolier" sum up the Pope's "touching reference to his beloved Venice." These two words, recalling, as they do, the well known personal holiness of Pius X. and his long sojourn in the city of gondolas, where the gondolier threads his way through other swiftly moving boats in narrow canals, might fittingly be chosen as a figurative description of him who is now so deftly threading his way through the mazes of reform by restoration.

"St. Peter's Bote" (St. Peter's Messenger) is the name of the new Catholic German paper published in this city. It is ably edited by the Benedictine Fathers of St. Peter's Monastery, Rosthern, Sask., and contains much useful information about the German Catholic colony there, the value of its homesteads, the need of teachers, etc. We congratulate our German brethren on the fine start they are making in the field of Catholic journalism.

On Friday evening of last week the Winnipeg Theatre was crowded with an appreciative audience who had come to witness the third international debate between the University of Manitoba and the University of North Dakota. The first debate two years ago resulted in a victory for the visiting team from Grand Forks; the second, last year, was held at Grand Forks, and there again, the visiting team, ours, won the day. This time also the judges decided in favor of the visitors. The more impressionable and less critical part of the audience seemed to concur in this decision; but even the judges were not unanimous and many of the thoughtful public wondered at the majority vote of two against one. Our men certainly made out their side of the case in a more businesslike common sense way. However they had too little elocution, while the Ameri-

cans had too much of the wrong sort. One of our men read his speech from beginning to end and drew special attention to this technical error by the awkward way in which he turned half round to a table behind him to deposit thereon each leaf of his manuscript as he got through it. Doubtless this flagrant breach of the unwritten rules of public debate weighed with the judges in their adverse decision. However his reading was so natural as to be far more pleasing and effective than the declamatory sing-song of the first speaker from Grand Forks. Then again, our debaters had the advantage of better English, both in point of accent and in the choice of words. Of the three North Dakota giants—they were all considerably over six feet—the one who has most natural talent for public speaking has an extremely faulty Scandinavian accent and a sad lack of familiarity with the force of English words, as when he spoke twice of the "ovation" he and his colleagues had received, when "cordial welcome" was what he meant. The Manitoba speakers impressed one with their love of truth, while the others seemed to aim at victory by catchy methods. This difference was delicately hinted at by Dr. Peterson, Professor of Economics in the University of North Dakota, when he spoke at the banquet which followed the debate. He said he admired the English and Canadian way of taking defeat in a sportsmanlike spirit, the motto of which was, "Let the best side win," and he deprecated the contrary tendency on his side of the line, the tendency to view defeat as an unmitigated calamity. The contest, he insisted, was the real thing, the victory should be quite a secondary consideration.

Taken all in all, the debate was a most interesting and suggestive one. The audience was absolutely impartial, as ready to applaud, with good humored amusement, the somewhat rough and boisterous declamation of the visitors or the good points made in tones that were too modest and unemphatic by the home team. The Rev. Dr. Wilson is an ideal chairman, clear, calm and self-possessed. His introduction was all the more necessary as none of the speakers realized that the question at issue ought first to be stated, and marked off so as to exclude irrelevant matter. In fact, there was a noticeable absence of finish in the speeches of all the debaters. They had evidently no training in the art of writing speeches so that each discourse will have a beginning, a middle, and a proper ending. This art, which represents the very acme of intellectual culture, is being elbowed out by the spurious culture of the day. Young men think they have made a telling speech when they have simply collected a heap of disjointed facts without any dominant idea to vitalize them. Father Drummond alluded to this when at the banquet, in complimenting the North Dakotans on their "breezy" style of eloquence, he said that St. Boniface College had plenty of young speakers that would be quite worthy of their steel, if only they and the audience could understand French. This was putting it mildly, for there is hardly a first-class Catholic College on the continent that could not produce more polished and effective speakers than the participants in the recent international debate. Nor is the reason hard to find. Students of the higher classes in Catholic Colleges are trained to weigh the value of each proof, to marshal their arguments in the most persuasive array, and then to deliver their speeches without mouthing on the one hand or undue tameness on the other, whereas these young men from non-Catholic colleges or embryo

universities are too independent to consult anyone but their fellow students, and so they crystallize into either slipshod or ranting speakers. Nowhere is the kindly Mentor, who knows whereof he speaks, so necessary as in the preparation and delivery of a truly able discourse. Had such wise coaching been resorted to, it would have been impossible for a man that has spent some years on this continent to speak, as one of our debaters did, of "Pennsylvania." Of course such remarks do not apply to the extempore replies thrown off in the heat of a debate; but extempore speaking, to be successful, must be preceded by a long and patient training in true rhetoric and logic.

The man who has trained himself to observe those rules which are after all but deductions from the experience of the world's greatest orators soon acquires the habit of applying those rules on the spur of the moment. It were well if our aspirants to University debating next year would begin immediately to train for the coming contest. Let them study the general principles of rhetoric and elocution, and while preserving their British dread of flummery and theatrical insincerity, let them imitate the distinct articulation and fervid earnestness of their North Dakota rivals.

It is really a pity that the chairman of these public debates is not empowered to correct, in his concluding speech, glaring errors of fact or principle. One of this latter kind was repeated with singular vehemence on two occasions by the American debaters. They affirmed very loudly that education always tends to remedy social wrongs. This is just about as silly and crude as the assertion that food always agrees with everybody. Good food does agree with healthy stomachs, provided too much of it be not taken at a time. Bad food may be purged of its evil ingredients by a healthy organism, but it will certainly ruin a weak stomach. Now much of the present day education is unmoral and unreligious and therefore inchoatively bad; most of it is of a very inferior quality and is absolutely powerless to remedy the evils under which human society groans now and will always groan so long as it does not seek the right remedy in the true religion.

With English-speaking audiences, who are slow to apprehend principles and their logical consequences such an error may have little importance. But outrageous errors of fact ought surely to be corrected; else the audience, always for the most part extremely ignorant of history, will go home with a new brood of future lies. For instance, at a recent intercollegiate debate in this city between St. John's and Wesley, speakers on both sides affirmed, with the serenity of youthful ignorance that this country had been first settled by the Anglo-Saxon race. Whether by "this country" they meant the Canadian North-west or the whole of Canada, this affirmation was equally and ridiculously false. The chairman, who has written several historical works about Canada, might have informed these callow youths that this country was discovered by a French Canadian, La Verandrye, that the first white woman to rear a family here was a French Canadian, Marie Anne Lajimoniere, that her descendants now number six or seven hundred persons, that the first missionaries here were French and French Canadian, that in the early days of the Red River colony Hudson Bay factors had to speak French, and that when Manitoba joined the Canadian Confederation more than half the people of this country spoke French.

If by "this country" the debaters meant the whole Dominion, their ignorance of Canadian history casts a lurid light on the sort of teaching imparted to them in the public schools. Is it possible that they were never told how Canada was discovered by a Frenchman named Jacques Cartier and settled by Frenchmen 140 years before any permanent settlement of British immigrants was effected in any part of what is now the Dominion of Canada? And a curious feature of this blatant display of monumental ignorance was the presence at that debate, as a judge thereof, of one whose family, on his mother's side, had been French Canadian for three generations before the British had gained a foothold on the St. Lawrence. Yet most of the audience went home more and more convinced that this country was first settled by Anglo-Saxons, albeit of that audience not one tenth had a drop of Anglo-Saxon ichor in their veins, but just good Celtic (Scotch or Irish) blood.

A very interesting article in the "Catholic World" for March is "The English Bible before the Reformation," where the Rev. George Joseph Reid, of St. Paul Seminary, shows that Catholic vernacular translations of the Bible existed before Wyclif's time.

"Latest Phases of Anglican Thought" by Father Charles Coppens, S.J., in the March "Messenger," is a curious study of that ocean of ever changing currents. Speaking of those who cling fondly to the delusive hope of corporate reunion, the writer says: "Every man and woman, and especially every clergyman, who submits to the Vicar of Christ, thereby preaches a more impressive sermon than one who, however learnedly, preaches submission and refuses himself to submit."

The second number of "The North West Contractor, A Builder's Gazette," lies before us. It is published in this city and teems with valuable information for the building trade. It says editorially: "Many indications point to the fact that building operations in Winnipeg for the coming season will be carried on under approximately the same scale of prices as last year." This is welcome news to those who are building this year.

## Persons and Facts

Mr. F. MacGregor Davies, of Minnedosa, after spending a few days in this city, returned to his home on Wednesday.

The first party of French Canadian Immigrants from Quebec under Father Blais arrived last Saturday. The Immigration Department expects a large influx of immigrants this summer from North Dakota, Michigan and Eastern Canada. Many are already booked for the Edmonton district, many for Manitoba.

The Barr Colony reports progress and encourages intending English settlers to come.

The new chapel of the St. Boniface Convent of the Holy Names was blessed last Sunday morning by the Rev. Father Veilleux, S.J., who is taking Father Plante's place as bursar of St. Boniface College, while the latter is preaching a mission at St. John's, North Dakota.

On March 5 Foster, the weather prophet, warned us to keep "a watchful eye on the clouds and sky" from the 17th to the 21st of March, "for about that time the storms may become dangerous." Forecasting again on March 19,

two days after that period of storm had begun, and not seeing any storms, he said nothing about them. It is his habit to refer back to his previous weekly forecasts whenever he finds them approximately realized; but when they are falsified by the event he of course observes a discreet silence. Sometimes he deliberately misrepresents his previous weekly forecast so as to show that his misrepresentation has been verified. Thus on March 12 he wrote: "My last bulletin gave forecasts of a disturbance to cross the continent 22 to 26, warm wave 21 to 25, cool wave 24 to 28." When we turn to that "last bulletin," of March 5 this is what we find: "The next disturbance will reach the Pacific Coast about 16, cross west of Rockies by close of 17, great central valleys 18 to 20, eastern states 21. Warm wave will cross west of Rockies about 16, great central valleys 18, eastern states 20. Cool wave will cross west of Rockies about 19, great central valleys 21, eastern states 23." Either Mr. W. T. Foster does not keep a record of his own weekly forecasts, or he relies upon the carelessness of the public who will not take the trouble to verify. Compare the original bulletin of March 5 and you will see how not one single date agrees with the supposed repetition thereof on March 12. In the former the "disturbance" was to last from the 16th to the 21st, in the latter from the 22nd to the 26th; in the former the warm wave is announced from the 16th to the 20th, in the latter from the 21st to the 25th; in the former the cool wave is to last from the 19th to the 23, in the latter from the 24th to the 28th. And yet after all a storm of snow did rage here in the afternoon and evening of March 20th, one of the four days for which Foster announced stormy weather. Only, everybody knows, without being a weather prophet, that the vernal equinox, which falls about March 21st, is proverbially the stormiest season everywhere.

Mr. J. McGovern, Dominion Immigration agent at Port Arthur, was here at the beginning of the week.

John A. Creighton of Omaha, Neb., on the 18th ult., deeded without reserve to Creighton University, that city, property valued at \$250,000. In all Mr. Creighton has given to the institution, in cash and valuable property, about \$750,000. For his liberality, Pope Leo bestowed upon him the title of Count. Creighton University is in charge of Jesuits, and consists of a free classical day college and a medical college. In the former there are about 250 students, and in the latter 150. Creighton University or College is the only adequately endowed Catholic College in the United States, with the exception, perhaps, of St. Thomas College, St. Paul; and yet neither of these institutions holds a particularly high rank among Catholic Colleges, several of which are admittedly far superior to them in scholarship. This shows that money, even supported by the best of systems, as in the case of Creighton, cannot create what requires years of tradition.

A Catholic pilgrimage from Russia lately visited Rome and the Holy Father.

The Council of the Catholic Union of Ceylon has memorialised the British Government through the Duke of Norfolk, for the amendment or abolition of the Royal Declaration. It is pointed out in the petition that the number of Christians in the island is 349,239, and of these 82 per cent. are Catholics.

Mr. William R. Grace, who died last Monday of pneumonia in his