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Northwest Review.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 1900

CURRENT COMMENT

The writer of "In the Octave of St. George," contributing to this issue, is, we think, mistaken in saying that "almost all Catholic papers are disloyal towards England." None of the Catholic papers in England or Canada are disloyal. Most of them, to be sure, are not jingo papers; but there is a middle and wise course between jingoism and disloyalty, and that middle course consists in loyal service with open eyes. Loyalty to England is assuredly not a more exacting virtue than loyalty to the Church, and yet the latter does not exclude historical blame of high dignitaries in the Church of the past.

One would think that a poet—and Mr. Charles J. O'Malley is a real poet—would excel in detecting shades of meaning. Yet, strange to say, the editor of the Midland Review persists in misunderstanding our objection to a strong adjective which gave not only a special shade of meaning but a very high color to its substantive. Mr. O'Malley hailed Mr. Fréchet as an "ardent" Catholic. We poked fun at the word "ardent." He replied: "Is he not a Catholic?" We rejoined, "Who ever said he wasn't? but between a Catholic (of any sort) and an 'ardent Catholic' there yawns a chasm." Meanwhile the Kentucky critic writes to Dr. O'Hagan, who replies that said chasm is of no interest to him, and to Mr. Louis Fréchet, who writes back that he has always (?) remained a Catholic in practice. And thus the Catholic ardor of this French Canadian poet remains where it was, absolutely unproved.

Here is another instance of Mr. O'Malley's inaccuracy. We said, in our issue of April 11: "If the Midland Review were better informed on the recent literary events of French Canada, it would hardly have praised Mr. Louis Fréchet's style so highly as it did lately." Mr. O'Malley had called Mr. Fréchet's style "exquisite." We objected in the foregoing remarks to the superlative praise contained in the word "exquisite," but we dropped not the slightest hint that Mr. Fréchet's style was not good.

Even between "good" and "exquisite" we see quite a number of degrees, such as "very fair," "very good," "pleasing," etc. But Mr. O'Malley evidently wrote to Dr. O'Hagan that we had said Mr. Fréchet's style was "not good," since the Midland Review of May 8 informs us that Dr. O'Hagan replied: "As to Louis Fréchet, it is nonsense to say that his style is not good." Who ever said it was not good? We said and still say it is not "exquisite." An exquisite style in a poet supposes thought wedded to melody. Now Mr. Fréchet undoubtedly is melodious, but his best thoughts are the property of others; when left to himself, he is poor and vulgar in idea. Give him a striking fact in history and he will put it into telling dramatic verse. He knows his language well, he has the poetic temperament, and so he can turn out graceful lines. What he lacks is the creative power. No great thought ever "strikes along his brain and flushes all his face." Perhaps it is because he feels this in his heart of heart that he has so often copied other French poets. Had the exposure of his plagiarisms, which appeared some years ago in "La Vérité," been sent to the French Academy in time, that august body would never have crowned him.

L'ECHO DE MANITOBA.

Our French contemporary in Winnipeg replies at length, and with a judicial calm that is as unwonted at it is pleasing, to our last article (May 2) on the school deadlock. We are happy to see "L'Echo" admitting plainly and unequivocally that the school question is not by any means settled. In the face of this avowal what becomes of the solemn and oft-reiterated promises of Sir Wilfrid Laurier? Did he not undertake to settle this knotty question in such a way as to do full justice and afford complete satisfaction to the wronged minority whose sacred constitutional rights had been affirmed by the highest court of the Empire?

As to the so-called "settlement," can anyone in good faith dare to aver that it has settled anything? What has been done so far is due to a combination of circumstances which have allowed us to enter upon a course of conciliation, yes, but one in which all the concessions have come from us. Conciliation is not much to boast of for people who have constitutional rights.

No; the settlement remains what the Sovereign Pontiff declared it to be, "defective, imperfect, insufficient." We have just had a striking proof of this in the failure of the Winnipeg Catholics to obtain any reasonable concessions from the city School Board. The Catholics asked for very little in return for the enormous sacrifices they offered to make in the interests of peace, and yet that little was refused not so much because of ill-will on the part of the members of the Winnipeg School Board as because of the "settlement" which those members alleged as the reason of their refusal. Now, who fathered that settlement, if not Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Hon. Thomas Greenway?

"L'Echo" pretends that Sir

Wilfrid settled the school question by referring it back to the local legislature, and thus our contemporary, in order to entice us into the arena of politics, lays a trap which, albeit pretty skillfully devised, is just a trifle too glaring to ensnare us. What we want is not "a policy of partial and progressive concessions," subject to the political exigencies of parties in power, but the acknowledgment of our constitutional rights. For this have we fought since 1890, and this do we still demand to-day. This also is what the then Mr. Laurier solemnly promised in 1896 if he came into power. Instead of this full and complete vindication of our rights what have we? Alas! we regret to confess it, we have nothing but an appeal to the mercy of the local legislature. Our case is that of an unimportant but honest citizen who, having obtained a judgment of the supreme court against an unjust aggressor, and having applied, for the execution of the judgment, to the executive officer, is informed by the latter that he must arrange matters with the aggressor himself: "For," says the executive, "since he is the cause of all your wrongs, it is his business to make that restitution which justice demands." In sober truth, were all the laws of the Empire administered in this fashion, we should soon be in the midst of anarchy the most complete.

We can easily forgive L'Echo its special plea in favor of Sir Wilfrid, but we cannot help seeing therein one more instance of the blinding effect of politics on its victims. As far as we are concerned, without refusing to take advantage of whatever good dispositions our local rulers may manifest, we persist in maintaining the vantage-ground given us by the judgment of the Privy Council and the Remedial Order of the Governor-General-in-Council. We hold that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has the right and is in duty bound to restore to us full and entire justice, and we cannot cease to pray that the hour of our deliverance may soon come.

One more word. L'Echo thinks "the diocesan authority" made a mistake in not approving the Liberal Catholic members when they wished to elicit from the Hon. Hugh John Macdonald a declaration of his intentions with regard to the school question. But, in the first place, these members are in no sense the representatives of the Catholic body and, in the second, it is obvious to retort that, during Greenway's government, the Liberal members carefully abstained from embarrassing the Hon. Thomas by any such questions.

DECOYING IMMIGRANTS.

The Montreal "Daily Witness" lately published a letter exposing the decoy system thanks to which the Doukhobors who settled in the Canadian Northwest were lured toward Southern California. Agents for the sale of railway lands persuaded them to send delegates to that beautiful but deceptive land. The railways showed these delegates every attention and carried them about to see the lands these same railways had for sale. The delegates arrived when the coun-

try around Los Angeles was luxuriating in a mantle of green and flowers thanks to the abundant rains in midwinter. They were charmed, they said they had at last found their earthly paradise. They hastened back to Manitoba and the Territories to proclaim the good news. Had they gone to Southern California last month they would hardly have been so enthusiastic. No rain had fallen since midwinter, all was parched and dried up, i.e., all the land that has not irrigation facilities, and these facilities require great capital and organization which these poor, ignorant people are not able to furnish.

The Witness correspondent says: "Southern California is a paradise for those who are in feeble health and have the means to buy a home, but for the poor laborer, depending on his work for a living, it is not what interested parties represent it to be. We have already more laborers than can find work at living wages." Farmers cannot depend upon the rain for crops. "This is the third year of defective rain fall, and poor crops are the result." The soil must be watered artificially and this is very expensive.

The only parties who will gain by this exodus of Doukhobors are (1) the railway companies, which will palm off on them at \$1.25 an acre lands that are dear at any price, unless used for mining or stock-raising, both of which operations require much capital in Southern California, (2) the beet sugar factories, which offer the Doukhobors only 50 cents a day, whilst they are now paying other laborers from \$1.25 to \$2.50 a day, and (3) the employment agents whose only object in life is to deceive one more unfortunate laborer for whom they have no pity.

The foregoing details of this method of decoying immigrants as exposed by one who has been residing in Southern California for the last sixteen years and who may therefore be supposed to know what he is writing about, are recited here not because we have any great affection or esteem for the Doukhobors, but because we like to see a fraudulent bubble burst. We consider this merely one out of many instances of the tricks of immigration and employment agents. Laborers are decoyed into a country where work for laborers is hard to find at any time, and once there they will receive—for how long, nobody knows—a wage on which a family cannot live.

As to the Doukhobors themselves, without being quite prepared to accept La Vérité's saying, that "people who are kept in Canada in spite of themselves will make sorry settlers," we think their departure would not be an appreciable loss. The fact that Count Leo Tolstoi organized their removal to this country has always militated against them in the eyes of well informed Catholics. Tolstoi is a hater of the supernatural, masquerading in the guise of a thoughtful peasant. That this prince of materialistic humbugs, who looks upon all the history of both Testaments as trash, should patronize the Doukhobors is proof positive that they are at bottom an anti-Christian and therefore an uncivilizing element.

RESTRICTED FRANCHISE.

The Government have given notice that they intend this week to introduce their new franchise legislation. They are to be congratulated on their determination to redeem their ante election pledge to reform the system of making up the voters' list. We speak feelingly on this point, having on one occasion with many other Catholic residents of the city been the victims of a registration clerk's partisan manipulation of the list, and we trust that the new law will be an absolutely fair one, under which every duly qualified British subject will get square treatment and be assured of a vote. It is rumoured that the new act will contain clauses excluding certain classes of lately arrived immigrants from the franchise until they pass some kind of educational test. When appealing to the people at the last elections all references to a provision of this kind proved exceedingly popular, and we believe that in some constituencies it had a great deal to do with the success of Conservative candidates. It is a point, however, which must be handled very carefully. We certainly believe there are many immigrants that have arrived in batches during the past year or two who are not fit to be entrusted with the power of voting and who will not be fit for a good many years to come; but it is a most difficult matter to deal with and we shall await with interest the details of the government legislation.

DONAHOE'S MAGAZINE.

This beautifully illustrated magazine opens its May number very appropriately with a graceful, melodious six-act sonnet by P. J. Cormican, S. J., on "The Queen of May." One line in the sextet—a flawless gem—"Her very touch made earth what eye had never seen," is used as a legend for the sweet Madonna that forms the frontispiece. Another Marian contribution is "Gleanings from Bossuet on false devotion to Our Lady and the Saints," by F. M. Capes. This writer introduces Father Tyrrell, S. J., the now celebrated author of "External Religion, its use and abuse," as repeating the solemn warning of the Eagle of Meaux, a warning that is most timely in this Month of Mary. Too many Catholics, supposedly pious, think they are devout to the Blessed Virgin because they recite faithfully a number of prayers in her honor, and yet they make no effort to bridle their tongues, to curb their vanity, to deny themselves. True devotion consists in eagerness to serve God with ever increasing fidelity. If we wish to be really devout to Mary, we must strive to imitate her virtues. Bossuet says truly: "How many people think of offering their vows or asking help of the Saints against their faults and vices, of begging prayers for their own conversion?"

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