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**Northwest Review.**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1900

**CURRENT COMMENT**

A great fuss has been made over an anti-British article in the "Semaine Religieuse" of Quebec. It was supposed to be written by the French Canadian editor; but when we read it, we were immediately impressed by the intrinsic evidence of its foreign authorship. The writer spoke of France as his home: "En France même...on nous vantait le génie colonisateur de l'Angleterre." He also betrayed an ignorance of British affairs which would have been impossible in a French Canadian of such ability as the article revealed. Then, this diatribe was represented as suggested by the recent British disasters in South Africa, whereas in reality the article contains not the slightest reference to the Transvaal war. This week the editor of "La Semaine Religieuse de Québec" declares that not only the Archbishop of Quebec is in no way responsible for the articles it publishes, but that in this case the author of the article lives in Manitoba. The editor evidently deeply deplors the "inopportune-ness of such an article in the present circumstances." We trust the editor will learn thereby not to patronize foreign contributors writing on questions which they cannot understand.

**TABLET TACTICS.**

The first editorial note in "The Tablet" of December 30th reads as follows:

"The Manitoba elections have resulted in a triumph for Mr. John Hugh [sic] MacDonald [sic] and in the defeat of the Liberal party. The Catholics of the province, while still complaining of grievances, seem as a body to have looked on helplessly at the elections, and been unable even to make up their minds which way to vote. Their organ, THE NORTH-WEST REVIEW, can find nothing to interest it in party politics. At present that journal seems to devote all the time it can spare from neglecting its duties at home to championing the Transvaal. If a little of the energy spent in demonstrating that the religious disabilities of Catholics in the Transvaal do not matter had been spent in steadily organizing the Catholic vote, perhaps the Catholics of Winnipeg would not now be obliged to make the miserable confession that there is nothing that interests them

in the politics of their own province."

The editor of "The Tablet," albeit a fervent Catholic, has unwittingly adopted some of the methods of Protestant controversy. One of these consists in completely ignoring an opponent's unanswerable reply and attacking him on some other point by a liberal invention of supposed facts. This is what truly honest, straightforward Englishmen call "drawing a herring across the scent." In our issue of Dec. 5th we proved, by the parallel instance of the Jesuits, an illegal body in England, holding large properties there to everybody's knowledge, that the dead letter of the Transvaal laws against Catholics cannot outweigh the fact that Catholics hold important offices in the South African Republic. Not being able to refute this statement of ours, "The Tablet," instead of honorably acknowledging that we are right, dishonorably distorts our views, making us say what we never said, viz., "that the religious disabilities of Catholics in the Transvaal do not matter." The only passage we can think of that bore the remotest resemblance to this unfair distortion was one quoted from the South African Catholic Magazine, in which the editor, Rev. Dr. Kolbe, said that, in educational matters, Catholics in most parts of the British Empire suffered greater disabilities than in the Transvaal, but that such disabilities constituted no valid reason for war. (See NORTHWEST REVIEW, Nov. 21, '99.) And we submit that this is as true as the Tablet's version that such disabilities do not matter is false. Kruger never robbed Catholics of educational rights guaranteed by the Constitution as Greenway robbed us here. Neither did the Imperial Government dream of asserting our rights by force of arms, for here there were no gold or diamond mines to grab, no millionaires like Cecil Rhodes to save from ruin.

Of the five sentences that make up the Tablet's editorial note, the only one that is not a distortion is the first, and that contains two inaccuracies sufficiently astonishing in a paper which not only prides itself on its accurate reproduction of proper names but is continually poking fun at the inaccuracies of other, especially, foreign, journals. It prints the present Manitoba premier's name as "John Hugh MacDonald." Everyone in Canada knows that "Macdonald," with a small "d," is the proper form for Sir John and his descendants. "John Hugh" for Manitobans is a rich joke. The two names in their real sequence, "Hugh John," are so familiar in this province that the family name is habitually dropped. "Hugh John's Committee Rooms" was a well known sign in Winnipeg during the elections. "John Hugh" reminds us of the Frenchman who said, "When I wear a collar-paper, my English friends find it a sore-eye." How the Tablet would snub any Canadian or American who should write "Henry John Newman" or "Edward Henry Manning!"

Sentence number two: "The Catholics of the province, while still complaining of grievances,

seem as a body to have looked on helplessly at the elections, and been unable to make up their minds which way to vote." That incidental sneer about our "still complaining of grievances" seems to imply that we have really very few left, whereas the fact is that no grievance has been legally removed and that Winnipeg Catholic schools are not only utterly ignored but actually taxed for the support of Protestant schools. The main assertion that Manitoba Catholics "looked on helplessly at the elections" is astoundingly grotesque in face of the fact that in Winnipeg South most Catholics voted for the Conservatives and that in ten other constituencies the Catholic voters turned the scale in favor of Hugh John. Is this blunder of the Tablet's another proof of that wider and deeper knowledge of our Manitoba affairs which it claimed in 1897 as a result of its being printed in the "nerve-centre of the British Empire?"

Sentence number three: "Their organ, THE NORTH-WEST REVIEW, can find nothing to interest it in party politics." This is a case of wrenching a text from its context so as to make the former say what the latter contradicts. The Tablet represents us as taking no interest in party politics in general, as if no political question could ever interest us. What we did say in our "Notes by the Way" of Nov. 28th was: "The REVIEW finds nothing that interests it in party politics AS AT PRESENT MANIPULATED,"—which is quite another story. However, we proceeded, directly after, to remark: "We feel that as unprejudiced onlookers, we see a great deal more of the true inwardness of the game than many of those who are in the thick of the fight. We do not intend to say how we think men should vote on this occasion; WE HAVE TAKEN A DECIDED STAND IN MORE THAN ONE ELECTION IN THE PAST, but that has been when some great question of vital importance to Catholics has been at issue, and we see nothing of the kind in this contest." After forecasting the probable triumph of the Conservative party, we add: "If our views are borne out by the result it will be a great change for Manitoba. Whether or not it will be a change for the better, we do not pretend to say. We, of course, have opinions on this but they are not for publication." This context proves clearly that we merely refrained from siding publicly with either party, because neither party gave any guarantee that our school grievances would be removed. The context shows that only in this sense did we take no interest in party politics "as at present manipulated." That we did, however take a keen interest in the issue, is shown by our devoting three out of seven editorial columns of that issue to the electoral contest.

Sentence number four: "At present that journal seems to devote all the time it can spare from neglecting its duties at home to championing the Transvaal." From a literary point of view this is the gem of the Tablet's note. We can calmly enjoy the skill in that rapier thrust because it leaves us absolutely unharmed. It is the

Tablet's way of punishing us for charging it with inability to see the other side of a question. So little did our Canadian contemporaries think that we neglected our duties that several of them took the trouble to reprint our forecasts of the recent election, forecasts which the event has proved to be the result of correct information carefully collected from various sources. As to the Transvaal, it is a pure travesty to say that we championed it; we simply pointed out, as many of the best lovers of the Empire have done before us, that there is much to be said in favor of the Boers. We plead for justice, but hold no brief for the South African Republic.

Sentence number five: "If a little of the energy spent in demonstrating that the religious disabilities of Catholics in the Transvaal do not matter had been spent in steadily organizing the Catholic vote, perhaps the Catholics of Winnipeg would not now be obliged to make the miserable confession that there is nothing that interests them in the politics of their own province." Of the three propositions contained in the foregoing sentence we have already proved that the first is false. The second, viz., the supposition that we ought to have organized the Catholic vote, reveals a lamentable ignorance of our situation here. It would have been the height of folly for a recognized Catholic organ to side publicly, in the circumstances surrounding the late election, with either party. Such a course would have defeated our best interests. So bitter and unreasoning is the fanaticism enkindled and kept aflame by Greenway and his henchmen that the fact of the Catholic body leaning towards one party would have thrown a considerable number of Protestant voters into the arms of the other.

Moreover, in this country the most effectual political organization is distinctly not provided by daily or weekly journals. The latter especially would be of very little use in a campaign of hardly four weeks' duration. We have a daily paper in Winni-

peg which has any amount of capital behind it, and which could give points to the Tablet in skilful misrepresentation, suppression of truth, and the sacrifice of facts to epigram; yet that paper is admitted by its own partisans to have done more harm than good to its party by its untiring efforts during the electoral campaign. No; we did not organize the Catholic vote, because that is not our business. We knew others were doing that better than we could, and the result proves the wisdom or our "masterly inactivity."

The third proposition of this last and most misleading of the Tablet's sentences implies that the Catholics of Winnipeg are obliged now, i. e., after the triumph of Hugh John, to confess that they are not at all interested in the politics of Manitoba. Really, this is deliciously funny. The very idea that the Catholics of Winnipeg could at this moment make any such confession is preposterous. Why, it is they who turned the scale, and they think their present situation is rather better than it was under Greenway. True, the NORTHWEST REVIEW said, before the election, that party politics, "as at present manipulated," did not interest it. This was an official declaration of neutrality, which left Catholics free to make up their own minds; but it had not the remotest connection with apathy on the part of Catholics. We knew full well that our coreligionists were deeply interested in the struggle; and we deemed it wise not to interfere publicly and officially.

Having thus pulled to pieces the Tablet's ill-natured snarl, we may be asked how it is that the great metropolitan journal betrays so much spleen. In reply we venture to offer this explanation. About three years ago the Tablet, seduced by the blandishments of leading Canadian Liberals, though itself a Tory of the Tories at home, undertook to settle the Manitoba school difficulty. Being at the "nerve-centre of the Empire," it understood the complexity of the case far better than the Canadian hierarchy, whom it



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