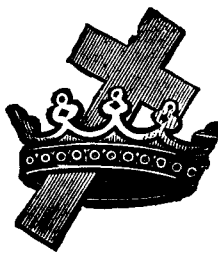


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CURRENT COMMENT

We feel that no apology is needed for the large amount of space devoted this week to Mr. J. A. MacDonell's letter in defence of the late Archbishop Tache. This valuable contribution to the history of Manitoba and the Canadian Northwest first appeared in the Montreal Gazette of February 13, which deemed it of sufficient importance to deserve the following headlines: "Wolsey vs. Tache"—"The Churchman's Case upheld Against the Soldier"—"Events of '70 Recalled"—"What the Archbishop of St. Boniface did in Connection with the Red River Rising."

It is hardly necessary, however, to say that we do not share Mr. MacDonell's high estimate of Lord Wolsey's worth, except in so far as this praise is merely a rhetorical device to ensure the more ready acceptance of the writer's condemnation of Wolsey's ignorant brutality. Neither do we share Mr. MacDonell's view as to the relative importance of the Rebellion of 1837-8, and the Red River Rising of 1869-70, nor his contemptuous fling at Mr. Henri Bourassa, who is—to reverse the writer's phrase—Hyperion to many a satyr among the self-styled loyal "statesmen." But, after all, these differences of opinion do not affect the main issue which Mr. MacDonell states with such wealth of fact and breadth of knowledge.

What, for men of literary taste adds greatly to the value of Mr. MacDonell's letter in the stately rhythm of his style. He writes as gentlemen of the old school did, with a fine ear for the perfectly rounded sentence. Their training was leisurely and complete, not as ours too often is, hasty and slipshod. The same dignified manner is visible in his strictures on views adverse to his own. He eschews invective. He neither hacks nor hews, he simply cuts clean, and, when there is nothing left of his adversary, he sets his hero on a monument built "of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man," the closing cadence of a Latin verse from Lucan's Pharsalia, "clarum et venerabile nomen," thus fitly saluting the illustrious and venerable name of Alexander Antonine Tache.

Baltimore, Rochester, the Madison Capitol, three stupendous conflagrations where special care is taken to provide against such disasters, do not these calamities occurring so near each other in point of time, indicate the possibility of organized efforts at destruction of valuable property? The loud-mouthed declaimers against the social order are fond of predicting universal ruin as the only possible prelude to the realization of their senseless dupes be already putting their prophecy into practice?

The venerable missionary, Father Lacombe, who was the guest of His Grace the Archbishop of St. Paul, during his recent visit to that city, is a living and enthusiastic witness to the great Archbishop's practical support of Catholic Missionaries in the Canadian Northwest. Father Lacombe has known John Ireland, whether as "Father," "Bishop," or "Archbishop" for forty years and during all that time he has loved him for the generous and noble kindness with which he always befriended the Oblates and other Missionaries who passed through St. Paul on their way north.

As the veteran missionary and the Pauline prelate are old friends,

their conversation drifted into personal channels. Among other things which Father Lacombe authorizes us to record: Archbishop Ireland said: "I am accused of objecting to the maintenance of foreign languages in the Churches of my jurisdiction. Well, the other day, finding that the pastor of one of the French Canadian parishes had begun to add to his French sermon a few words in English for the benefit of a handful of English-speaking people that attended his church, I ordered him to confine himself to the French language. If those few English-speaking people wanted English sermons there were plenty of churches they could attend." His Grace then went on to speak of the difficulty of keeping up foreign languages amid American surroundings, and cited a recent instance. He was giving Confirmation in a French Church, and, being as fluent in French as in English, he examined each candidate in French before conferring the Sacrament. Out of more than sixty children, who all understood his questions put in French, only two answered in that language, all the rest replied in English. "Take the French schools wherein the teaching is chiefly in French, given by French teachers. When the children leave the school room for recess, they all break out into English, which is the language of their play." Father Lacombe's very natural conclusion is, that, if French speaking parents insist on their children keeping up the parental language, they should return to the French districts of Canada.

On the evening of Friday, February 26, in the presence of His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface, several of the local clergy, the Fathers and students of the College and a few invited lay friends, Father Lacombe held the large audience in the College hall spellbound as he narrated one momentous episode in his early career as a missionary among the Indians of Alberta. In spite of his 78 years completed two days later, he spoke with the greatest ease and charm for nearly two hours, and all felt sorry when he stopped. We begin a full report of this dramatic lecture this week.

The "Catholic Standard and Times of Philadelphia" published lately on its "Home and School page" a fictitious letter supposed to be written by a young American travelling in Europe. This letter bristled with blunders of all kinds, historical, geographical, etc., and young readers were asked to send in their corrections. Hundreds of replies were received, and among them one which assuredly bears away the palm for unconscious humor. The blundering letter had mentioned Queen Elizabeth's "husband." The young corrector writes naively: "Elizabeth was never married; she died a natural death."

Archbishop O'Reilly, of Adelaide, South Australia, speaking of the results of granting franchise to women, tells the following story:

"Some three years ago, when the elections were on and political zeal ran very high, an old man and his wife lived somewhere near Adelaide. He (the Archbishop) must not tell the suburb. The man's name was Mick, and his wife's name was Mary. Unfortunately Mick was in favor of Mr. X., while Mary was in favor of Mr. Y. Day after day they had disputes and arguments. At length the morning came to vote, and Mary said: 'Mick, we have never quarrelled in our lives, and we are not going to quarrel over Mr. X., or Mr. Y. I will vote for Mr. X.' Mary went to the poll, and when she came back she informed her hus-

band that she had voted for Mr. X. 'I don't believe you,' said Mick. 'You're always suspicious,' replied Mary. 'I thought you would not believe me, so I brought the ballot paper with me.' Flourishing it before her husband, Mary cried triumphantly: 'Now, do you believe me, Mick?'

"As many Catholic parents are not sufficiently educated to exercise proper control over the books read by their children," says the St. Louis Review, "some arrangement ought to be made in every parish whereby priest or teacher would be enabled to keep a watchful eye on the literature taken by Catholic children from public libraries. We have been surprised and shocked to see immoral novels and other bad books, even such as are on the Roman index, read by Catholic children in the family circle, the parents being absolutely ignorant of their character and utterly helpless as to how to stop an abuse which they felt themselves powerless to control."

Writing at the end of January, "Vox Urbis," the Rome correspondent of the New York Freeman's Journal, sums up the first six months of the present Pope's pontificate in a way that must bring an uncomfortable feeling of unfortunate blundering to the writer of an article on Pius X., in the September "Catholic World" (see Northwest Review, Sept. 26, 1903). That writer, venturing on prophecy said: "His reign will probably not be memorable for the inauguration of new things. Leo has done enough on these lines for one century. But the advance guard will now mark time till the rest of the army comes up." Like Foster's weather forecasts, read after date, this is funny when confronted with the facts thus admirably condensed by "Vox Urbis."

The present pontificate has now lasted just a week less than half a year, yet the reforms of half a century have been already either realized or shadowed. Pope Pius X. has suppressed a number of charges which were little more than sinecures; he has applied a new and rigorous system for the election of Italian Bishops, by transferring this charge to the Holy Office; he has provided for the decorum of the temple by suppressing the most objectionable of the practices which have hitherto defied both decency and authority; he has begun the reorganization of the Roman Congregations; he has instituted a severe investigation into the supposed sacred character of many bodies supposed to be those of early martyrs of the Church, and has ordered one of these about which the evidence was not conclusive as to martyrdom to be removed from a church where it had been kept for centuries; he has abolished all secular interference in Papal elections; he has appointed a commission to undertake the enormous work of codifying all the laws of the Church; he has foreshadowed a complete reform of the breviary; he has removed all ambiguities from the path of Christian social action in Italy. In the days of Leo we used to be puzzled sometimes as to the exact force of the Pontiff's instructions—and no wonder, for the ideas of the late Pontiff were so vast and often so profoundly philosophical that it was not always easy for ordinary mortals to fix their precise meaning. But with Pope Pius X., no such excuse is possible. Everybody knows just what he means, and he is nothing if not practical."

The question whether worshippers at Mass should or should not

remain in semi-prostration during the elevation of the Host and the Chalice has provoked many learned letters to "The Tablet." But it has been practically settled by the authorities of Westminster Cathedral in a leaflet issued lately and bearing the Imprimatur of Cardinal Vaughan. This leaflet directs that Catholics at the Elevation of the Host and Chalice should devoutly raise their eyes towards the Blessed Sacrament, as it is for this reason the Priest is directed to elevate the Sacred Species." One writer attributes the contrary practice which has prevailed of late years to the extravagances of Anglo-Catholicism. Certain it is that the Spaniards, who have so deep a devotion of the Sacred Host that they speak of it habitually as "La Divina Majestad" just as we say the "Blessed Sacrament," kneel erect at the elevation, look at the Host and the Chalice, and find fault with us for appearing ashamed of so consoling a mystery.

The beginning of that period of spiritual regeneration which lasts through Lent until Trinity Sunday and during which all true Catholics must confess and receive Holy Communion, reminds us how we should pray for unrepentant sinners. There are many ways of making the Easter Confession. One is to go through a mere form in order to keep up one's membership in a Catholic benefit or insurance society which requires the fulfilment of the Easter duty. Some have been known to do this and afterwards to neglect attendance at Sunday Mass all the rest of the year. Such people are a scandal to the Church and stand more in need of prayers than those who omit their Easter duty altogether, for these latter do not add hypocrisy and sacrilege to the catalogue of their sins. Then there is the habitual drunkard or profligate or business cheat, who reforms for a few weeks after his Easter confession, and because he fails to frequent the Sacraments, slides back into the old ruts. For such as these a Mission is sorely needed, and in the course of this year it is His Grace's wish that missions should be preached in all the parishes of this diocese. Nothing stirs up the habitual sinner to true repentance and the ordinarily good Catholic to greater fervor like a well conducted Mission, in which the whole scheme of salvation is set forth in logical order, in which each penitent has the comfort of choosing a new and experienced confessor able to rectify the possible reticences of confessions made under the restraint of previous acquaintance, and ever watchful as to the surest preservatives against relapse. But even with the best of mission preachers, even with the man of God who seeks not his own fame but the permanent conversion of the sinner, the great weapon is prayer. This is a spiritual warfare, and supernatural weapons are the only effective ones. The prayers of a poor old woman full of faith and trust may do more for the regeneration of a parish than the most eloquent of sermons, if not vitalized by personal prayer.

A book agent for the "Bureau of National Literature and Art," of Washington, D.C., has been operating very successfully of late in these parts. His method of procedure is this. He comes to some prominent citizen, Archbishop, College principal or Librarian and announces, in the most plausible way that this very person has been singled out by the U.S. Government as the possible recipient of a very valuable gift, "The Messages and Papers of the United States Presidents from 1789 to 1902" in ten volumes. By way of compensa-

tion, especially for the cost of binding, the donee is requested to pay the small sum of \$4.60 a volume. When the \$46 are paid up and the volumes arrive, a cursory examination reveals the fact that the entire expenses of this publication, binding and index included, have already been defrayed by special appropriations of Congress. Thus the "Bureau of National Literature and Art" succeeds in dumping upon an unsuspecting public, at a profit of 300 or 400 per cent., a mere compilation already paid for by Congress, and which costs the "Bureau" nothing but transportation and agents' commissions. The binding, for which especially the \$46 were claimed, although as proved by a resolution of Congress (see vol. 1, p. iii) fully paid for by the United States Government, turns out to be worth about 50c a volume. This is one of the neatest Yankee tricks we have ever come across.

Persons and Facts

On February 17, the Rev. H. E. Gilchrist, who resigned from the rectorate of St. Luke's Episcopal church of Roselle, N.J., two weeks before, was baptised into the Catholic faith in St. Michael's Church, Cranford, N.J., by the Rev. John A. Westman. Mr. Gilchrist, who is 36 years old, and has a wife and two children, will enter business.

Father Bailly, Assistant General of the Order of the Assumption, and founder of "La Croix," was present at a lecture on the Knights of Malta, delivered by Mr. Charles J. Munich, F.R.Hist.S., to the Brothers of the Assumption, at the Convent of the Nursing Sisters of the Poor, Bow, London, E., on Sunday afternoon, February 7. He is staying with the Fathers of the Assumption at Bethnal Green. In welcoming the distinguished visitor Mr. Lister Drummond, K.S.G., spoke of Father Bailly's services to France and the great zeal and devotion of his order. Mr. Drummond doubted whether the Knights of Malta, of whose bravery they just heard from Mr. Munich, had shown more courage than Father Bailly and his great Order, which had done so much for religion and for France in the hour of trouble. It was now helping those in England who were trying to bring back to the Catholics of this country the holy places of which they had been despoiled at the so-called Reformation. Father Bailly replied in French (which Mr. Drummond interpreted), thanking the Brothers for their welcome and expressing great interest in the work they were doing, which he was glad to say was progressing in England and France.—Catholic Times.

The "Saturday Review" publishes some strong comments on the government's refusal to bring in a Catholic university bill. "We sympathise frankly," it says, "with the Irish members in their disappointment that no Government Bill dealing with the university question in Ireland will be introduced this session." We can affect no surprise that their disappointment was expressed in terms of heated indignation. We are very sure that English Nonconformists in so tantalizing a position would give way to far stronger language than did the Irish members in the House. The truth is, that nothing but the prejudice, fortified by ignorance, of a section of Unionists now stands in the way of the University question being settled in Ireland."

The "Liberte" of Fribourg, Switzerland, pays a very touching tribute to Miss Florence Boulton, who died there on the 26th of Jan-