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**Northwest Review.**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10 1899.

**CURRENT COMMENT**

An unconscious revelation of the fewness of clerical vocations in the United States was made by the Right Rev. Bishop Shanley when, preaching recently in the cathedral of St. Paul at Father M. Doherty's first Mass, he made much of the fact that this was the ninth priest the cathedral parish has given to God. Now, that parish has been established at least fifty years, and we submit that nine priests in fifty years is a decidedly poor showing for a parish which for the past twenty years has been a fairly populous one. If any cathedral parish in Quebec had produced only nine priests in half a century it would say nothing about it.

The recent cold weather has brought vividly before many of us the untrustworthiness of the ordinary thermometer. Last Saturday the thermograph registered 44 below; the best Government buildings thermometer, 40; St. John's College observatory, 42.8; St. Boniface College, 41; an excellent uncolored alcohol thermometer owned by Messier of St. Boniface, and Cherrier's carefully located instrument in St. Boniface, several unreliable thermometers below 50, and a registering thermometer

look at the thermometer: 75 degrees! I can't stand anything above 68." The caretaker would obsequiously promise to have the heat supply moderated, but instead of doing anything to the furnace, he would simply substitute a low-registering thermometer, one that generally was seven degrees below the proper mark, for the old one. Next morning he would call and ask how the gentleman found his office today. "Oh, all right, John, just what I wanted, 68 degrees." A high-registering thermometer would perform the same service for the chilly officials who wanted 78 degrees when their instrument only marked 72. Imagination supplied the furnace.

In the December number of the University of Ottawa Review, which is a very substantial and well illustrated issue, we find the following interesting facts about New Zealand, imparted to the students by the Right Rev. John Grimes, Bishop of Christchurch, during his recent visit to Ottawa. "Sixty years ago there was not a Catholic church nor a resident priest in the whole of New Zealand, while at present there are four bishops, one hundred priests and a Catholic population of 100,000, which is about one seventh of the total inhabitants. The native Maoris number about 45,000, many of whom are Catholics." We should be greatly obliged to the business managers of the U. of O. Review, if they would kindly address their valuable magazine to St. Boniface instead of Winnipeg. For convenience of postal arrangements, before the new regulations, which do not affect us, we moved our plant to St. Boniface a couple of years ago, a fact which several of our exchanges have not yet discovered.

Taking it all in all, we have seldom read a more powerful critique of Aubrey de Vere's poetry than the masterly analysis thereof that appeared in the University of Ottawa Review for December by Maurice W. Casey. He holds the balance true between the merits and demerits of the greatest living Irish bard. The article, on the whole, is far above the standard of college journals; but why in the world did Mr. Casey not strike out that unfortunately trivial passage of his about matches and cuspidors? This is the only discordant note that betrays the presence of vulgar, would-be funny and sadly incongruous schoolboys.

**AERIAL NAVIGATION.**

We are almost at the end of the nineteenth century, 115 balloons was

ry, even the aeroplanes of Maxim and Longley, have no authentic record of sustained flight, though we have been informed every now and then for the last five years that they were just on the point of succeeding.

That they will never succeed seems to us a pretty safe prophecy. For they must imitate the flight either of kites or of birds. Now, as to kites, anyone who has read Capt. Baden-Powell's interesting article in the December number of Pearson's Magazine can see for himself that the best results obtained by the most up-to-date kites are extremely meagre and liable to be reversed by a mere gust of wind. As to imitation of the action of the bird's wing, Prof. Pettigrew's article on "Flight" in the Encyclopedia Britannica shows in detail how complicated is the flight of a bird, and, though he throws some crumbs of comfort to the would-be imitators, the outlook in this direction seems to present an insoluble problem.

One of the greatest obstacles to successful human flight through the air is man's proportionate weakness as compared with birds. In proportion to its weight the bird exerts 92 times as much power as man, and yet, so far as knowledge goes at the present day, man can do more continued work than any machine of his weight, in other words, the average man's muscles are better, weight for weight, than any machine men have yet been able to make.

If the wind were always blowing at a steady and sufficiently gentle rate, flying machines might possibly be practicable. But the slightest increase or decrease of wind velocity necessitates in the flying body a readjustment which nothing but a living principle can bring about. When a bird, while soaring, feels the wind weakening on its right side it beats the air with the right wing and thus maintains its equilibrium. This readjustment is and must be instantaneous. Now no such instantaneous readjustment can be brought about in a huge flying machine a hundred times larger than the man who is supposed to readjust it. He is so far from the extremities that he cannot tell what the wind-pressure is there, and, even if he could, it would be impossible for him to so readjust the inclination or motion of all parts of his immense framework as to counteract instantaneously the upsetting thrust of the wind. He upsets and there is an end of him, or at least of his machine.

Flying machines, like kites, will always be subject to pitching, tossing and tremendous downward swoops. The frolics of an ordinary wind, not to speak of anything like a stiff breeze, are too much for them. The centre of gravity is displaced, the propellers become useless and down the whole fabric rushes. Balloons, being lighter than the air are not exposed to these dangerous lurches and tumbles, unless they are fastened to the earth. When sailing free, aeronauts in a balloon do not feel even a gale of wind.

Thus the problem of safe aerial navigation resolves itself into the question, Can balloons be steered in any direction in spite of the wind? This question has been practically answered in

the affirmative, provided — and this is an indispensable condition — the wind be very light. On the 9th of August, 1884, Captains Renard and Krebs, of the French army, started, in a dead calm, from Chalais, near Meudon, in a balloon driven by a screw connected with an electric motor, travelled in a south-westerly direction about four kilometres and then steered back to their starting point, where they landed safely. Their speed was 5, 6 metres a second, i. e., a little over twelve miles an hour. Therefore, against a wind blowing at less than twelve miles an hour, they could have made headway. But a twelve mile an hour wind is a very light breeze, such as would not occur more than once in three or four days, and, if at any moment the breeze were to freshen, the Renard-Krebs balloon would be helplessly driven before it.

More than fourteen years have elapsed since this, the first success in the steering of balloons, and it has not yet been duplicated. The French, as we see by a recent number of the Courrier des États-Unis, are still working at the problem, frequent trials having been made last summer of a new cylindrical and rather complicated dirigible balloon, but with no practical result. Halts of this kind are a curious feature of aeronautics. It is now nearly forty years since John Wise made the longest balloon voyage on record. He sailed, at the rate of almost a mile a minute, no less than 1500 miles from the city of St. Louis to Henderson, N. Y., almost as great a distance as Andree intended to travel when he started on his ill-fated flight. Nothing like this distance has ever been covered by the multitude of later aeronauts. However, it was only the other day we read of balloonists crossing the English channel and to some extent steering their balloon, though the details are as yet too scanty to enable us to judge of the value of the improvement.

Nevertheless, scientific aeronauts are sanguine of ultimate success in solving the steering and motor problem. The French Government has, we believe, a standing offer of 200 million francs (\$40,000,000) for a serviceable dirigible war-balloon. Mr. Albert Kabis de St. Chammas, a practical engineer, recently left Winnipeg to submit an invention of his own to the U. S. War department. His ideas are new. He would construct an air-ship of a shape never yet attempted but apparently better adapted to cope with the continual variation of the wind-pressure. He maintains that his air-ship will rise and fall without any increase or decrease of the substance that gives it buoyancy, and that it will not suffer from the puncturings it may receive from the enemy's shot. It will also, he thinks, be able to turn end for end almost in its own length, whereas the Renard-Krebs balloon could turn only in a large circle. His model, which he kindly showed us, seems both simple and ingenious. But, of course, practical tests may reveal difficulties which no inventor can foresee, and at any rate we are safe in predicting that, unless some new great natural secret be discovered soon, it will be long

before aerial navigation becomes a practical pursuit. Tennyson's forecast of "the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue" is happily almost as far from its accomplishment as it was sixty years ago.

**NOTES FROM STE. ROSE.**

There's a rose in the midst of the desert, and its heart is a church; this rose, like the Glastonbury thorn, blossoms more beautifully on Christmas night than at any other time.

O! night of all nights in the year!

"That only night in all the year,  
When the stole'd priests the chalice bear,"

as Scott tells us in Marmion.

During many hours, by the subdued gleam of two candles on the altar-rails and the sanctuary lamp softly burning, faint glimpses of crimson and spruce hardly hinted at the glories of Christmas, shadowed in dim outline. Only the great, white Christ, high above all, hanging so pitifully on the cross, was clearly discerned in the gloom, and made one think of the dark hours on Calvary.

The crib was still unveiled, but the cross was in sight—how short a journey for the Divine Infant! It seemed an image of our lives; by many a sun-bright day, by many a cloud-shadowed one, from the joys of Bethlehem to the "consummation est" of Calvary.

But when the last penitent had been absolved (there were 400 communions) one by one a thousand lights shone out, and the grace and peace of the Lord were poured out upon all. Presently there stole on the stillness the first faint notes of the dear old Christmas chants. We are not like the children of Israel who wept by the waters of Babylon, remembering the songs of Zion, but we sing with joy the lays of the fatherland in the home of our adoption.

After all was over, mothers took their little ones to gaze on the Divine Infant, meekly laid upon straw in His white grotto, so lonesome and sweet that one's heart ached for Him that His Mother was not there. This is the feast of the little ones. O! blessed children who, for the sake of the Infant Jesus, obtain more than your natural inheritance of love and caresses, especially on this day when children on earth run to the arms of their parents, and the children of Heaven run to worship the Babe of Bethlehem. O! blessed mothers, who, for the sake of the Mother Immaculate, obtain more loving homage than is justly your due.

Yesterday, which was the New Year, witnessed an interesting little ceremony at the doors of the church when the congregation assembled to present their beloved pastor, the Rev. Father Lecoq, with a small offering (from their poverty, as they said) and an address expressive of their gratitude towards him for his untiring devotedness and goodness during the three years we have been so happy to possess him; to him being due also, as is truly observed, in a great measure, the prosperity of the place. The address concluded by expressing a fervent hope that God in His goodness will leave him yet many years amongst us.