



CURRENT COMMENT

A year ago, when Cuba was turned over to its own people, many prophecies of failure were uttered by Americans. Last month the Cubans celebrated the first anniversary of their independence. They began to keep house with about half a million dollars in the treasury; now they have three millions of a surplus with all debts and expenses paid. While this surplus has been growing, educational facilities have been increased and improvements of many kinds have been made.

Of course we all know how much farther north habitable and inhabited Europe goes than North America. We all know, for instance that London, the metropolis of the Empire, is one degree and forty minutes farther north than Winnipeg. But a recent announcement by Messrs. T. Cook & Son may perhaps enlarge our views on this subject. They state that after June 19 next it will be possible to go by rail to Narvik on the Ofoten Fiord, which is several degrees within the Arctic Circle. When we reflect that Dawson City and Nome, which are practically in the same latitude, are two degrees outside of the Arctic Circle, we begin to realize what "several degrees within" that circle means. The town of Archangel, with its twelve churches, founded more than 300 years ago and once the only seaport of Russia, is a few miles north of Nome and Dawson, and we need hardly remind students of geography that Hammerfest, 70 degrees 40 min., is six degrees—about the difference between Winnipeg and Milwaukee—north of Dawson. However, the United States boasts of the most northerly post office in the world, Point Barrow, in Alaska, 71 degrees 15 minutes.

"Every day is thanksgiving day with western farmers just now," says the Regina Leader of May 28. "Spring and seedtime came in early and the bright dry weather lasted till practically all the soil that was to be put under crop had been seeded. Then came a week of rain, which penetrated well into the ground and has caused the grain to come up evenly and well. And now Old Sol is directing his rays upon the growing crops with all his power and warmth, the result being that the young shoots can almost be seen to grow. The only cloud which appears on the farmers' horizon—a cloud which will grow bigger and blacker as the crops grow heavy to maturity—is the absolute certainty that if there is another bountiful harvest—and prospects in other years were never more promising—there will be a blockade on the C.P.R. 'vaster than has been.'"

Mr. Walter Scott, whose paper it is that makes this last remark, has distinguished himself by his vigorous attack on the C.P.R. for congestion of traffic on account of lack of railway facilities. His array of facts ventilated before the House at Ottawa has been met either by Mr. Tarte attributing special motives to Mr. Scott or by Sir Thomas Shaughnessy trotting out columns of figures about the C.P.R.'s immense traffic. No one has attempted to deny Mr. Scott's facts; no one could honestly do so after travelling in the west this spring. The congestion is simply appalling. The mistakes of C.P.R. underlings are innumerable. In other words, the service is undoubtedly most inefficient.

Having seen this with our own eyes, and finding no sufficient ex-

planation thereof in replies hitherto published, we called on Mr. William Whyte, assistant to the President of the Canadian Pacific Company. His explanation is more satisfactory. Here it is. The pressure brought to bear on employers by labor unions and strikes, force the C.P.R. to increase its expenses: on the other hand, rates are going down; hence a double reason for economy. Now the best way to save expense is to substitute powerful engines for weak ones, engines that will haul 50 cars instead of 20. But powerful engines suppose increased steam pressure to the square inch, which means clean boiler pipes. Nothing fouls the pipes like salty water, and the plains on both sides of Regina are full of alkaline water which encrusts the pipes and makes them gradually useless. New compound engines have been known to "die" after a few days of this alkaline water. All sorts of remedies have been tried, but until lately none were effectual. The C.P.R. is at present spending \$300,000 on a chemical process of treating alkaline water, and this, it is hoped, will prove a success.

As to the blundering of C.P.R. employees, exemplified in Mr. Walter Scott's car loaded with paper, which remained three weeks lost in the Regina C.P.R. yard, Mr. Whyte attributes this to the frequency of strikes which entail as a consequence the employment of foreigners whose knowledge of English is very imperfect. The order may be correctly given by an experienced official, but it is imperfectly understood by the porter who consequently mistakes the destination or contents of one car and the mistake may not be discovered for weeks.

This explanation makes the blame rest primarily on labor troubles. How these troubles are artificially provoked and carefully nursed is set forth in an able article which we reproduce elsewhere from the Montreal Star. Since that article first appeared in the columns of our contemporary, another street railway strike has confirmed its truth. This time the agitation was got up by outsiders, who attempted to foist international unionism on Canadian labor. The attempt happily failed because the men, being sensible and patriotic, were easily convinced that they ought to manage their own affairs for themselves. They felt that they were justified in distrusting the motives of any outsiders who interfered in the management of their business and tried to stir up strife between them and their employers.

An extraordinary example of return to the Church after nearly 50 years of apostasy occurred lately in Chicago. The facts are vouched for by the Detroit Journal and are as follows. Father L. La Fontaine, when a young priest, was perverted by Chiniquy and followed him to St. Anne, near Kankakee, Ill., where he taught school for several years and was afterwards ordained as a Presbyterian preacher.

He officiated in the St. Anne Presbyterian church for many years, and finally resigned to open the largest store in the village. He became rich, married into one of the most aristocratic families of the picturesque little French-Canadian town, and was the father of two daughters. One of these is Mrs. L. E. Scott, wife of a Denver capitalist. Though he prospered beyond his most sanguine expectations, it was always evident to the close friends of Father La Fontaine that his mind was not easy and that he yearned for the old faith, and he has been known to express regret because he left the Church.

At last, a few months ago, when he was 75 years of age, the prodigal returned to the bosom of the

true Church and left all behind. He is said to have entered a monastery to do penance there for the remainder of his days. His example shows how long-suffering and infinite is the mercy of God and may be cited as an encouragement to those despairing sinners who are tempted to lose all hope because of the length of time they have spent in grievous sin.

"The Catholic Citizen" of Milwaukee gives some curious details connected with the announcement of the Rev. Henry Ormond Riddell's recent reception into the Church. He was an Episcopalian clergyman, stationed for a time in Philadelphia, New York and Chicago. In 1896 he went abroad as chaplain to the Ritualistic Bishop Grafton of Fond du Lac, Wis. The news that Dr. Riddell has been received into the Catholic Church surprises no one in New York who has watched the brilliant Episcopalian preacher's career. During his incumbency at St. Martin's church there, Dr. Riddell was as much a Catholic as he could be without openly submitting to Rome. He was very jealous of his title, and although understood to be a doctor of divinity and called "Doctor," he always insisted upon being addressed as "Father," and would instantly correct anyone who called him anything else. He established a holy water font and a confessional, both of which were used by the members of the church.

The conversion of Dr. Riddell seems to have greatly exercised the leaders of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. Bishop Grafton especially, whose protege he was, cuts a sorry figure, and excuses himself by saying: "I was so excited and taken suddenly by surprise at the news that Father Riddell had become a Romanist that my thoughts left me for the time." In fact so agitated did Bishop Grafton become that he denied he even knew Mr. Riddell and denied he was ever connected with the Fond du Lac diocese. Dr. Charles H. Lemon, of Milwaukee, whose sister Mr. Riddell married in New York in 1897, comes out in the following interview and punctures the statement of Bishop Grafton as follows:—"I cannot believe that the venerable Bishop Grafton ever spoke the words attributed to him to the effect that 'to the best of his knowledge, he never knew or even heard of such a divine in the Episcopal Church?' In view of the actual facts, such a statement is inexplicable, and as Mr. Riddell has no one but himself on the ground to state them, I consider it but the merest justice to give them publicity. I therefore state the actual and indisputable facts to be that Bishop Grafton of Fond du Lac was not only largely responsible for Mr. Riddell's entry into the ministry, but was intimately acquainted with him. As a young boy, Mr. Riddell was a member of the Church of the Advent in Boston, of which church Bishop Grafton, then known as Father Grafton of the Cowley Fathers, a religious society having its home in England, was the rector. At that time Father Grafton taught the most extreme doctrines that it was possible to teach and still remain in the Episcopal Church. These teachings impressed themselves on the mind of Mr. Riddell, and he was always, while in the priesthood, an extremist.

Thus did the Bishop point the way to Rome, while remaining immovably fixed, as his present plight proves, like a mere sign-post. Mr. Lemon continues:—

After leaving Boston Mr. Riddell spent some time at St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia, and lived while there with the Cowley Fathers, who were in

charge of that church. Among these was Father Maturin, who conducted a mission at All Saints' Cathedral, in this city, about eighteen years ago, and who, five years ago, himself became a priest of the Roman Church. From Philadelphia Mr. Riddell went to the University of the South at Suwanee, where he graduated. After having had several parishes under his charge, during which time he had made several visits to Rome, he went to the Lambeth conference about ten years ago with Bishop Grafton as his chaplain, and for a short period prior to his marriage, was rector of a small church at Oakfield, Wis., in Bishop Grafton's diocese.

When Mr. Riddell was married to my sister in New York, Bishop Grafton performed the ceremony. When Bishop Grafton's coadjutor was consecrated, which ceremony caused widespread comment on account of its extreme character, Mr. Riddell was present and assisted in the ceremonies. The remark attributed to Bishop Grafton that he (referring to Mr. Riddell) was never in the diocese of Fond du Lac, is easily disproved, and the alleged slurring statement likening him to a "weak, little rat," is hardly worthy of Bishop Grafton as the preceptor of Mr. Riddell. Those who know the latter realize that he is a man of strong intellectual attainments, and whatever may have induced him to take the reported step was the result of due deliberation.

When the poor Bishop was confronted with this interview, he made the following lame excuses:—

"Yes, that is about all so."

"Then why was it you were reluctant about giving it out in the previous interview?" was asked.

"Well," responded the bishop, "you may say for me that I was so excited and taken suddenly by surprise at the news that Father Riddell had become a Romanist that my thoughts left me for the time. During the day I had more leisure to deliberate upon it, and then it all came back to me. Then, again, another priest, who I knew to be Romanish in his ideas, with a name much similar to Riddell, I believe it to be Father Odell, now in the east, was in my thoughts, too, and this confused me."

"The Reign of the Sacred Heart"—the General Intention for this month—is beautifully expressed in those familiar words of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come!" May Christ reign as king over the hearts of all men. "We must not forget," writes the editor of the Canadian Messenger, "that not only to extraordinary men the power of hindering or seconding the designs of God has been given, but this power belongs in some degree, to each one, however weak, however lowly. It belongs to you who read these lines. The Heart of Jesus counts upon you to be his helper to gather in the harvest which He has watered with His Blood. Say not that you have neither authority nor eloquence, nor fortune, nor any other means of influencing your fellow-man. You will be shown that the most powerful of all means of influence is at the disposal of all Christians, namely, Prayer."

A decree of the Congregation of Rites, bearing date April 22, but only lately made public, orders the insertion of the invocation "Mater Boni Consilii, ora pro nobis" (Mother of Good Counsel, pray for us) after the invocation "Mater Admirabilis" in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Clerical News

Rev. Dr. Trudel officiated in the Catholic Church at Morden last Sunday.

The Rev. Brother Ulysses, Superior-General in Canada of the Brothers of Christian Instruction, founded by Jean de Lamennais, stopped over here last Sunday on his way to Calgary and Pincher Creek, where he is to confer with Rev. Father Lacombe with a view to a new house of his order in the diocese of St. Albert. Brother Ulysses has been at the head of his Canadian brethren for the last fifteen years and is highly esteemed by all the clergy.

Rev. J. E. Rockliff, of the Liverpool diocese, arrived here last Saturday, to consult with His Grace the Archbishop on the settlement of Catholic orphans emigrating from England. Father Rockliff is interested in Father Bann's children's home.

Rev. E. Proulx, S.J., is preaching a mission in Rev. Father Lavigne's church, at Neche.

The Most Rev. William Henry Elder lately celebrated his 84th birthday and the 57th anniversary of his ordination.

Rev. I. Drummond, S.J., lectured last Wednesday, June 3, at Vir-den, and Thursday at Oak Lake.

Mgr. Canon Johnson, Cardinal Vaughan's secretary, says the rumors of His Eminence's approaching end are unfounded. According to the doctors, if the Cardinal takes the necessary care, he may live ten years longer.

Rev. Father Guillet, O.M.I., came here last Tuesday on a visit from his new parish in Duluth. The former pastor of St. Mary's was gladly welcomed by his many friends in this city. He returns on Friday to Duluth.

Last Sunday was one of His Grace's busiest days. In the morning at 6 in his private chapel the Archbishop ordained subdeacon Rev. Hormisdas Hogue and conferred the tonsure on Mr. Perisset. After the 7.30 Mass in the cathedral Mgr. Langevin began the visitation of the parish of St. Boniface, preached, and confirmed one hundred children, 92 of whom had made their First Communion that morning at an earlier Mass. He was also present at High Mass. In the afternoon His Grace meant to join the pilgrimage to St. Norbert, but unfortunately missed the train; so he visited St. Mary's Academy, where he gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening he administered confirmation to 44 children, most of whom had made their First Communion at the 9 o'clock Mass, when Rev. Father O'Dwyer preached and the pupils of St. Mary's Academy furnished excellent music and hymns. At the evening service His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface said a few words on the gifts of the Holy Ghost imparted in the sacrament of Confirmation. He urged the children to pray fervently for the success and maintenance of the Catholic schools. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Rockliff, of Liverpool, who is on a visit, the purpose of which is dwelt upon at some length in another column. He began by mentioning the great feast of Pentecost, which was an outpouring of the spirit of prayer, and then went on to speak of the efficacy and qualities of fervent prayer, recommending that all should pray in the name of Christ, with trust and perseverance.