

The Catholic Weekly Review.

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA

Reddite qua sunt Caesaris, Caesaris; et qua sunt Dei, Deo.—Matt 22: 21.

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Notes.

A DESPATCH to the newspapers on Thursday announces that the Holy See has instructed the Bishops of Canada to endeavour to lessen any existing antagonism between the English and the French.

THE reverend editor of the *St. Louis Western Watchman* will have his little joke. Speaking of the approaching marriage of Mr. William O'Brien, the *Watchman* says: "We hope his marriage to the charming Russian lady will cure William of his penchant for keeping bachelor's hall inside of jails."

WE trust that none of our readers will fail to read the open letter, which will be found in this number, addressed by Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, one of the most distinguished of English Men of Letters, to the Rev. Dr. Hyde—a name so strangely Stevensonian—in vindication of the lamented Father Damien. The second division of Mr. Stevenson's letter will appear in the following issue. An editorial article, dealing at greater length with this very important letter has had to be held over till next week owing to the demands upon our space.

THE *Mail* has laboured, mountainously, over the case of the ex-priest of Montreal, Martin, and the outcome is only a mouse. The *Gazette* of Montreal, thus impartially and briefly sums up the circumstances of his return and "mysterious disappearance": "The Rev. Mr. Martin's return and the statements he has made show that he willingly put himself in the way of the authorities of the Catholic Church, of which he was once a priest: that he willingly corresponded with them on the subject of his return to his first faith; that he willingly left his family in pursuance of the agreement arrived at on his own initiative, being provided with money for his journey by those with whom he was negotiating. He has as willingly chosen to return and resume his duty to his family. There is nothing in the case to afford just ground for a sensation, nor to give the chief actor a claim to the title of hero."

THE APPROACHING ELECTIONS.

BEFORE THE REVIEW will again reach its readers the elections for the Ontario Legislature will have been held, and the people of the Province have spoken, by their votes, upon the grave issues introduced into the contest. "It is noticeable," says the *Mail* in its leading article of last Thursday, "that in the contest now in progress the most zealous campaigners for Mr. Mowat are not the genuine Liberals but the liegemen of the Roman Catholic Church, who are fighting for the maintenance of privilege. In like manner, and for the same reason, Mr. Mowat's cause is supported by the entire French press of Quebec. Bleus, Mercierites, and Ultramontanes unite in urging the twenty thousand French Canadians who have votes in Ontario to cast them *en bloc* for the Government candidates." The *Mail* is incorrect in describing Catholics as fighting for the maintenance of "privilege," unless it be that the liberty of conscience which they seek to retain, is one and the same thing as "privilege." The platform of the party whose cause the *Mail* espouses being one of open attack upon the peaceful action of the Church and upon the freedom of will of her adherents in respect to the question of education, it is scarcely to be wondered at should it prove to be the fact that it received from those whose rights are broken in upon and threatened a determined and an adequate resistance.

The issues of the contest are of a sort, we need scarcely say, to force themselves upon the attention of the most lethargic of our people: and even those who are ordinarily the most unwilling to be disturbed by the clamour of contending political factions, will on this occasion hardly be able to close their ears to the meaning and import of the questions which are to be submitted to the electorate of the Province on Thursday next. The issue is one affecting chiefly the existence in Ontario of Separate Schools, and the retention of the educational rights enjoyed by the minority under constitutional guarantee. In the broad, the question is one of more than that. Ultimately, it is one of the natural rights, the rights of conscience of the minority, as individuals—the right belonging to them inalienably, by every law, natural and divine, to control the education of their children conformably with their sense of duty. The policy of Mr. Meredith, so far as Catholics are concerned, is directly opposed to their notions of parental right and liberty of conscience. Apart from the point of view of religious interests, and regarded in its political aspect, Mr. Meredith's programme is one whose success can be purchased only at the cost of serious consequences to the Dominion. In seeking to secure the repudiation of the conscience clauses in the Constitution Mr. Meredith attempts to undo the work, and to reopen the most disturbing question that confronted the Fathers of Confederation. To remove these guarantees is to displace the keystone of the Constitution. Mr. Meredith in attempting it, enters upon a pre-eminently dangerous undertaking, and one in which, we believe, the heart and intelligence of the country will be arrayed against him.