

NORTHWEST REVIEW

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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 1898.

CURRENT COMMENT

That masterly work on Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, "Mariolatry," is now for sale at the Winnipeg Stationery and Book store, 364 Main St. The copies bound in blue and gold at 60 cents are selling even faster than the unbound volumes at thirty cents. Don't let the month of May end without getting a copy. It is a real arsenal of arguments in defence of the Catholic faith and it is very well and entertainingly written.

The United States were to take possession of Cuba in twenty-four hours; they have been trying to get at it for over a month and they hardly seem to have scratched the Pearl of the Antilles. This reminds us of what happened at the outbreak of the civil war of 1861-5. The Northerners were going to smash Secession in thirty days; at the end of thirty months the operation seemed well nigh hopeless. History repeats itself.

We print this week a beautiful prayer for Ireland which the Hierarchy of that Catholic country approved for the consecration of their native land to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Those who heard Fr. La Rue's touching sermon on last St. Patrick's Day in St. Mary's Church will remember that he then read this simply eloquent prayer at Father McCarthy's request. The eve of the month of June consecrated to the Sacred Heart has seemed to us an opportune moment for setting before our readers the text of this short but most comprehensive prayer. Many will be glad to use it in their daily devotions.

The June intention for the associates of the Apostleship of Prayer is "Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament." It was this devotion on Blessed Margaret Mary's part which was the occasion of Our Lord revealing to her the mysteries of His Divine Heart. It was on the altar that He appeared to her in the most memorable of her visions. The American "Messenger" for June says very well: "The Eucharist is to the seven sacraments what the heart is to the members and the sun is to the chief planets. Being the sacrament of union with Christ, it is prepared for by all the others. They beget, purify, fortify, consecrate the Christian soul, but to lead it to the sacrament of divine union. All the others unite the soul to the grace of Christ, the Eucharist unites to Christ Him-

self; it is as St. Thomas says, "the sacrament of consummation in Jesus Christ."

The Casket Printing and Publishing Company (Limited) of Angotinish, N.S., has published in a neat pamphlet of 16 pages an English version of the Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. on the Manitoba School Question together with the Pastoral Letter of His Grace Archbishop Bégin promulgating the Encyclical. The translation reads well, though it is not quite so accurate as the one which appeared in our columns and was prepared in this office. It was an excellent idea to reprint Archbishop Bégin's explanatory Pastoral. This is emphatically a pamphlet worth keeping for one's self and distributing to friends and acquaintances. The encyclical AFFARI VOS is the charter of our school liberties, approving, as it does, the acceptance of legitimate concessions as instalments of justice.

THE PLEA OF SINCERITY.

In the all important matter of eternal salvation as well as in many other matters of secondary importance it is the fashion to accept, with what seems to us unjustifiable readiness, the plea of sincerity in bar of condemnation and reproof which, in the absence of such a plea, would be richly deserved. That this plea is really valid to an extraordinary extent in questions of hereditary misbelief we are quite ready to admit, though when it comes to individual cases and concrete instances it may be extremely difficult to establish the likelihood of absolute sincerity. As regards downright unbelief or atheism the probability of sincerity diminishes with the growing age and experience of the unbeliever, so that it reaches almost a vanishing point in the case of an intelligent and aged unbeliever. For such a one the probabilities against his sincerity are, to put it mildly, a thousand to one.

Still greater is the unlikelihood of sincerity when alleged as an apology for grave immorality. The standards of morality are more uniform all over the world than are the standards of belief—a fact which points to the original monotheism and religious unity of the human race. Hence a calmly judicial mind will be slow to acknowledge that a writer of obscenity can thus write in good faith. For example, it requires a phenomenal infusion of amiable credulity to believe that Zola is sincere in his pretence that zeal for realistic fidelity is the true motive of his shameless lubricity. And yet this is the style of plea we sometimes find echoed by even Catholic writers. One of the most distinguished, when lately confronted with a posthumous reminiscence of Alphonse Daudet to the effect that Zola adopted the cry of "naturalism" and its consequent filth as a means of making money, replied indignantly that he, being personally acquainted with Zola, could not believe this statement, for that Zola was the very soul of sincerity, a fanatic undoubtedly but still thoroughly sincere. This great Catholic writer, like too many other Catholic authors, is not able to cut himself loose from the shallow amenities of social intercourse. Because Zola, whom he has met, has loudly protested, in season and out of season, that he was transparently sincere, the good natured Catholic believes him, as if hypocrisy had never succeeded in wearing virtue's cloak. But there are limits to the likelihood of sincerity, and one of these most certainly is the bridgeless gulf between the most elementary morality and the most evident lewdness. Tranquil flection, equally aloof from the glamour of personal magnetism and the fear of being

thought narrow-minded or intolerant, probes the hollowness of the plea of sincerity in such cases as this. The more one wisely weighs Zola's methods, the more one feels that he has the strongest possible motives for insincerely pleading sincerity.

The same reasoning applies to the works of Ernest Renan. As a master of the Biblical languages, he had few superiors; but his unsupported testimony is of little worth because he so frequently trampled on the accepted code of morality. The man who wrote "L'Abbesse de Jouarre" cannot be trusted to speak the truth in his commentaries on Scripture. Insincerity is the very breath of his nostrils, because he delights in immorality. David Creedon in the WESTERN WATCHMAN has lately handled a cognate subject in his usual masterly manner. He has shown how even so apparently innocent a Catholic as Agnes Repplier can bring herself to condone moral delinquencies that ought never to be condoned. The fact is the opinions of their set are too much for the fashionable litterateurs. They become moral cowards, slaves to human respect. Their bugbear is the dreaded epithet "narrow-minded." Perhaps, if they knew how this cowardice wins them the healthy contempt of the "stubbornly sane" Catholic, they might be stiffened into literary independence.

"The People's William."

Since Gladstone's death, during the period of mourning which so great a loss has brought upon the English-speaking world, unstinted eulogy has been bestowed on his cherished memory. He was undoubtedly a marvellously gifted man, more many-sided, perhaps, than any other public man in this century. But to call him, as some have done, the very greatest man of our time is an exaggeration. In point of soundness and balance of mind he cannot be compared to Leo XIII. of whom Mr. Marion Crawford so happily says that he is more "stubbornly sane" than any of his contemporaries. And, after all, keenness of insight and breadth of knowledge are not qualities of such transcendent worth as well-balanced judgment, deep knowledge of the human heart and consistency of purpose. In these paramount gifts Gladstone was strangely deficient.

What was most remarkable in the famous statesman was his combining apparent contradictions: oratorical impulsiveness with financial genius, revolutionary tendencies with religious conservatism, coolness and versatility in debate with almost childish pique at political reverses. Albeit at one time drifting Romeward where his best friends had found the truth, he wrote, some thirty years later, a wicked pamphlet against the Vatican. Though the most democratic of premiers, he alone in this century persuaded the Sovereign to use her royal prerogative and abolish the purchase of army commissions. He imprisoned Irish leaders and then died politically for Ireland's sake. He, who had created so many knights, baronets and peers, chose to end his days without a title, as "the people's William," spurning one kind of honor for the sake of another, the very choice of which betrayed his plebeian preference for the quantity rather than the quality of his admirers. For ever aiming at the aggrandisement of his country, he inflicted on the British Empire the ineffaceable stain of Gordon's abandonment to a cruel death at Khartoum.

In one thing only he was consistent and that is the truest glory of his long career. He was ever a man of moral rectitude and outwardly blameless life, earnest and painstaking, using his splendid gifts to the best of his

conscious and constant efforts. The very limitations of his character may have kept him in invincible ignorance of the truth as it is in the Catholic Church. His last word, "Amen," leads us to infer that he conformed to the Will of God in the fragmentary way in which he apprehended it. And so we may hope that he has found mercy with his maker.

Strange Views on Liberty.

"United Canada" has the following sapient remarks:

"The Catholic press of the United States shares UNITED CANADA'S views of the war between America and Spain. The lay Cardinal at Antigonist (sic), N. S., is enthusiastically in favor of Spain, and the North West Review of Winnipeg, if it was now in existence (sic), would certainly be also with those pious people who are more Catholic than the Pope, especially if their habits were in line with Toryism, whether religious or political. It is not that we love Spain less but that we love liberty more."

Considering that we struck off "United Canada" from our list of exchanges almost a year ago, the editor of that slipshod sheet is to a certain extent excusable for thinking that we are no longer in "EXISTANCE," though his ignorance is akin to that of the ostrich burying its head in the sand. He is probably not even aware that his ink-bedaubed paper has continued ever since to visit our sanctum. We half regret the necessity of sending him a marked copy of this issue, for he will then no doubt feel himself in duty bound to retaliate by cutting us off and thus depriving us of much innocent amusement.

The poor man thinks he loves liberty more because, forsooth, he sides with the big bully who is butchering the weakling. Many of the big bully's best friends—or, to drop metaphor, many of the wisest non-Catholic statesmen in the United States have condemned the present war as unjust. And we Catholics, who know the inner workings of the revolutionary spirit, cannot help seeing that the American onslaught on Spain is mainly the result of the lying machinations of secret societies. For seventy-five years, and especially for the last three years, the people of the United States have been helping that vile rable which calls itself the Cuban Insurrection, and the Government of the States has tolerated or winked at the open conspiracy against a friendly power.

Nor is it even true that "the Catholic press of the United States" has unanimously approved the war. Its bravest and most independent organs, such as the "Western Watchman," have strongly condemned it. Now, of course, that the sad conflict is in full swing, most of them deem it their duty to uphold their government. But the claims of patriotism do not blind them to the tyrannical conduct of their own misgoverned country.

Here, then, is the gist of our final message to "United Canada." The NORTHWEST REVIEW is enjoying a healthy existence in the town of St. Boniface, having moved thither from Winnipeg in April 1897. It sees no glory, and still less does it see any semblance of liberty in the unjust interference of a mighty nation with the affairs of a week nation, when the latter has not been a whit more cruel than the former, and when the weaker nation was doing its best to remedy the evils of an administration that was certainly not worse than the United States administration of the South after the civil war.

REV. FATHER O'DWYER, O. M. I. PAYS A GRACEFUL TRIBUTE TO GLADSTONE.

Free Press, May 20.

At the evening service yesterday in St. Mary's, Rev. Father O'Dwyer preached a sermon appropriate to Ascension Thursday, and in the course of his remarks took occasion to refer to the death of Mr. Gladstone. He said they had all learned that morning that the Grand Old Man was no more. To many this news had brought deep sorrow. Mr. Gladstone had not died a Catholic, he had not lived one, nor had he ever manifested any desire to become one. He had, however, led a just life, and had, in consequence, he felt sure, a happy death. It might seem hard for Catholics to reconcile Mr. Gladstone's writings on some of the dogmas of the Catholic faith with truth, yet they should remember the great difficulties that stand in the way of a Protestant understanding the great truths of the church. To fully realize these difficulties they would have to read the "Apologia" of John Henry Newman. It was customary for Catholics to offer up prayers for the souls in purgatory, and he had not forgotten the dead statesman, and to-night, from the bottom of his heart he would say, "God have mercy on the soul of William Edward Gladstone." He felt confident that the same prayer gone up from the hearts of the millions of Irishmen scattered the world over. Gladstone had proved a friend indeed to Ireland, and he trusted that the sorrow which the death of this man would evoke in Ireland might awaken in the hearts of British statesmen a desire to render to Ireland that justice to which Gladstone had sacrificed the best years of his life.

THE NEW SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE.

News reached Rev. Father Guillet, O. M. I., of St. Mary's, Winnipeg last Saturday evening that, on the previous Thursday, Ascension Day, the Very Reverend Cassian Augier had been unanimously elected Superior General of the whole Congregation. The new General has long been well and favorably known in the Order, of which he was the Procurator in Rome for many years. He had lately returned from the exercise of the office of Visitor—the highest after that of the General—in Ceylon, where there is an Oblate Archbishop. Father Cassian, who is 53 years old, is a brother of Father Celestine Augier, who was for several years Provincial of the Canadian Oblates, and who was present at the first Provincial Council of the ecclesiastical province of St. Boniface in 1889.

The Very Rev. Father Cassian Augier, O. M. I., is now the fourth General, the first having been His Lordship Bishop Mazenod, the second Father Fabre, and the third, Father Soullier. We trust we may be allowed to offer to the new General our humble homage and to wish the Very Reverend Father many long years of apostolic administration.

The four Assistants, who form as it were the standing committee of the Order, are also elected by ballot. The result of this election is not yet known; but it is taken for granted that Rev. Father Antoine, O. M. I., the well-beloved Provincial of the Quebec province Oblates for so many years, and, since Father Soullier's death, Vicar General of the Order, will be re-elected to the post of First Assistant, which he held during Father Soullier's administration.