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## CURRENT COMMENT

A charming anecdote is related by the Rome Correspondent of "The Tablet," in its issue of December 23. Writing on Dec. 17, the correspondent says: "One day this week Cardinal Macchi administered solemn baptism in the chapel of the Little Company of Mary to a sturdy little American convert of eleven. His mother did her best to argue him out of his resolve to become a Catholic, but even she capitulated when, after she had reminded him how much his dead father was opposed to Catholics, the little fellow replied: 'Oh mother, I guess Papa knows more now.'"

This central region of Canada has hitherto prided itself on being free from rats. We have, to be sure, the muskrat, commonly called in French "rat" by the French halfbreeds, whence comes the historic Rat Portage; but we have as yet no common rat, such as those which infest seaports. Unfortunately, our immunity from this pest is not going to last long. The ratless days of the Canadian Northwest are numbered. The house rat, whether brown or black we know not, is moving up through North Dakota. Last year he had reached Grafton and has since taken up permanent lodgings there in spite of all human efforts to exterminate him. Now he has reached St. Thomas, thirteen miles north of Grafton. As there are only twenty-eight miles between St. Thomas and Gretna, he may begin to increase and multiply according to his wont before the end of this year on Manitoba soil. The custom house at Gretna, in spite of all Mr. Salzedel's watchfulness, will not stop him. If he only knew what a treat is awaiting him in the Winnipeg sewers he would make greater haste. But he is sure to be here in a couple of years at most, and then our city fathers, having discovered that he is a mighty scavenger, will not be worried about the flushing of the sewers. If only they could train him to absorb the gas that now issues from the manholes what a blessing would his ratship be!

"Men and Women," a bright and popular Catholic magazine published in Cincinnati, lately printed "The Confessions of an Actress," of which the Catholic Fortnightly review says that "they are appalling. The authoress tells a terrible tale of double dealing, blackmail, commercial assassination, and treachery on the part of managers. But the worst feature of the theatrical life she portrays is the low code of sexual morals prevailing largely among the profession. 'Publicity reveals no hint,' she claims, 'of the awful conditions that too often prevail. The truth is too terrible for publication, and the vast mass of it is never exploited in print. It could not be. Normally, a vast portion of the stage is as corrupt and vile to-day as was ever the court of the profligate Charles the Second or Louis the Fifteenth; only in its viciousness there is no glamor.' If it is true, as this actress, who 'has spent a lifetime upon the stage' and is still actively engaged' in the profession, claims: that 'from manager to call-boy, the vast majority of men behind the curtain line are insatiable in the pursuit of vices which recoil and take their own terrible revenge, and they have no scruples in their manner of securing the indulgences which destroy them morally and physically,' and that 'there are many companies, which are almost the rule rather than the exception, where no woman can hold her position who refuses any advances that may be made her by the owner, the manager or the star,' then she is indeed right in denouncing the theatrical career as 'a preparatory course in vice' and in pathetically warning Catholic parents against letting their boys and girls enter this 'accursed profession.' But even if she exaggerates, as we believe she does, we know enough from other reliable sources to support her in her contention that the theatrical profession in this country to-day is not

a career which any serious father or mother ought to encourage son or daughter—especially daughter—to enter. It is extraordinarily dangerous to faith and morals, and success has to be dearly bought."

One of our subscribers at White Horse Yukon Territory, sends us a copy of the Morning Post, with request that we should make some remarks upon an article therein on French Anti-Clericalism. Although the article is necessarily pretty old, having appeared in London, England, on October 23 last, then crossed the Atlantic and the widest part of British America, then, after passing from hand to hand in a frontier settlement, having been sent back half way across the continent, and finally having waited a couple of weeks before we had time to notice it, yet the principles it involves are always actual and therefore deserve to be examined. It is the concluding article of a series on the situation of the Church in France. There is in this article nothing particularly new for Catholics who are aware of the tone of similar editorial utterances in the London "Times," but its sympathetic, if mistaken, treatment of Catholic questions would be very new to the rabidly anti-Catholic editors of many of our Canadian papers, who have not yet learned to respect the honest convictions of Catholics.

After giving an abstract of the law voted by the French Chambers on July 4, 1905, by 341 votes against 233, the Morning Post correspondent in France writes:

These are the principal features of the law separating the State from the Churches in France. Its general effect will be to place all creeds under an obligation to support themselves if they wish to continue their existence. Though it is impossible to predict the effect which the separation will have upon the Roman Catholic Church (the Protestant and Jewish Churches, which are accustomed to provide largely for themselves, will undergo little change) some lines of probable development are already foreseen by those best acquainted with the religious condition of France. It is expected that the obligation to provide for the cost of worship will separate the chaff from the wheat, and will, at first, cause a considerable falling off in the number of professing Roman Catholics. The indifferent will not care to pay for the maintenance of a creed in which they do not believe, though they may hitherto have liked to enjoy the kind of respectability which formal membership of the principal State Church conferred upon them. Among the peasants and humbler classes in many parts of France the separation will diminish the prestige of the Church. The average Frenchman worships the State. As long as the Church was a kind of Government Department, and its ministers Government officials these people respected it and them, but when the connection with the State has been severed a proportion of those who were Roman Catholic because Roman Catholicism was the official State religion, the religion of the majority, will undoubtedly fall away from it. As an able writer, M. de Lanessan, has pointed out, the Roman Catholic Church has escaped for a century all the struggles to which it would have been exposed by free competition with other religions. The mass of the people always goes with those whom it believes the strongest and the most numerous.

This quotation is enough to show the respectable and moderate Protestant view; for it is thoroughly Protestant, and views a Catholic people from a Protestant stand, and therefore it is not a correct view. Those Catholics who to quote the Morning Post correspondent's phrase, are "best acquainted with the religious condition of France," for they know it from the inside, are members of the family and know its spirit as no outsider can, deny that the prestige of the Church, for the average Frenchman, came from the State. This mistake of the Morning Post corre-

pondent is due to his traditions of a State-governed Church in England. He applies these traditions to the Church in France, but they are a lamentable misfit. In England the Established Church is, will she nill she, in spite of the protests of some of her members, a creature of the State not only as regards pay but also in the doctrinal and disciplinary sphere. Not so the Church in France. Even the salaries paid to ecclesiastics were accepted not as Government bounty but as a small and partial restitution of the Church property unjustly confiscated by the Revolution. Her internal discipline and especially her doctrinal teaching was always independent of the State and frequently an open condemnation of State heresies. Both the Morning Post correspondent and M. de Lanessan, whom he approvingly quotes, overlook the fact that ever since the concordat of 1801 the French Church has maintained an almost continuous struggle against the illegal encroachments of the State. It is not, therefore, at all true that she "escaped for a century all the struggles to which she would have been exposed by free competition with other religions." Free competition she would have welcomed, but what she was frequently exposed to was a manifest preference for Protestants, Jews and professed infidels in all State departments. This was the rule during over a hundred years, the only exceptions—and even these covered but a part of her relations with the State—being the first years of the Second Empire, from 1852 to 1859, and the first five or six years after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1. The average French Catholic was fully aware of all this and he revered the Church as a power superior to the State, and in almost daily conflict with it. He is not likely to forsake the Church now that her despoilment by her enemies appeals to his sense of chivalry. No doubt persecution will result in some falling off, some sifting of "the chaff from the wheat," but this inevitable result of all oppression will be more than counterbalanced by the awakened zeal of those who hitherto appeared indifferent, though in their hearts they clung to Catholic belief.

The Morning Post correspondent goes on to quote M. de Lanessan as taking for granted that the French Church strove to destroy the Republic, and instancing the Boulangist movement. But the Church, as a whole, never sided with this or any other similar movement. Doubtless many Catholics did strive to restore the legitimate Monarchy, and at one time, in 1873, the majority of the French people seemed to lean that way; but the Church never opposed Republican institutions because they were democratic. What she did oppose was the Masonic atheism which afterwards attempted to identify itself with the Republic.

The rest of the Morning Post article is made up of sayings attributed to some of the young Liberal clergy in France. Passing strange it is that these well-meaning Protestant correspondents never get hold of a really representative Catholic priest whose words might carry weight. They invariably pick out some ill-balanced youth who is half if not fully Protestant at heart, and then they laud him as a hopeful son of the Catholic Church. Unfortunately there are, in France at the present time, a few noisy young priests who follow the lead of the Abbe Loisy, a discredited destroyer of tradition and dogma, a man who, while professing to explain the Holy Scriptures and historic Christianity, explains them away. But this small and undisciplined school has very little influence and is not at all representative of the French Church. It were tedious to quote all its vapourings here. Suffice it to say that if these priests do not change, they will soon work their way out of the Church to which they can hardly be said to belong even now. There are, however, two sentences in the Morning Post attributed to a Parisian priest, against which we must enter a solemn protest. Here is one: "The spirit of the Abbe Loisy has penetrated the ranks of the younger

clergy, and St. Sulpice sends every year fresh apostles of the larger theology into the field." This is a shameful and utterly groundless insult to the Sulpicians, whose theology, albeit progressive in the development of dogma, as the best Catholic theology ever is, is nevertheless perfectly orthodox and directly opposed to the Abbe Loisy's spirit. The second quotation is this: "We have seen what the education of our Roman Catholic upper classes by the Jesuits leads to, and our greatest grievance against the Jesuits is that our worst enemies have come from their colleges." True, some, but very few of the worst enemies of France have come from Jesuit Colleges, but they have come as Judas did from the Apostolic college, from the very feet of Incarnate Wisdom, by voluntary rejection of the holiest teaching, by betrayal of the faith so carefully instilled into them. They have come, as Voltaire did, who in the very frenzy of his attacks on the Church, did homage to the virtues of his masters, the Jesuits, and called them "the Pope's bodyguard." They have come as Maeterlinck, the immoral and infidel Belgian dramatist, did, who, after spending several years at the Jesuit college in Ghent, spent, as he himself avows, ten more years in trying to get rid of his Catholic belief. Over against these few degenerates we can safely set the valiant army of fervent Catholics trained in the Jesuit and other Catholic colleges, who are now bravely fighting the battles of their faith in municipal and political contests, and on whom the hopes of the French Church now rest.

In our first quotation from the Morning Post there is a parenthesis which calls for special comment. The writer said therein that the Protestant Churches in France, being accustomed to provide largely for themselves, will undergo little change after the separation between Church and State. This is distinctly not the opinion of Jean Reville in an article on "Anticlericalism in France," in the American Journal of Theology (University of Chicago, IX, 4). Mr. Arthur Preuss, who quotes him (Catholic Fortnightly Review, Jan. 1, 1906), says he expresses the belief that Protestantism will not profit by the separation of Church and State, but, on the contrary, suffer therefrom. Nor will the various Protestant sects in his opinion gain in membership. "Those men," Jean Reville writes, "who are freed from the yoke to leave the Church of their forefathers, and also religious enough to feel a repugnance to simple free thought, do not throw off the clerical yoke to bear the dogmatical one of a little congregation."

## Clerical News

Rev. Father Cherrier left last Monday for Manteno, Ill., on a visit to his cousin, Rev. Father Bourdeau, parish priest of that place, who is seriously ill. Rev. Father Plante, S.J., is acting pastor of the Immaculate Conception.

Rev. Father Bournival, S.J., spent the Epiphany and the following Sunday with his old Nicolet college friend, Rev. Father Jutras, at Letellier, where he preached once on Saturday last and twice on Sunday, returning to St. Boniface College on Monday.

Mr. Alexander James Macdonald, for many years one of the most deservedly popular students of St. Boniface College, and a fine comic actor, entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Sault-au-Recollet, Que., on the 5th inst.

The Very Rev. J. C. Sinnett, vicar-general of the Prince Albert diocese, came here on Tuesday and was the guest of the Jesuit Fathers of St. Boniface College. He returns to the Northwest on Friday.

His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface went to St. Norbert last Wednesday for a few days.

Rev. Father Emery, O.M.I., who has lately been succeeded as Rector of the

University of Ottawa by Rev. William Murphy, O.M.I., is visiting his brethren at St. Mary's Presbytery.

Monsignor Dugas, accompanied by Rev. Dr. Beliveau, drove out to Ile des Chenes on Tuesday to visit Rev. Father Camirand.

Rev. Father Mireault, of St. George de Chateauguay, near Fort Alexander, Man., came here last Monday with his father, Mr. Mireault of Montreal, who is visiting his friends in Manitoba. On Tuesday Father Mireault returned to St. George, accompanied by Father Charles Poirier of St. Raphael, and Father Napoleon Poirier, of St. Maurice, who will both return here on Monday next and then go to Montreal on a visit.

Rev. Father Benoit, curate at St. Jean Baptiste, left on Monday for Prince Albert to visit his family there.

Among the many priests visiting the Archbishop this week were Reverend Fathers Bastien, Benoit, Bouillon, Campeau, Gillis, Hogue, Joubert, Martin and Rousseau.

Rev. Father Lemarchand, O.M.I., pastor of Calgary, stopped here this week at St. Mary's on his way to France.

## Persons and Facts

Foster's weather forecast of December 30 contained no definite prediction for the ensuing week with regard to this region; but it announced high temperatures for "the middle northwest" from the 9th to the 11th inst. The warm wave that reached us on the 5th inst., raising the temperature to 31 above zero was not foreseen by Foster, unless we are willing to allow him a margin of 5 days.

St. Boniface College is the first college in Canada to introduce the newest and most perfected kind of typewriting machine, manufactured by L. C. Smith & Bros. Three of these machines are now in daily use in the commercial department of St. Boniface College and give complete satisfaction especially as regards delicacy of touch. The typewriter room, with its large assortment of typewriters, 14 standard (Remington, Underwood, Smith Premier and L. C. Smith), each on its own dainty table, with all the latest improvements, is one of the show places of the new octagon and reflects great credit on the up-to-date enterprise of Brother Kennedy, S.J.

Mr. James O'Connor, of St. Thomas, N. Dak., whose dangerous illness we mentioned last week, improved under Dr. McKenty's treatment at St. Boniface Hospital. At the end of last week the patient seemed to be at the point of death, but rallied soon after receiving Extreme Unction and seemed to be out of immediate danger. Hopes were even entertained that he might recover. His cousin, Mr. John M. O'Connor, who had anxiously watched by his bedside, returned to St. Thomas on the 6th inst., and was replaced by another cousin, John's brother, Mr. Archie O'Connor, who found the aged relative so much better that he also returned to St. Thomas on Monday last. Tuesday, however, having brought a turn for the worse, Mr. John O'Connor came up on Wednesday.

The new octagon is now fully occupied by the Students of St. Boniface College, who have returned from their Christmas holidays and are now hard at work. Several new students have been registered for this term, the total now being 210.

On last Sunday the theme of Father McCarthy's sermon was the Epiphany. He drew attention to the three great events which occurred on that day. First, the Manifestation of the infant Saviour to the Gentile world in the persons of three princes or "Magi" from the East, by a miraculous star.

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