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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Popular wisdom has long recognized that there is such a thing as being too clever by half. That is just what has lately happened to Mr. F. C. Wade. He prided himself upon having caught Father Ritchot falsifying a date. So sure was he of his valuable find that he got the first page of the Father's remarks photographed and reproduced in photogravure. Then he pointed exultingly to a cipher written over what looked like a 3 in the date "1870," and, with his ornate insolence called for an explanation.

The venerable cleric, not being easily moved, has taken his time to answer; but the reply is crushing in its bluntness and simplicity. Those 'Remarks' of his, he says in last Saturday's Free Press, were written during the night between the 28th and 29th of April, 1870, on loose sheets of paper, which he afterwards rolled up in a bundle and placed in a trunk. These sheets were the rough draft of a copy which he himself handed to Sir George Cartier on the 29th April, 1870. Some years later, probably in 1873, while rummaging in the trunk, he came across this roll of papers, and was at first at a loss to remember what they referred to; when he had found the gist of the 'Remarks,' so as to save himself the trouble of looking into them again every time he should handle them, he wrote on a blank space under the title the words "28 au 29 Avril, 1870," to remind himself of that memorable night when he had drawn up and copied his 'Remarks' on the 26 clauses of the Manitoba Bill.

The very form of this reminder shows that it is not an initial date. No man that is beginning a document puts two dates to it. But how did the 3 come under the 0? The Reverend Father attached so little value to this rough draft that he really cannot remember. These loose sheets were never meant for any one but himself. It was only, when the late Archbishop Tache insisted upon their importance, that they were pasted in at the end of Father Ritchot's diary. However, he suggests two explanations, inclining rather to the first, which is, that what looks somewhat like a 3 (though it is very different from his other threes in the diary) is merely an involuntary slip of the pen when writing on a bundle of papers tied up in a roll. Having noticed this involuntary flourish, he wrote a heavy cipher over it. The second explanation is that, writing in 1873, with the acquired habit of that date, he may have inadvertently first written a 3 and then perceiving his mistake, immediately cor-

rected it. At any rate, he never made any pretence of intending this reminder as a corroborative date, for he expressly insists upon the fact that the space in which these figures now appear was blank in 1870.

Mr. Wade fancied he saw, and therefore affirmed with his usual cocksureness, that there was a difference of age between the ink of the 3 and that of the 0. No one else has been able to detect any such difference. We in particular, having carefully examined the original, agree with Father Ritchot that the ink is the same, except that there is more of it in the heavy 0 as well as in the tail-strokes of the 2 in "28" and "29." But what Mr. Wade's jaundiced eye has completely overlooked, though it is of vital import for the question at issue, is that both the ink and style of writing in the entire phrase, "28 au 29 Avril, 1870," are manifestly different from the rest of the ink and writing on that page, thus indicating that this phrase was written at some different time.

The best point that Father Ritchot makes is this. Had there been any fraud, the merest tyro would have completely effaced the awkward flourish or or 3. But there is not the slightest attempt at concealment. Therefore there can have been no attempt to conceal anything. The correction, in fact, is so obvious that it cannot escape the most casual observer. But that is just the sort of thing that a malevolent critic is apt to fasten upon and illustrate with a photogravure in the hope that the unthinking multitude, who will never have the patience to wade through a pamphlet of interminable side-issues and persistent repetitions of exploded slanders, will at least gloat over this pictorial representation of a ridiculous mare's nest. When some wiseacre finds out a thing that is self-evident, the French say he has discovered the Mediterranean. When an over-zealous person spends his energy on a bootless quest, the English say he goes on a wild-goose chase. Both sayings fitly apply to Mr. Wade's attack on Father Ritchot's honesty. The latter's straightforward explanations make the amateur detective look like a silly child.

THOSE LIBEL SUITS.

Mr. R. L. Richardson is in a state of mind over the outcome of his libel cases. He had been accused by the Nor'-Wester of manufacturing news, and as correspondent of other papers of having concocted sensational dispatches. In regard to a person who has borne for a number of years a reputation for that kind of work it would naturally be thought that there was nothing very extraordinary or out of the way in such charges. But it is understood that in one or two specific cases mentioned the culprit was not really the Tribune editor, but another person; and as the former saw in these an opportunity to establish a character for himself, he had the publisher of the Nor'-Wester indicted for libel. The case was sent up from the police court for trial, but miscarried on the way. We have heard it hinted that the accuser and the accused agreed between them that if the writing of the article could be fastened upon Mr. Beaton, the accused would be let off with the merest form of an apology and proceedings against him would be dropped. The publisher, Mr. Bell, was not above escaping from responsibility for the article in this manner, so the story goes; and evidence was furnished to implicate the supposed writer. Then followed the case against Mr. Beaton, which went on from the police court to the grand jury, by whom it was thrown out. Mr. Bell had to be let off, according to the agreement which is said to have been made, and the second case broke down. Between the two stools the Tribune man fell to the ground, and ever since has been foaming with rage.

R. L. Richardson says there has been a miscarriage of justice. We are inclined to agree with him; but it was not in Mr. Beaton's case, which ran its course until it exhausted itself for want of legal vitality. There was not evidence enough to establish a prima facie case, and the

grand jury had no option but to throw it out. The miscarriage was in connection with the case against the publisher; and if rumors are true the editor of the Tribune was himself a party to it. There has not only been a miscarriage of justice, but a gross abuse of it, one so scandalous in its nature that we are surprised it should have been overlooked by the court. In his charge to the grand jury the Chief Justice referred among others to an indictment for defamatory libel against the publisher of a newspaper. That indictment never came before the jury. What happened to it? Where or how did it miscarry? It was a criminal case duly committed to the assize for trial, with the Queen as prosecutor. Mr. Richardson was open to make any agreement he pleased with Mr. Bell, but if he can go further and with the connivance of the Attorney-General's Department thus tamper with the administration of criminal justice the country is confronted with a condition of things that is simply alarming. This is a matter of much greater public consequence than fifty "libels" on the editor of the Tribune, for it is a scandal on the administration of the law. That his Lordship has allowed it to pass unnoticed can only be attributed to the heavy work of the assize court, in which he was so immersed that the incident escaped him.

To accuse R. L. Richardson of manufacturing news and concocting sensational dispatches is a libel, is it so damaging to his character that he must seek redress in court? In August, 1892, the Free Press charged him with manufacturing "Indian massacre" dispatches to the New York Herald during the rebellion of 1835, in terms so blunt and plain as to put to shame the Nor'-Wester article of September last. Why did he not take proceedings then? Did he not think his character was through the trouble? If he will go back through the files of the Free Press for several years previous to that date he will find the same charge made again and again. Where was his indictment then? Was he waiting until death and mundane changes disposed of inconvenient witnesses? As editor of the Tribune he published a manufactured piece of news only a few weeks before the Nor'-Wester article appeared, to the effect that Mr. Greenway was promised knighthood by the Earl of Aberdeen if he would settle the School question. That was a scandalous reflection on the honor of the Governor-General. This is one instance of many that might be cited. Was he correspondent of the New York Herald in 1835? He will not deny that he was, for it is a fact too well known. In that paper, of date April 28, there is a long dispatch from Winnipeg with the following headlines: "Rebels' Great Victory;" "General Middleton Beaten by the Half-breed Sharpshooters;" "Forced to Retreat;" "Dreadful Effect of the Rebel Volleys." And the narrative to correspond begins:

"A terrible sensation was caused by the receipt of the news which, when undisguised, amounts to nothing less than the signal defeat of our troops."

Who sent that lying dispatch? In the Herald of April 30 there is the following from Winnipeg:

"The Indians around Winnipeg are getting uneasy. The chief of the St. Peter's Reserve Indians waited on the Indian Superintendent to-day and made an exorbitant demand, which, if not conceded, he said, would cause his band to leave their reserve and go on the war-path. The Department is embarrassed. Every effort is being made to keep the Indians on the reserve."

Who sent that lying dispatch? More could be quoted if necessary, as untruthful and sensational as these. To say that their author is libelled when accused of being a manufacturer of news can only create a laugh.

Bad Writings.

A suggestive fable is attributed to the Russian fabulist Krilof. A robber and an author are in Hell; both are enclosed in huge, iron cauldrons, beneath which fires burn; yet with this difference—the fire beneath the robber is continually decreasing, while that beneath the author is ever growing worse. The author deems his sins to have been

less than those of his companion; he complains of injustice, and one of the demons comes to vindicate the sentence of divine justice.

"Wretch!" he exclaims, "dost thou compare thyself with the robber? His crime is as nothing compared with thine. Only as long as he lived did his cruelty and lawlessness render him hurtful. But thou! Long ago have thy bones crumbled to dust, yet the sun never rises without bringing to light fresh evils of which thou art the cause. The poison of thy writings not only does not weaken, but, spreading abroad it becomes more malignant as years roll by. Look here!"—and for a moment he allowed the condemned to look upon the world—"behold the crimes, the misery of which thou art the cause. Look at these children who have brought shame upon their families; who have reduced their parents to despair. By whom were their heads and hearts wounded? By thee. Who strove to rend asunder the bonds of society, ridiculing the rights of authority and law, and rendering them responsible for all human misfortunes? Thou art the man. Didst thou not magnify unbelief with the name of enlightenment. Didst thou not place vice and passion in the most charming and alluring lights? And now, look! A whole country, perverted by thy teachings, is full of murder and robbery, of strife and rebellion, and is being led onward by thee to ruin. For every drop of that country's tears and blood thou art to blame. And now dost thou dare to hurl thy blasphemies against the God thou has outraged? How much evil have thy books yet to bring upon the world? Continue, then, to suffer; for here the measure of thy punishment shall be according to thy deserts."

Thus spoke the angry demon, and slammed down the cover on the cauldron.—The Angelus, Detroit.

SHE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING.

A Mountain Girl's Bright Idea That Saved the Lives of Passengers.

From the Washington Evening Star.

"Speaking of experiences on the railroad," said a New York travelling man, "I had a slight scrape one time on a mountain road in Tennessee that may be worth the hearing."

"We were coming down a long grade of ten miles in a mixed train. That is, we had a gondola loaded with ties, as the end car, with our two passenger coaches and baggage car, and I should say we were making about twenty miles an hour on a track that would be treating us very kindly if it didn't sling us into eternity if we dared to add five miles an hour to our speed, when I happened to look out of the rear door and saw a wild train of loaded coal cars swinging down after us. They had evidently started at a tippie which we had passed only a few minutes before, and when I saw them they were going so fast that they distanced the men on the ground, who made a run to get on and stop their further flight. I made a wild rush for the conductor, but before I reached him he had ordered the engineer to let out his engine for all she was worth, and in this way keep ahead of our chasers. Fortunately we had no women aboard, and the men could be kept in better control, though it was all we could do to keep them from jumping off."

"It was only a short time until we began to see that our salvation lay in the pursuing train flying the track, because we had reached our limit, and our train was swaying and tossing so that everybody was scared out of his wits. I know I was, and I just sat in my seat and held on, waiting and listening to the thunder of the train behind us, which was not 500 yards away and gaining every second. It was far heavier than ours, and if anybody went off the track it wasn't going to be the coal train. I said a moment ago we had no women aboard. I meant we had none to speak of."

"There was one, but she was a homely mountain girl, who didn't seem to know anything, and because she sat quiet in the corner and didn't scream, we thought she didn't amount to enough to count. I was looking at her in a dazed kind of a way, when all of a sudden she lit out of her seat as if she had been shot out of it, and, knocking everybody out of the way, she dashed out of the rear door before anybody could touch her, and we thought she had jumped off, but she didn't. She jumped for the open car hanging on like a cat, until she got to the far end of it, and in a second she was tumbling those ties off at the rate of a dozen a second."

"They would hit the track and bounce every which way, but she kept piling them off, the coal train getting closer every second, and at last a couple of them stuck up in a cattle guard, and the next thing we knew there was a terrific crash, rails and ties and tracks, and coal cars flew, and the coal train rolled over itself and went down the hill in a heap. By George, as that girl stood there in

her plain calico dress and old sunbonnet and watched that train pile up at her feet, I thought that Joan of Arc, Cleopatra, Grace Darling and the lot of them weren't a patching to her, and, as far as we were concerned, they weren't."

"She had saved our train and our lives and we took her off with us in triumph. Then we made up a purse for her big enough to buy a farm with, and I'll bet she's got more good clothes and jewelry and books and trinkets than any girl in the mountains, for we never forget her. She doesn't quite appreciate some of the fine things she has, but what do we care for that. We appreciate her just the same."

The Mexicans Highly Civilized and Honest.

From the Catholic Review.

General Ransom of North Carolina, our Minister to Mexico, expressed himself fully, the other day, in an interview for the Morning Journal, of this City, in relation to the people of Mexico, their manners and morals. He said in substance that he went to Mexico prejudiced against its people. For this he cannot be blamed. The Protestant missionary societies have been engaged for many years in collecting money to convert Mexico, and in order to swell their funds for this purpose had to deceive those who would be likely to subscribe into believing that the Mexicans needed to be converted. The common story told by these missionary agencies was that "Romanism" had so debased the Mexicans, and had given to them such crude or false notions of religion that these people had become plunged in vice, ignorance and superstition.

This deplorable condition of the Mexicans has been so constantly insisted upon by the Protestant missionaries in their eagerness to collect money that the utterances of a gentleman of unquestioned integrity like General Ransom is of very much more than passing importance. General Ransom divides the Mexicans into two general classes, the smaller class consisting of those of Spanish descent and the greater class, or mass of the Mexican people, who are of Indian race. The white Mexicans he describes as a highly well educated and refined people, temperate, moral, and, by implication quite equal to any class of our Americans in intelligence and capacity. The great mass of Mexicans, those of Indian race, he describes as all Christians, and thoroughly civilized, and he speaks of them as the gentlest people he ever met. Contrast that for a moment with our own Indians after two hundred or three hundred years contact with Protestantism. Who would think of describing the "wards" of this nation as "gentle?" And to conclude this encomium of the Mexicans by an impartial observer who has had opportunities to become acquainted with their characteristics, General Ransom dwells strongly on the honesty of the Mexicans of all classes, their hatred of all forms of deceit or fraud in matters involving money.

If it be sincerely desired to compare the influence exerted by Catholicity and Protestantism respectively in civilizing nations and cultivating in them all that gives beauty and solidity to civilization, it is probable that no better examples can be had than that afforded by the conditions of the Indians of Mexico and the Indians of the United States.

Give Us a Rest, Preachers!

From the N. Y. Sun.

On the last Sunday preceding an election the regular political speakers are glad to be able to take a rest. So far as they are concerned, the campaign is over. If they have been on the stump pretty steadily, even in a canvass as short as this has been, their voices are hoarse and their vocal chords are strained and sore. The people who have listened to their eloquent appeals have also had their fill of politics.

All hands are glad of the rest and distraction of the last Sunday of the campaign, and if they are of the religious spirit which should be in every soul, it is a relief for them to turn their thoughts from mundane affairs and human contentions to the consideration of the eternal verities with which religion concerns itself. Accordingly, the church should be especially careful to exclude from their worship and exhortations on the last Sunday before an election everything that disturbs their religious calm by suggesting the controversies of politics or that tends to inflame the passions excited by the secular conflict of the week. It should be a time for prayer and meditation on spiritual things. The man who enters the house of God should find there a refuge from the turmoil of politics.

To-day, however, he will have to keep out of many of the churches of this city if he seeks this needful medicine for his soul; but, fortunately, he has warning