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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16 1897.

CURRENT COMMENT.

While agreeing with the Free Press editorial of last Saturday that the proportion of four Catholic judges out of a total of ten in Manitoba speaks volumes for the toleration of the Protestant majority, which is sixfold greater than the Catholic minority, we cannot help thinking that in other matters—the school question for instance—Catholics are not fairly treated even here; and at any rate the Catholic Register, speaking as it was of Ontario, did not deserve to be styled a "maker of mischief."

The success of Father Drummond's lecture in Rat Portage, a full report of which we give in another column, shows how eagerly our separated brethren will listen to anyone that can reason with them on the first principles of Catholic philosophy and theology. The able Rat Portage correspondent of the Free Press said in last Saturday's issue: "Of the lecture it is needless for me to say anything save that it created a profound impression upon all those who heard it. Probably the greater portion of the audience were Protestants, and from none of those present was the applause so enthusiastic. It was a gratifying sight to see the manner in which our Protestant clergy responded to the sentiments enunciated by the eminent Catholic divine."

When will the Twentieth Century begin?

With apologies to our inquiring correspondent, to whom we promised an earlier reply, we now give him our own opinion as to the beginning of the twentieth century. We hold that it will not begin till the first moment of the first day of January, nineteen hundred and one. The nineteenth century will continue till the last second of the twenty-fourth hour of December 31st of the year nineteen hundred. It seems almost a truism to say that the present century will not end till it is complete. But, of course, this way of stating the case supposes that the present century began with 1801. And this is precisely what we have to prove.

Let us go back to the year of Our Lord ONE. To be sure, we are aware that that year was not called "the year one" while it lasted. The custom of dating back to the Christian era was not adopted till the Roman Empire had become Christian, several centuries after the birth of Christ. Still, we are justified in reasoning from analogy, we may calculate what ought to have happened from what really did happen at the end of the last century. The faddists of the French Revolution then started a new era, which they called the era of the French Republic. They chose the

21st of September 1792 as the first day of their "year one." Now their "year two" did not begin till the 21st of September 1793. Consequently, the hundredth year of their era—supposing their absurd system had been kept up—would not have been completed till the end of the 20th of Sept. 1892. Now, substitute for Sept. 20th December 31st, and for 1892 the year 100, and it will directly become plain that we must reach December 31st, 100, before the first century is complete. In other words, the second century began on January 1st, 101; the tenth century on January 1st, 901. Therefore, the twentieth century will begin on January 1st, 1901.

Illiteracy and Crime.

The Winnipeg Tribune complacently quotes the Toronto Globe attributing the illiteracy of the Nulty family to the negligence of the people of Quebec who are supposed to pay more attention to the hierarchy than to the proper education of their children. Though the Globe says "it is not necessary to trace any connection between the illiteracy and Tom Nulty's awful outbreak," it afterwards distinctly connects illiteracy and crime, as if the former led necessarily to the latter. This notion is exploded by all contemporary statistics. Here is a sample. The United States Census Bulletin of May 6, 1892 records that there were in United States prisons on June 1, 1890, no less than 7,383 prisoners charged with homicide. Of these homicidal criminals 61.73 per cent. could read and write, while only 33.43 per cent. were totally illiterate. In other words educated murderers were almost twice as numerous as the uneducated.

Dr. Lyman Abbott says: "As has been often pointed out, intelligent wickedness is more dangerous than wickedness that is unintelligent; the devil knows enough; sending him to a public school will not make a better devil of him" (*Christian Union*, Nov. 22, 1888).

What would have made Tom Nulty a better devil is Catholic education, and this the parish priest tried in vain to give him. Father Baillarge is quoted in the Montreal Star as deploring the fact that the Nultys always remained deaf to his exhortations to send their children to school. The real cause of Tom Nulty's fall is his neglect of his religious duties. He had not received the grace-giving sacraments for several years. This explains quite clearly to an intelligent Catholic how it was the devil got the better of him.

But there is another still more probable explanation. The fratricide seems to be a lunatic, afflicted with sudden lapses of consciousness and memory. If this is the case, no education could make up for this mental twist.

We should like to ask The Globe what the illiteracy of the rest of the family, of the murdered sisters and brother, has to do with Tom's crime? Are they responsible for it?

Finally, to take away the last prop of the Globe's theory, Tom Nulty, though he can neither read nor write, can talk two languages fluently and intelligently, as appears from the newspaper reports, and this is more than most public school teachers, not to speak of the pupils, can do. A youth who is at home in two languages cannot be called ignorant, and yet ignorance is impliedly made synonymous with illiteracy. Sir John Lubbock tells us this is a fallacy, for many of the brightest Greeks could not write, and Bellamy in his "Equality" foresees the time when highly educated people will have lost the habit of writing.

LECTURE AT RAT PORTAGE ON The Reasonableness of The Christian Faith

By Rev. Father Drummond.

Last Thursday, the 11th inst., Rev. Father Drummond, S.J., lectured in the Rat Portage opera house for the benefit of the local Indian Industrial School. This is, it appears, the first lecture delivered in the new Hillyard Opera House, which, though not so large as some Winnipeg halls, is superior to any of the western theatres or halls in its acoustic properties and in the convenience of all its appointments.

Mr. Langford, crown attorney, in a happy speech, introduced the lecturer to a large and most select audience, mostly Protestants. Miss Irene Doyle, a bright lass just entering her teens, played with spirit an overture on the piano. Mr. Machin then sang a song, "The Indian Chief," with both words

and music by the accompanist, Mrs. Dr. Gunn. Both Mr. Machin's vibrant barytone and Mrs. Gunn's variations were much admired; but, as the Free Press correspondent writes, everybody was so anxious to hear Father Drummond that they did not encore. Mr. Kyle, who sang comic songs between the first and second parts of the lecture, was more fortunate, being vigorously recalled.

Synopsis of the Lecture.

The purpose of the lecture is to show how reasonable is the belief in the existence of a personal God, in the immortality of the soul and in the truth of the Christian religion. The existence of God is proved by the necessity of a First Cause. The human mind naturally seeks for the cause of things. An elaborate work of art is immediately referred by all men to a skillful workman. We scout the idea of its being the result of chance or blind force. Now the world about us, the entire visible universe, is a work of stupendous, of most admirable mechanism. Therefore it must be the effect of an intelligent Cause; and if that Cause is not directly admitted to be infinite, at least in final analysis we must go back to a Cause which is itself uncaused and consequently infinite in power, wisdom and all other imaginable good qualities. This is the Christian's God.

Against Him are marshalled two classes of unbelievers: the scoffer and the doubter. The scoffer pokes fun at the Bible, openly denies the existence of God and turns all religion into ridicule. He might be called the bully of unbelief and, like all bullies, he is beaten as soon as he is found out. He has had his day—we have outgrown him, and can afford to let him wear himself out in senseless jeers and unreasoning gibes.

The doubter is more dangerous, not because he has any real arguments to back him, but because he is just now somewhat fashionable with shallow minds. He might be styled the dude of unbelief. He calls himself an agnostic, using a Greek word because it sounds well, and forgetting that it means a know-nothing. Professing a wish to believe, he loftily regrets that the proofs of the existence of God are not sufficiently conclusive. He says: "I do not know if there is God, if he has indeed revealed himself in the Christian religion." And so he speaks dimly, not of a God, but of the great "Unknowable." The great prophet of Agnosticism is Herbert Spencer, an acute thinker whose fundamental blunder lies in his false premises. However he himself has said lately that the more we investigate the ultimate cause of things, the more certainly we find ourselves in the presence of "An infinite Energy from which all else proceeds." That is a pretty good definition of the Christian's God.

Meanwhile agnostics, who are so reluctant to accept our impregnable argument for the existence of God, eagerly grasp at the unproven theory of Evolution. They, who are so hard to please in the matter of Christian arguments, are quite content with the intangible possibilities of Evolution. Now Evolution has done some good; it has proved conclusively that there may be great varieties in one and the same species. We thank it for thus having, indirectly, confirmed the unity of the human race, but it has never demonstrated the blending of one species with another. Darwin's whole theory is merely a congeries of "perhaps"es. But a hundred, a thousand, a million perhapses can never produce a "therefore." The conclusion can only be, at best, "perhaps." And such a conclusion is childish when set against the certainties of history, of observation, of Scripture.

Besides, until Agnostics destroy our natural mental instinct to seek out the causes of events, they have done nothing to shake our reasonable conviction that there is an Infinite Necessity, First Cause of all created things.

There is one point at least where evolution halts. There is one mystery it cannot explain. That mystery is the origin of life. Between the mineral kingdom and the vegetable kingdom yawns a bridgeless chasm. How came the first living plant among the not-living minerals of this earth? That is a question which Prof. Henry Drummond in his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" tells us science is powerless to solve. It cannot even define life. There is a helplessness in scientific books here, and a continual confession of it which to thoughtful minds is almost touching. Between the most beautiful crystal and the plainest plant the difference is fundamental. The life is in every plant and tree, inside its own substance and tissue, and continues there until it dies. This localization of life in the individual is precisely the point where vitality differs from the other forces of nature, such as magnetism and electricity. At this point we reach the limit of the powers of nature and must necessarily refer the origin of life to the creative power of

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nature's God. "No system of the universe," says Sir Joseph Dawson, "can dispense with a First Cause, eternal and self-existent; and this First Cause must necessarily be the living God, whose will is the ultimate force and origin of the natural law."

Secondly, we have a soul. Science tells us that our bodies change totally at least once in seven years. And yet we, who have lived many times seven years, know that we have always been the same person. Therefore, there is something in us which does not change. Now that something, which we call the soul is a spiritual substance, because it thinks, and it thinks the highest thoughts, thoughts that are quite remote from material pictures, such as the thought of "honor," of "virtue," of "glory." Moreover it reflects entirely upon itself, which no material substance can do. Finally, it feels that it is responsible to an unseen Lawgiver, who will reward its good deeds and punish its crimes. It longs for another, a better and an unending life in which all the injustices of this world shall be rectified.

Now a spiritual substance like this soul of ours cannot die, for death is merely the disintegration of the parts of a material substance. Matter dies because it is resolved into its constituent atoms. But a spirit has no atoms, no parts. Of itself, therefore, it is immortal. The only way it could end is by annihilation, and God alone can annihilate. But God will certainly not annihilate the soul, because he is just, and immortality is the realm of justice; in the next world only can all wrongs be righted.

Thirdly, the question of Revelation presents itself. To know that there is a God and that the soul is immortal is not enough. We must know what to do in order to make ours a happy immortality. History shows that it is impossible for men to know this easily, correctly and completely without Revelation. God has spoken. What religion is the echo of His voice? Examine the great religions of the world. Heathenism, with its vices, its cruelty, its unreason, is out of court. So is Mohammedanism, because it sterilizes everything it touches, art, literature, government, agriculture. Buddhism with its four hundred million adherents has been more or less idealized by Sir Edwin Arnold and Rudyard Kipling; but it is quite certain that no two men agree as to its history and tenets, and that not one million of its votaries are anything better than idolaters.

There remain Judaism and Christianity. Judaism was once the true religion. Its history, even if considered as mere history, is absolutely unique. "The shadow 'tis of substance onward striding." The substance has come—the shadow is hopeless.

Thus, by elimination, we reach Christianity. And what a glorious residuum! Not savage Heathendom, not semi-barbarous Buddhism and barbaric Mohammedanism, but the elite of mankind in the highest known civilization. Christians are the leaders of science, of philosophy of art, of liberty, of culture.

And how divinely our religion was established! The world, at Christ's coming, was, with all its high culture, steeped in cruelty and lust. Christ taught his followers to be patient and kind unto martyrdom, to be pure even in their thoughts. His apostles were illiterate men. They went into that heathen world seething with corruption and cruelty, and they first startled it by their virtues and then converted it. Dying for their faith in Christ's resurrection, they spread that faith in all parts of the globe.

Nor has this divine religion ever faltered in its progress. It has converted and civilized the barbarian as well as the Roman persecutor, the savage as well as the scoffing freethinker. It stands to-day, stronger, brighter, more hopeful, better equipped than it ever was.

Nay, it presents an unexampled phenomenon. Whereas other great men are gradually forgotten except in histories and cease to influence the lives of their fellow-men, Christ Jesus is now better loved, more closely followed by

more disciples than in the years that immediately succeeded his death. At the end of this nineteenth century thousands upon thousands, all the round world over, are living for His blessed sake; many have died, in this very century, for His faith and love; many more would be only too glad to give up their lives for the glory of His Holy Name. That is an argument which no sophistry can weaken and no number of objections can disprove.

After the foregoing lecture, which was occasionally punctuated by intelligent applause and listened to with the most flattering attention during the 75 minutes it lasted, the Reverend Mr. Andrews, Methodist minister, rose in the audience to propose the usual vote of thanks. He had heard this lecture ten years ago at Qu'Appelle and he remembered how much good it had done. He had never listened to such a flow of pure English kept up so long. Father Drummond had spoken of the triumph of the Cross; he (Mr. Andrews) thought Protestants did not make enough of the Cross, we ought to be as proud of the Cross as the Turks are of the crescent. He wanted to have a cross put on top of the fine steeple, now nearing completion, of his new Mount Zion church, but many of his people and especially of the Orange brethren opposed this and set up a meaningless round ball.

Here an Irish Catholic visitor from the mine district interrupted the speaker and said: "I'd give five dollars to put a cross on the top of that Methodist church." The audience laughed good-humoredly and the Rev. Mr. Andrews proceeded:—

"While listening to Father Drummond's eloquence, an idea occurred to me. Why could we not get him to preach the inaugural sermon at the opening of a new church? (Laughter.) I have written in every direction to secure a good preacher, but they all have some excuse to offer. Now I don't think we could get anyone as good as Father Drummond."

The new Baptist pastor, the Rev. F. T. Tapscott, heartily seconded the vote of thanks, concurring fully in Mr. Andrews' enthusiastic eulogy.

Mr. Langford then put the vote to the audience, who responded with loud and long-continued applause. Father Drummond, in accepting the vote of thanks so gracefully tendered by the chairman, begged to thank the audience for the really extraordinary attention with which they had listened. Their beautiful opera house was most admirably adapted to the speaker's comfort, and the rapt silence with which they had listened to him made his task a truly pleasurable one. With regard to Mr. Andrews' kind invitation to preach at the opening of Mount Zion church, he must say that he (Father Drummond) would have to write to the Pope. The storm of applause that greeted this sally wound up an entertainment with which every one was delighted and which must have produced a substantial sum in aid of the Indian School.

Justin McCarthy.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor has good tidings to give of Mr. Justin McCarthy's health in the "Weekly Sun." He says: "My readers will be delighted to hear that Mr. Justin McCarthy is rapidly getting restored to health. The news is almost incredible to those who saw him during his recent illness, and who knew how near he seemed for days to be to death. Indeed at some moments his departure was thought to be a question of hours or even moments. Struck down by overwork, by anxiety, by the unflinching devotion of a true patriot to what he considered his duty to his country, he would, if he had fallen, be one more in the long list of the men who have died for the Irish cause. What a tragedy it is that a cause can command such devotion from spirits so noble, and at the same time be so much at the mercy of selfish and unprincipled adventurers."