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CURRENT COMMENT

Elsewhere we reproduce an interesting report of the blessing of the new church at Saskatoon by His Lordship Bishop Pascal, O. M. I. This sympathetic account of an event fraught with incalculable good to the new settlements in that fertile region was written by a Protestant and appeared in the Saskatoon Phenix, of Sept. 25, a well edited eight-page weekly which has already reached the 50th number of its first year.

At the assize court in London, Ont., last Saturday, the jury awarded eight thousand dollars damages to a Miss Archer against the Sacred Heart convent in that city: \$3,000 for wages and \$5,000 for dismissal from the Order. While extending our deepest sympathy to the Ladies of the Sacred Heart as victims of a stupid anti-Catholic fanaticism, we cannot help pointing out the ludicrous inconsistency of a bigoted jury mulcting the Sisters to the tune of \$5,000 for having expelled a dangerous person from their convent. All these benighted jurors no doubt consider a convent a sort of prison, from which it is difficult to escape, and yet they fine the Reverend Mother a small fortune for showing one of the ex-Sisters the door.

To the damages for seventeen years' service ex-Sister Archer had no possible right in equity, since gratuitous service is one of the fundamental principles of every religious order.

Miss Archer pretends that she was not insane and therefore ought not to have been sent to the Longue Point Asylum. Until we get a full and impartial report of the case, such as the "Catholic Record" of London is sure to give, we have no means of unanswerably refuting her plea, which is a very weak one, for she may have been cured at Longue Point; but meanwhile the Free Press despatch, much fairer than the Telegram's, says: During the afternoon over a dozen nuns from the convent were put in the witness box by the defence and every one of them testified that while at the convent Sister Archer acted strangely. The witnesses declared their conviction that she was responsible for a series of misdeeds and acts committed at the institution during her stay.

One redeeming feature of this wretched trial is chronicled by the Winnipeg Tribune alone in its last Monday's telegram from Toronto. Chancellor Boyd charged against the plaintiff. This shows how much superior the judge was to his jury. But the latter, after two hours' deliberation, returned the above disgraceful verdict. If Mary Archer has any care for her reputation the money she has extorted will hardly make her happy.

Last Sunday, by pastoral letter read in all the churches of the diocese of Montreal, His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi forbade the faithful to read "Les Debats," a Sunday newspaper which insidiously aims at undermining Catholic faith and ridiculing Catholic practices. The persistent persiflage of this dangerous sheet had long moved all fervent Catholics to desire just what Mgr. Bruchesi has now done. His Grace may rest assured of the grateful obedience and support of the vast majority of his diocesans.

Our Holy Father, Pius X., published his first encyclical last Sat-

urday. Cable despatches give the following extracts:—

"We proclaim that we have not in the pontificate any other programme than to gather all things in Christ so that Christ shall be all in all. There will not be lacking those who, measuring divine things by human laws, will try to discover what are the secret intents of our soul. We say to them that we do not wish to be, and, with divine aid, shall not be, before human society other than the minister of God, of whose authority we are the depository."

His Holiness declares that obedience to the laws and submission to the government are the duty of all citizens. The encyclical closes thus: "It is evident that the Church instituted by Christ must enjoy full and entire independence."

Police Magistrate Baker, who has a merciful tenderness for young criminals, bewailed last Saturday the fact that he had no place whither he could send an innocent looking girl, who dresses as if she was 15 and is really 20, who confessed to stealing a gold watch, and who has long been known to the police. There is a reformatory for boys, but none for girls. The Maternity Hospital, however, offered to relieve the good judge, and this is how the Tribune, kindly though bluntly, states the fact: "It is satisfactory to hear that those good Samaritans, the Sisters of Mercy, have taken charge of Blanche de R., the vice-hardened child and guttersnipe, who was remanded from Saturday."

Mr. W. T. Foster's Weather forecasts from Washington are generally pretty difficult to understand. He starts (always from the Pacific coast) a "disturbance" on the 7th of the month, a "warm wave" on the 6th, another disturbance on the 11th, another warm wave on the 12th, and a "cool wave" on the 13th, and as these disturbances and waves take from three to five days to cross the continent, things get beautifully mixed. This he distinctly admits in his latest forecast, Oct. 3. He says:

These great disturbances will continue over a period of 10 days from about the 12th to 22nd, and all styles of weather that sometimes come in October will be included in that ten days. These storms will probably strike hardest where the greatest disturbances of the past three months did not appear. Nature is inclined to be generous in the distribution of such gifts and when this storm period has passed, most places will have experienced some of the weather extremes that have occurred during August, September, and October.

All of which is delightfully indefinite and surprisingly obvious, but does not show that any reliable forecasting can be made more than a day or two in advance.

The only tangible prophecy is the one in which he foretells, the day before, last Saturday's storm, the severity of which was felt especially on Lake Superior. "About date of this bulletin, and immediately after, comes one of those very dangerous storm disturbances which have been described in previous bulletins." But we all know that weather forecasts 24 hours ahead are fairly trustworthy. Curiously enough, on the very date of Foster's latest, Oct. 3, we experienced here three sharp thunderstorms in the space of twelve hours, two of them in a tolerably bright sky, an unusual phenomenon at this time of the year.

The Rev. J. B. Silcox's sermon last Sunday, printed in Monday's Free Press with the scarehead "Strong Defence of Public Schools,"

looks as if it was meant for a reply to Father Drummond's sermon, four weeks ago, on "Catholic Education." If so, Mr. Silcox's effusion is a strong confirmation of the Catholic preacher's condemnation of looseness of thought, want of sequence and inaccuracy in public school teaching. Mr. Silcox deals only in sonorous platitudes. He makes no attempt at claiming for the public schools the qualities opposite to those which Father Drummond condemned. The sensational minister's discourse is utterly devoid of unity or consecutiveness. It is a running fire of disconnected assertions, such as this: "through the schools ethics and morality could be taught without religion." This needs a deal of proof, which is not forthcoming. As a specimen of his inaccuracy we note that he confuses Dr. Arnold with his son, Mathew Arnold, and that he adduces Arnold's influence apparently to prove that personality, even without religion, is the great factor in education. Had Mr. Silcox read Arnold's admirable Christian sermons to Rugby boys he could hardly have supposed that Arnold eliminated the influence of religion.

At the end of his senseless screed Mr. Silcox waxes wroth. His last sentence is this: "Any in Canada who were not in sympathy with such an institution," i. e., with a school system that ignores religion, "would be better away from it." Then more than half the population of Canada would have to quit the country, for Catholics, who form 43 per cent. of the entire population, have no sympathy with such an institution, and the number of Protestants (Anglicans, Lutherans, etc.) who share this lack of sympathy would easily run the percentage up beyond 50.

Departing from the ordinary routine of the Winnipeg sermon reporter, for whom orator and rant, sage and fool, genius and idiot are all one, all being painted with the same monochrome brush, the Telegram of last Monday gave a breezy welcome to the Rev. Prof. Bland, who, like all the new arrivals at the Protestant colleges, had been extensively advertised several times. The article begins thusly: "What came ye out for to see?" The Biblical quotation might well have been addressed to the crowds who flocked last evening to Grace church, filling every seat in the building. The answer might have been: "A little lame man who walks with a crutch, rather below the average height, a keen face and short grey beard." It was certain that many were drawn there out of mere idle curiosity to hear Professor Bland. But when once he spoke it was no wonder. A marvelous flow of language poured from the small figure standing on the platform. Thought, high thought, translated into eloquent sentences, and a message which went to the heart of each and every hearer, whatever motive drew them to church; these were the characteristics of the sermon. It was a voice from the east calling to the men of the west, stirring them up to their duties, and to the opportunities around them. This little black figure who had never seen the prairies till a week ago, interpreted them to the prairie dwellers, and read the destiny of the race springing from their fruitful soil. After such a grandiloquent introduction one would naturally expect some "high thought" in the one and a half column of the sermon proper. But it is undiscoverable. Conceits there are, compliments galore. Protestant shibboleths such as "the brotherhood of man," Pagan ethics such as the praise of wealth, a judicious admixture of socialistic principles such as "public ownership," in order to

please the gallery; in a word, the usual hodge-podge of the popularity seeker; but not a word to show that the speaker ever heard of the Incarnation. The entire sermon might have been preached by an intelligent monotheistic Chinaman.

Mr. A. E. Winship, editor of a Boston educational journal and member of the Board of Education of the State of Massachusetts, a gifted and highly polished Bostonian, now in this city, declares that Bishop Spalding, of Peroria, is unquestionably the greatest of all American essayists on educational topics. Father Baumgartner, one of the keenest and most Catholic of critics, says of Bishop Spalding's educational essays: "By their haziness, their mixing of Catholic and 'modern' ideas, of truth with falsehood and inaccuracy, they can do only harm." Without going so far, we have more than once remarked in these columns how inconclusive, incoherent and unpractical those brilliant essays are. The writer seems to be ashamed of Catholic educators. "Real Catholic thinkers and poets are hardly ever quoted by the Bishop," writes Baumgartner in the Stimmen aus Maria-Laach, "except in so far as the modern world will accept them, or as they seem to approach modern views by some occasional utterance." Moral: If you want to be praised by the non-Catholic world cultivate the habit of stringing together shining scraps of thought, without any connection between them. That is the only thing the non-Catholic up-to-date educationist can admire, for his system has destroyed in him the faculty of consecutive thought, the sense of mental perspective, and the power of seizing the strong point in everything.

When Mr. A. E. Winship, editor of the Boston Educational Journal, lectured last Tuesday evening on "Rascals and Saints," Mr. W. A. McIntyre, who revels in italics or heroics, introduced him as director of "the greatest body of teachers on earth," the U. S. National Teachers' Association. We are glad to see that the Telegram report, evidently the work of a mature mind, does not echo this servile worship of Boston methods. If American methods of education are so superior to ours, how comes it that the finest products of that American education fail to excite our admiration? Their most highly praised lecturers are severely criticized in Canada. Mr. Winship does not rise above the Yankee standard of greatness, size or quantity, which really means "bigness," not greatness. For instance, he admires the University of Illinois for having "357 distinct courses, covering every department of knowledge." Thereupon the Telegram slyly remarks: "He dwelt at some length on the educational advantages of American colleges, the chief of which appeared to be that they now handle so many subjects that no reasonable man could go through them all in a lifetime of ordinary duration." The same writer, while giving the lecturer due credit for pointing his excellent moral, viz., that nature's law of the survival of the fittest only is all wrong, and that the world's weaklings should be helped, says: "He has a fund of anecdote, although the illustrative point was sometimes missing, and his pronunciation of many English words is bound to make Englishmen feel there are compensations in being behind the United States in educational matters." This is a graceful concession to sugar-coat a pill; but is it true that English methods of education are really behind those of the United States? The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Which of the two systems produces the better results in the realm of thought and literature?

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Clerical News.

Last Monday Rev. Father Paquay, C.S.S.R., who has been, for the last two years, superintending the construction of St. Augustine's Church, Brandon, of which he is the architect, stopped for a few hours at the Archbishop's House on his way back to St. Anne de Beupre. All those who met the genial, cheerful priest will regret his departure; but his work is now complete. He has left to Brandon and all Manitoba a monument which is an object lesson in honest brick, stone and mortar, especially mortar, that indispensable material which is so scantily distributed in most modern buildings, and which Father Paquay laid on everywhere so broad and thick as to astonish the men of the craft.

Rev. Father Jutras, pastor of Letellier, came here last Monday. He has just recovered from a severe attack of gastritis and is in need of rest. He returned home on Tuesday.

Rev. Father Bastien, pastor of St. Amelie, returned from the east last Monday.

His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface, accompanied by Rev. Dr. Trudel, leaves Friday, the 9th, for Rat Portage, where on the following Sunday he will consecrate the Church of Notre Dame.

Rev. Charles Poirier left on Wednesday afternoon for his new parish of St. Georges de Chateauguay, near Fort Alexander on the Winnipeg River. His brother, Rev. Napoleon Poirier, who arrived last Saturday, left on Wednesday morning for St. Maurice, Assa., where he succeeds the Rev. Charles.

Rev. Father Dandurand, O. M. I., went last Monday to visit the Trappist Monastery at St. Norbert.

Rev. Father Perrault, O. M. I., arrived at the end of last week at St. Mary's Presbytery to be chaplain of St. Mary's Academy.

Rev. Fathers Dugas and Drummond, S. J., will be present at the consecration of Notre Dame du Portage next Sunday. Father Drummond will preach.

Rev. Father Gonzague Belanger said the students' Mass last Wednesday in the chapel of St. Boniface College, where he went through his classical and university course. That same morning he left for St. Norbert to enter upon his duties as curate to Mgr. Ritchot.

Persons and Facts

Last Tuesday, at the request of the late Dr. Bourbeau's mother, Rev. Father Dugas, S. J., Rector of St. Boniface College, sang Mass for the repose of the soul of the recently deceased Doctor, who, besides being at one time a student in the college, had, in 1898, made in the same college the retreat that decided his vocation.

Relating to the doings of St. Boniface town council a Telegram reporter performed a feat last Tuesday which threatens to create a revolution in mathematics: he made two parallel streets, La Verandrye and Provencher avenue, meet at a corner, and this meeting is to be illuminated by an electric lamp. Eleven other arc lamps will be placed at less revolutionary corners and moreover one will stand in front of the cathedral and another in front of the town hall.