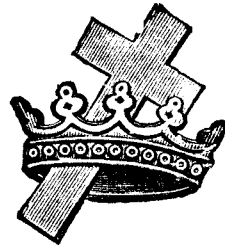


Northwest



Review.

"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

THE ONLY CATHOLIC PAPER PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH IN NORTH-WESTERN CANADA.

VOL. XIII, No. 23.

ST. BONIFACE, MANITOBA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1897.

\$2.00 per year.
Single Copies, 5 cents.

Newman Literary Guild.

The first regular meeting of the Newman Literary Guild was held Thursday at St. Mary's school room evening before last, when Mr. J. A. McInnis presided over a large attendance. Mr. F. W. Russell gave the opening address of the season in the form of a paper stating the reasons for the formation of this guild, with a few general reflections on the duties of membership. This paper is so valuable that we print it here.

Mr. Russell's Paper.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:—

We met here last week and with business like despatch organized an association which if it achieves its object will in the future be an important power for good in this community. It is scarcely necessary for one to speak now about the need of such an organization, for to use a well worn phrase it has been a "long felt want" amongst the Catholics of Winnipeg, nevertheless in endeavouring to comply with your request to read a short paper at this the opening meeting it may not be considered out of place if I do go a little into the reasons which have prompted the establishment of our guild, putting these reasons into the form of a few general reflections on the duties of membership, especially on two or three leading points which it seems to me are particularly worthy of consideration by members of such an adjunct of the church as our guild is intended to be.

I start out, then, with the assertion, and it is an assertion which I think will receive the assent of all here, that at no time in the history of the Church was it more necessary that Catholics should be fully equipped in the principles of their religion and able not only to satisfy themselves but also to give an intelligent reason for the faith that is in them than at the present day. One reason of this is that these are the days of general education, days when the intellect must, humanly speaking prevail; days, too, when unrest, dissatisfaction, doubt and fear as to their position has seized the minds of non-Catholics to an extent never known before, rendering it absolutely necessary that we should each one of us in our different sphere of life be not only willing but able to place before them the claims of the Catholic Church and to show them the rest, the peace and content they may find if they will only turn with confidence to the church of their forefathers. This being so it is the manifest duty of Catholics no matter what their position or condition may be to cultivate the intellectual, as well as the moral powers, which they possess, that they shall each one be an agent for the advancement of the cause of the Church and our Holy Religion. Truly a great work lies ready for us to do if we will only be true to ourselves and faithful to the direction of our Holy Father who has himself in more than one of his immortal letters sketched out for Catholic laymen the plan by which they should direct their energies to spread the influence of the Church. But to do this work, to be ready at all times to make good use of our opportunities, we must be well prepared and thoroughly equipped, and the question for us to solve is how is this to be accomplished? We in a Protestant country like this have it constantly forced on our minds that we are not only comparatively few in number but also that we are possessed of comparatively little influence on the large aggregate of religious bodies around us. This means that we are living in what must be called a dangerous atmosphere, so much so that it will take even the most devoted Catholic all his time to remain uninfluenced by the religious and irreligious ideas which he is surrounded. In view of this, one thing that must be consoling to all of us is the fact that notwithstanding all the difficulties which have been put in our way never in the past has the Church in this country done greater work in the education of the younger children than is being done in the elementary schools which are being conducted in this city, and we may claim without fear of successful contradiction that Catholic children when they leave our schools are not only as

well instructed in their religion but must be disposed by reason of the excellent training they receive to live as good practical and uncompromising Catholics as the children of any country ever were. But the foundation of Catholic practices and Catholic principles having been thus excellently laid, common sense and our knowledge of human nature and the circumstances of our position here teach us that special measures of some kind must be taken if we wish the rising generation to continue in the course that has been marked out by them in the schools. And proceeding along this line of thought our everyday experience tells us further that this can only be accomplished by keeping as strict a watch as we can over both boys and girls as soon as they leave school to prevent if possible the entire severance of the link with which they have so far been united to the Church and its institutions, and by inducing them not only to keep up their connection with the Church itself and the Sunday school but also to join guilds and confraternities the aim of which shall be to interest and entertain them and at the same time supplement the knowledge gained at school of religious doctrine and history, of the teachings of our religion and the past of our glorious Church, which knowledge will, otherwise, assuredly day after day grow more and more indistinct. And in this line much can undoubtedly be done by a guild such as that which we have founded.

Unfortunately our circumstances do not permit of our doing all that we would like to do. We cannot for instance, establish a club to which our boys could come and enjoy attractive forms of innocent amusement, but there is one thing we can do and that is provide them with intellectual recreation such as debates, interspersed with lectures and talks on lively Catholic topics, which I would remark, in parenthesis, should as often as possible be given by lay members rather than by the clergy as thereby we shall be stimulated to useful enquiry. Then, as time goes on it seems to me we should endeavour to establish a library of suitably selected books, and I would recommend as the foundation of such a Catholic Library every single publication of the English Catholic Truth Society. And this brings to my mind the thought that one important thing which the members of a guild of this kind can set themselves to accomplish is to cultivate amongst Catholics, and especially the young, the habit of reading. It is sometimes said, indeed it has been a general complaint amongst Catholic publishers and authors that Catholics do not read. I should be very sorry to think that this is altogether true for it would be great reflection on our people inasmuch as the only legitimate excuse could be want of time and the cases are very rare indeed where a boy or a man does not have time to read if he wants to. When I hear a man who can read say he does not have time to read I put him down as a man to be pitied—and I think too, this pity may well be extended to his wife and children for having a husband and father who is so indolent and has so little interest in his or their welfare that he is content to let others do his reading and thinking for them. But the question is is the charge true of our Catholic people? and it has been answered by those who are competent to express an opinion who say that it is not altogether true but that the trouble is that Catholics are very much like other classes of people inasmuch as they do read a great deal of the rubbish of which the printing presses are so prolific in these days. The time was and that not so very long ago when our Catholic people really suffered for the want of suitable reading in their families and when Catholic books were published at such high prices that but few could afford to buy them. But of late years a revolution has been worked in this respect and foremost amongst those who have brought about this wholesome change we may certainly give one of the places of honor to the C.T.S., who have published a vast library of books that are attractive both inside and out and have really accomplished wonders in providing us with a means with which to forestall the baneful effects of the floods of corrupt literature which are deluging and desolating the land. All experience proves that

there is no more prolific source of evil than the trashy, demoralizing literature which constantly being scattered broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the country and which none can avoid seeing. It should be our aim, therefore, as members of a Catholic Literary Guild to spread amongst our people a knowledge of and a love for better class publications, books which are so interestingly written that if once read the reading will assuredly create a craving for more, and which can be had at a trifling cost covering the whole field of fiction, biography, history, doctrine and controversy. Besides the books of the Truth Society it should be our duty to make known amongst Catholics the existence of the many excellent magazines which are published weekly or monthly and which in themselves form each year a respectable Catholic Library. Amongst these I would mention "The Month," "the Catholic Magazine" and "the Catholic Presider" published in England; "the Scottish Catholic Monthly" published in Scotland; "the Irish Monthly" published in Ireland or if we do not care to go so far from home we have our Canadian "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" which is small but will grow; and many excellent monthlies published in the United States, notably "The Catholic World" by the Paulist Fathers, New York; "the Ave Maria" of Notre Dame, Indiana, "the Messenger of the Sacred Heart" and "the Rosary Magazine" both of New York. Then there are the hundreds of newspapers which are issued weekly, contributed to by some of the greatest minds and ablest writers in the world, none of which papers I need enumerate for I have said sufficient to indicate that the promotion of good Catholic literature in Catholic homes is no longer either an impossibility or a difficulty, and we strive to spread the desire for this literature to such an extent that in every Catholic family there shall be at least one weekly Catholic paper, some Catholic monthly, and some of the Truth Society children's papers for the smaller children, and story books, interesting biographies and deeper works for those of larger growth.

And now, although I understand it to be your desire that my paper should be a short one, I think I have yet time to briefly refer to another subject closely akin to Catholic Literature, the taste for which it may well be considered within the province of the members of a Catholic Literary Guild to stimulate, and that is what we may call "Catholic home art." As everyone knows art was the creation of the Church and this is particularly true of the art of painting. The most rudimentary acquaintance with the history of art in the last 1900 years is sufficient to convince anyone that art both in architecture and painting was the work of the Catholic Church, for it cannot be denied that the most absorbing inspiration of Christian art in its earliest days and right up to the period of its most perfect splendour was the Incarnation and especially the Divine Motherhood typified in the Madonna and Child. All that is greatest and best by the common consent of the educated world in the art of painting is to be found in the creations of the great Catholic masters of the golden age of painting, and this being admitted it will be very much to be regretted if Catholics nowadays do not fully appreciate their own privilege and allow their artistic inheritance to be wholly enjoyed by others. The world shows its appreciation of the works of the great Catholic painters by the monetary value it sets upon their great religious masterpieces, and our Protestant friends show their appreciation of Catholic art by the abundant use they make of it in beautifying and adorning their homes. Surely we do not intend to leave it all to them; it is the outgrowth of our faith, the outward expression of our devotion, our sacred traditions and our religious practices, and we should see to it that a true taste for it leaves its impress not only on every book, school and church but on every Catholic home in the land. Of course not many of us can afford to possess the originals but the modern multiplication of the various processes of reproducing pictures, and the perfection to which these processes have been carried, have placed within the reach of almost every household,

even the most humble, the opportunity of adorning the home with nearly all the masterpieces of the older and the later schools. A refined taste, therefore, for that which is most perfect and true is and should be a characteristic of every Catholic, and members of a Catholic Literary Guild ought to do many wise things than attempt to introduce Catholic pictures into Catholic homes, for by nothing can young lives be influenced more than by form, color symbolism which they see around them. As I have said and as we all know, never before have the facilities been so great for obtaining at very moderate expense reproductions of the noblest and best specimens; let us therefore try to utilize, and induce others to utilize, the abundant resources at our disposal and so adorn our homes, the homes of our children, with such examples of Catholic art that our little ones thus trained up from the earliest years to see the best and truest in religious art will thereby be formed not only to higher and nobler tastes but to a warmer and richer love of their religion which that art symbolizes.

And now I must close, for we have other business on for this evening that will prove more interesting than the dry paper which I have laid before you. I have attempted in a very short compass to outline some points which, as I said at the beginning, I felt might reasonably interest the members of a Catholic Literary Guild. I have endeavoured to follow your instructions to limit my paper about fifteen minutes and in doing this I have necessarily been able only to skim the surface of what are really very important and it seems to me deeply interesting subjects. Catholic literature and Catholic art might each in themselves form the text of a much longer paper and perhaps at some future time we may pleasantly and profitably spend an evening developing either or both points. I trust that this meeting, our first, is only the beginning of a long career for each one of us as members of our new guild. To be successful we must lay down some definite lines and this has in a small way been my object this evening. Having laid down these lines I think if we set resolutely to work and keep together, doing all we can to create a bond of sympathy and cooperation amongst the members of the guild, and bearing in mind that everything we do should be done with a view to our improvement both morally and intellectually, we shall succeed, and the day will come when we shall reflect with pleasure not unmixed with pride that we had a hand in the foundation of "The Newman Literary Guild."

A vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Russell on motion of Mr. Golden, seconded by Mr. Kennedy.

Part of the evening was taken up with an interesting debate, in which Mr. J. J. Smith, assisted by Mr. F. Marrin, maintained that alcohol is more baneful than tobacco, which Mr. F. D. Smith and Mr. E. Golden denied. No little debating talent was developed on both sides. The president gave his decision in favor of the affirmative.

The Rev. L. J. S. Williamson, an ex-Anglican clergyman who had been received into the Church the day before, was invited to speak. After expressing his delight at the formation of this Literary Guild, he hoped the society would devote its energies chiefly to the production of literary essays and the discussion and criticism consequent thereon.

The Newman Literary Guild.

To the Editor of The Northwest Review.

Sir,

As announced in the last issue of the Northwest Review there has been organized in Winnipeg a literary society to be known as the Newman Literary Guild. Such an organization, whose function would be to stimulate and foster the intellectual life and vigor of the Catholic young men and women of this city has long been an abiding need. While other religious denominations have had their peculiar organizations for the social and intellectual improvement of their members the Catholic people

have lacked conspicuously anything of a distinctly literary character to encourage and foster intellectual growth and achievement. The hour has at length come. The seed has been planted. Let us in charity hope it may grow into a living tree, ever green and ever fruitful. The name of the society—the Newman Literary Guild—is been peculiarly well chosen. The word "Guild" carries us back in the history of the Church and of the world to the grand old Age of Faith when by means of organizations known by that appellation the great historic Catholic Church in her numberless works of Christ-like charity fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and harbored the homeless and poverty-stricken among men. What more fitting than a title which at once associates us in thought with the glorious work of living charity in the Church of Christ? The word "Newman" at once calls to our minds the name of one who was and is in very truth a beacon-light to inquiring men, one who stands as the intellectual and literary giant among the churchmen of this nineteenth century, who by his innate force of character and his immortal fixity of purpose has conquered the uncharitable animosities and unthinking prejudices of the English people and changed the religious face of the English-speaking world. Let us then pray "Lead Kindly Light" that this organization as yet in its infantile stage may be worthy of the patronage of the illustrious John Henry Newman.

But in order that our wish in this respect may be fully realized we must all put our shoulders to the wheel and endeavour to make each meeting an unqualified success from every point of view. The programmes in the course of different meetings should be constructed by every member in turn and should be of such a character as to present a pleasing variety.

Debates and essays, although very desirable should not exclude the reading and recitation of choice selections in poetry and prose, or even the recitation of beautiful productions in music. Swinburne says "to have heard the greatest works of any great master is a possession added to the best things of life," and Darwin, the great naturalist, who, through his neglect of the humanities became so one-sided and exclusive in his reasoning, said in his later life "had I my life to live again I would make a rule to read some poetry, and listen to some good music at least once a week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use." It then should be an object of the society to cultivate in its members a taste for good literature, and an appreciation for fine music.

Again in the opinion of the writer it is highly desirable that the Catholic ladies of Winnipeg be admitted to membership and take an active part in the work of the Guild. This is deemed advisable not only for the sake of the organization itself but also for the good of the Catholic cause at large. If there is one thing in Catholic circles more lamentable than another it is the fact that our Catholic young men and young women do not appreciate each other as they should. If I may be pardoned for so saying, mixed marriages are becoming a positive evil in this city. A Catholic young lady of creditable social standing said to me only the other day that there are no "desirable Catholic young men" in Winnipeg, or at least if there be she did not know them. What a sad commentary that such a statement could be honestly made! Now cannot the Guild do a noble work in bringing the Catholic young men and women into closer communion by teaching them to know and appreciate each other as members of the same "household of the faith." I think it can.

In this way then the Guild may become a powerful auxiliary of the Church. This at least is the humble view of one who standing by its cradle looks forward with faith and hope to a healthy growth and development of the society in the sphere of intellectual and literary activity.

VOLO BENE.

Education for a young Man or Woman, for the active duties of life, is obtained at Winnipeg Business College and Short-hand Institute. Full particulars free.