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## CURRENT COMMENT

Mr. J. J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railway, and his Catholic wife, have contributed a million and a half to the new St. Paul Cathedral, which, as we announced lately, is to cost three million dollars. It is expected that the other million and a half will be subscribed by wealthy Catholics in St. Paul and Minneapolis. No doubt the inspiration of this princely gift is due to Mrs. Hill, who persuaded her husband, some years ago, to contribute half a million to Archbishop Ireland's seminary. The construction of the new Cathedral will begin this summer. It will stand on the summit of St. Anthony's Hill, in the most fashionable quarter of the city. When will our Canadian millionaires' Catholic wives turn their husbands' munificence into so noble and glorious a channel.

The well written article on William Chapman, which we reproduce elsewhere from the True Witness, comes as a striking confirmation of our own editorial of last week on "Canadian Poets." The article of our very interesting Montreal contemporary is credited therein to "an occasional contributor," and the graceful flow of its language as well as the unusual familiarity it reveals with French literature suggests the hand of a brother poet, Mr. J. K. Foran, formerly editor of the True Witness. The only fault (if fault that is when there is question of poetry) we might be inclined to note in this otherwise admirable essay is its dithyrambic tone. Chapman, though fully the peer of any poet now living in America, is not a genius. He is not a poet of the very first order. But he is original; unlike another better known French Canadian poet, he is no plagiarist; his thoughts and words are his own, and they are high and deep, and true. He does not aim at meretricious effects. Doubtless it is this wholesome character of his poetry, its sincerity, its saneness, that has won the plaudits of literary France, which, in spite of popular fads, is at bottom essentially and preeminently sane.

Monsieur Charles Bordes, leader of the "Schola Cantorum," or reformed Church Singing School in Paris, contributes to the "Figaro" of that city a most interesting account of his interview with the Pope after the solemn Gregorian Mass celebrated in St. Peter's on April 11. The Holy Father began by praising the Parisian "Schola Cantorum" for its adherence to the true principles of Church music. He went on to say that he was fully aware of all the difficulties that faced the much needed reform. "You," he said, "are young and ardent, and would wish to see this great undertaking accomplished tomorrow. Work, but without haste and without anger against men; and above all, trust the wisdom and vigilance of the Holy See. I have spoken and given publicity to my ideas. Rest assured, that in order to secure obedience, I will know how to take all the general and even the particular steps that will be necessary. I will act 'suaviter' (gently)." Then the Holy Father added, "but also 'fortiter' (energetically).

His Holiness asked Mr. Bordes if he had been present at the Gregorian Mass in St. Peter's and what impression it had produced on him. Mr. Bordes expressed his enthusiastic admiration of the magnificent choral effects produced by that great Gregorian choir. "I have heard," interjected Pius X., "that not everybody was of your opinion."

Encouraged by these words, Mr. Bordes related how a Roman lady before whom he had given vent to his enthusiasm had twitted him with being a Lutheran. (In Italy all Protestants are supposed to be Lutherans and all Lutheran music doleful). "Pius X. smiled and wished to have," writes Mr. Bordes, "my opinion of the whole ceremony. Remembering the deplorable tunes played by the Pope's silver trumpets at the moment of the elevation, I ventured to say: "It seemed to me, Holy Father, that there was only one blemish." Interrupting me, the Pope exclaimed:

"The trumpets! Ah! yes, the trumpets! That very evening I attended to that, henceforth they will play different tunes."

The Pope referred again to the detestable style of music that obtains in the Cathedral or collegiate singing schools of Italy and other countries.

"I love all the great musical styles," continued the Pope, "I love Bach, the great symphonists, and even the masterpieces of the opera, but I want the opera to remain on the stage. Those compositions are admirable, but the church is not their place. By little and little they have invaded it; we shall find means to turn them out. I remember one day, while I was saying Mass, at the moment of the consecration, I heard a voice singing, 'Mira O Norma!'"

And now comes an incident that reveals the Holy Father's close attention to remote happenings, an incident that will send away many a Montreal choirmaster with a flea in his ear.

"Just then the Pope rose, and rummaging among the papers heaped upon his desk, drew therefrom a newspaper clipping, which he showed me, remarking that it was taken from a Canadian journal. It was a list of the musical numbers rendered in the different Churches of Montreal on Easter Sunday. There were orchestral pieces, Masses of every kind, with tenor solos.

Underlining with his finger each of these programmes, Pius X. smiled ironically and said:

"Do they perform such music as that in Paris?"

All I could answer was:

"Alas! Holy Father, alas!"

A writer in the True Witness, speaking of the fifty years clause in the Grand Trunk Pacific project, the clause that gives the Company fifty years' control of the line, remarks that "amongst those who spoke the strongest and with the most determination upon what was to be done fifty years hence was the late Mr. McCreary, member for Selkirk. It was very late on Tuesday night when Mr. McCreary's loud voice raised the echoes of the Ottawa Parliament." A few hours later on Wednesday morning he was dead in his rooms. What interest does he now feel in that fifty years clause? What does it really matter to each individual speaker in that debate? No doubt they are wise and it is their duty to plan for the future, as custodians of the interests of posterity; but how many of these close thinking and hard working debaters on this fifty years clause gave a thought to the situation of their own immortal souls fifty years hence? Yet that is the only question that is of supreme importance. Aply, indeed does our contemporary conclude with these lines by Teresa Beatrice O'Hare in the Boston Pilot:

"What will it matter in fifty years, Care or laughter, joy or tears? Who will wonder, who will care Whether our days were dark or fair, Whether we smiled or whether we frowned,

What we sought, or what we found? Wisdom, folly, hopes or fears— What will matter in fifty years?"

"What will matter? Oh Christ above, What will matter, save thy dear love? Earthly friends who share our gain Fly when comes our woe or pain. Pure of heart and strong of will. Falling, struggling, climbing still, Eyes raised heavenward, penance, tears— These will matter in fifty years."

The United States Catholic Historical Society has published the autobiography of the late Rev. Augustus J. Thebaud, S.J., born at Nantes in 1807. At the age of 28, being already a priest, he was admitted into the Society of Jesus in Rome. About 1838 he was sent as a professor to St. Mary's College, Kentucky. In 1846 he was appointed Rector of St. John's College, Fordham, and, barring one year, 1859-70, spent at St. Mary's College, Montreal, the rest of his life was spent in New York State. He died at Fordham, Dec. 17, 1885. Father Thebaud was a man of immense, and what is rarer, of well digested erudition. He filled himself up with stores of information till he was sixty-four years of age and then published his first book, "The Irish Race in the Past and Present," of which Parnell said it was the best book on the subject. "Gentilism, or the history of Heathenism from the beginning," was his next work, which demolishes with an astonishing array of facts, the current agnostic view that the human race advanced from savagery to civilization, from polytheism to monotheism; Father Thebaud proves the contrary, that savagery and polytheism were both corruptions of primeval culture and religion. Later on, he wrote "The Church and the Gentle World," showing the early propagation of Christianity throughout the world, so that by the end of the first century of our era there were Christians everywhere. Then came "The Church and the Moral World," showing how Christianity reformed the morals of our planet, and thus refuting Gibbon in the most complete and satisfactory manner. Father Thebaud wrote other works in a lighter vein, for instance, "Louisa Kirkbride," a novel of Irish immigrant life in New York; but the earlier books mentioned above constitute his great claim to respectful admiration. In the sphere of philosophy of history nothing quite equal to them was ever published in America. His autobiography, which is said to be replete with valuable detailed information as to the United States between 1835 and 1885, will no doubt revive the interest of students in his great works, which, albeit highly appreciated by the Catholic body when they appeared some twenty or thirty years ago, have since fallen into unmerited oblivion.

## Persons and Facts

Captain Algernon Sartoris, grandson of the late General Grant, was married to Mlle. Germaine Cecile Noufflard, in the Church of St. Honore D'Elyau at Paris on Wednesday, April 27. The bride comes of a noted Catholic family, and Mr. Sartoris was recently received into the Church at St. Louis.

An effort is being made by the State Department at Washington, at the request of Senator Kean, to locate the "Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls the soul of Music Shed," in order to secure it for exhibit at St. Louis exposition. The Jersey City Branch of the Uni-

ted Irish League of America adopted resolutions requesting President Roosevelt to get the harp for the Exposition.

One of the curiosities of the Vatican of which we hear little is the journal, published there daily. This journal consists of brief abstracts of everything of interest of which the papers published in Germany, the United States, England, France and other lands have recorded. A large staff of linguists prepares this newspaper. The resulting publication in Italian, is intended not only for his Holiness the Pope, but for the hundreds of attaches. Of course, such news as would not be of interest to Vatican circles is omitted in the resume.

Preparations are already under way for the fourth annual convention of the American Federation of Catholic Societies, to be held in Detroit, August 2 to 5. More than a million American Catholics will be represented, and in addition there will be delegates from Porto Rico and the Philippines. The Sioux, Chippewas, and Mandans, will be represented by Chief Tall Mandan, of South Dakota, who will be accompanied by other Catholic Indian chiefs.

Mgr. Legal, O.M.I., Bishop of St. Albert, lately made an episcopal visitation at Pincher Creek. While His Lordship was there the parishioners decided to build a \$9,000 convent, to be directed by nuns recently expelled from France. Three years ago the Pincher Creek Catholics built a \$12,000 Church. The settlement is very prosperous. Land is now offered at ten dollars an acre.

The assessor of Moose Jaw puts the population of that flourishing town at 2,436; the assessment is \$1,662,000.

Settlers from the United States are pouring in to the Saskatchewan country. About two thousand immigrants for points on the north half of the Prince Albert branch were transferred in one week, from May 4 to May 11.

Russia will supply Catholic chaplains for her Catholic troops in the present war, and has notified the Vatican to that effect.

The Catholic Columbian of the 14th inst., gives a finely executed photographic group of the "Prince of Cathay and the Archbishops" comprising Prince Pu Lun, the Chinese Minister, and Commissioner Wong (all three in Chinese costume), Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis, Archbishop Ryan, of Philadelphia, Mr. D. R. Francis, president of the St. Louis World's Fair, Mrs. D. R. Francis, and her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Perry Francis, Bishops Hennessy, Burke and Cunningham. This interesting group was taken in front of the Chinese building at the World's Fair.

Father Ehrle, S.J., who will be in charge of the Vatican exhibit at the St. Louis Exposition, has shipped most of his cases from Naples and is now crossing the Atlantic. One of the most precious articles which Father Ehrle is carrying himself to the United States is the famous Bible which belonged to the Emperor Constantine, whose initials are still to be seen on the cover. Collections of ancient church vestments and of Papal coins and medals will be among the most important exhibits.

During his stay in St. Louis, Father Ehrle will be the guest of the Jesuit Fathers at the St. Louis University. At the close of the fair he will take the exhibits back to Rome.

On Sunday last in St. Augustine's Church, Brandon, Rev. Father Girard, C. SS. R., announced that, thanks to the generosity of an aunt of the late Father Godts, who gave \$25,000, the church was now quite free from debt. This beautiful church cost \$35,000, of which only \$3,000 were contributed by the parishioners, the rest being furnished by the Redemptorist Fathers themselves and their friends. As Father Girard said lately, "while other churches pay high salaries to their ministers, the Redemptorist church in Brandon not only pays no salary to its priests but is built and supported chiefly by them."

We tender our most sincere sympathy to Mr. J. J. McGee, Clerk of the Privy Council, Ottawa, in the great loss he has sustained by the recent death of his son, Mr. Jas. McGee, Captain of the Rough Riders, and a player on the Champion Ottawa team, who died on Saturday last from concussion of the brain, the result of a fall from his horse on the previous Monday. James was the first graduate of Ottawa college to play with the city team. He was one of the finest athletes in Canada. A host of friends are greatly grieved at his untimely demise.

On Tuesday evening last an influential gathering of former students of St. Boniface College, assembled there and held a preliminary meeting for the formation of an Alumni Association. A committee was appointed to draw up constitutions and report to a future general meeting.

## Clerical News.

Rev. Brother Cordel, O.M.I., late of the Oblate residence at Duluth, arrived here last week on his way to Fort Pelly, where he is going to assist Father de Corby, O.M.I.

A successor to the late Father Deshon, Superior of the Paulist Fathers, will be elected about the middle of June, at a meeting to take place in New York. Nearly all the members of the order will be present at the meeting.

Rev. Father Frigon, O.M.I., who has been preaching missions in Minnesota and Wisconsin, returned on Saturday last. On Wednesday he left for the diocese of St. Albert, Alberta, where he will be similarly employed, proceeding thence for further mission work to British Columbia. He will be absent all summer.

Rev. Father Ruten, S.M., arrived from Vancouver's Island last Monday and went on to the Ottawa diocese on Wednesday. Father Ruten, who is a Hollander, was recently engaged in the Indian Missions on Vancouver's Island.

The Provincials of the Dominican Order in this country sailed last week for Rome, to attend the election of a Dominican Master-General. The election takes place every twelve years.

Bishop Phelan, of Pittsburg, celebrated on May 4 the golden jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. The ceremonies began with solemn Pontifical High Mass, Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia officiating, and were followed by a banquet, at which addresses were made by Archbishop Ryan and Monsignor O'Connell, rector of the Catholic University in Washington. In the evening a reception was held at which an address was delivered by Cardinal Gibbons.

We are glad to hear that the Rev. Benjamin F. De Costa, formerly rector of the Protestant Episcopal church of St. John the