



CURRENT COMMENT

On Monday of last week the Morning Telegram printed on its editorial page immediately after its Editorial Notes a letter signed John M. McAlpine, protesting against some shocking scenes which he described as having been witnessed on Thursday, Feb. 5, at Deer Lodge. Finding in two subsequent issues of the same paper no denial nor counter-protest, we took the story for granted and commented thereon in our last number. Just as we were going to press on Thursday, Feb. 12, the following apology appeared in the Morning Telegram, not, however, on the editorial page, but on page 7, in an obscure corner of the paper.

IN MALICE AFORETHOUGHT.

Anonymous Writer Attacks People Under False Pretences.

Owing to the accidental misplacement of a file of unapproved "copy," a letter appeared in the Telegram on Monday morning containing statements concerning a social gathering of snowshoers. This letter was never intended to go to the compositors, and no such letter would ever be deliberately published by the Telegram without full investigation.

Since its appearance a careful investigation has been made, with the result, first, that no person bearing the name signed to that letter can be discovered, and the letter itself was therefore sent under false pretences; and, second, the Telegram has absolute evidence that the statements in the letter were false in every particular, and clearly dictated by personal malice. The Telegram apologizes to the ladies and gentlemen who were so grossly misrepresented.

On the previous evening, Wednesday, Feb. 11, the identity of "John M. McAlpine" was still accepted by Mr. Edwin Baker, President of the St. George Snow Shoe Club, who wrote to the Free Press News Bulletin of that date.

"In one of the morning papers a Mr. John McAlpine takes exception to the behavior of a party of snow shoers at Silver Heights on Saturday (Thursday) night last. I wish to state that the St. George Snow Shoe Club were in no way connected with the gathering referred to by Mr. McAlpine."

Evidently Mr. Baker also supposed that Mr. McAlpine exists, and that his assertions were true, since he simply disclaimed any connection between his club and the snowshoeing party of February 5.

This being the state of the case on Thursday, Feb. 12, we refrained from taking any notice of the Telegram's apology till we had secured trustworthy information. Our remarks not being of a personal nature, but having a wide, general application, we saw no reason for withdrawing them, nor do we now in any way apologize for them. If such scenes were not witnessed on the 5th inst., they have been frequently witnessed at other dates on the outskirts of this city; and that was all we needed to point our moral.

However, we have since learned that the ladies and gentlemen who assembled at Deer Lodge on Feb. 5 were unexceptionable in every respect, and that nothing at all improper occurred on that occasion. The fact that the name of John M. McAlpine does not appear in the Winnipeg Directory and that his whereabouts have not yet been discovered does not, of course, prove his non-existence; but the consensus

of opinion among the best society here, i.e., among the people who know all about each other, is that the slanderous letter was written by a woman who thus vented her spleen because she had not been invited to that gathering. Her name is freely mentioned among people who are "in the swim."

In all this affair no little blame rests with the Telegram. We are quite willing to believe, as the apologizing paragraph quoted above implies, that the editor-in-chief had no knowledge of the McAlpine letter till it had appeared; but, clearly, there must be some one on the editorial staff who is allowed too much latitude in his craving for sensationalism. Then, why was not the apology given as much prominence as the attack made "under false pretences" and "in malice aforethought." This is not the first time the Telegram has printed a wicked slander on its most prominent page and afterwards hidden away the refutation in the obscurest possible corner of its columns. A well conducted daily journal should have a special place, always the same, for letters to the editor and replies thereto. Finally, why did not the Telegram apologize sooner? We happen to know that complaints and remonstrances poured in upon it the very day the objectionable letter was published, from the elite of our upper crust; and yet nothing was done to set matters right till three entire days had elapsed.

The anonymous sneak who calls himself this time "still a Catholic," has written another letter printed by the Free Press last Saturday. He waited till the man who pays the St. Joseph's school teacher out of his own pocket was in Florida, to repeat the lie about the government secretly supporting that school. The writer of these shameful letters is beginning to chafe under the restraints of anonymity; his vanity getting the better of his prudence, he informs the public that he himself wrote a separate report for Monsignor Merry del Val's benefit. This narrows down the authorship to a very small number of idiots capable of doing anything so foolish. If he gets rope enough that man will surely hang himself, as far as reputation goes, by betraying his identity, and we can conceive of no humiliation deeper than the being found out as the writer of those two letters.

Friday, the 20th inst., is the 25th anniversary of the election of Leo XIII. to the Sovereign Pontificate. As the memorable date draws near, the Holy Father's health seems really to improve. Last Saturday the Winnipeg Tribune reproduced a telegram reporting an interview between the correspondent of the Berlin Tageblatt and Dr. Mazzoni, one of the Pope's physicians, ridiculing the reports that he is in declining health. He says His Holiness is truly a phenomenon. He grows older in years, but paradoxically seems to gain vigor every year. He will live to be a hundred years or more. Even then he will enjoy life as to-day. He has the constitution of a young man. He leads a regular life, takes very little alcohol, reads without spectacles, walks without a cane, and dresses and undresses without assistance. He works about fourteen hours daily and one can hardly believe that he will ever die. The New York Herald's Berlin correspondent cables the same interview with Professor Mazzoni, adding these words: "What? The Pope ill?" laughed the professor. "He is so well that we might envy him. Except for a slight hoarseness, which was easily cured, nothing has ailed Leo XIII. these last two years."

We have received, from the International Committee of the Papal jubilee, the order of festivities which we translate in another column. Count John Aquaderni, President of this committee, also sends us the list of subscriptions for the golden tiara collected in the various dioceses of the entire globe. The contributions from those Canadian dioceses which did contribute are given as follows in francs (or lire) and centimes: St. Boniface, 51.00; St. Albert, 10.20; Kingston, 628.00; Ottawa, 2042.00; Quebec, 5625.00; Rimouski, 175.00; Three Rivers, 257.00; Toronto, 2866.48; Hamilton, 259.06. Quebec's contribution is the largest of any diocese in the world; Macao, in the ecclesiastical province of Goa (India), comes next with 3433.31, and Toronto, third (as above). The golden tiara is an exquisite piece of artistic work, and is to be presented to Leo XIII. on the 20th of this month.

On February 13, the Morning Telegram published a most interesting interview with Mr. William McBride, M.A., manager of the North American Life Assurance Company, who had just returned from a six weeks trip through Mexico. When asked if he had come across any acquaintances in that far off country, he mentioned several and then added: "I also accidentally passed the Rev. A. A. Cherrier of Winnipeg and the Rev. Father Joly of St. Pierre, Man., immediately after their arrival in Mexico City. In turning round to look at something, I recognized Father Cherrier's symmetrical outline, and when I yelled out his name his feet and the pavement became suddenly divorced, so great was his surprise at being called by name four thousand miles away from home. We almost fell on each other's neck in true Mexico fashion, and I put in three pleasant days with the two reverend gentlemen, whom their friends know to be desirable companions. Father Joly's luxuriant crop of whiskers (i.e. full beard) disguised his priesthood, but Father Cherrier's classical and clerical 'physiognomy' gave him away every time, and attendants as well as guides always accosted him as 'Padre', very much to our amusement."

To an enquiry whether the trip was an expensive one Mr. McBride answered:

"Not by any means. I have visited all continents but one, some time or another in my life, but must say the Mexican trip is by far the cheapest one I have ever taken considering the miles covered. The principal expense is in reaching the Mexican frontier. There you at once find yourself wealthy, as every dollar of American money suddenly changes itself into \$2.62 Mexican money and from there mileage tickets by any route cost you less than one cent a mile. Your Pulman averages about 75 cents a day and you can get the usual five daily Mexican meals at excellent cafes for less than a \$1.75 a day, and really enjoy the exceedingly good Mexican cooking, particularly if, like myself, you appreciate something spicy such as hot tamales and Chili-Con-Carni. Shun the American restaurants and hotels as you would a rattle snake, but never have any diffidence about patronizing a good Mexican cafe or hotel, where you are sure of most courteous treatment, and where you will get for one-third the price three times the value given in any American hotel I saw. The bedrooms are exceedingly large, and for curiosity I measured the one I occupied at Aguas-Calientes and found it to be 42x24 feet and the ceiling only 22 feet high. If I had to pay for the cubic dimensions of the room, I would have

been financially busted, but my bill for the room was only one dollar a day, or about 37 cents in our money. The only defect was that which you find in all Mexican hotels viz, an awfully hard pillow full of knots; however, my soft head and the Mexican hard pillow learned to get along very nicely after they had been wedded to each other for a few nights."

Mr. McBride easily kept clear of the three towns where alone the bubonic plague was to be feared. He says he enjoyed the climate very much. "While I found it extremely hot in the extreme south of the Mexican Republic during the middle of the day, yet the coast breezes made the mornings and evenings delightful, and it was a great pleasure to dine out-doors in the shade of the banana or orange trees that grace the courts of the hotels, and after dinner sip their lovely ices and admire their nonpareil Mexican ladies, whose charms, refined conversation and bewitching eyes, made me wish I was again young and unmarried. In the meantime, you are of course enjoying an excellent Havana cigar, that has cost you less than 5 cents, American money. In Mexico, you never have to apologize for smoking beside ladies, as smoking is not only tolerated, but encouraged everywhere, churches only excepted."

As to the natural resources of the country, Mr. McBride says "they are practically unlimited, though most of them are as yet only partially developed. Within the last few years over \$500,000,000 of American capital has found investment there, and European capital is coming to the front. Many of the Mexicans themselves are enormously wealthy; natives who count their wealth by the millions are visible every hour in the day. I would like to tell you a good deal about these resources, the excellent Mexican government, the big army, splendid police system, fine art galleries, museums, cathedrals, and quaint and decidedly amusing customs, but I have a great deal of business to attend to this afternoon."

Not half bad this for a Protestant's account of a Catholic country, so often depicted by interesting aliens as a degenerate place.

Not in Mexico assuredly could such a scene be witnessed as is described below in a telegram to the Montreal "Star." One must go to the heart of cultured New England, the originator of the "New Woman," to find what public school girls can do in the way of manly sport.

New Haven, February 10.—Girls' teams from Waterbury high school and the Broadman training school, of New Haven, met in the Anderson gymnasium ostensibly for a game of basket ball. After the game was over the spectators asserted that they had witnessed a prize fight without rules, a definition from which none of the excited feminine players was ready to dissent.

There was bad blood before the game because the Waterbury girls insisted upon the privilege of interference, a style of play which the local team had always barred. At last it was agreed that the first half should be played without, the second half with interference.

There was little out of the ordinary in the first half which ended with the score of 10 to 6, in New Haven's favor. But the second half from the first second of play to the call of time was marked by the roughest sort of tactics.

The girls struck each other in the face, pulled hair, tripped and threw one another to the floor, and lost

all control of themselves. Faces were scratched, eyes injured, and dresses torn with the most reckless disregard of propriety and fair play and the pretty players were soon transformed into sorry looking objects.

Coaches and spectators tried to stop the fight, but they might as well have talked to the winds. The girls were oblivious to all else and they rushed at each other with true ferocity. Time was sounded before the game was over and the opposing amazons had to be almost dragged apart.

The Waterbury girls had apparently excelled as sluggers, for the score was 12 to 10 in their favor. At the end of the game word was passed to hush it up as it was feared that the faculties of the two schools would put a stop to basket ball, if the circumstances became known.

The second Diamond medal contest in elocution—second in all Canada, the first having been held here—took place last week. Although the judges did not favor the only man among the seven contestants, we are pleased to see that the "Matinee Girl"—a trustworthy judge in such matters, when she has no special axe to grind—would have awarded the medal to Mr. Lawrence Palk, who has, to quote Town Topics, "repose, which is much to an elocutionist. His voice is of musical quality and under complete control. He reads with nice discretion and suits the action to the word." His selection was particularly good, and his rendering of it so natural and effective that I felt sure he would be awarded the medal." This chimes in very well with what we said a fortnight ago. Brains and voice are the two indispensable requisites of natural elocution.

Mr. Albert Dubuc's reply to the toast, "Sister Societies" at last week's fifteenth annual dinner of the Manitoba College Alma Mater Society was pronounced by those who were present "the hit of the evening." He spoke with great deliberation and with hardly a ghost of a smile, though his witty remarks constantly drew laughter and applause. The chairman, Mr. Mc Kerchar, departing from his rule of not commenting on the speeches, made an exception when he said it would be a long time before Manitoba College could send any one over to St. Boniface to make as telling a speech in French as Mr. Dubuc had just made in English.

Mr. Joseph Bernier, M.P.P., may well be proud of the successful banquet given in his honor by the Conservatives of this Province. Seldom does so young a man receive so much honor. St. Boniface College, where he got his entire classical education and whence he issued as a graduate of Manitoba University less than ten years ago, is also very proud of his record. His many well wishers hope and pray that he may safely steer his course through the many shoals and reefs of political life.

An honest contractor has a fine chance just now in the cordwood trade on the C. N. R. There are plenty of contractors on this line, but very few business men who understand the sacredness of a business promise. Most of them are always ready to promise cheap bargains, but, if they come across a better offer, the promise on the strength of which the Winnipeg dealer has hired cars and sleighs is cast to the winds and the new offer accepted. The consequence of this sharp practice will inevitably be the squeezing out of these unreliable contractors by reliable business men.