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CURRENT COMMENT

With reference to a paragraph of exclusive information we published last week about Pere Hyacinthe, a recent clerical convert from Anglicanism, who spent several years in Geneva, informs us that, although Pere Hyacinthe's oratorical powers may have dwindled after he left the Church, he still preserved enough eloquence to fill any church in which he preached. But he was listened to as one would listen to an actor, and produced no lasting impression on his hearers. A well-known caricature, circulated by the Protestants of Geneva, represented him as an acrobat leaping through several hoops, one of which was marked "Rome," another "Old Catholicism," another "Eglise Gallicane," etc. Some years ago he wrote to a friend of our informant that one day, while walking on a bridge at Cologne, he suddenly became convinced that Our Saviour was not God. This gives the measure of the man. As our friend says one never knew what would be his next move.

In the column of Clerical News will be found Abbot Gasquet's programme of visits, including Canada and mentioning in particular a visit to St. Paul. In our issue of Aug. 27 we printed a list of twelve lectures which this most learned prelate intends to deliver on this continent. Would it not be well if the Catholic Club invited the Right Rev. lecturer to deliver one of these great lectures in Winnipeg? The subjects are most varied, from "The Rise of English Art" to "The Black Death of 1349," from "The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion" to "Christian Democracy and Parish Life in Mediaeval Times." As Abbot Gasquet's sojourn in America is limited to three months, application for a lecture should be made soon, and might be addressed "Care of the Catholic University, Washington, D. C."

Parents assume a grave responsibility when they choose for their boys a commercial, rather than a classical or university course. Generally speaking, this choice determines the boy's career for his lifetime. No doubt the boy himself, as he grows older, may, on realizing the narrow limitations of a purely commercial training, revert to the classical fountain of scholarship and logical development, because he continually finds well educated men talking of things he does not understand and the consequent sense of inferiority nerves him to repair the breaches of the past. But that tardy reparation in mature manhood is never so satisfactory as the studies of early youth when the memory is quick to receive and the fancy plastic and retentive. In many cases, however, this momentous decision of the parents being based on full knowledge of their son's capacity, is the only proper course. The majority of boys are not clever enough for a classical course.

The case is very different when the boy himself is allowed to choose, not merely between a classical course, the natural avenue to the professions or the priesthood, and the commercial course, the immediate preparation for business, but between several different avenues to an art degree. In this case we have a mere youth, with no experience and no real self-knowledge, electing one out of many courses, generally through caprice or because the one he chooses is supposed to be the easiest. In many Protestant colleges and universities, especially in the Eastern States, this elective system is carried to absurd extremes. Last

year, about this date, a famous educator from Boston, when lecturing here, extolled a certain Massachusetts institution because it offered to its students more than one hundred different courses. The result of such a system is not knowledge but dissipation of mind. Western educators are beginning to see the folly of unduly multiplied elective courses. At a meeting of the Ohio College Association held in Columbus, O., on December 29th of last year, Dr. W. O. Thompson, president of the Ohio State University, greatly deplored the desultory habits that had been nurtured under the elective system. He said among other things: "We speak about our students as being young men, but they are only boys; they take all the liberty of men without any of their responsibility. In my opinion," he added with fine irony, "a student who, on coming to college, is able to choose his course of studies ought to be given a degree in advance on account of the unusual wisdom which he displays."

This week's instalment of Mgr. Tache's 1859 letter ably refutes the false description of the French halfbreeds given by an English writer of note and repeated ever since by misinformed or prejudiced chroniclers. The chief accusation against these brave and peaceful natives was that they inherited from their double origin—French and Indian—a certain inability to resist temptation. This charge, the first part of which no gentleman would make, Mgr. Tache meets with the very effective rejoinder that the French half-breeds were quite as good as the non-French halfbreeds. He hints that he might say very much more. Those who knew the inner history of the Red River settlement at that time, those, for instance, who remember how far from moral was the life of a former Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company then still alive, will understand what that prudent hint implied. Many of the men who thus defamed the French halfbreeds may have been able, but did not even try, as the French halfbreeds did, to resist temptation; they systematically tempted and ruined the weaker ones; and they had not the excuse of a semi-savage origin, for they were full blooded whites from Great Britain.

A recent cablegram from Paris related the acquittal of a murderer because he pleaded that the man he killed had "the evil eye" and had cast an unfortunate spell over him, and the mild sentence passed at Nevers on another murderer for a similar reason. "Sorcery and witchcraft are sure to revive when real faith grows cold or dies out altogether."

However, faith is very much alive in many French hearts; it even becomes militant at times. Quite recently M. Combes gave orders that the Ursuline Nuns at Ambert, near Clermont-Ferrand, should be expelled. The gendarmerie prepared to carry out his orders and the populace prepared to resist, and to defend the nuns. A scuffle took place, and the officer in command of the police was badly beaten. Moreover, no locksmith could be found willing to undertake the unpopular work of forcing open the convent doors. Finally the liquidator had to withdraw and inform his superiors that he was unable to carry out their commands.

Surely somebody must have been nodding in the editorial office of our staunchly Catholic contemporary, the "Catholic Citizen" of Rochester, when that silly poem, "Fools Rush in," appeared in its issue of August 26. Putting Giordano Bruno and Rousseau in the same boat with the saintly Columbus comes near to blasphemy, and

toasting "those who defy all rights and break all rules" might have made even the printer's devil stand aghast.

In the course of a sermon on education last Sunday at High Mass in St. Mary's Church Father Drummond exhorted parents to keep before their promising boys the high ideal of the priesthood. Vocations to the secular and regular clergy should be fostered. This implied that the parents themselves should have loftier aims than the mere pagan love of money. He deplored the fact that in this respect many had degenerated from the Catholic traditions of their Irish ancestry. Although the parish of St. Mary's had been in existence more than thirty years, only two sons of parishioners had been raised to the priesthood. On the other hand, across the river, among the French Canadians, in the short space of nineteen years, 24 young men had issued from St. Boniface College to become priests or religious. And yet the English-speaking Catholics complained of the dearth of priests whose mother tongue was English.

On Wednesday, at a meeting of the Parks Board, Mr. C. N. Bell, with characteristic breadth of mind and culture, proposed that the new park be called "La Verandrye" after the first white man who discovered this Red River country. Mr. Handscomb, of "Town Topics" who knew of Mr. Bell's intention, had on the previous Saturday warmly supported this suggestion in his paper. By a curious mistake, due to too great reliance on a supposedly learned informant, Mr. Handscomb had written of the Sieur de la Verandrye as "the intrepid Huguenot explorer and trader." One would think this fortunate slip might have propitiated Mr. Stuart Mulvey. Deeply as he hates everything Catholic and French, the Protestantism of a Frenchman more than atones in his eyes for that poor fellow's nationality. But probably the Orange fire-eater knew better. He is too old a bird in this country not to know that La Verandrye, the ancestor of Archbishop Tache, the man who never travelled without a Catholic chaplain, the discoverer whose companion here in 1732 was Father Messaiger, a Jesuit, was a thorough Catholic. And so the illustrious Stuart Mulvey objected to the name of "La Verandrye" for the new park. However, although his objection intimidated the Parks Board, the question is not yet settled. Meanwhile, the only monument to the discoverer of this region is a street named after him in St. Boniface, and a pedestal waiting for a statue in the same town.

Persons and Facts

A number of privileged persons, writes a correspondent of a Paris paper quoted in "La Nature," were present on St. Sylvester's night, Dec. 31, 1903, in Strasburg Cathedral to observe the mechanism of the famous clock. "The spectacle was of special interest, since, for the first time since its construction in 1842 the machinery was called upon to indicate the first leap year of a century, after an eight year interval. At astronomical midnight the machinery worked with wonderful regularity. The levers and trains of wheels began to move, the movable feasts of the year took their respective places and the admirable mechanism, calculated to indicate in perpetuity all the changes of the calendar, continued its regular movement, faithfully adding the extra day for the first leap year of the twentieth century."

In chronicling the death of Mrs. Henry George, widow of the author of "Progress and Poverty," and other books hardly less famous, the London "Tablet" recalls the tribute paid to Mr. George at the time of his death by Bishop Spalding, discerning in it an indirect eulogy on the lady now dead. Mrs. George was a devout Catholic and brought up her children in her religion, Father Dawson, O.M.I., being their guide and friend.

A convention out of the ordinary is in progress this week at the Central High School, St. Louis. The delegates are all deaf mutes. The formal opening was at the World's Fair in Congress Hall, Saturday afternoon. Religious services for those of the delegates who are Catholics and others wishing to attend were held Sunday morning in the chapel of the deaf-mute institute, beginning at 9 o'clock. Rev. Father Moeller, S.J., who is skilled in the sign language officiated.—Catholic Standard and Times Sep. 3.

Miss Josephine Bawlf left last Monday evening for Toronto, where she will resume her studies at Loretto Abbey. Mr. Will Bawlf accompanied her, and will spend the next few weeks holidaying in the east.

The new Catholic Church and new residence for the priest are completed at Arcola.

"La Defense," of Chicoutimi, Que., describes the celebration at Roberval, with High Mass and sermon, of the hundredth birthday of Mrs. Francis Gagnon, nee Henriette Tremblay, who is in perfect health. She was born at Les Eboulements, Que., Aug. 26, 1804. Her husband was baptized on the same day as herself. They were married at nineteen and lived together 78 years. He died at the age of 97, three years ago. They had eight children, six of whom are still living. She has seen the great grandchildren of her own children. Her sight, hearing, memory and intellect are still perfect.

M. Combes' policy of persecuting religious seems to have increased the faith in France. Enormous multitudes are making pilgrimages to Lourdes.

Several Roman newspapers announce the early publication of a Papal Letter in favor of peace, and appealing to civilized States to stop the Russo-Japanese struggle.

Lieutenant-General Count Keller, who was killed in the fight at Liaoyang, while resisting the Japanese advance, was of Irish descent. He came from one of the "wild geese" who marched out with the honors of war from Limerick.

Mr. Michael Davitt has given a denial to the report that he was about to enter Parliament and to become Secretary of the United Irish League.

It is reported that Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Kelly Kenny will succeed Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood in command of the 2nd army Corps.

An effort is being made to secure the canonization of Father Isaac Jogues, S.J., who was martyred in what is now New York State on October 16, 1664, by the Mohawk tribe of Indians, to whom he was preaching the faith. He was ordained priest in 1636, and after some years of missionary life in Canada, returned to France. Almost immediately he was sent back by his superiors to the American continent, and met his death at Ossernenon. It is hoped that his

canonization may be proclaimed during the Pontificate of Pius X.

In honor of the Austrian Emperor's seventy-fourth birthday, King Edward the VII attended Mass at Marienbad. His Majesty was accompanied by his equarries and wore the uniform of an Austrian Field Marshal. The Abbot of Tepl received the King at the Church door, and preceded his Majesty to a seat at the left of the altar. During the service, the King was seen to accept the promptings of Sir Francis Plunkett, our Ambassador at Vienna, who is a Catholic, and who signified to his royal master the times to sit or stand. But it was noticed that at the Elevation his Majesty stood all the time. Possibly his declaration against Transubstantiation prevented him from giving obedience to Sir Francis Plunkett's promptings there.—Liverpool "Catholic Times."

Georgetown University, Washington, celebrates a double jubilee this year. One is the hundredth anniversary of the restoration of the Society of Jesus, which began its new life in Georgetown College in 1804. The other is the golden jubilee of the declaration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was under this title that the College Sodality was founded towards the beginning of the past century.

Miss Leo and Miss Irene Barrett left last Wednesday for their cottage on Coney Island, Lake of the Woods, where they will spend this balmy month of September.

During the past week the number of students admitted to St. Boniface College for the Michaelmas term has increased as follows: boarders, from 75 to 97, other pupils, from 40 to 64; total from 115 to 161.

St. Mary's Academy, Crescentwood, reopened last Monday and now has one hundred boarders and forty day pupils and half-boarders.

The completion of the new St. Mary's school is unfortunately delayed, through some fault which the contractors keep shouldering off on some one else. Meanwhile the boys, who number over 200, are partially housed during school time in the church, and the girls are waiting till the new building is ready, let us hope in a week from now.

THE CRITICISM OF IGNORANCE.

(Heard in Winnipeg by a Contributor to the Northwest Review.)

A woman, stylishly dressed and afflicted with one of those harsh voices that betray either ill-breeding or ill temper, is interviewing the Principal of a school.

"Mr. A., Miss B. ain't no teacher."

"What makes you think so, Madam?"

"Well, there ain't no discipline" (with a strong accent on the second syllable) "in her class room."

"Have you visited her class room?"

"No; but this mornin' I seen four little girls, all from her class, playin' hide an' seek durin' school hours."

"I will inquire about this. Anything else?"

"Yes, lots. First off, your teachers don't none of them know how to teach."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed. They all teaches by books, instid of by objects, as the teachers does down east."

(Here the conversation was interrupted.)