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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, APRIL 25 1899

CURRENT COMMENT

In his latest contribution to the "Free Press" the Smoky River correspondent drops his initials, "W.C.S." and does not sign his interminable screed, or was it the editor who suppressed the tell-tale initials? At any rate there is no mistaking the identity of this fellow. His earmarks betray him: Long-winded, involved, obscure, pretentious disquisitions, underhand insinuations, monumental conceit and large ignorance.

While Dr. Murray, the editor of the great English Dictionary, which is to be eight times the size of Webster, was engaged on the letter B, he inquired of Stevenson what was the meaning of the word "brean," which had turned up in one of Robert Louis's stirring tales. The great story-teller replied that he was sorry to say he had not read the proofs of the book, but "brean" was plainly a misprint for "ocean," and he went on to show how his handwriting made this possible. Meanwhile, how many puzzled their brains over that unfortunate word, and the curious thing about it is that there really is a verb "to brean," meaning, in provincial English, "to perspire."

On Tuesday, April 4th, twenty-seven students, a whole class, left the College of Joliette, Que. It was a clear case of inexcusable insubordination. They had refused to conform to the college regulations which bound them to shovel the snow off their handball alley. By their conduct they stamped themselves a collection of cads who would have been hissed out of any English school. But quite a potter was made about them. Silly people wrote to some of the French Canadian papers blaming the authorities for too great severity. Thereupon, Father Grégoire, prefect of discipline, published in the "Minerve" an affidavit setting forth how kindly and mercifully this group of young rebels had been treated. Any one who knows Rev. Father Beaudry, the venerable and gentle superior of Joliette College,

must feel that the fault lay entirely with the 27 prigs, and ultimately with the parents who brought them up so badly.

"Le Trifluvien" of the 11th inst. published a long letter from Father Gérin, who visited Manitoba and the Northwest last year, another from Father Lacasse, O. M. I., and a third from "a high ecclesiastical dignitary," all warmly encouraging emigration from the Province of Quebec to Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. These admirable letters furnish excellent replies to the objections made against this emigration by the editor of the Quebec "Vérité" and some other writers who prefer to encourage the colonization of the upper Ottawa and the Northern portions of their own province, though they admit that settlements in these latter places are encompassed with the most disheartening drawbacks.

Our well edited contemporary, "L'Ouest Canadien," had, in the issue of the 13th inst., an excellent article pointing out the urgent need of a French Canadian on the Indian commission which is to treat with the Indians of the Athabasca-Mackenzie region. To send out a Frenchless commission for such a purpose in a country where even the Hudson's Bay officials have to learn French is as absurd as it would be to send to Paris an ambassador that did not know a word of French. Unless the government intends this treaty business to be a farce—a supposition which will not appear altogether extravagant to those who know how called-for, except in the opinion of soreheads like "W. C. S.," the "Free Press" special correspondent over there, any treaty arrangements with the Indians of that region are—it will rectify this unpardonable blunder and appoint some French Canadian who can talk freely with the Catholic missionaries, the only ones who really know and have civilized the Indians, and with the halfbreeds, most of whom cannot speak a word of English.

THE POPULATION OF THE EARTH

"The population of the earth in 1989 was 1,485,763,000." This sort of thing crops up occasionally in most of our daily and weekly papers. That very sentence is taken from a Winnipeg contemporary of last Saturday. It is very amusing to any one who reflects that the population of China has never been counted. We have here the total population of the globe done into thousands, and yet every well informed person ought to know that we cannot get the population of one fifth of that total, viz., the Chinese Empire, done into hundred millions. The inhabitants of China proper have been variously estimated at from 250 to 536 millions. Moreover, who can hazard anything but the wildest guesses at the populations of Central Africa, Northern Australia and Polynesia? Why, even here in the geographical centre of Western civilization nobody can come as near the number of the inhabitants of Winnipeg as this bold statistician thinks he can approximate the entire population of the Globe. The prov-

incial government's official report says the capital of Manitoba contains 39,000, while Henderson's Directory puts the population at 49,000. We have thus between experts a difference of ten thousand out of forty thousand, say, one quarter of the total in doubt. Without pretending that so flagrant a discrepancy obtains in all statistics of population, we think we are quite safe in maintaining that he would be a great geographer who should feel sure that he could conjecture the total population of the Globe within two hundred millions.

THE CATHOLIC SICK BENEFIT ASSOCIATION.

An organization bearing the above name has recently been formed in Winnipeg. Its objects are, as set out in its constitution, "To unite fraternally all persons entitled to become members of the organization and to establish a fund for the benefit of its members who are sick and unable to work." Any practical Catholic over 18 years of age and not more than 55 years of age, who passes the medical examination, is eligible for membership, and the fees for membership are as follows: Entrance fee, from 18 to 35 years, \$2; 35 to 40 years, \$3; 40 to 45 years, \$4; 45 to 50 years, \$5; 50 to 55 years, \$10; monthly fee, 50 cents payable in advance. Every person being a member of the organization for over six months, incapacitated through illness or accident from following his usual occupation or otherwise earning a livelihood, is entitled to sick benefit of four dollars per week for 16 weeks in any one year, and free medical attendance during sickness by the association physician, Dr. Moody. The charge for medical examination for entrance is \$1; but for three months all candidates who at present hold life insurance and can show that they have not suffered any illness or serious accident since they were examined for such insurance will be admitted without medical examination. The entrance fee for all applicants between 50 and 55 years has also been reduced for three months to \$5. The officers of the association are: Rev. Father Cherrier, president; Mr. F. W. Russell, secretary-treasurer; Mr. J. A. Picard, chairman of sick committee; and Mr. N. Bergeron, chairman of finance committee. The meetings will be held in the hall of the Immaculate Conception branch No. 163 of the C. M. B. A. on the third Thursday in each month.

This organization has been formed to meet the wants of a large section of the Catholic population; it will be conducted on strictly business principles; it is entirely controlled by the members, for the members and from the members; its funds will be devoted solely for the relief of sick members; it is confined to the healthy section of the community; is compact and easily managed; and its objects have the hearty approval of the ecclesiastical authorities. It starts off with a good number of charter members and with many applications on hand, and will no doubt become a power for good in the city. All Catholics who need the protection of a sick benefit society should apply at

once, and others who do not actually need the benefit should join to help the establishment of a worthy Catholic society which has undoubtedly been much needed here. The entrance fees will never be lower than they are now, and those who intend to join will act wisely by joining at once. Not the least important of the benefits to be derived is the free medical attendance in sickness. Those who have had doctor's bills to pay can realize what this means, and those who have not cannot tell the moment that sickness will strike them. The association has been fortunate in being able to make an arrangement with Dr. Moody, of Drs. Moody and Todd, to act as the Association physician.

Further particulars regarding the association and how to join it will be cheerfully given by any of the officers mentioned above.

IS THE SCHOOL QUESTION FINALLY SETTLED?

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Premier of Canada, is reported as having said in answer to a question of Mr. Casgrain, M. P., on the Manitoba school question:

The Government have reason to believe that the settlement known as the Laurier-Greenway settlement has been accepted by the majority of the minority, though not unanimously. In so far as the federal jurisdiction is concerned, if any hon. gentleman is not satisfied that the settlement should be final, it is open to him or any member of parliament to attack it.

If those be truly the words spoken by the Hon. Premier we feel in duty bound to enter a solemn protest, for, in the first place, although the majority of the minority, as a matter of fact, are now with schools working under the general provisions of the school law of 1890 as amended by the Laurier-Greenway settlement, it is obvious that the same majority cannot carry concessions any farther than directed by the Encyclical "Affaires." But the Pope distinctly states that the Laurier-Greenway settlement is "defective, imperfect, insufficient," and "that which the Catholics demand, and which they have, as nobody doubts, the right to demand is far greater;" therefore all that the minority has been by circumstances forced to accept, it has done so under protest and in the full expectation of obtaining the "far greater which they have a right to demand."

Secondly, it is clear from what we have just said that the settlement cannot be "final." Nor can Sir Wilfrid Laurier say that it is final; yet he seems to insinuate it is. The Hon. Premier knows too well the basis upon which negotiations were begun, viz., that whatever restitution is made to us can be accepted only "pro tanto," pending the restoration of all our rights and privileges. We claim that the federal jurisdiction will cease only when justice in its entirety is done the aggrieved minority of Manitoba.

If it is not leze majesty, some one might suggest to King Humbert that his style of mustache is not calculated to strengthen the bond between Italy and friendly nations.—Chicago Times-Herald.

THE WINNIPEG GENERAL HOSPITAL.

Swift and terrible is the mephemis that has overtaken the Directors of the Winnipeg General Hospital. A couple of weeks ago several of them, who live near the Sisters of Mercy's Maternity Hospital in Broadway, loudly called upon Dr. Patterson, the chairman of the Provincial Board of Health, to close up that institution because three deaths from puerperal fever were reported to have occurred there. As a matter of fact the presence of that deadly fever could be proved only in one of the three cases; but the immaculate Directors clamored for their pound of flesh and the Sisters had to go. And now these same Directors have to face a perfect storm of denunciations from the press and the public as to their management of the General Hospital.

Dr. Patterson, who has the Scotch quality of not being a respecter of persons, came out last Saturday in the Winnipeg evening papers with a long letter ushered in with the scare-head "Diphtheria and Death" in letters half an inch high, and declared that, owing to some unexplainable mismanagement, in the past six months, 38 persons had contracted diphtheria in the General Hospital and that five of these had died. All these cases had originated in the general wards and in the nurses' home, and not in the isolated building. Of the 38 persons contracting diphtheria, ten were nurses and 28 patients undergoing treatment for other affections. Moreover, six persons contracted in the hospital acute dysentery, and two of them died of that disease.

To cap the climax of disaster and ruin, the "Morning Telegram" of this (Tuesday) morning, publishes the following:

Another case of diphtheria was reported to the board of health as developing in the general hospital on Monday. This makes a total of 41 cases during the past six months.

The public is anxious to know who was responsible for the disgusting and alarmingly dangerous condition of the space underneath the floor of the hospital kitchen which was the cause of the large number of cases of dysentery breaking out in the hospital a short time ago. It is learned that the sink pipe became clogged up and the kitchen slops, as a consequence, ran out on the ground underneath the kitchen floor until there was over a foot of disease-breeding filth there. The milk for use in the hospital, it is stated, was kept in the kitchen, near the floor underneath which was this terrible mess. If such be true, it is astounding.

The citizens of Winnipeg are intensely aroused over this horrible state of affairs. The general wards must, of course, be emptied forthwith and disinfected for at least three weeks; but many are asking if even that will be enough, if the whole building, which has cost so much, will not have to be destroyed, if the new Jubilee wing itself is safe. Dr. Inglis writes officially that he thinks it is not "In my opinion," he says, "it will be impossible to keep this new wing free from infection, as it is located directly between and in close proximity to two infected buildings, i. e., the iso-