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## CURRENT COMMENT

The effect of a good story, even if the point be not altogether missed, is often impaired by the omission of an important circumstance. Thus in a series of very interesting "Random Reminiscences From Various Sources," which appeared lately in the "Ave Maria," the author, perhaps because he was so familiar with Cardinal Wiseman's appearance that he thought none of his readers needed the reminder, omits, before, during and after the following anecdote, all mention of the Cardinal's great size:

"He used to relate with amusement and satisfaction how, on his last visit to Ireland, he had been characteristically welcomed by a ragged native. As soon as he had set foot on Irish ground this warm-hearted fellow pushed his way through the crowd, and falling on his knees before him, seized his hand, which he covered with kisses, exclaiming at the same time: 'Now, thin, by holy St. Patrick, Heaven bless your immensity!'"

Yet the fact that Cardinal Wiseman was six feet two, ruddy and very portly, "a mountain of flesh," as Father Purbrick calls him (Ward's Life of Card. Wiseman, vol. II., p. 163), adds great sharpness to the point of the Irishman's "immensity." And nowadays most people have forgotten or never knew what the great prelate's physique was.

These "Reminiscences" are said to be drawn especially from Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, F.S.A., and Mrs. W. Pitt Byrne. One wonders which of the two—or was it the compiler himself?—is responsible for the prophetic touch with which the following passage ends. Speaking of Catholics in England some sixty years ago, the writer says:

There was but little intercourse between Catholics and Protestants. In some respects, however, this state of affairs was not without its advantages. Catholics married Catholics only; there was deep reverence for all things spiritual; there was hardly a Catholic family of importance that did not furnish a priest to the Church in each generation.

Low-necked dresses were things unheard of at Catholic parties; the waltz was unknown. Catholic young men danced only with Catholic girls, because to them their acquaintance was strictly confined. Among the devout, it would have been considered very unbecoming to attend church in anything but the plainest bonnet. It was a time of "plain living and high thinking," such as is never likely to return again until after the passage of that socialistic, perhaps bloodless, but more probably bloody, revolution which, whatever may be its injustices, horrors and atrocities, will winnow the wheat from the chaff, the false from the true; till, after the days of persecution are passed, a new order shall arise on the ruins of the old, and Christ shall come to His own again.

Sir Oliver Lodge, the famous author of "Modern Views on Electricity," makes these eminently sensible remarks about the elementary teaching of natural science:

I have found nearly all children rather keen to know about natural and astronomical things. They do not always care for machinery. Boys sometimes care about such things as a bicycle or a pump, but girls hardly ever do. They may easily be made tired with science teaching of an unwise kind, but, if they are initiated in a kind of science which children ought to be interested

in, then it is wholesome training for them all. I do not believe in having schools where boys having an aptitude for science shall learn nothing else, and schools where boys who have an aptitude for letters shall have nothing but a literary education. I do not agree with premature specialization.

In the New York "Messenger" for this month Father Muckermann, S.J., writes very learnedly on "Zoology and the Origin of Man." With a wealth of scientific arguments he shows that paleontology does not offer any proof for the common genetic origin of man and ape; neither does the anatomical similarity between the two, nor their embryological history, nor their blood relationship. The arguments are directed especially against Huxley, C. Vogt, Darwin, Haeckel and Dr. Hans Friedenthal.

Much used to be written, some thirty years ago, about human skulls unearthed in what were supposed to be tertiary strata; but Father Muckermann, after examining and measuring the most famous of these skulls (Cro-Magnon, L'homme Mort, Dolmenbauer, etc.) proves, by quotations from present day anthropologists of great repute, that tertiary relics of man are wanting and the traces of human activity that were believed to be of tertiary origin are of a very doubtful nature, that "glacial man was every inch a true man," and that paleontology knows no ancestors to man.

In refuting Haeckel's fantastic theory that the anatomical parallelism between the various stages in man's embryology and his past history leads to the inference of his purely animal origin, Father Muckermann answers first, that even if this parallelism were a fact, it would not necessarily imply evolution; and secondly, that this parallelism is a pure fiction. He quotes Conn as saying: "Of these twenty-one stages, more than half have been proved to be wrong, and in regard to some of the others it is questionable. This attempt of Haeckel, made with such boldness as almost to inspire belief, is thus a failure." In describing these imaginary stages Father Muckermann can afford to be humorous.

"According to Haeckel the first and second stage of the human ovum, in which it consists of only one cell, is a repetition of man's racial development, when he had the honor to belong to the single-celled monera and amebae. The fifth, the gastrula—development, points without any doubt to the fancied gastreaes, which were so happy as to consist of a single cavity. Then comes the sixth phase in which the human embryo represents the primitive worm, which is soon followed by the seventh, that of the molluscs, and the eighth, a reproduction of the ascidians. These worthy animals close the first half of the human ancestral pedigree. Commencing the second half, we are led upwards and onwards to the skullless lancelet, the lamprey and the stage of fishes, when our forebears were the happy owners of fins and gills, and smiled the genial smile of the shark. The twelfth stage is that of the lungfish, the thirteenth the siren, and the fourteenth that of the salamander and polliwog—in happy recollection of which blissful fact we even at present distinguish a certain class of men with the endearing title of polliwogs."

Father Muckermann's refutation of Friedenthal's "blood relationship" is an excellent example of the logician's superiority over the mere scientist who is not logical. Science gives facts; but philosophy alone

can draw logical conclusions from those facts; and the trouble with most evolutionists is that they sin against the most elementary laws of logic, by deducing vast conclusions from very slender premisses. A hundred weak probabilities can never warrant a cock-sure conclusion. Father Muckermann's treatment of this point is so clear and convincing that we quote the entire passage.

The third part of our thesis is directed against Dr. Hans Friedenthal, who in the years 1900-1902 attempted to prove a blood relationship between man and the anthropoid apes. He maintains that human blood has the property of decomposing the blood of lower apes, whilst it has no effect on the blood of those of a higher species. Hence, he concludes: "We do not only descend from apes, but we are true apes ourselves."

We gladly wish the author joy in this happy conclusion, but protest against its wider application, and this for two reasons: because (1) the results are still dubious and the experiments do not perfectly agree; (2) even if the fact were undoubtedly true we could only infer a similarity of chemical properties between the blood of two beings, but not their genetic relation. For it would have to be proved that a genetic relation is the only explanation of the alleged fact. But this can not be done, for although Friedenthal showed experimentally that the blood of a crab (cancer pagurus) is indissoluble in the red corpuscles of a rat, it would be absurd to rush to the conclusion that rats descend directly from crabs. Consequently, it would be equally illogical to make a similar conclusion between man and ape. Indeed, we could well invert the whole process, and say: In the same way as the rat is not directly related to the crab, so also does man stand in no direct relationship to the orang.

We think we have said enough to show that Father Muckermann's article is a most valuable contribution to the evolution controversy and that it cannot be ignored by any one who attempts to defend Herbert Spencer, who built his elaborate philosophical system on so unstable a basis.

A Winnipeg business man, who employs quite a number of clerks, willingly engages the service of Catholics because he says he can trust them, although he himself is very far from being a Catholic and is not even credited with any perceptible conscience. Recently, in the absence of his cashier, he confided the cash department to a Catholic clerk. The latter objected on the plea of dreading the responsibility. "Oh," replied the boss, "I know I can trust you, for if you did steal, the next time you went to confession, you would have to make restitution."

Reviewing in the current "Messenger" Elizabeth Robins's "The Magnetic North," from which we last week borrowed a striking passage on the Jesuits in Alaska, Miss Katherine E. Conway says: "It is a wonderful book of originality, power, and fascination beyond aught that we can recall in the novels of many seasons." The author has broken a new trail in literature, not only in the Arctic setting of her story, but in its absorbing human interest without the heretofore indispensable hero and heroine. . . . In still another way the story is unique; for the Jesuit missionaries, fruit of the martyr-blood of Archbishop Seghers, Alaska's first apostle, figure prominently in it, faithful to the life in their efforts to christianize and civilize the aborigines, and

hampered, as often before, in their history, by trader and gold-seeker. The Catholic priest, portrayed with some degree of verisimilitude, has appeared in some recent novels by non-Catholics, but Miss Robins is, we believe, the first to break wholly with the Jesuit of the Protestant tradition, while manifesting in the natural evolution of her story the vicious grip of said tradition on even honest and chivalrous non-Catholics. Much of the interest of the book for the Catholic reader is in the impact of the gold-quest against the soul-quest, and the shattering of one man's worldly ambitions in consequence. Yet the author is not a Catholic, and cannot be suspected of special pleading. She only tells a story, true in its main features, and of remorseless logic."

"Inches and Eminence" is an extremely curious article in the Strand Magazine for this month. Mr. Beckles Willson begins by saying that the world knows little of the stature of its greatest men. "Take so glaring a case as that of Napoleon. Here is a personage constantly under surveillance by people struck by the one eminent peculiarity of his person; yet he would be an ingenious inquirer who should succeed in reconciling the various accounts given of Napoleon's stature. Bourienne, who had ample opportunities for observing him closely, says he was five feet two inches; but Captain Maitland measured him on the Bellerophon, and found his distinguished passenger to be five feet seven. Mr. Willson does not seem to be aware that these two measurements agree perfectly; because the French foot, "le pied de roi," which was at that time still in use, the metric system being new and not yet popular, is almost one inch longer than the English foot (exactly 12.99 English inches) and consequently five feet two French is equivalent to a little more (on account of the added two inches, i. e., one-sixth of .99) than five feet seven (exactly 67.11 inches) English. However, this does not affect Mr. Willson's contention that apparent stature is deceptive. Some men appear shorter than they really are, while others seem taller than their true stature. We know one man who is frequently mistaken for a six-footer, although he is only five feet eight. So Mr. Willson took the precaution of writing to all the eminent men whose forms and heights he gives in a series of pictures, which will be a surprise to many. Thus in his picture gallery of sovereigns King Edward VII. appears as five feet eight and a half inches, while his left hand neighbor, his nephew, the Kaiser, is about one inch shorter. The tallest sovereign in Europe is the King of the Belgians, represented as nearly six feet five; the shortest is the present King of Italy, five feet two. Taking the British Association Anthropometric Committee's "mean" stature of the British Isles as five feet seven and seven-eighths of an inch, and deducting five-eighths of an inch for boots, "King Edward represents in his own person what may be described as the standard British stature." This "remarkable fact," as Mr. Willson calls it, agrees with—or shall we say, has led up to?—his conclusion, well supported by his picture galleries, that "eminence—i. e., great talents, great capacity—is found oftenest in both abnormal extremes. But the normal man is of normal height—and if he does not accomplish revolutions in politics, warfare, and art, he at least achieves what genius too often misses, the prize of personal happiness and the virtue of good citizenship."

In Mr. Willson's gallery of British statesmen the shortest is Lord Rosebery, five feet five, and the

tallest, the Duke of Devonshire, six feet one. Mr. Balfour is six feet. Soldiers and the populace generally speak of 'Little Bobs' as an extremely diminutive person; but Lord Roberts is really five feet six and a half, a half inch taller than General Sir John French. Kitchener is the tallest of English generals here represented. Lord Alverstone, five feet eleven, is the tallest in the judges' gallery, and Lord Halsbury, five feet three, the shortest. Sir Oliver Lodge, with his 75 inches, looks down on Lord Kelvin, at the other end of the line of scientists with his 67 inches. Among actors Mr. Tree is the only six-footer. Sir Henry Irving is five feet ten. Sir Edward Elgar, the tallest of the musicians and singers represented, is five feet ten and a half. Cricketers average high, the tallest being J. E. Tunnicliffe, six feet two and a half, with W. G. Grace half an inch shorter. President Loubet is five feet six, the French average, and President Roosevelt, five feet nine, not much above the American average.

The Winnipeg Normal School library is now provided with a copy of "Jesuit Education" by Robert Swickerath, S.J. This large volume of 687 pages, which appeared last year, soon took rank as one of the best works on general pedagogy and the ablest defence yet published of the Jesuit system by one who knows what he is writing about. It speaks volumes for the fair-mindedness of the Normal School principal that he should of his own accord have sent for this profoundly Catholic book to adorn the shelves of a library where 90 per cent. of the readers are non-Catholics. The publisher is B. Herder, 17 South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

## Persons and Facts

Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue, Fair Wages Officer, stopped here Sunday last on his way to Prince Albert.

The "Educational Review" of St. John, N.B., for this month, announces that "Mr. Frank Allen, Ph. D., a graduate of the University of New Brunswick, and recently senior instructor in the department of physics at Cornell University, has been appointed professor of physics in the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, at a salary of \$2,000." The salary is \$2,500, and Dr. Allen was the first of the new professors to arrive here.

Mr. Kenneth McLeod, who died in this city last Sunday at the age of 73, came to this country in 1852, and is said to have built in 1857 the first house outside of Fort Garry. If this be so he was the founder of that hamlet which, some years later, was called Winnipeg, and numbered 150 souls in 1870.

In the "Trifluvien" Father F. A. Baillarge warns the Catholic public against the "Grammaire Française" of Claude Auger, published in Montreal. This grammar, says the learned critic, takes the first step recommended by "La Ligue de l'Enseignement": it ignores God. All mention of religion and religious motives is studiously avoided. Only twice is the name of God printed in the book, and each time as a mere expletive, "Bon Dieu!" and "Ah Mon Dieu!"

There has arisen in Italy a linguistic genius who beats Cardinal Mezzofanti all hollow. The latter spoke only eighty languages, while Alfredo Trombetti is said to know four hundred of the native dialects of North and South America alone, although he is only 38 years old.

"La Verite," of Quebec, very properly takes to task "La Patrie," of