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## CURRENT COMMENT

One of the most valuable lessons of the recent educational convention in this city is the importance of little things, accuracy, scholarship, grammar. We lately came across, in two consecutive numbers of the same paper, (one of the most suggestive of our exchanges) two touching little poems that were marred in the very first lines by faults against grammar. One began: "Let us be patient, you and I." It should of course have read "you and me," since these two words are in apposition with "us." The other opened in this way:

"Tis thirty years, my son,  
Since thou departed"—  
instead of "departedst," or rather the plural form should have been used throughout the poem. This unfortunate blunder prevented us from quoting an otherwise fine lyric, for we could not take the liberty of substituting "you" and "your" for "thou, thee and thy" all through the poem, and we could not well print "thou departed."

The new Bishop of Green Bay, Dr. Fox, has a long flowing beard. His predecessor, Bishop, now Archbishop Messmer, has a graceful square beard. In the east on the contrary, Bishop Cusack was no sooner made bishop than he shaved his bushy beard, saying that he did not wish to be known as "the bearded bishop." There was a rumor lately that Pius X was about to authorize a general wearing of beards among the clergy. If he did, many of those who wear them now would promptly shave. But it appears his Holiness has no such intention. Fashion seems, of late years, to favor the clerical razor. Since shaggy bearded Anthony Trollope thirty years ago made his young lords and dukes beardless and beautiful as Greek gods, we seem to be gradually veering round to the old days of our grandfathers when no man wore a beard unless he had some facial blemish to conceal.

Our city contemporary, the Tribune, of last Saturday, quoted the Christian Standard as giving, on the authority of a German missionary who has been long a resident of Japan, the following estimate of the number of Japanese Christians in 1902: Catholics, 55,836; Protestants, 46,634; Russian Orthodox, 26,680; total 129,150. But, as the Catholic Japanese are no doubt more correctly estimated at 70,000 by Mgr. Magabure, coadjutor to the Archbishop of Tokio (see Northwest Review, July 30, 1904, p. 1, col. 2.), and as children are said not to be included in the Protestant reports, the whole number of Christians may be reckoned at 170,000 in a total population of 45,000,000, that is to say, about one in every 264 is a Christian. This small proportion is counterbalanced by the rate of increase which, for the converts, appears to be about 4.5 per cent. Per annum, while the entire population increases at the rate of only 1.5 per cent. Moreover, the Christian Standard adds: "The gains of Christianity are much greater than the number of adherents indicates. For many of the most prominent public men of the Empire are Christians, and their influence is both wide and deep, so that the very language represents an absorption of Christian ideas which has been going on almost unobserved, and therefore most surely."

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, that duds

replica of the Church of England, is travelling in vain efforts to begot a name for itself, at once better than the one which forces it into such tautological phrases as an "Episcopal bishop" and yet not identical with ours. But in Japan where most of the Catholic missionaries are French, it calls itself the "Nippon Sei Kokwai" or Holy Catholic Church in Japan. However the Japanese are too wary to be taken in by this dishonest decoy. They will be sure to ask these pseudo-Catholics the three questions put by the Catholic remnant to the first French missionary who built a chapel at Nagasaki in 1886 after the re-opening of Japan: Are you unmarried? Do you obey the Pope? Do you pray to the Mother of God? This was the test of the true Church left them in the 17th century by their last martyred priests. "When we have shed our blood for the faith," they said to their neophytes, "you will be without priests for a time. Then perhaps hirelings and false teachers will try to deceive you. Do not listen to any who cannot answer these three questions in the affirmative." Some of the Sei Kokwais may answer the first and third queries affirmatively, but the second will assuredly stick in their throats.

We are pleased to see that the well known London Catholic book firm, Burns & Oates, are advertising in the Tablet "The Cross in Japan," a history of the missions of St. Francis Xavier and the Early Jesuits, by Cecilia Mary Caddell, a new edition with preface and supplementary chapter by the Bishop of Salford. Such books are most timely at the present moment when cultured Japanese are making strenuous efforts to suppress all mention of their tyrants' forty years of cruel persecution of Catholics. In this respect recent encyclopaedias are much more guilty than the older ones. Thus all that the Universal Cyclopaedia (Appleton 1900) says of this terrible persecution is the following distorted account: "In 1542 the Portuguese entered Japan, introducing firearms and an aggressive religion. There followed a wonderful momentary success in conversions under Francis Xavier, but papal pretensions and various imprudences roused the jealous patriotism of the nation. A period of deplorable anarchy ensued. . . . Christianity was rooted out." This is written by Mr. James Main Dixon, late professor of English Literature in the Imperial University of Japan. "Momentary success" is a dishonest term for a movement which continued to spread during eighty years till Japanese Christians numbered more than a million. "Papal pretensions" is all rot. Mr. Dixon's animus is revealed by his avoidance of the word "Catholic," for which he substitutes "an aggressive religion." There was one great imprudence which Mr. Dixon also suppresses, but for which the Catholic missionaries were not responsible. This is related in the American Cyclopaedia, article Japan by Prof. W. E. Griffis, Imperial College, Tokio. "Hideyoshi who had then recently succeeded in bringing the whole Japanese empire under his absolute rule, is said to have asked a subject of the double kingdom of Spain and Portugal how his King had managed to possess himself of half the world. The Spaniard's reply, 'He sends priests to win the people; his troops are then sent to join the native Christians, and the conquest is easy,' made a deep impression upon Hideyoshi." This lying brag-godocio thus turned the cruel tyrant against the Christians whom he had hitherto favored.

In that same article Prof. Griffis, writing shortly after Japan had adopted the manners of civilized Europe and America, and before the Japanese had learned to doctor their past history to suit the Protestant taste, says: "Missionaries speedily followed the merchants, and in 1549 Japan was visited by the celebrated 'apostle of the Indies,' St. Francis Xavier. Both merchants and missionaries were favorably received, and while the one class found a ready and most profitable market for their goods, the other rapidly converted vast numbers of the natives to Christianity. Three of the most powerful nobles, the princes of Bungo, Harima and Omura, were among the converts. In 1582 the Japanese Christians sent an embassy with letters and presents to Rome to do honor to the Pope, and assure him of their submission to the Church. In the two years that followed their return (1591-2), it is said that 12,000 Japanese were converted and baptized."

Of the persecution Prof. Griffis writes: "Hideyoshi issued an edict for the banishment of the missionaries. The edict was renewed by his successors in 1596, and in 1597 twenty-three priests were put to death in one day in Nagasaki. The Christians on their part took no measures to pacify the government but defied it and began to overthrow idols and pull down heathen temples. This led to dreadful persecutions in 1612 and 1614, when many of the Japanese converts were put to death, their churches and schools were destroyed, and their faith was declared infamous and rebellious. The Portuguese traders were no longer allowed free access to the country, but were confined to the island of Deshima, at Nagasaki. In 1622 a frightful massacre of Christians took place near Nagasaki, and horrible tortures, endured with heroic constancy, were inflicted on multitudes in the vain effort to make them recant. In 1637—when all the priests had been either killed or banished and could not therefore govern their flocks—"it was discovered by the Japanese government that the native Christians, driven to despair by the persecution, had entered into a conspiracy with the Portuguese to overthrow the Imperial throne. The persecutions were renewed with increased rigor. Edicts were issued banishing the Portuguese forever from Japan, and prohibiting any Japanese or Japanese ship or boat, from leaving the country, under the severest penalties. By the close of 1639 the Portuguese were entirely expelled, and their trade was transferred to the Dutch, who, as enemies to the Portuguese and to the Roman Catholic faith," and Prof. Griffis might have added, as abettors and instigators of the persecution, as men who delighted in trampling on the Cross of Christ painted on the floor of every wharf, "were not involved by the Japanese in their condemnation. In 1640 the oppressed Christians rose in open rebellion in the island of Amakusa, crossed over to the mainland, seized the castle of Shimabara, and made a long and gallant stand against the Shogun's army. The Christians were at length subdued by the superior military skill of their opponents, who brought to their aid artillery, which the Dutch lent them. The Christian stronghold was finally carried by storm, and all within its walls, to the number of 31,000, were put to the sword." The Dutch remained in the enjoyment of their blood-money; for more than two centuries they had the undisturbed monopoly of Japan's trade with Europe.

Christianity was supposed to have been, as the Universal Cyclopaedia says, "rooted out." But several thousand heroic Christians remained hidden in remote valleys of Japan and for 226 years preserved the faith without priests or any other sacrament than baptism which they conferred on each other. On the return of Catholic missionaries in 1866 these noble children of God made themselves known, and the joy on both sides may be imagined. But the Japanese government, not yet humanized, got wind of their existence and drowned several hundred of them by sending them adrift in scuttled ships. Of this last act of Japanese persecution, which occurred in 1867 the cyclopaedias of course breathe not a word. The descendants of that heroic Christian remnant—a remnant that has not its parallel in the history of the world—are the staunchest of Japanese Catholics.

From the statistical Year Book of Canada we glean some interesting figures. The Province of Quebec outstrips all other provinces in the number of its non-public schools, 846, as against 198 in Ontario. The enrolment of the non-public schools shows a still greater preponderance for Quebec, 129,436, as against 26,067 in Ontario and less than two thousand in each of the other provinces. This private enterprise, the best test of zeal for education, is also apparent in the greater number of teachers in non-public schools, 4,345 in Quebec, 649 in Ontario, 50 in New Brunswick, 27 in British Columbia, 22 in Manitoba. Another curious fact is that although Manitoba has very few private schools it surpasses all other provinces in the preponderance of its local contributions to education over its government grant for the same purpose, the latter being \$191,991, while the former amounts to \$1,396,963, which is more than seven times as much, whereas the government aid is to other sources of revenue as 1 is to 2.15 in Ontario, as 1 is to 4.6 in Quebec, as 1 is to 2.8 in Nova Scotia, as 1 is to 2.4 in New Brunswick, and in British Columbia the figures are reversed, the government aid being more than 3/2 times the amount collected from other sources. As to the expenditure per head of population, Manitoba leads with \$5.22 per head, almost twice as much as the next in the list, British Columbia, which spends \$2.96 per head on education. Quebec comes last with \$1.40 per head. This is due chiefly to the large numbers of religious Brothers and Sisters who impart the very best of education at the lowest possible rate, because of the self-denying poverty of their own lives. In the cheapness of excellent education the province of Quebec has no rival in the Protestant world, except perhaps Scotland, whose glory in this respect was so patriotically emphasized by Mr. William Scott, principal of the Toronto Normal School, at the recent educational convention in this city.

The Montreal "Star" in its "This Date Thirty Years Ago" column, of Aug. 5, reprints the following:

Rev. Father Lacombe, who lately arrived in the city from Manitoba, received a telegram, yesterday from St. Boniface announcing that the grasshoppers continue to devastate the crops in that province. In consequence he considers it his duty to warn persons intending to emigrate to Manitoba to wait until next summer.

This is interesting and no doubt correct information about the state of our province in 1874. But when the Star, in the explanatory note it appends to each venerable

item of 30 years ago, goes on to say that Father Lacombe, "now a very old man, and as ardent as ever in his civilization of the Red-man, has recently returned to his mission," our usually well informed contemporary goes astray. Father Lacombe is now in Europe travelling with His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface. In a letter received within the past week, Mgr. Langevin, writing from Paris, says he cannot start for home before Sept. 10 and may have to wait till Sept. 20, but not later.

Tuesday last was the first anniversary of the coronation of Pius X. While thanking God for giving us so holy, so gentle and yet so strenuous a Sovereign Pontiff, we should all pray for him that he may long continue to govern the Church and in particular that he may successfully cope with the present tremendous difficulties in France.

Another awful human holocaust, this time on the Denver and Rio Grande railway. On Sunday evening the World's Fair Flyer, in attempting to cross a trestle, over which a torrent, produced by a cloudburst, was rushing, was carried away by the roaring waters. Probably one hundred lives were lost. This seems to be one more of those accidents that might have been prevented if safety were not sacrificed to speed. Why attempt to cross a bridge over which the water flowed? Cloudbursts are known to be of short duration. Why not wait till the torrent had spent itself and then make sure that the trestle was not undermined. Such so-called accidents are real crimes, and public indifference to them is a sign of a return of barbarism.

The Free Press Evening Bulletin of Thursday, the 4th inst., sees a mystery in the fact that seventy dollars were, on Tuesday last, placed to the credit of the Government Grant fund for public schools. Mr. R. D. Fletcher, chief clerk of the Department of Education, is reported as saying that he would like to know who is the sender of the money and for what purpose it is sent. The purpose is evident—restitution of money received under false pretences from the government. It is undoubtedly conscience money, probably sent by someone who, having been to confession, has been told to restore that sum. To ask for the name of the person is indelicate, unnecessary, and most assuredly useless. The government has got back its money, what more does it want? Further proceedings would savor of tyrannical interference with conscience. If so much fuss is made about conscience money repentant sinners will be strongly tempted not to make restitution, lest their sin be found out, and thus the government would be the loser. The restoration of conscience money should be encouraged by asking no questions; for if all who cheat the government made restitution, the provincial debt would soon be wiped out.

Professor W. F. Osborne, who tried so hard to introduce into the University curriculum a book that described drunken carousals and other immoral scenes in the most vivid and seductive way now waxes eloquently indignant at the women who drink in London taverns. And yet what he relates in his London letter of last Wednesday to the Free Press, is not half so shocking as many of the scenes in Balzac's "La Peau de Chagrin." Is this up-to-date logic? It certainly is not 'mediaeval,' as the professor called the teaching of St. Boniface College.